

Bibliographic Record

ZÁHORA, JAKUB. *Mundane Self-Legitimizations of Power: Distribution of the Sensible in the Israeli Settlements in the West Bank*. Prague, 2017. 277 p. Doctoral dissertation (Ph.D.) Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute of Political Studies. Thesis supervisor: PhDr. Ondřej Ditrych, MPhil., Ph.D.

Abstract:

In this doctoral thesis I am looking into mechanisms, practices and political technologies that work to depoliticize contested and potentially disturbing realities. To make sense of these processes, I am utilizing the theoretical and conceptual apparatus derived from Foucault's and Rancière's respective works. Following Rancière, I conceptualize depoliticization as a "distribution of the sensible", a particular ordering of what is presented to the senses and thus made intelligible, "obvious" and "natural". Understanding such arrangements in terms of a governmental programme, I focus mostly on material and visual elements of the dispositif that promotes this depoliticizing rationality.

Empirically, I am investigating the case of the Israeli so-called non-ideological settlements in the West Bank. Despite some popular misconceptions, these communities attract Israelis by offering cheap public services and housing rather than for their religious-nationalistic appeal, effectively posing as family-friendly suburbs. Nonetheless, such benign experience of the settlers is in a stark contrast to the contested (geo)political status of their communities and violence that underpins the Israeli occupational regime that the settlements are a part of. Drawing on a long-term fieldwork in Israel/Palestine which entailed mostly interviews and participant observation, I argue that the contentious nature of the settlement is erased on the part of the settlers through specific material and visual practices that feed into the middle-class ethos by aesthetization of the occupation's manifestations and practices.

By closely examining the particular case of the Israeli settlements, the thesis thus contributes to the aesthetic turn in IR by looking into ways in which power legitimizes itself through certain representations and visual and material configurations. Nonetheless, as opposed to works which focus on the constructions of difference between the Self and the Other, or spectacular manifestations of power, I argue that dominance can operate in and be facilitated by much more mundane and unremarkable registers of the everyday.

Key words: Israel, Palestine, depolitization , aesthetics, visuality, materiality, governmentality, dispositif

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