

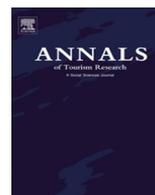


ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Annals of Tourism Research

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/atoures



CrossMark

The touristification of a conflict zone: The case of Bil'in

Yaniv Belhassen*, Natan Uriely, Ortal Assor

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 2 March 2014

Revised 7 September 2014

Accepted 21 September 2014

Available online 11 October 2014

Coordinating Editor: Nancy McGehee

Keywords:

Political consumerism

Transnational activism

Global citizenship

Palestine

Israel

ABSTRACT

This study examines the evolution of the Palestinian village of Bil'in as a site that attracts international tourists and analyzes the factors that enable this process. Based on an analysis of primary and secondary sources, this paper shows how the village developed from a site of a local dispute into an international symbol of resistance. The study illuminates the involvement of tourists in shaping a political struggle. Our analysis of the tourist experience demonstrates that Bil'in provides visitors with touristic thrills, but in quite a protected bubble, where the risks are contained and the action is controlled. We conclude that different actors are involved in constructing and staging the events as authentic experiences and that in so doing they generate a suitable platform for the performance of political tourism.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Introduction

Marshall McLuhan's vision of an information technology destined to transform the world into a global village—a vision he propounded in the early 1960s—is closer than ever to becoming reality. One of the consequences of this process of globalization is the appearance of cosmopolitan politics dealing with universal issues such as human rights, animal welfare, environmentalism, and the dissemination of democratic principles, values and procedures throughout the world. The emergence of universal views regarding these issues reflects the consolidation of what can be regarded as a global or cosmopolitan consciousness. Indeed, world leaders seeking solutions to such problems as

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +972 8 6304517; fax: +972 8 6304538.

E-mail address: yanivbel@bgu.ac.il (Y. Belhassen).

greenhouse gas emissions, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and trafficking of women are largely guided by this cosmopolitan consciousness (Beck, 2006). Thanks to the media, however, the cosmopolitan mode of thinking has also trickled down to the consumer and into civilian spheres. Political turmoil, uprisings and civil wars are examples of events receiving international media coverage, and for some individuals the arenas in which these various forms of turmoil take place may be appealing to visit. International visitors to such zones may be interested in deepening their understanding of events or they may be motivated by the desire to express their cosmopolitan outlook. By choosing certain products, companies and destinations, or by volunteering on arrival at their destination, tourists can participate proactively in the cosmopolitan discourse in a manner that is not always available to them in daily life.

Though not much information is available in the literature regarding tourists who engage in political activism, it is clear that political tourism encompasses a wide spectrum of modes—from the cross-border activities of international organizations whose transnational activists travel around the world (Bianchi & Stephenson, 2014; Keck & Sikkink, 1998), to what Micheletti (2003) calls political consumption, which is expressed as consumer choice. The current study focuses on transnational travel to active conflict zones as an expression of political activism (Pippa, 2002). The demand side of this phenomenon, which is often referred to as “politically oriented tourism” (Brin, 2006; Clarke, 2000; Hercebergs, 2012), concerns persons who combine transnational travel with political activism. The study of these political tourists’ motivations and conduct consists of two basic positions. While scholars such as Clarke (2000) and Brin (2006) criticize political tourism as a type of politically biased propaganda, Higgins-Desbioles (2008, 2013) and Moufakkir (2010) stress the role political tourists in generating hope and promoting peace. Notwithstanding the importance of the conceptual clarification of the phenomenon, our main concern in this study has been to focus on the supply rather than the demand side of political tourism, meaning, the destinations that receive these visitors. More specifically, based on an analysis of the role of tourism in the history of the Separation Barrier dispute in the Palestinian village of Bil’in over the last decade, we describe a process by which international tourists have become an integral part of local struggle. We have sought to show how a conflict zone can evolve into a locus of attraction for political tourists in a process that may be termed ‘touristification’. The data in this study shows that this process began with an intentional decision of the Local Popular Committee to brand and construct their struggle as Israeli-international-Palestinian teamwork. In our analysis, we examine the mechanisms responsible for this process, including the players that promote it, the sort of experience provided to the visitors, and the conditions that facilitate the active participation of international visitors in Bil’in.

This paper is based on qualitative interpretations of primary and secondary data collected between 2010 and 2014. Primary data was derived from fieldwork in the village of Bil’in in the West Bank, which included 12 participant observations in weekly demonstrations that took place there, as well as interviews with the leader of the Bil’in Popular Committee, Ahmed Issa Abdullah Yassin and other key members of the Popular Committee, key Israeli activists who have been involved in the struggle from its outset, attorney Michael Sfar who represents the village in the Israeli Supreme Court, and international tourists. In this regard, we note that very few studies in tourism scholarship rely on participant observations in conflict zones. While some of these studies focus on non-political vacationers in terror-afflicted areas (see Uriely, Maoz, & Reichel, 2007, 2009), most of these ethnographies were carried out within a theoretical framework of political tourism (Brin, 2006; Clarke, 2000; Koensler & Papa, 2011). While qualitative fieldwork in active conflict zones is not easily accessible to researchers and involves various forms of risk, it can contribute valuable first-hand insights to the study of political tourism as well as to better established issues in tourism research, including risk taking and guest-host encounter. Based on our analysis of the role of tourists in the history of the Separation Barrier dispute in the Palestinian village of Bil’in over the past decade, we examine the mechanisms responsible for the process of turning Bil’in into an important political destination, including the players who promote it, the sort of experience provided to the visitors, and the conditions that facilitate the active participation of political tourists in a conflict zone. In our analysis of the tourist experience of international visitors in Bil’in, we also highlight the importance of adventure and authenticity as key elements of the Bil’in experience and stress the relatively controlled nature of the struggle in Bil’in as a necessary condition of tourist participation. In addition

to depicting the process of ‘touristification’ of a conflict zone, our study demonstrates the potential role of tourism in an attempt to advance a political struggle. While focusing on a single case, our analysis sheds light on the essential building blocks that comprise a political tourism site.

Political instability and tourism

Political instability is defined in the literature as a situation in which the legitimacy of laws and the sovereignty of the official government are challenged by entities positioned outside the political system (Hall & O’Sullivan, 1996). This kind of situation is often associated with political protests, which may include violence and terrorist attacks (Arana & Leon, 2008; Lea, 1996; Wiewiorka, 1994). Intuitively, we would expect to see an inverse relationship between the political instability characterizing conflict zones and tourist arrivals. It is therefore not surprising that political instability has a negative impact on both destination image and tourist arrivals (Araña & León, 2008; Mansfeld, 1996; Pitts, 1996; Seddighi et al., 2001; Sonmez, 1998; Timothy et al., 2004). The media generally plays a role in intensifying the sense of danger by disseminating problematic images of conflict zones, culminating in the listing of these zones in travel advisories issued by government agencies as destinations to be avoided (Noy & Kohn, 2010). However, stabilization of the geopolitical situation is enabling tourists to reach these destinations, and nowadays the latter frequently play a new role in the local tourism landscape. This is how Tiananmen Square, the Berlin Wall, and the towns of Belfast in Ireland and Srebrenitsa in Bosnia-Herzegovina have turned into must-see sites (Causevic, 2011; Hall & O’Sullivan, 1996; Light, 2000; McDowell, 2008; Simone-Charteris & Boyd, 2010).

There are nonetheless some unique destinations that attract international visitors in the wake of the negative publicity related to political instability (Brin, 2006; Pitts, 1996; Schwartz, 1991; Vered & Bar-Tal, 2014). Such destinations include certain areas where conflict is still ongoing and which are therefore relatively dangerous for visitors. Although tourists in conflict zones can be regarded as strangers who are detached from the conflict, tourists turn whether knowingly or unknowingly into political players in political conflicts that have nothing to do with them (Burnhill, 2007; Neumayer, 2004). In Tibet, for example, in 1989, after China imposed military rule, a secret network of tourists was formed. This network collected information on human rights and transferred it to the rest of the world. Tourists in Tibet not only risked their own lives when visiting the area, but they also turned into allies of the Tibetans, who used the tourists as a political resource through which to make their story known (Schwartz, 1991). Another example, closer to the Bil’in case, can be found in the study of Clarke (2000) regarding the political tours in the Palestinian city of Hebron, which remind us of the tours of Northern Ireland. In Hebron parallel tours are organized on behalf of both the small community of Jewish settlers and the large Palestinian community. Each side attempts to convince tourists that its cause is just and recounts the injustices wrought by the other side throughout history (see also Belhassen & Ebel, 2009; Stein, 2008).

The political and legal battle against the Separation Barrier in Bil’in, which received wide media coverage, was launched after the Israeli government declared its intention to build the Separation Barrier in proximity to the village. According to the Oslo Accords, which the Palestine Liberation Organization and the State of Israel signed in 1993, the West Bank is divided into three Areas, A, B and C. The complex post-Oslo bifurcation of sovereignty left the village of Bil’in in Area B, which is under the civilian rule of the Palestinian Authority and the security control of the State of Israel. The village is located to the west of Palestinian Ramallah and the nearby Israeli settlement Modi’in Illit. This is the political backdrop for the protests, but the origin of the local conflict in Bil’in lies in the decision of the Israeli government in 2002 to build a separation barrier. The decision to build the barrier was motivated by a series of terror attacks in Israeli cities carried out by Palestinians living in the West Bank. The barrier was designed to follow the Green Line, a route that could not fail to have political implications in future negotiations between the State of Israel and the Palestinian Authority regarding the possibility of establishing a Palestinian state, and more specifically the future border. As a result, the construction of the barrier was opposed by Israelis living across the Green Line (i.e., the settlers) as well as by right-wing Israelis who viewed its construction as portending a future waiver of Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank, which was seized from Jordan in 1967. Despite the political

power of right-wing Israelis who view the settlement of the West Bank as a national and religious mission, the Israeli government decided in favor of construction of the barrier along the Green Line in the hope of preventing easy access to Israeli cities by Palestinians living beyond it. The official position of the Israeli government was and remains that the Separation Barrier is a security issue, and that the political border will eventually be determined through future negotiations with the Palestinian Authority. The length of the planned barrier is about 760 km, versus approximately 320 km for the Green Line. The many deviations from the Green Line are in dispute. In the vicinity of Bil'in too, the barrier deviates from the Green Line; areas carved out by these deviations were expropriated and used to build a new neighborhood in Modi'in Illit.

In 2008 the Israeli High Court of Justice (HJC) issued a judgment regarding a petition filed on behalf of the Head of the Bil'in Popular Committee. The HJC stated that the decision to build the separation barrier was not a political decision motivated by the desire to annex land, but was instead dictated by military-security needs and the desire to protect the State of Israel and its citizens. However, the ISC also ruled that the projected route of the barrier disconnected the residents of Bil'in from hundreds of acres of private land and cultivated fields; these lands are planted with olive, grapes and almonds, and are also used as pasture for the residents' sheep. In short, the route of the barrier failed to balance security needs against the needs and welfare of Bil'in's residents. It was therefore imperative to plan an alternative route that would minimize the damage caused to village residents (HJC, 8414/05). Dismantling of the barrier at Bil'in started in June 2011, four years after the High Court of Justice instructed the Ministry of Defense to alter its route. According to the Israeli director of the documentary, *Five Broken Cameras*, who lived in the village during these years, it was a moment of victory and euphoria for the Palestinians and their supporters. However, the Bil'in Local Popular Committee decided that both international involvement and the demonstrations conducted every Friday would continue, as the new route still leaves 1,350 dunams (350 acres) that were part of the village on the Israeli side of the barrier.

Political consumerism and political activism

Political consumption includes a wide variety of participation formats in the political arena, and nowadays it is frequently associated with globalization (see for instance Micheletti, Follesdal, & Stolle, 2004). Famous examples of globalized political consumption are the consumer boycotts against the Swiss food company Nestle and the American sportswear company Nike, on one hand, and the preference for Fairtrade products and services, on the other (Friedman, 1999). Tourism is a consumer arena that potentially invites high-level ideological involvement, as it requires careful planning of the allocation resources—more so than other consumer services. In addition to the need to select from among the many companies that sell tourism-related products, travel to another country requires some degree of awareness regarding the government of that country, as well as willingness to support the local economy, if only indirectly. Noteworthy in this context is Micheletti's (2003) distinction between negative (e.g., boycott) and positive (e.g., buycott) political consumption, as illustrated by the examples of Nestle and Fairtrade, respectively. Visitors to Bil'in who come to express their solidarity with village residents manifest positive political consumption; those among them who refrain from visiting Israel as an act of protest against Israel's policy in the West Bank manifest negative political consumption as well (for a discussion and examples of political consumerism in the Israeli-Palestinian context, see Moufakkir, 2010).

The most significant difference between the various international visitors to conflict zones lies in the meaning they attribute to the visit. Brin (2006) suggests that there are two types of political tourists in Jerusalem differing from one another in their motives: the activist/solidarity tourists, on one hand, and the curious tourists on the other. The activist/solidarity tourists usually come to Jerusalem with firm political views in clear support of one of the two sides involved in the conflict, and they visit places that reflect their support. Brin notes (2006) that, contrary to what could be expected, the activists who come for a visit are not necessarily knowledgeable about the history of the conflict. They sometimes demonstrate ignorance despite their willingness to act and despite the supposedly well-formed views they exhibit when they support one of the sides. Similar findings have been reported by Koensler and Papa (2011), who found that young peace and human rights activists

who visit the conflict zone in the West Bank lack understanding of the historical, political and cultural complexity characterizing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. And, of course, there are also tourists who travel to this area out of curiosity and do not necessarily take sides. Instead, they are interested in seeing how the conflict is currently manifested in Jerusalem and want to learn about the conflict by seeing it for themselves. The political tourists referred to as 'curious' by Brin (2006) are cautious about becoming politically involved in the local arena. Their aim is to undergo an experience and to learn, and though they may harbor political views of their own, they do not view their visit as a political act.

Some of the visitors to Bil'in engage in other volunteer activities during their stay, such as picking olives, helping in schools or conducting cultural and social activities in the community. Many of the visitors are affiliated with human rights and peace organizations, which manage their visits and involvement in local protests and/or humanitarian activities. Organizations involved in coordinating visits by volunteers worldwide usually operate outside the official political system of the target country, though they do so in collaboration with local organizations. From the tourists' identification with the views and values of the organizations that coordinate their trip, it is possible to derive important insights into the motives of these visitors and the agenda they seek to promote, as well as to deduce the meaning they themselves attribute to their volunteering (Buswell & Forbes, 2002). However, despite the political implications of some of these activities throughout the world, McGehee and Santos (2005) found that, somewhat surprisingly, tourist volunteers usually refrain from expressing their political views and tend to attribute a humanitarian significance to their volunteering activities.

The international network of human rights organizations arose during the 1970s and 1980s (Weissbrodt, 1984). Scholars agree that the success of these organizations has always been dependent on their ability to establish a connection with local organizations and empower them through the international participation they can offer. Over the past four decades, these organizations have learned how to monitor human rights violations and how to coordinate the participation of transnational activists in conflict zones all over the world (Bianchi & Stephenson, 2014; McGehee & Norman, 2001; Stoddart & Rogerson, 2004). Activism in the Israeli-Palestinian context has a clear political connotation due to the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict, which visitors find very difficult to ignore. Evangelical tourists, for example, who volunteer in Israel and in Jewish settlements in the West Bank, do so in the context of a wider religious understanding of the situation (Belhassen, 2009; Shapiro, 2008). Similarly volunteers arriving with the intent of supporting Palestinian communities do so out of solidarity with the Palestinian cause (Higgins-Desbioles, 2013; Isaac & Plantenkamp, 2010). With respect to the latter, Isaac and Plantenkamp (2010) question how volunteers can generate hope among Palestinians and improve the conditions for locals in the occupied territories. They argue that the main contribution of these volunteer tourists concerns the international awareness that they raise to the Palestinian suffering and cause. Generating hope among moderate Palestinians and Israelis is also mentioned by Moufakkir and Kelly (2010) as the main contribution of political tourism to the Holy Land. Other contributions made by volunteering activists in Palestine include documentation of Palestinian life under occupation as well as concrete actions such as removing roadblocks, escorting ambulances through checkpoints and delivering food and water to families under curfew (Higgins-Desbioles, 2013).

The involvement of international activists may at times be perceived as a threat by the host country, particularly if that country is politically unstable. For example, in 2012 the government of Russia adopted a new law requiring all international civil society organizations operating within its boundaries to disclose their sources of financing and to register as "foreign agents" in an attempt to prevent transnational activists from becoming involved in local political affairs (Barry, 2013). Similarly, in June 2012, the Chinese authorities notified foreign travel agencies that they would stop issuing entry permits to Tibet—this, after a series of regulations had been put in place reducing the number of international visitors entering Tibet (Wozniak & Riviera, 2012).

Study methods

This paper combined ethnographic research and discourse analysis of texts surrounding the local protests in the village of Bil'in. The primary and secondary data upon which this paper is based were

collected between 2010 and 2014. The primary data (fieldwork) was collected via observations, interviews, the distribution of open questionnaires and e-mail correspondence with tourists who had visited Bil'in. The secondary data included analyses of two documentary films about the village and an interview with the director, who focused on the involvement of tourists in the documented conflict, as well as analyses of documents and websites of organizations that bring tourists to the Palestinian Authority in general and to Bil'in in particular.

The first visit to the study area was conducted in November 2010. It included participant observation of a demonstration in Bil'in, which involved joining an Israeli group that calls itself Anarchists Against the Wall and participates in the demonstrations every week, coming from Tel Aviv in private vehicles. During this first visit, spontaneous and informal interviews were conducted with the international visitors, who arrived together with the local residents, in order to help refine the research questions. Based upon the findings from the first visit to the village, an open-ended questionnaire was designed. In addition to a socio-demographic section, the questionnaire comprised the following questions:

- (1) Why did you decide to come to the village of Bil'in? How did you hear about the possibility of joining the demonstration in Bil'in? Are you planning to come back? Why?
- (2) What was the itinerary of your trip once you landed? (Sleeping arrangements, travel, training, were you traveling as part of a group or alone, meeting local contacts)?
- (3) Are you politically active in your country? How is this expressed?
- (4) What do your family and friends think about your trip to the West Bank?
- (5) Have you volunteered during this trip or on other trips?
- (6) Did your opinion change during your visit to the Palestinian Authority? Did you learn anything new?
- (7) Do you know about the historical developments of the protests in this village? If so, how did you acquire this knowledge? Was it before, during or after the trip?
- (8) Do you think you can bring about changes in the area by coming to demonstrate in Bil'in? How?
- (9) Do you think that tourism can be used to promote peace?
- (10) Do you think that tourism can be used to promote a political agenda?
- (11) Did you visit other areas of conflict as part of your political awareness? If so, please elaborate.

The second stage of data collection began in December 2010 and included nine participant observations in the Friday demonstration delineated below. Informal interviews were conducted throughout the observations; in addition, semi-structured in-depth interviews based on the above questions were conducted, while waiting at the meeting place for the demonstration to start. Questionnaires were also sent by e-mail to tourists who expressed their willingness to participate in the study and gave us their e-mail address. We eventually got back a total of forty-two questionnaires from the tourists, but out of these only twenty eight turned out to be useable. Additionally, three interviews were conducted with Israelis active in Anarchists Against the Wall, and one interview with a Palestinian contact person from the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), which organizes visits of international tourists to the Palestinian Authority and Bil'in. In addition, we conducted interviews with key members of the Bil'in Local Popular Committee who have been involved in the protest since its outset. An interview was also conducted with attorney Michael Sfard, who was hired by the village to represent it in the Israeli court system.

Difficulties in conducting the study were encountered repeatedly due to security problems, and moreover there were technical problems in reaching the village. For example, whenever we arrived at the village, we encountered a sign in Hebrew that read: "If you are Israeli and have reached this place—you made a mistake" (all the researchers are Israelis). The Israeli army frequently declares the demonstrations illegal, sometimes even before the march begins. Sometimes the army also issues a warrant declaring the area around the village 'a closed military area' and blocks the entrance to the village. This type of order prevents tourists from entering Bil'in and also prohibits the presence of Israelis or at least places them in danger of imminent arrest. The fact that we travelled to the demonstrations in the company of a group of Israeli anarchists who were accompanied by international tourists and Israelis interested in seeing a demonstration sometimes involved us in political debates

on the way. Some tourists expressed their concern that the research was being conducted on behalf of the Israeli government, which was presumably interested in collecting data on international activists in order to bar their entry into Israel (Reider, 2013). Other anecdotal events that shed light on the complexity of the fieldwork from our perspective—as opposed to researchers of Palestinian origin—were related to the political and civil complexity of entering the village. As to the security risks involved, there were bilateral violent incidents throughout the duration of the demonstrations: some demonstrators threw stones at the soldiers, prompting the latter to respond with tear gas and other means to disperse the demonstrations. We were aware that several demonstrators had been injured and even killed during demonstrations as result of a direct hit from a tear gas canister. In addition to tear gas, the army also uses the ‘Boashit’ (‘boesh’ in Hebrew means skunk)—a truck that sprays foul-smelling water which sticks to the skin. All these dictated a certain dynamic of data collection, i.e. before the start of the march toward the barrier and well before the situation escalated.

Secondary data analyzed in the study included decisions of international and Israeli courts, news articles, texts on websites of human rights organizations and visual documentaries produced by Israeli and Palestinian filmmakers (e.g., Bilin Official Website, n.d.; Bilin Weekly Demo, 2011). Most of the documents and media material used is available online, and only court decisions were collected from law archives. The two documentary films *Five Broken Cameras* (Burnat & Davidi, 2011) and *Bilin Habibti* (Carmeli-Pollak, 2006) were purchased and watched. Informal conversations were conducted with each of the directors after public screenings of their films in Tel Aviv.

To analyze the primary and secondary sources, discourse analysis was performed to identify central themes touching upon the role of international visitors to Bil'in. Discourse analysis is a method that seeks to unpack the content of qualitative data (e.g., texts, videos, photos) in order to understand the manner in which meaning is constructed (in this case, Bil'in as tourist site) (Santos et al., 2008; Van Dijk, 2002). Analysis of the various forms of data commenced with the researchers asking, “What understandings of Bil'in as a tourist site are being communicated in this text?” Next, visual images and audio materials were examined and compared across other data sources to determine whether discursive themes existed in more than one source of data. The usage of multiple sources facilitated a triangulation of various sources of data regarding the examined site, enabling us to delineate the themes and ideas that govern the discourse about Bil'in as a tourism attraction.

It is also important to note that the first author is a peace activist and a board member of Combatants for Peace—an Israeli-Palestinian grassroots organization - and therefore has a clear political stance on the subject matter. This research is part of his broader academic and non-academic interests in the intersection of politics and tourism in Israel and in the Palestinian Authority. The first two authors initiated the research, and the third author was recruited as a graduate student and wrote her thesis under their guidance (Assor, 2013).

Study findings

To understand how Bil'in evolved into a symbolic destination for international visitors, it is necessary to follow the history of the conflict in this village and track the involvement of outsiders in the conflict. While it would be difficult to speak of clear-cut phases in this evolution, it is possible to identify stepping stones and key characteristics that impacted the process. We will present our findings in three complementary sections: the first describes the history of the conflict in Bil'in, while attempting to understand the international and local political circumstances that facilitated the involvement of tourists in the local demonstrations; the second section provides details about the nature of the experience of visiting Bil'in, and the third section focuses on evidence—drawn from the fieldwork and from the political discourse surrounding the local struggle—showing that the village has turned into a symbolic destination for politically oriented tourism.

The birth of a political tourism destination

One of the questions that the case of Bil'in raises is how does a specific place turn into a center of international attention. To find the answer to this question, we propose to examine the events at Bil'in from two political perspectives. The first is the international perspective, characterized most notably by the intervention of the United Nations in the debate about the wall; and the second is the local

perspective. At the local level, a decision was made to open the struggle to outsiders and, eventually, to prefer international participation in the political struggle to Israeli participation.

In December 2003, the International Court of Justice in The Hague received a request from the Secretary of the United Nations to respond to the following question:

“What are the legal consequences arising from the construction of the wall being built by Israel, the occupying power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including inside and around East Jerusalem, as described in the report of the Secretary-General, considering the rules and principles of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, and relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions?” ([International Court of Justice, 2004](#)).

On July 9 2004, the International Court of Justice published its decision stating that the route set by Israel demonstrates Israel's illegal steps regarding Jerusalem and the settlements, and that it constitutes an infringement of the Palestinians' rights:

“The wall, along the route chosen, and its associated régime gravely infringe a number of rights of Palestinians residing in the territory occupied by Israel, and the infringements resulting from that route cannot be justified by military exigencies or by the requirements of national security or public order. The construction of such a wall accordingly constitutes breaches by Israel of various of its obligations under the applicable international humanitarian law and human rights instruments.”

International Court of Justice (July 9, 2004). In the wake of the publicity surrounding this decision, international organizations and cosmopolitan individuals alike felt impelled to concretely participate in this political issue.

At the local level, it is noteworthy that the Local Popular Committee of Bil'in began to act approximately six months following the above decision of the International Court of Justice. The first meetings, which began in February 2005, were conducted between representatives of the Local Popular Committee opposed to the wall, Israeli human rights activists and law professionals assisting the Palestinians. They were headed by attorney Michael Sfard, who represented the village in its petition to the High Court of Justice. The village head, Ahmed Issa Abdullah Yassin, was assisted by Sfard in drafting his petition to the High Court of Justice in September 2005. The petitioners relied on the International Court's decision, claiming that the route of the wall constituted an infringement of the village residents' human rights and that there were no security reasons to expropriate village lands, which were intended for agricultural purposes. In the High Court of Justice ruling, as mentioned above, the judges determined that the decision to build the separation barrier was not a political decision motivated by the desire to annex land, but was instead dictated by military-security needs and by the desire to protect the State of Israel and its citizens. However, the Israeli High Court of Justice also ruled that the proposed barrier disconnected the residents of Bil'in from hundreds of acres of private and cultivated land, failed to assure a balance between security needs and the needs and welfare of the residents of Bil'in, and should therefore be re-routed in a manner that would be less harmful to village residents ([HJC, 8414/05](#)).

In an interview conducted in August 2014 with the head of Bil'in's Local Popular Committee, Ahmed Issa Abdullah Yassin, he stated that the decision to make the international activists and visitors an integral part of the protest was a strategic one:

“When we started the action against the wall in Bil'in in 2005 and even before we started the action, we contacted the international and Israeli activists and told them that we needed them to participate in our action in Bil'in. We discussed many things about choosing non-violent resistance as our way and this type of resistance needed them. After we started, on the same day we started the action in February 2005, we called them and they . . . came and started to participate with us . . . We tried to be a triangle: Israelis, internationals and Palestinians. Three groups supporting each other. We are not alone. Over the past 10 years, all of our actions have had three groups.”

While the legal battle was still on, the Local Popular Committee resolved to launch Friday demonstrations. In a series of interviews with Ahmed Issa Abdallah Yassin, who has been the leader of the Local Popular Committee over the past decade, he said that the decision to hold a demonstration

following Friday prayers is not unique to Bil'in; however, the Popular Committee's willingness to include Israeli and international participants and its recognition of the latter's importance were probably pivotal in turning Bil'in into a focal point for international visitors. The Local Popular Committee, which led the protest, also decided that the local struggle would be a non-violent one. At the beginning, it was the Israeli activists who were responsible for the arrival of the international activists, but over the years many other organizations who heard about the village contacted them or simply planned to come to the Friday demonstrations. Abdallah Yassin well summarized the four key contributions of the international participants in the local struggle:

First of all, we know that without them there is more violence from the Israeli soldiers, and when we have internationals and Israelis with us there is less violence. . . . Second, the international and the Israelis try to take photos and videos and put them on YouTube. For example, when they killed Bassam Abu Rahama on April 17, 2009, in the first 10 minutes, the military forces said that they had not killed anyone. But after 15 minutes, the internationals and Israelis put video on YouTube, and the entire world saw how the Israeli military forces killed Bassam. And after that, the Israeli military forces said they were sorry they killed him, we didn't mean to kill him. . . . The third way is they when they go back to their country, they try to make documents and meeting and conferences and speeches about what's going on in Bil'in and other villages, and they try to encourage other people to come. The fourth way is that they also helped us with many creative ideas when we discuss what we can do with them. They helped us with their ideas to put it on the table and afterward to choose the good way to do this against the occupation.

Anarchists Against the Wall acted jointly with the Local Popular Committee from the beginning. This group, which includes prominent activists from Israel's radical anarchist left such as Ilan Shalif and Tal Shapira continues to accompany the protests to this very day. An interview with a member of this group who has been involved in the demonstrations since their inception reveals that village residents provided the peace activists with a wide range of options to lead and influence the nature of the struggle. The following account of this Israeli anarchist sheds light on the process, in which Bil'in evolved as a site that attracts local, Israeli and international activists respectively:

"Our first step was to start the demonstration at the village. This way, we could encourage public interest in the struggle. As soon as the construction of the wall started, we understood that we were going to have a long struggle ahead of us at Bil'in that would end only when the occupation ends. We were active on weekdays to enlist as many people as possible to take part in the Friday demonstrations. At first, the village residents and [Israeli] activists like us participated in the demonstrations. International activists arrived . . . even before Arafat was under siege at the Mukata [2002], and when the demonstration at Bil'in started, they were happy to take part in them. I think that only one year after the demonstrations in the village started, international tourists started arriving as members of international NGOs."

Additional testimonies from the start of the demonstrations confirm the statements of this activist, namely that during the first months, the majority of the demonstrators were local residents and left-wing radicals from Israel, together with a handful of international activists residing in the Palestinian Authority as part of their activities with human rights organizations. A European tourist in her 20s who was on her third visit to the village told us about her relationship with the local residents:

"When I arrived for my first visit to the village of Bil'in, I fell in love with the people and the place. I decided to stay for a few weeks so that I could learn more about the village and see how I could help them. I felt committed to actually live as they do so that I would be able to understand what they are going through every day."

The opening scene of the documentary "*Bilin Habibt*", the Israeli director who was involved from the very beginning in the village's struggle states when he describes his first encounter with local struggles against the wall:

"In the first days of the struggle, the village faces bulldozers and soldiers alone. Dozens were wounded every day. When we began to arrive with the international activists, we hoped to lower

the level of violence. The army's firing instructions, harsh on Palestinians, would supposedly change... In Bil'in the international activists rent an apartment to maintain a constant presence."

In our opinion, the openness towards strangers reflected in these statements, together with the willingness to let them participate in the struggle, played a crucial role in creating a sense of security.

Another factor at the local level that arguably promotes the involvement of international tourists is the anti-normalization movement, which rejects all collaboration with Israelis and in some cases even with peace activists. This movement is led by Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions, also known as BDS. Inspired by a similar movement against the Apartheid regime in South Africa, the BDS campaign was started in 2005 by Palestinian intellectuals and non-governmental organizations opposed to cooperation with Israelis. An outgrowth of BDS is the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, PACBI. PACBI rejects joint activities between Palestinians and Israelis, and even refuses assistance from Israeli organizations in local protests like the one in Bil'in (Although not all forms of collaboration are rejected by PACBI and the BDS movement, it is important to note that many Palestinians are afraid of being labeled as collaborators). From our interview with Abdalla Yasin and other key members in the local committee like the brothers Hamis and Hamdi Abu Rhama it is clear that this movement has not influenced the local committee in Bilin who view the Israeli activists as partners from the outset of the local struggle in the village. Nevertheless, they also implied that the presence of the international activists and foreign visitors often makes this rare Israeli-Palestinian cooperation easier especially during non-protests activities.

The Bil'in experience

Since the start of the Bil'in struggle, it has become customary to hold demonstrations every Friday at noon following prayers at the village mosque, as has been the practice elsewhere across the West Bank. This timing is mainly dictated by the leisure available to local residents, Friday being the day of rest in the Muslim world. As time went by, it became necessary to provide the foreign visitors with a short briefing regarding the essence of the struggle and the dangers involved in taking part in the march. One of the village buildings was designated for this purpose, and it is used as a meeting place to this day. At this house, visitors receive information regarding the purpose of the struggle and the demonstration. The information provided at the meetings we attended varied slightly from one occasion to the next, depending on the speaker and the natural dynamics between the audience and the speakers. In three instances, a female activist from the anarchist group gathered all of the new visitors and spoke to them in English about how the demonstration would proceed. She usually explained that they would start walking as a group towards the barrier together with the locals, and that when the group reached the barrier, it would be quite likely that the soldiers would shoot tear gas at them.

"When they shoot the tear gas, do not run. Look at which direction the piece of metal is thrown so that you can be far away from it and avoid getting hurt. The gas is less dangerous... When you breathe the tear gas, it feels very stressful. The eyes start tearing and it is difficult to breathe. It is therefore important to cover your face with a piece of cloth or to smell onion."

At this point, Israelis and international visitors alike started asking questions about the non-violent character of the demonstration and the likelihood of confrontation with soldiers, and the speaker would then elaborate about the possibility of being arrested:

"You might be arrested. If this happens, please be aware that we have a lawyer who takes care of this matter, and we are going to make sure that you are released."

All of the demonstrations at which we were present were accompanied throughout by reporters and cameras taking photographs of the demonstrators. The local leaders kept shouting slogans that were repeated by the demonstrators. An ambulance followed the demonstrators. When the demonstrators reached the barrier, they started provoking the soldiers by throwing stones at them. The soldiers used various crowd dispersal techniques such as firing tear gas or splashing malodorous water. All these occurrences contributed to the sense that authentic demonstrations were taking place.

The sense of danger that accompanies demonstrations is obviously an important ingredient in the experience of tourists visiting the village. It adds a taste of adventure to the demonstration. In the

marches we attended, the tourists were free to decide how closely they wanted to approach the wall and whether they were prepared to be exposed to tear gas. It sometimes appeared that the soldiers on the other side of the wall were also cooperating with the rules of the ritual, providing the “show” for which some of the tourists had arrived. One male tourist described the demonstration that he had experienced as follows:

“I never experienced anything like it. It was scary even though I knew that the tear gas that they could throw at us was not life-threatening. I was afraid, and at the same time I was happy about being able to actually feel what the local residents feel...”

In our observations we found that vast majority of the international visitors do not get close to the soldiers, stay away from the gas and avoid direct confrontation with soldiers. Only a few international activists dare to get close and to follow the locals and the Israeli activists. It is quite difficult to bring concrete evidence from the fieldwork, but this was our impression from our visits to the weekly demonstrations. In this context it is important to note that over time, the demonstrations at Bil'in have turned into something of a ritual, in which each side is aware of its role. A Finnish tourist in his 30s who stayed away from the soldiers under an olive tree described his motives for coming to Bil'in and addressed the re-routing of the wall:

“I came here to support the local residents. The case for this struggle in Bil'in won in court, but there is still a long way to go until peace arrives. I visited other places on the West Bank, and each place has its own story. The victory in court gives them hope that the current situation can change and that it can be changed through the use of non-violent acts.”

This Finnish tourist also expressed his disappointment at seeing the demonstrators throw stones at the soldiers after being told that the demonstration would be non-violent. However, he noted that the stone throwing showed that the local residents were desperate. He added that he did not justify their actions, but understood that the non-violent label was a relative one.

Note that before the barrier was shifted to the new route mandated by the High Court of Justice, the demonstrators used to march towards the old route and confront soldiers standing behind a barbed-wire fence; in that period the sense of confrontation was more intense. After the barrier was moved to the new route in accordance with the ruling by the High Court, the soldiers stood behind a wall, minimizing the opportunities for confrontation between demonstrators and soldiers (see, for example, the clip of bicycle tourists: [Riding on bicycle from London to Bil'in, 2011](#)). Whatever their intensity, the demonstrations in Bil'in give the international activists a sense of adventure and authenticity, while at the same time enclosing them in a protective bubble where risk is contained and the action controlled. With regard to risk, the findings presented above indicate that the visitors are prepared for the events by professional and local activists who tell them how to behave in the demonstrations. The tourists are excited and even somewhat scared, but not to the point of fearing for their lives or arrest for a long period.

The sense of authenticity is an important aspect of the phenomenon of international visits in the local struggle in Bilin and other localities in the West Bank. Theoretically we follow a recent line of research that holds that the sense of authenticity in tourism occurs when the tourists visit a place where they can act in accordance to their worldview (Belhassen et al., 2008, Knudsen & Waade, 2010; Wang, 1999). In other words, we hold that the sense of authenticity is activated when tourists are in a place where they can live according to their political worldview. The sense of existential authenticity in which tourists feel that they are authentically participating in the local struggle and acting in line with their political worldview is supported by the openness of the local popular committee toward international involvement in their struggle.

To sum up, our analysis reveals that the Bil'in experience provides visitors with touristic thrills and feelings of authenticity, but in quite a protected bubble, where the risks are contained and the action is controlled. The ‘touristification’ of Bil'in involved both institutional forces and human players, who together generated ‘constructed authenticity’ (Wang, 1999) in a conflict zone and invited international visitors to the site to engage in a ‘controlled decontrol’ sort of adventurous behavior (Urieli & Belhassen, 2006). These aspects of the Bil'in experience illustrate inherent components of a tourist experience in which the quest for excitement and engagement with the ‘other’ coexists with the need

for safety and security. We argue that a conflict zone cannot evolve as a destination of political tourism without providing its visitors with these essential features of the political tourist experience. Clearly, local residents play a crucial role in shaping these features: they allow the tourists a glimpse into their lives and struggle, thereby imparting to them the sense of undergoing an authentic experience. Thus, the support of local residents appears to be a necessary condition for the ‘touristification’ of a conflict zone. The findings from both the primary and the secondary sources indicate that the visitors are prepared in advance for the ‘show.’ They are groomed to behave a certain way during the demonstrations, and while they are excited and even somewhat scared, they do not fear for their lives nor do they fear getting arrested. The demonstrations, far from being life-threatening events, represent a ritual specially designed to generate an international response.

Bil’in as a symbolic destination

It would be difficult to determine precisely when Bil’in turned into a symbol of the struggle against the occupation. However, it is safe to say that the process coincided in time with the focusing of media spotlights on the protests as well as with the arrival of human rights activists from Israel and around the world. The testimonies collected show that the number of tourists arriving each week did not decline, and has even increased significantly since the start of the protests and even after the separation barrier was re-routed in July 2011. The authenticity of the protests in Bil’in was no longer perceived as flowing from objective legal arguments, but rather as linked to the emergence of the village as a symbol of the transformation of the struggle against Israel’s occupation and against its control over the Palestinian population of the West Bank (Abu Rahme, 2011).

Two documentaries produced during these years about the demonstrations in Bil’in—“*Bil’in Habibt*” and “*Five Broken Cameras*”—also contributed to internationalizing the local struggle and transforming the village into a symbol. Although tourists are not the focal point of either film, both document the involvement of international activists in the Friday demonstrations and the initiation of non-violent forms of protest seldom seen until then in the Palestinian struggle against Israel. For example, we are shown the use of giant puppets during Friday demonstrations; musical and theatrical marches; peace activists being tied to the fence together with the village residents; and other innovative ploys. In an informal interview, a female Israeli anarchist, who apparently plays a major role as cultural mediator between locals and visitors, stressed the importance of attracting international attention to the village:

“At the first demonstrations, we were a few activists together with the local residents. . . . It was very difficult for us to get people to come here because there wasn’t any awareness. Today, many people understand the significance of this struggle. Today, they know where Bil’in is located on the map.”

Organizations active in promoting the protests at Bil’in are aware of the political benefits to be derived from tourists residing in the village with the intention of taking part in the demonstrations. That is why ISM—the International Solidarity Movement—joined the protests. ISM seeks to disseminate awareness of the Palestinian issue worldwide (Higgins-Desbioles, 2013). It claims that it is possible to disrupt Israeli rule in the West Bank and end the occupation by recruiting foreign citizens for the struggle. In an interview conducted in Jerusalem, a Palestinian activist occupying a key position in the ISM said the following:

“Our goal is to make it possible for the Palestinian nation to live well and make a living. We believe that this goal can be achieved through non-violent activities. One way available to us is by getting the support of the world for our struggle. This is why we are pleased that international activists come to the West Bank so that they can see and understand the situation of the Palestinian people. Activists used to come during the first year of this struggle against the separation barrier, but they did so less frequently and in much smaller numbers. As time went by, when the world began to understand the suffering endured by the Palestinian people, the number of people joining the movement has grown substantially.”

An article published on ISM’s website in May 2005—only three weeks after the start of the protests in Bil’in—described the nature of the activities during the first days of the struggle in the village. The

purpose of this article was probably to encourage international visitors to go to the village and express solidarity with the struggle:

“May Day in the West Bank, and as a village marches in protest against the wall that will cut them off from over 50% of their land, the digger continues, picking away at the hillside relentlessly. Bil’in is one of the places that protested vigorously against the wall—demonstrations are held here at least once a week, usually twice, and the pattern seems well established (Lena, 2005)”.

The first publications on the movement’s website—which brought hundreds of activists to the village—dwelt on the illegal status of the barrier route and described the involvement of Israelis as well international activists in the struggle. In addition, the documentary “*Bil’in Habibti*,” which was filmed in the village itself and depicted the peace activists during the first days of the demonstrations, was instrumental in allaying the fears of tourists wary of visiting a conflict zone, thereby paving the way for an increase in the number of visitors coming to Bil’in:

“Residents of Bil’in village, together with international and Israeli activists, chain themselves to olive trees that are to be uprooted to make way for the Israeli apartheid wall. The wall is currently being constructed in many areas of Palestine. For Bil’in it will result in the annexation of 2,400 dunums of land (600 acres)—over 50% of the land belonging to the village (International Solidarity Movement, 2005)”.

When we attended Friday demonstrations, we quite often observed busloads of European tourists arriving to see for themselves what a non-violent struggle looks like and to see the village whose story they had watched on TV news programs in their own countries. The tourists who visited the Palestinian Authority on their own rather than in a group spoke of Bil’in as a symbol. For example, a Brazilian tourist in her 40s stayed in the village for a few weeks. She explained why it was important for her to visit the village of Bil’in rather than other villages in the West Bank:

“For me, this village symbolizes the Israeli occupation. The fact that they won in court raises hopes for a greater victory. The residents of this place do not give up. They have held demonstrations every Friday for the past seven years. I can see the feelings of hope expressed on the residents’ faces.”

Why is Bil’in more popular than any other village where legal battles have been fought over the route of the wall? The answer may be found in an interview that Michael Sfar—the attorney who represented the village as well as dozens of other similar cases before the High Court—granted to Just Vision, the peace organization:

“Question: Which type of important cases have you handled? What was the outcome?”

Answer: I had many important cases. I am thinking of the Bil’in case, which ended successfully. Not all of the lands of Bil’in have been returned but Bil’in has become a symbol, and the court has eventually ruled not only to change the route of the wall, but it has actually stated what has been claimed all along by me, the council of the village of Bil’in and the Palestinian public which was opposed to the construction of the wall: ‘You are not telling the truth. The separation barrier is not a security wall. Its route has been determined due to considerations regarding the expansion of settlements.’ I see it as great success, including the physical aspect of the return of hundreds of dunams. This was a very important as well as a successful case” (Justvision, n.d.).

Finally, additional evidence of the symbolic importance of the Bil’in protests is the recognition the locals got from the Palestinian Authority when they appointed Abdullah Abu Rahme, a resident and one of the local leaders of Bilin, as the chief coordinator for what has been titled the Palestinian Campaign for the 140th State in November 2011 (Abu Rahme, 2011). The acknowledgment that the non-violence label increases international support and tourist participation is arguably an important contribution of the involvement of tourists in the Palestinian political struggle against the Israeli occupation.

Conclusion

The findings presented in this paper propose a new reading of the conflict, which stresses the involvement of tourists in shaping the struggle and assuring its success. Our focus on tourists highlights the role of tourism in the political sphere, and conversely the role of political protests in the world of tourism. The hypothesis underpinning our analysis is that the transformation of the Bil'in conflict zone into a tourist attraction involved a process in which the site was associated and authenticated as a place possessing cosmopolitan significance and hence constituting a worthy destination. The Bil'in conflict demonstrates that it is possible for local political struggles to chalk up political gains, provided certain adjustments are made for international visitors attracted by the prospect of giving concrete expression to their cosmopolitan worldview. This study sheds light on the role of tourism in shaping a political struggle and our data show that the local popular intentionally saw the involvement of international activists as an integral part of their "triangle protest" that also includes Israeli activists. In this respect, we would like to suggest that the success of the protests in Bil'in (as exemplified in the Israeli High Court order to shift the barrier from its original position) cannot be understood without acknowledging the part played by transnational activists and political tourists in the village. The case of Bil'in illustrates the emerging role of tourists as a political resource that can be promoted cosmopolitically to aid political struggles. According to Israeli and Palestinian activists involved in the demonstrations from the very outset, the participation of tourists played a crucial role in the evolution of the Bil'in protests into a symbol of non-violent resistance against the Israeli occupation. Therefore, it can be concluded that, in the global village in which tourism currently operates, tourists have turned into a powerful political resource that can be used to promote issues such as cosmopolitan nature and world peace. This argument complies with the position of [Higgins-Desbioles \(2013\)](#) who stresses the important role of tourism in securing political solidarity in Palestine. Note, however, that the goal of this paper was not to question the role and impact of political tourism, nor to judge the motivations and conduct of the activists, but, as suggested by [Fassin \(2007\)](#) and [Mahrouse \(2009\)](#), to understand the anthropological configuration in which political tourism is taking place.

The transformation of Bil'in from one (among many) locations of conflict in Palestine into an international symbol of non-violent resistance that attracts political attention has been facilitated by several factors. First, the cooperation of the Local Popular Committee and the willingness of local residents to welcome outsiders to their demonstrations played an important role; without these, tourists would not have come. Second, the restraint shown by the Israeli army in dealing with international participants also facilitated the influx of curious tourists and supporters—the latter would probably have stayed away from a battle zone. Note that it is nearly impossible to find tourists or activists in Syria or in zones of tribal conflict in Africa. Third, labeling the struggle as non-violent resistance was also helpful in terms of reducing the visitors' perception of risk. Moreover, the notion of Bil'in as a site of non-violent resistance advanced its transformation from just another site of conflict into a symbol of the Palestinian struggle. Fourth, the events at the sites (mainly the Friday demonstrations covered by the media) provided the visitors with a sense of adventure and authenticity, which are key elements of the tourist experience in general and of the political tourism experience in particular.

The literature on political tourism is mostly concerned with the motivations and practices of individuals who combine political activism with transnational travel. While recognizing the importance of studying the demand side of political tourism, the current paper turns attention to the supply side: the destinations that attract political tourists. Based on the study conducted in Bil'in, Palestine, this paper delineates a process of "touristification," in which an active conflict zone evolves as an attractive destination for visitors who combine transnational travel with political activism. In this context, the current paper provides an answer to the question: what enables visits of political tourists to an active conflict zone. The analysis reveals that the evolution of a conflict zone as a destination of political tourism is a gradual process that involves different players and requires several conditions that facilitate a worthy and relatively secure experience of political tourism.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to thank Abdullah Yassin, Michael Sfar, Ilan Shalif and Tal Shapira for their cooperation and insights.

References

- Abu Rahme, A. (2011, September 9). No place for arms as we prepare a Palestinian state. *The Daily Star*, P. 9.
- Araña, J. E., & León, C. J. (2008). The impact of terrorism on tourism demand. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 35(2), 31–299.
- Assor, O. (2013). *Political tourism to conflict zone: The case of Bil'in village* (Unpublished thesis). Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.
- Barry, E. (2013). *Russia: Nonprofits defy a new law*. New York Times (p. A6).
- Beck, U. (2006). *Cosmopolitan vision*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Belhassen, Y. (2009). Fundamentalist Christian pilgrimages as a political and cultural force. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 4(2), 131–144.
- Belhassen, Y., Caton, K., & Stewart, W. P. (2008). The search for authenticity in the pilgrim experience. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 35(3), 668–689.
- Belhassen, Y., & Ebel, J. (2009). Tourism, faith and politics in the Holy Land: An ideological analysis of evangelical pilgrimage. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 12(4), 359–378.
- Bianchi, R., & Stephenson, M. (2014). *Tourism and citizenship: Rights, freedoms and responsibilities in the global order*. London: Routledge.
- Bilin Weekly Demo (31 December 2011). Retrieved 07.03.12, from: <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V41-HPasqtA&feature=related>>.
- Bilin Official Website. (n.d.). Retrieved 06.12.11, from: <<http://www.bilin-village.org>>.
- Brin, E. (2006). Politically-oriented tourism in Jerusalem. *Tourist Studies*, 6(3), 215–243.
- Burnat, E., & Davidi, G. (2011). *Five broken cameras [Documentary]*. Israel, Palestine & France: Kino Lorber.
- Burnhill, E. (2007). Weeds and wild flowers: Political tourism in West Belfast. (First published in *Edinburgh Review*). Retrieved 30.06.13 from: <<http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2007-05-08-burnhill-en.html>>.
- Bussell, H., & Forbes, D. (2002). Understanding the volunteer market: the what, where, who and why of volunteering. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 7(3), 244–257.
- Carmeli-Pollak, S. (2006). *Bil'in Habiby [Documentary]*. Israel: Claudius Films.
- Causevic, K. (2011). Phoenix tourism: Post-conflict tourism role. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(3), 780–800.
- Clarke, R. (2000). Self-presentation in a contested city: Palestinian and Israeli political tourism in Hebron. *Anthropology Today*, 16(5), 12–18.
- Fassin, D. (2007). Humanitarianism as a politics of life. *Public Culture*, 19(3), 499–520.
- Friedman, M. (1999). *Consumer boycotts*. New York: Routledge Press.
- Hall, C. M., & O'Sullivan, V. (1996). Tourism, political stability and violence. In A. Pizam & Y. Mansfeld (Eds.), *Tourism, crime and international security issues* (pp. 105–121). New York: Wiley.
- Hercebergs, D. (2012). Narrating instability: Political detouring in Jerusalem. *Motilities*, 7(3), 415–438.
- Higgins-Desbiolles, F. (2008). Justice tourism and alternative globalization. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 16(3), 345–364.
- Higgins-Desbiolles, F. (2013). Tourism as politics: The case of Palestine. In L. Blanchard & F. Higgins-Desbiolles (Eds.), *Peace through tourism: Promoting human security through international citizenship* (pp. 61–74). Oxon: Routledge.
- HJC 8414/05 (2007, February 18). Ahmed Issa Abdallah Yassin, Bil'in Village Council Chairman (The Supreme Court sitting as High Court of Justice). Retrieved 01.09.11, from <http://elyon1.court.gov.il/files_eng/05/140/084/n25/05084140.n25.pdf>.
- International Court of Justice (2004, July 9). Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Summary of the Advisory Opinion. Retrieved 07.03.12, from: <<http://www.icj-cj.org/docket/files/131/1677.pdf>>.
- International Solidarity Movement (2005, May 4). Video from Bil'in: Olive tree chaining. Retrieved December 30, 2011 from: <<http://palsolidarity.org/2005/05/video-from-bilin-olive-tree-chaining>>.
- Isaac, R., & Plantenkamp, V. (2010). Volunteer tourism in Palestine: A normative perspective. In O. Moufakkir & I. Kelly (Eds.), *Tourism, progress and peace* (pp. 148–162). Oxfordshire: CABL.
- Justvision (n.d.). Interview with Michael Sfar. Retrieved 01.09.13 from: <<http://www.justvision.org/portrait/99695/interview>>.
- Keck, M. K., & Sikkink, K. (1998). *Activists behind borders: Advocacy networks in international politics*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press.
- Knudsen, B. M., & Waade, A. M. (2010). Performative authenticity in tourism and spatial experience: Rethinking the relations between travel, place and emotion. In B. M. Knudsen & A. M. Waade (Eds.), *Re-investing authenticity: Tourism, place and emotions* (pp. 1–19). Bristol: Channel View Publications.
- Koensler, A., & Papa, C. (2011). Political tourism in the Israeli-Palestinian space. *Anthropology Today*, 27(2), 13–17.
- Lea, J. P. (1996). Tourism, realpolitik and development in the South Pacific. In A. Pizam & Y. Mansfeld (Eds.), *Tourism, crime and international security issues* (pp. 123–142). New York: Wiley.
- Lena (2005) May day demo. The international solidarity movement website. Retrieved 17.04.12, from: <<http://palsolidarity.org/2005/05/may-day-demo-2005>>.
- Light, D. (2000). Gazing on communism: Heritage tourism and post-communist identities in Germany, Hungary and Romania. *Tourism Geographies*, 2, 157–176.
- Mahrouse, G. (2009). The compelling story of the white/western activist in the war zone: Examining race, neutrality, and exceptionalism in citizen journalism. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 34, 659–674.
- Mansfeld, Y. (1996). Wars, tourism and the "Middle East" Factor. In A. Pizam & Y. Mansfeld (Eds.), *Tourism, crime and international relations security issues* (pp. 265–278). New York.

- McDowell, S. (2008). Selling conflict heritage through tourism in peacetime Northern Ireland: transforming conflict or exacerbating difference? *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 14, 405–421.
- McGehee, N., & Norman, W. (2001). Alternative tourism as impetus for consciousness-raising. *Tourism Analysis*, 6, 239–251.
- McGehee, N., & Santos, C. A. (2005). Social change, discourse and volunteer tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 32(3), 760–779.
- Micheletti, M. (2003). *Political virtue and shopping*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Micheletti, M., Follesdal, A., & Stolle, D. (2004). Introduction. In M. Micheletti, A. Follesdal, & D. Stolle (Eds.), *Politics, products and markets: Exploring political consumerism past and present*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Press.
- Moufakkir, O. (2010). Re-evaluating political tourism in the Holy Land: Toward a conceptualization of peace tourism. In O. Moufakkir & I. Kelly (Eds.), *Tourism, progress and peace* (pp. 162–178). Oxfordshire: CABI.
- Moufakkir, O., & Kelly, I. (2010). Introduction peace and tourism: Friends not foes. In O. Moufakkir & I. Kelly (Eds.), *Tourism, progress and peace* (pp. xii–xxxii). Oxfordshire: CABI.
- Neumayer, E. (2004). The impact of political violence on tourism: Dynamic cross-national estimation. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 48(2), 259–281.
- Noy, C., & Kohn, A. (2010). Mediating touristic dangerscapes: The semiotics of state travel warnings issued to Israeli tourists. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 8(3), 206–222.
- Pippa, N. (2002). *Democratic phoenix: Reinventing political activism*. UK: University of Cambridge Press.
- Pitts, W. J. (1996). Uprising in Chiapas, Mexico: Zapata lives, tourism falters. In A. Pizam & Y. Mansfeld (Eds.), *Tourism, crime and international security issues* (pp. 215–227). New York: Wiley.
- Reider, D. (2013, March 31). Michael Sfard: Is Israel on the high road to fascism? *972 Magazine*. Retrieved 01.09.13, from: <<http://972mag.com/sfard/39804/>>.
- Riding on bicycle from London to Bil'in (29 July 2011). *Youtube*. Retrieved 07.03.12, from: <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctiu7BkY6qE&feature=related>>.
- Santos, C. A., Belhassen, Y., & Caton, K. (2008). Reimagining Chinatown: An analysis of tourism discourse. *Tourism Management*, 29, 1002–1012.
- Schwartz, R. D. (1991). Travelers under fire: Tourists in the Tibetan uprising. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 18(4), 588–604.
- Seddighi, H. R., Nuttall, M. W., & Theocharous, A. L. (2001). Does cultural background of tourists influence the destination choice? An empirical study with special reference to political instability. *Tourism Management*, 22(2), 181–191.
- Simone-Charteris, M. T., & Boyd, S. W. (2010). Northern Ireland re-emerges from the ashes: The contribution of political tourism towards a more visited and peaceful environment. In O. Moufakkir & I. Kelly (Eds.), *Tourism, progress and peace* (pp. 179–198). UK: CABI.
- Shapiro, F. L. (2008). To the apple of god's Eye: Christian Zionist travel to Israel. *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 23(3), 307–320.
- Sonmez, S. F. (1998). Tourism, terrorism and political instability. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 25(2), 416–456.
- Stoddart, H., & Rogerson, C. M. (2004). Volunteer tourism: The case of habitat for humanity South Africa. *GeoJournal*, 60(3), 311–318.
- Stein, R. (2008). *Itineraries in conflict: Israelis, Palestinians, and the political lives of tourism*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Timothy, D. J., Pridaue, B., & Seongseop-Kim, S. (2004). Tourism at borders of conflict and (de)militarized zones. *New Horizons in tourism: Strange experiences & stranger practices* (pp. 83–94). Cambridge, MA: CABI.
- Urieli, N., & Belhassen, Y. (2006). Drugs and risk taking in tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 33(2), 339–359.
- Urieli, N., Maoz, D., & Reichel, A. (2007). Rationalizing terror-related risks: The case of Israeli tourists in Sinai. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 9(1), 1–8.
- Urieli, N., Maoz, D., & Reichel, A. (2009). Israeli guests and Egyptian hosts in Sinai: A bubble of serenity. *Journal of Travel Research*, 47(4), 508–522.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2002). Ideology: Political discourse and cognition. In P. Chilton & C. H. Schaffner (Eds.), *Politics as text and talk* (pp. 33–57). Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Vered, S., & Bar-Tal, D. (2014). Routinization of the Israeli-Arab conflict: Perspective of outsiders' eyes. *Israel Studies Review*, 29(1), 41–61.
- Wang, N. (1999). Rethinking authenticity in tourism experience. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26(2), 349–370.
- Wozniak, A. & Riviera, G. (June 7, 2012). China forbids international tourism to Tibet indefinitely. *ABC News*, Retrieved 02.01.14, from: <<http://news.yahoo.com/china-forbids-international-tourism-tibet-indefinitely-121550685-abc-news-topstories.html>>.
- Weissbrodt, D. S. (1984). The contribution of international nongovernmental organizations to the protection of human rights. In M. Theodor (Ed.), *Human rights in international law: Legal and policy issues* (pp. 403–438). Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Wiewiorka, M. (1994). *The making of terrorism*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.