

# The moment to come: geographies of hope in the hyperprecarious sites of occupied Palestine

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## Abstract:

In this article we sketch out a geography of hope in Palestine. We focus on ‘hyperprecarious’ sites, exactly those where exposure to harm is heightened and where thus reasons *not* to hope seem plentiful. Focusing on fieldwork at such sites, we examine hope as a temporal practice of waiting, attending especially to how a ‘moment to come’ (*kairos*) constitutes and affirms anti-colonial practices and topologies of everyday Palestinian life. Hope in the cases we discuss is not simply a positive orientation to the future, but an experience of *kairo*-logical time that ties hopeful waiting to *topo*-logical practices that disrupt the space-times of the Israeli occupation, and the horizon of hopelessness it creates for Palestinians. We propose that attending to *kairos* and *topos* can therefore reveal the ways that together they can operate as conditions of possibility, as a ‘moment’ and ‘place’, for time-spaces to come forth anew, and so as structuring conditions for everyday Palestinian hope for life that is irreducible to the systematic subjugation and violence of the occupation.

**Keywords:** Palestine; hope; kairos; waiting; topology; precarity

‘We’re staying, we’re staying,  
as long as the za’tar and olive remain’  
(Palestinian proverb)

‘We have found our own way of mastering an uncertain future’  
Hannah Arendt, ‘We Refugees’ (1943)

## 1. Introduction

In this article we sketch out a geography of hope in Palestine that addresses the seeming paradox of the persistence of hope in fieldworks sites where the reasons *not* to hope seem plentiful. These reasons are many: expanding settlements (Joronen 2017a); restricted mobilities (Tawil-Souri 2012; Griffiths and Repo 2018); prohibited construction (Berda 2017); ‘new’ modes of land appropriation (Alkhalili 2017; Ryan 2017); home demolitions (Graham 2002); targeting of families (Griffiths and Joronen 2018; Harker 2011); intense surveillance (Zureik 2001); and bureaucratic (Joronen 2017a) and settler violence (Griffiths 2017). These conditions are most pronounced in Area C of the West Bank at sites that thus become highly precarious, it is here that we focus this discussion of hope. At such ‘hyperprecarious’ sites, as Rema Hammami (2016, 171) terms them, the sovereign body – to whom one appeals for protection and justice – is that same settler colonial

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state whose violent conditions threaten protection and justice in the first place. In an important respect, such ‘hyperprecarity’ thus shares parallels with the ‘increasing unpredictability and crisis’ and the ‘lack of sense of direction’ that, Nauja Kleist and Stef Jansen note (2016, 373), have precipitated a turn to hope as a focus in anthropology and cognate disciplines such as geography. Within more critical formulations, hope has been framed as little but a ‘cruel optimism’ that is part of a late capitalist ‘Zeitgeist’ for promising conditions unrealisable for the great majority (Berlant 2011), discussed as an unevenly distributed orientation that is intimately tied with the socio-economic processes orchestrated by the state (Hage 2003), or alternatively, seen as a ‘hopeful ethos’ of future investments and thus as a part of a biopolitical rationale for the implementation of neoliberal policies (Millei and Joronen 2016).

In this paper we seek to sustain the critical sensibility of such perspectives on hope and the ways in which it is embedded in the creating of precarious conditions and various modes of governing while also exploring further the relations of hope and vulnerability. Even as we begin at the persistence of hope in highly vulnerable parts of the West Bank, thus approaching hope as *epiphenomenal* to the settler colonial (hyper)precarities induced by the Israeli occupation, we nonetheless consider hope as *irreducible* to strategies of governing, be they colonial, and/or capitalist. Though we thus acknowledge the ways in which settler colonial governing creates landscapes of *hopelessness*, hope here is less understood as a mere means to govern, for instance through the ‘cruel optimism’ and empty promises that are, to be sure, crucial in the ways in which the Israeli military overrules Israeli High Court of Justice verdicts (e.g. Joronen 2017a). The focus of the research in this paper is thus concentrated on the *practices* of hope in the vulnerable parts of the occupied West Bank with the objective, following Ghassan Hage’s suggestion, of exploring agency at sites where one hardly expects to find any space left for agential manoeuvre (2009, 100-101). Hope in this formulation can emerge from (close to) hopeless, even desperate, conditions and (yet) connects to affirming practices towards everyday modes of ‘getting by’ and staying with the trouble in the hyperprecarious sites produced by the occupation (Allen 2008; Griffiths 2017; Hage 2009; Joronen and Griffiths 2018).

Related literature in geography has conceptualised this affirmative capacity of hope in two primary ways. First, geographers are credited with ‘the tools to open up space for alternative, hopeful visions of social, ecological, and political life’ (Lawson 2007, 336) and called on to utilise these tools to provide accounts of the world based on a praxis of ‘difference not dominance’ (e.g. Gibson-Graham 2008). Hope is here deployed as a means of ‘staying with the trouble’ (Haraway 2016) to provide an ‘optimistic’ (Harvey 2000) or ‘utopian’ (Anderson 2006b) ‘politics of hope, of collective action and of endless possibilities and potentialities’ (Griffiths 2014, 94). A second focus on hope has coalesced with the increased attention on affect and/or emotion to produce a rich literature around the affective dimensions of hope (e.g. Anderson 2006a; Anderson and Holden 2008). Geographers working in this area have documented this embodied dimension to hope in the diverse contexts of protest (Juris 2008), childhood self-esteem (Kraftl 2008), international volunteering (Koleth 2014), depression (Anderson 2006a) and resistance (Griffiths 2017). Hope by this reading presents a ‘dynamic imperative *to action*’ that orientates bodies towards the affective promise of a ‘more to life’ (Anderson 2006a, 744, original emphasis).

Our objective in this article is to elaborate the notion of hope as a disruptive practice that is epiphenomenal, yet irreducible to the ‘hyperprecarities’ of colonial time-spaces. We focus, in

particular, on the ways that precarity relates to hopeful Palestinian practices and sites of dwelling through a waiting of a turning and decisive future ‘moment’. We draw on fieldwork in the West Bank to examine hope as a temporal practice of waiting, focusing especially on how a ‘moment to come’ (*kairos*) constitutes and affirms anti-colonial practices and topologies of everyday Palestinian life. In making this argument, we draw on relevant literatures in geography that open up the relations of *kairos* to *topos* (place) (e.g. Crang 2005; Braun 2014; Secor 2013) to further contribute to what Lauren Martin and Anna Secor (2013) refer to as the third tradition evolved somewhat beyond the mathematical/post-mathematical divide in current topological thought (See also Joronen 2016; Malpas 2006). In particular, we draw on this ‘third tradition’ to think of place (*topos*) as space-making and temporalising (see also Harrison 2007) so as to provide a deeper conceptual understanding of those Palestinian spaces of hope that are irreducible but simultaneously engendered by the ongoing Israeli occupation. The persistence of hope in highly vulnerable cases we explore herein is not simply a positive orientation to the future, but an experience of *kairo*-logical time that ties future hope to *topo*-logical practices that disrupt the space-times of the Israeli occupation, and the horizon of hopelessness it creates for Palestinians in the hyperprecarious sites.

The article proceeds in four sections. We begin with a deconstructive discussion of the notions of *topos* and *kairos*, showing how beyond the metaphysical and theological load these concepts have been burdened with, we may think of *topos* and *kairos* as conditions of openness – as place and moment – enabling the *topological* and *kairological* practices of hope. Key to this elaboration is the waiting for a moment (*kairos*) that constitutes and empowers everyday practices of living in a community of hope. The first section thus builds towards the main theoretical argument of the article: that *kairological* waiting – as an everyday hope constituted by the awareness of a decisive ‘moment’ and potential history-making ‘event’ – can produce topologies in which subjects and communities relate to the world despite the hopeless landscapes of occupation. In order to explicate how different Palestinian practices produce topologies irreducible (but related) to those produced through military occupation, we look at the ways in which hope grows from various efforts (at different West Bank sites) to ‘go on’ or ‘get by’ under the hyperprecarities of the occupation (See Allen 2008; Joronen 2017b). While the second section focuses on the ways in which alternative topological spaces are constituted in these practices, the third moves on to think of the ways in which different temporalisations of hope are related to these anti-colonial enactments. These two sections, drawing on materials collected during a total of seven fieldwork periods, therefore build towards the main empirical argument of the article: that practices of hope produce topologies that disrupt the contemporary moment of the Israeli occupation. We close with a final section that further considers the value of focusing on hope in Palestine and explicates the future lines of inquiry that are indicated by the research in this article.

## **2. Kairos, topos, hope: waiting for the moment of come**

Hope, as we indicated above, denotes a process where the potentials of a future moment (*kairos*) enter a present situation – a site of dwelling (*topos*). *Kairos* and *topos*, as a ‘moment’ and ‘place’ for openness, therefore have the capacity to make time-spaces, to which hope in Palestine and for Palestinians, as a *kairo*-logical and *topo*-logical practice of everyday waiting (for a radically different future), can become attached. We propose that attending to *kairos* and *topos* can thus reveal the ways that together they can operate as conditions of possibility, as a ‘moment’ and ‘place’ for time-

spaces to come forth anew, and so as structuring conditions for everyday Palestinian hope that remains irreducible to the systematic subjugation and violence of the occupation. To arrive at this point, however, requires a deconstructive approach that aims to rid both terms of their metaphysical load with which, in the course of Western metaphysical and theological thought in particular, both concepts have become burdened. Constrained by space, what is offered here is a sketch of such a deconstructive genealogical project that makes important steps towards freeing *kairos* and *topos* from the snare of Western metaphysics and ‘onto-theology’ (for more on this, see Malpas 2006). The promise of which, as the discussion of fieldwork below will show, is great: attending to *kairos* and *topos* in this way affords a deeper view into what is at stake in different Palestinian conceptualisations that underpin hope under the violence and horizons of despair produced by the Israeli occupation. In this conceptual section we therefore wish to release *kairos* and *topos* for our elaboration of the sites of hope, time and waiting in the current Palestinian context, and by doing so, to avoid colonising the events of hope with ontologies that are, at worst, loaded with a heavy metaphysical burden from the past (see Sundberg 2014; Joronen and Häkli 2017).

*Kairos*, in particular, has a long history in theology and early Greek thinking. In the classic Greek, *kairos* indicated the right, or critical moment – what will happen at the right time and correct place (Boer 2013) – hence designating a sense of fitness and appropriateness of both, time *and* place to come. In Christian theology, in the scriptures of the Apostle Paul in particular, *kairos* came to represent an eschatological waiting for a (returning) messiah, a messianic temporality lasting until the *Parousia*, the full presence of the Messiah (Delahaye 2016; Prozorov 2014). In early Greek thought, *kairos* was thus conceived in connection to place, or more specifically: a ‘proper’ and ‘right’ place that, by extension, forecloses the radical possibility of thinking *kairos* as a rupturing event that refuses a proper moment to take things “out of their place” (Boer 2013, 127). Later, Apostle Paul, as both Walter Benjamin (2006) and Giorgio Agamben (2005) in particular have shown, connected *kairos* to precisely this rupturing moment, which waiting (as a messianic *period* of time) had the potentiality to structure the experience of lived time anew. In fact, the potentialities present in these early understandings have been taken up by a wide range of writers, from Walter Benjamin and Giorgio Agamben to Martin Heidegger, Alain Badiou and Antonio Negri; each of whom rework *kairos* in a non-mythical and non-apocalyptic manner to emphasise the moment of emancipatory ‘possibility’ (Agamben 2005, 69-72), ‘messianic time’ (Benjamin 2006, 396), ‘revolution’ (Negri 2003, 147-180), ‘event’ (Badiou 2003), and ‘momentary vision’ (*Augenblick*) (Heidegger 1996, 307-321), altogether a grounding moment for a radical, often revolutionary and world-making transformation.

While these reformulations are useful for offering different deconstructive readings of *kairos*, at this point we wish to emphasise three ways of opening *kairos* further for examining the ways in which hope is formulated and practiced at hyperprecarious sites in the occupied West Bank.

First, *kairos* may constitute a moment/event, where history is made and the past’s grip on the everyday turned into new (ontological) possibilities, but it is never a moment outside the community. Thus, as a world-making event, *kairos* also relates to ethics and politics by constituting, reframing, and, as is the case with vulnerable Palestinian communities, by (re)claiming a right and belongingness to a place and community (see Murchadha 2013, 59). The importance of looking at

*kairos* through the politics that in each case constitute it, is also elucidated by Bruce Braun (2014) who, instead of merely celebrating the revolutionary potential of *kairos*, its eventfulness and rapturous potential in particular, argues that we should attend to the role of *kairos* in efforts to govern, and thus in power relations through which it is played out. Braun highlights the ways that contemporary urban governance embeds the discontinuous and ‘eventful future’ (*kairos*) to a ‘static time of liberal polity’ (*chronos*) to the end of maintaining ‘capitalism’s ecological contradictions’ by eternally repeating itself (2014, 61-62). Connectedly, and in the context of Palestine, Oren Yiftachel has shown how Zionist histories have offered instrumental ‘tools for validating present Jewish colonisation’ where, time-as-*chronos* has become a ‘national time ... in effect, a-historical, providing a unified, linear and repeatedly recited backdrop for contemporary practices of territorial expansion’ (2002, 224). Though these narratives present essentially *chrono*-logical, more-or-less smoothly linear sequestrations of time-space, the Zionist trajectory of time-space has also been marked, as Julie Peteet adds, by watershed moments, from the Balfour Declaration (1917) to the establishment of the state (1948), the occupation of the rest of the Mandatory Palestine (1967) and the Oslo Agreements (1993/1995), all intrinsically connected to spatial colonisation and compartmentalisation that have shrunk Palestinian land and pushed the Palestinian population into isolated Bantustans (Peteet 2017, 3; see also Falah 2003). To be emphasised here, therefore, is that when set in specific power-relations, the turning moments of *kairos* may become entangled in completely different politics than those of the ontological discussions of Benjamin, Agamben and others discussed above. This highlights the importance of examining *kairos* – the coming moment of transformation – as embedded in multiple power relations, uses, and, we argue, *topologies*.

Second, the connection of politics and community applies also to *kairological* time, to the *waiting* of a transformative moment to come, which passes between hope and hopelessness, joy and anxiety. Key for the context at hand is that such waiting for the moment constitutes and empowers everyday practices of living in and sharing a community of hope that comes to pass – and rests on – the possible dangers of what the incalculable future event may bring. Such *kairo*-logical waiting is orientated towards, not merely the ‘temporal opportunities of everyday life’ that the open future evokes (Maffesoli 1998, 108), but also a fundamental discontinuity, a transformative moment at an unknown time in the future. Waiting in this sense is not a mere preparation, but a hopeful waiting that impacts on how temporality and the everyday are lived and practiced. Given this, the possibilities for hope to emerge from hyperprecarious conditions are opened; vulnerabilities can bring people together and push them to fight, together and separately, to escape regimes of control, not necessarily by demolishing them, but by hampering and resisting their effects upon the life they aim to govern. Waiting is therefore not a sign of passivity but an active praxis of hope, which finds its source from the possibility of a moment when the occupation – its spaces and tactics of governing – is no longer the dominating power.

Third, we show how hope, as a form of temporal waiting (rather than an affect), creates topologies that are not so much imaginary anticipation of a “better future” but more a practice that structures everyday spaces differently through the hopeful waiting for the moment (*kairos*) to come. What we argue is that the topologies of hope open up ways of relating to the world, and it is this way of relating that undergoes a process of (ontological) transformation in the practices of hope.

Even though geographical work on time and space has elaborated, as Mike Crang writes, the ‘heuristic grid’ of *chronos/kairos* and *chora/topos* often with ‘*chrono-chora* dominant’ (2005, 18),

here we do not wish to privilege *topos-kairos* over *chrono-chora* in any simple and straightforward manner. Our reasons for this are many: we wish to consider *topos* (like *kairos*) through the power-relations that constitute them (as we highlight above), but also to pay close attention to the historical realities in which both, *kairos* and *topos*, have been constituted. When it comes to the latter point, Heidegger for instance, and later Derrida, saw *topos*, in particular the way in which it was formulated by Aristotle (Casey 1997, 63-64), as central to the long genealogical process of Western thinking, which they referred to as the ‘metaphysics of presence’: the onto-theological belief that behind the presence of things lies hidden essential conditions and categories defining the nature, movement, and the character of things (see Heidegger 2003; Vallega 2003).<sup>i</sup> Derrida (1981) thus found more hope from Plato’s *chora* than from Aristotle’s ‘topology of the presence’, showing how its ‘bastard reasoning’ disturbed, already at the dawn of Western philosophy, the too neat a distinction between ‘intelligible ideas’ (being as essence) and their ‘sensible appearances’ (becoming). Heidegger took a different view, arguing that it was precisely Plato’s *chora* – in its way of thinking space as equal to matter – that paved the way for Descartes’ calculative notion of space as extensional *res extensa*, which connection to ‘matter’ the latter exemplified in his famous description of the ‘piece of wax’ (See Elden 2005). Unlike Derrida, Heidegger turned back to *topos*, making it a central constituent of what he called the ‘topology of being’: a place, or a site of openness for the new ‘events’ (*Ereignis*), with new ontologies of time-space, to emerge (Malpas 2006; Heidegger 1972). What is crucial here is that, despite their disagreements, both Heidegger and Derrida connected *topos* and *chora* to particular history-making events in a way which not only shows the need to pay attention to their embeddedness to the deep currents of Western metaphysical thinking, but by critically acknowledging this, calls for a fundamental reconfiguration of any spatial conditions through those specific space-making events and moment(s) that they come to being. In this regard, we wish to follow Heidegger in his suggestion to rethink *topos* as a place of openness, particularly as this enables us to properly connect place to the potentials of coming moments (*kairos*) and the hopeful practices they engender.

However, in the recent geographical literature on what Lauren Martin and Anna Secor (2014) refer to as the ‘post-mathematical topology’, the focus has been more or less in aims to tease out more nonlinear, nonmathematical, chaotic and discontinuous forms of spatiality (e.g. Allen 2011), or alternatively, in new epoch-reflecting topological language capable of articulating the current junctures of instability, flows and other non-territorial forms of spatiality (e.g. Harvey 2012). Such approaches, often following the rules of specific topological systems under scrutiny (Law and Mol 2001), have also tended to focus in on the difference between relational and territorial, or what constitutes the relationship between topological and topographical spaces (e.g. Allen 2011; Kallio 2017). Herein, we depart from such approaches by exploring instead how time and space are drawn together in different topological set ups, hence thinking topology as a space-making and temporalising practice of gathering, accompanied with the ontological power of ‘making’ (time-spaces) (see Elden 2005; Harrison 2007; Joronen 2016; Malpas 2012; Sloterdijk 2012). Rather than defining *topos* beforehand with grounding conditions, whether non-calculative or discontinuous and non-territorial *form* of spatiality, we thus look at *topos* as a condition of possibility for any such ontological nominator to come to the fore and be played out in the relations of existing. It thus follows that *topos* denotes a site of openness, rather than a bounding condition, *topology*, in turn, naming those sets of space-making practices that gather together different elements, ranging from the manifold events, relations, borderings, becomings and material conditions to the ‘historical grievances, contemporary here-now agitations, and the

imagination of future’, as Panelli (2007, 50) aptly adds. Instead of ontologising *topos* – that is, by proposing a new ontological take on topology – we therefore consider the ontology itself to take place topologically; that is, as space-making and temporalising practice of gathering. Place, hence, happens, takes place: it underlines the possibility, and the openness for the different closures and openings to manifest themselves as topological gatherings of different practices, materialities and temporalities (Elden 2005; Joronen 2013; Wylie 2002). The key point is that, if place (*topos*) is what affords an openness for new topologies to emerge, topological relations are what bound and make spaces via practices that, on the one hand, gather anew, but on the other hand, reflect and take place within the existing ways of being-gathered. Such openness of *topos* is thus what makes alternative topologies of Palestinian dwelling possible, but also irreducible to the those of the Israeli occupation.

For the discussion that follows, taking this openness for new topologies means not only recalling the co-constitutive relationship of hope and hopelessness, but also recognising how the existing hyperprecarities of the occupation may not (completely) stifle Palestinian resistance or eliminate topologies that are, have been, and will become Palestinian. In the hyperprecarious sites we focus on in the following section, *kairos* and *topos* thus play a central enabling role: *kairos* as a locus of a kairological waiting and hopeful practices it generates, and *topos* as a site of openness for grasping space anew with different topological ways of hopeful space-making.

### **3. Practices of hope at sites of hyperprecarity**

In the two sections that follow, we move on to present examples of practices of hope from ‘hyperprecarious’ sites of the West Bank Area C. The accounts are drawn from a total of seven research visits over the past five years in which we have interviewed a great number of activists, farmers, local politicians and residents of villages at eight different, highly vulnerable sites and communities. In addition to interviews, the materials we use are taken from field notes, participatory research (olive harvests, activist tours, community meetings), walking interviews and ethnographic vignettes from longer fieldwork periods, though we also use document materials from the NGOs, UN organisations and from the field. Our discussion focuses on a selection of these accounts to build an understanding of how practices of hope persist in sites that are exposed to especially harsh forms of settler and state colonial violence. We have anonymised both names and places in the discussion.

During fieldwork in a Bedouin village in the southern part of the West Bank, Faris, a nominated spokesperson for his “unrecognised” village,<sup>ii</sup> recounted a history of physical and emotional abuse on the part of the nearby settlement community and the IDF soldiers stationed there. It was a harrowing (but all too familiar) story of settler attacks, home demolitions and infrastructural deprivation. Faris walked us around the village, talking in detail about the demolition orders for all but two of the community’s buildings, and the repeated bulldozing of dwellings and communal facilities. The lower part of the village slopes into a valley where cattle graze, one of the men with Faris pointed to how access to this grazing land has narrowed with first the construction of a settler access road to the expanding settlement and then by a 10 or so more metres with a stretch of coiled razor wire. Looking down into the valley, Faris’s sweeping motion indicated the higher parts into which the settlement will eventually grow, a map he showed us made it further clear that his village will be slowly surrounded on three sides, leaving an even narrower strip

through which the community will be allowed to access, not only the land they own, but the wider West Bank. Later that night stones were thrown from the settlement into the village, as they have been for the last six months. The Bedouin community can do little in response: retaliation in kind has brought arrests in the past; the PA has no jurisdiction in this part of the West Bank; and the IDF soldiers (who do have jurisdiction and are responsible for the safety of both Palestinians and settlers) stand by and watch, intervening only when the Bedouins show anger.

At the same time a threat of demolition orders hangs over the community. Our interviews with the residents were marked by the damage that such a threat can bring to both home and communal life in the village. We heard stories of how anxieties grow over the knowledge that one day your home will be razed, of how people wake up early to scan the surrounding hills for approaching bulldozers, and of the ways that – according to Faris acting as translator – the continual threat of losing one’s home has brought a lot of “stress and anxiety” and that “for a long time people have not slept well in the night”. Given this context, we can thus consider the village as a site of (hyper)precarity, where the exclusion from services (utilities, transport links, legal recourse) and infrastructure, the lack of protection from law enforcement authority, and the continued threat of demolition, eviction and violence are each significant contributory factors exposing the site to “maximised precariousness” and “arbitrary state violence”, at the same time leaving the inhabitants with no other option than to try to “appeal to the very state from which they needed protection” in the first place (Butler 2009: 26).

Despite such extreme precarity, Faris insisted on hope and described practices that enable him and members of his community to “go on”: “we have fun, we laugh, *we go on* ... We ask people to help us, to help in resistance against the Israeli state ... I’m a believer ... *we go on*”. Yasser, Faris’s cousin expanded: “we have an NGO that will bring solar power to us and we have one other [NGO] helping us to build a bee farm down that way”. The plans here are to secure funding for solar panels on one of the two structures in the village that have not been issued with demolition orders that will mitigate against the punitive status of being “unrecognised” – that is, living forcibly off-grid even alongside the settlement whose lights, air-conditioning and winter heating function barely 50 metres away. The bee farm is more ambitious and strategic: in partnership with a Jerusalem-based NGO, the village has crowd-funded a project to establish structures in the valley that will serve as the farm. The honey – both for use and for sale – will benefit the community, but the bee farm serves a potentially greater need: it will alter the landscape of the valley so that the narrowing corridor of access to grazing land is, effectively, fortified with the farm’s structures. The thinking behind the project, one of the NGO workers explained in interview, is to “make it as difficult as possible for the IDF and settlers to erase the village completely, once something is built there the whole process [of land sequestration, from demolition court order to bulldozer] slows right down”. From an Israeli Civil Administration perspective, the structures – no more than some platforms and hive boxes – are illegal, from the perspective of the Bedouin community, they re-make the land, render it productive as a space that offers sustenance, capital and, most importantly it seems, a “re-Palestinian-ised” area of the valley that can (even only temporarily) facilitate access to grazing lands and access roads to the wider West Bank.

Several kilometres along one of those access roads is situated a similar Bedouin village where we undertook further fieldwork. On this occasion the community was not surrounded by a growing settlement but is still threatened with demolition orders and sporadic visits from IDF

bulldozers. Again, the village's "unrecognised" status has played a central part to creating a space of precarity: the lack of utilities, coupled with consecutive dry winters, has brought a water shortage. Attempts to draw on the water table below have repeatedly been met with military responses as the full 'politics of verticality' (Weizman 2007) have come into view: Israel claims the water reserves below the West Bank and the IDF fills in even the most rudimentary attempts to dig a well – the only accessibility to water is through the wells built before the occupation, or through the water quota the Israeli water company allows the Palestinian Authority – this means that in effect there is no water because of the area's lack of infrastructure and refusal by the military to grant a permit to improve the supply. Mohamed talked at length about two main impositions that the occupation places on his growing family: restrictions on building to extend his home and a lack of available water for cooking and bathing. Once again, there was a clear sense of injustice and a palpable exasperation at the realities of the occupation for communities living in Area C. Mohamed, however, was not resigned and took us on a walk around the small village pointing out first: "there is a pipe running from the settlement to the master plan [utilities network] and we're taking water secretly from the pipe". He did not smile, he just shrugged, matter-of-factly.

The practice of doing things secretly came out also in another fieldwork site, located near the Separation Wall in the Bethlehem district. Ahmed, one of the residents of a community where half of its houses have been issued a demolition order by the ICA (Israeli Civil Administration), told how houses were (re)built, repaired and improved quickly at night or during the Jewish holidays so as to go undetected by the local IDF commander. They do this even though they know that Israel uses aerial photography to monitor space, targeting construction without Israeli-issued permits and recording uncultivated fields so as to then confiscate them, while simultaneously hoping, as Ahmed reasoned, that "it is hard[er] for them [IDF], when they come to your house, if you live there already... they cannot order you to leave instantly". For the Palestinians in this village, there was a definite pride and a sense of irony at the lengths they have to go to outwit some "pointless" regulations, and a strong hope that, in the shadow of this most violent of occupations, the willingness to go through the endless permit processes, like the unauthorised renovations and (re)building, show they are not leaving their homes, despite the threat of demolition orders. With this hope, Palestinians transform their spaces: "every year we try to add something to our homes" – something small and unnoticeable that makes the often quickly constructed houses more of a home.

We thus begin to gain a sense of how, within the distribution of severe vulnerabilities, hopeful practices not only persist but are emergent of the very conditions of that vulnerability. It is the vulnerability/precarity itself that activates agential manoeuvres that form the conditions for the topological practices of hope such as re-spacing a small part of a valley, creating networks of stolen water, or extending and transforming the space of one's home to the end of creating topological spaces different to those of the occupation. Above all they show how people find hope to go on and (re)build the sites and spaces – the topologies – of everyday life despite the hyperprecaries of the occupation, thus creating practices of living that are related yet markedly different to the narrow and hopeless positions fashioned by the Israeli occupation. These practices of hope, ranging from the "stealing" (redirecting) of water and constant rebuilding to bee farms, solar panels, and collaboration with NGOs, thus draw together different elements so that they constitute topological spaces of the everyday that are irreducible to the conditions imposed by the

occupation. Such space-making ‘overcomes’ in the true sense of the word – not by defeating and leaving something completely behind (Heidegger 2003, 84), but by way of incorporation accompanied with an uncertain hope of elevating the existing (colonial) conditions to new topologies (until the ‘moment’ comes). Relating this back to the words of Faris, Yasser, Mohammed, Ahmed and others, we might describe their hope as something quite similar: as a practice whose insistence on an uncertainly hopeful future (while never denying the paradoxically ‘hopeless’ present) helps in creating sites of dwelling that incorporate and escape the ‘script’ of the occupation in which their existence is reduced and threatened. In this regard, Lisa Duggan and José Esteban Muñoz make an important distinction between a mode of hope that ‘simply keeps one in place within an emotional situation predicated on control’ and ‘a certain practice of hope that helps escape from a script in which human existence is reduced’ (2009, 278-280), also adding how hopelessness can help communities to come together and find hope for resisting the precarious states of affairs imposed upon them. As Judith Butler (2016, 25-26) also puts it, vulnerability is ‘neither fully passive nor active, but operating in the middle region, a constitutive feature of human animal both affected and acting’. Vulnerabilities may hence be produced and used as forms of subjugation, control and political violence that *affect* us (Joronen 2017a), but can also be mobilised for the sake of *acting*, making, and resisting (see Athanasiou 2016; Hammami 2016; Joronen and Griffiths 2018).

#### 4. Temporalising hope: hope for the end of occupation

In this final section we move on to illustrate two temporal ways of building hope for the transformative future moment to come: the cyclic practices around the olive harvest and the past irruptive moments. We thus argue that the expressions of hope towards the end of occupation are constituted through these two overlapping ways: by using the past moments of transformation (*kairos*) as a source of future hope, and by sticking into cyclical practices part of the way of living the occupation aims to hamper, disable and eliminate by inducing hyperprecarious living conditions.

At a fourth fieldwork site, in a Bethlehem District village threatened particularly with the construction of the West Bank Wall and house demolitions due to the Jerusalem Masterplan that affects around one third of the village inhabitants, a farmer, Nidal, spoke to us during the 2017 autumn olive harvest.<sup>3</sup> He began with words of hope, heard with some frequency in the West Bank – “we are going to stay here as long as the olives and za’atar stay here” – but expanded this into more practical realm: “the olive tree is ... a blessed tree. We use it for lighting, the lamps with oil. In this tree is *hope!* Oil is the pillar of our home ... whoever has bread and oil can never go hungry”. Yet, as he goes on, it becomes clear the relationship to olive trees is not simply extractive: harvest is a time for the families with trees to come together annually, to share meals and spend time together. Moreover, the tree also provides, as Kefah, one of Nidal’s relatives explained, a symbol for Palestinian hope: “olive tree is a particular kind of tree, they can take a lot of rough situations, without water, things like that, so it can live through hardships, like the Palestinian people ... it’s the best tree that fits the terrain of Palestine”. For Kefah, it is clear that olive trees embody the

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<sup>3</sup> Here we collected materials through interviews, and by participating in three olive harvests, and once on an activist tour of the area.

struggle of the Palestinian people, and that hope for both Kefah and Nidal is a paraphrase of, or consonant with a Palestinian proverb – *we are staying, we are staying, as long as za'atar and olive remain* – in a way that is part of their everyday life. Such persistency, therefore, is not merely about drawing on political discourses tied to Palestinian *sumud* (steadfastness), which the PLO (re)introduced as a political term during the 1970s and 80s to emphasize the importance of Palestinians resisting forced expulsions by staying in their land (see Johanson and Vinthagen 2015), and which more recently has been reframed as a more active way of resisting the occupation (See Hammami 2004; Leshem 2015). Instead, we argue, such persistency is a practice of everyday life – a way of sticking to what is elementally different than the occupation; of saving and maintaining, by a way of living and acting a different way-of-life, what the hyperprecarities of the occupation aim to eliminate and hamper. Olive trees are thus a source of hope, and a sign of continuous Palestinian belongingness central not only for the topologies irreducible to the occupation but also for the cyclic temporalities and rhythms of everyday life.

This was illustrated by one of interviews in the same area that took place under the shadow of 'Al Badawi' [trans: *nomad*] – an ancient tree dated to 4000-5000 years old that today has become something of a symbol of Palestinian olive oil production that signifies 'the ancientness of Palestinian inhabitation of their land' (Meneley 2014, 56-7). Such remark is not banal, nor romanticising: as villagers talked about Al Badawi, explaining its cultivation over thousands of years since the Roman era, they connect the ancient olive tree, and the trees around it, to a different temporality, to a *cycle* that not only stretches back to contest the Zionist/colonialist myth of a 'terra nullus' but also connects them to their land and trees in a way that reasserts and enables a practice of living the land according to repeated ecological cycles and temporalities. On the cultivation of olive trees in the West Bank, anthropologist Anne Meneley (2008, 21) has written of the ways that the Israeli occupation 'distorts *time* as much as *space*' (our emphasis) and how the struggle of farmers all over the West Bank is with 'occupation time', that which ties labour and production to a clock and 'interferes with the seasonal rhythms of old', or what Irus Braverman (2009, 257) has termed Palestinian farmers' 'vernacular sense of time' that is rooted (literally) in the cyclical life of a tree and its fruits. Where Nidal insists, to repeat his words, that "in this tree is hope", his daily and annual cycles of planting, pruning and harvesting refuses the impositions of 'occupation time', as underlined by Meneley (2008, 23). The prevalence of such cycle, hence, is itself a source of future hope – that despite the present hardship, Palestinian spaces will one way or another endure. And yet, there is more in the trees themselves than the cyclic temporalities they gather; namely, their 'platiality' (see Elden 2000). Olive trees are not solely things occupying a place in empty space (Heidegger 2001, 153); they constitute places that together with cyclical temporality allow and build hopeful spaces for Palestinian dwelling. Olive trees give a sense of dwelt place (*topos*), thus forming *topo*-logies of time-space that are not only imaginary but material parts of the everyday practices, and thus, of the everyday topologies of hope that refuse the binds of Israeli occupation time and space.

Such sticking into practices of everyday life is made explicit in further interviews with Suleiman and Yehya, both farmers a few kilometres along the Separation Wall in the Bethlehem District. As Suleiman continued to reiterate throughout the time we spent in his village: "just like all the others, the British and the Turkish, they won't stay forever". Yehya, similarly asserted:

Many occupations and mandates have followed one another on this land since the times of the Romans, Byzantines, Turks, English, Jordanians. Yet in the end, they all went away, while the

owners of the land remained. The age of Israel is 70 years, which is relatively small, very young.

Hopefully *its end is near*, as it has already started to erode itself away.

Yehya's words convey a strong sense of inevitability and a broader scale of time that is evocative of a space whose borders are not controlled by Israel – or any other occupier. The very same was true in an example from Baha, an activist based in Beit Sahour: “the last 5,000 years have witnessed the rising of different powers and empires in Palestine – none of them remains. Most of them left a stone and a bad story behind: what did the crusaders leave? They left a lot of monuments, massacres of people ... a bad story of murder and crime”. It is this evocation of Palestine – as temporally and spatially irreducible to Israel's occupation – that Baha locates hope: “all these tyrants and all these oppressors collapsed ... people's hope is motivated by understanding the history of displacement, of human history and realising that *no oppressor lasts forever* here, so we will survive this oppressor”.

It is important to recognise that here the past is not constructed as a linear process of a national time, but through the transformative moments in human history. Past occupiers and their rule have all collapsed, in a way that the past irruptive moments of transformation – the past *kairos* – can become a source of future hope. This can be read, to be explicit, as less an evocation of the past as nostalgia or yearning, but as a mobilisation of historical events to animate the future, to bolster the hope that imbues the moment to come. Along with Yehya and Suleiman, then, Baha presents time as nonlinear and, more importantly, they both live through this hopeful knowledge: Yehya's interview was closed with a quip, “Israel is just a baby, you know?! The future is Palestinian, *we continue*”, from a local guide, Mahdi, while Baha finished by reiterating: “this oppressor will have the same fate ... and that's why I *never stop* talking, educating people about the state of Israel and occupation”. It is not only the repositioning of Israel's presence as an impermanent one that is crucial here, but also the sense of how such potential time-space becomes a lived and practiced one, a topo-logy, where continuity between moments (*chronos*) is punctuated by the discontinuity of *kairos* (see Murchadha 2013, 36-7) – “no oppressor lasts forever” – and where hope is located and drawn on “to continue”, or “never stop”.

Most of the interviews and exchanges we have discussed took place while families enjoyed harvests together, or during large get-togethers and village committee meetings through which solidarity grows from shared vulnerabilities. In these spaces, new ways of helping one another and novel modes of working together – in volunteering, committees, and organisations, in building or (re)diverting water supplies – develop. Those involved in these acts may well feel the insecurities induced by the occupation – the home demolitions, forced displacements, restrictions of movement, physical violence, and so on – but they draw strength in the firm belief that one day this particular occupation will come to an end, that eventually all empires turn into ashes. Everyday life and work (in the fields, in particular) may have become harder, and sometimes impossible but food continues to grow and important Palestinian cultural practices are preserved – this is not achieved without struggle, but it is achieved in an important respect nonetheless. Such ways of making things part of the everyday thus not only disrupt the spatial logics that underpin the subjugating tactics of the occupation, but allow different ways of creating, gathering and maintaining places, that is, different logics of making, being, and living in *topos*. The kairological temporality, lived through hopeful waiting and remembering of the coming moment in different ways, becomes a lived space through the topological places of the everyday.

## 5. Concluding Section

As our deconstructive takes on *topos* and *kairos* (as an ‘open place’ and ‘moment of transformation’) indicate, to understand how hope relates to a future ‘moment to come’ in such a way that it remains capable of constituting new topologies of hopeful practices, it is crucial to attend not only to those place-based practices that such hope generates, but also to the power relations that constitute such a moment. This requires attention to the ways in which hope – as an active waiting of the transformative future moment – and the practices it engenders – the topologies of dwelling – are connected to the hyperprecarious, close-to-hopeless conditions induced both by the occupation regime and its vigilante force, the settlers. Such an approach involves a sensitivity to the ways that Palestinian everyday life, in its small-scale efforts and shared senses of precarity and existing ways-of-living, dampen the governing effects and come to constitute topologies of hope that are irreducible to those of the occupation. Accordingly, as a ‘moment’ and ‘place’, *kairos* and *topos* do not merely name the conditions of openness (open place/moment of transformation) and thus the capacity to re-constitute time-spaces, but *the conditions through which topological practices of kairological hope* can carry Palestinian communities, families and villages through the systematic subjugation and hyperprecarious condition produced by the Israeli occupation. Such *kairo-* and *topologies* do not necessarily remove the hyperprecarious (Hammami 2016) and hopeless landscapes of the present occupation (Harker 2012), this is not our claim, but it must be recognised that they render precarity itself a condition lived through a different *topos* – one of everyday hopes, practices, solidarities and future potentials. Accordingly, *kairos* is not a mere revolutionary event of rupture but an emergent future moment which has the capacity to transform and empower present sites of dwelling and ways of living. In this respect we agree with Brian Massumi (2002, 211), who sees hope as an empowering future uncertainty capable of bringing ‘a sense of potential to the [present] situation’, though we would add that this should not exclude the ways in which these future potentials become connected to ongoing anti-colonial struggles, and in the case of Palestine and Palestinians, to empowering hopes about the eventual end of occupation.

Palestinians living in the hyperprecarious sites of the West Bank, our discussion shows, locate such hope in different aspects of their lives, thus temporalising and spatialising their sites of dwelling with manifold practices drawing on the hope that the turning moment (*kairos*) will come and end the violence of the occupation. For Yehya, Suleiman and Baha, Israeli occupation is only one of many occupations whose “end is near”; for Nidal and Kefah the hardy olive trees create cyclic temporalities that “live through hardships, like the Palestinian people”; for the strangulated Bedouin community (of Faris and Yasser) hopeful practices consist of constant rebuilding and finding of new ways to get by with solar power, a bee farm and collaboration with NGOs; for Mohammad this means going around the restrictions to water availability by taking water secretly out of the pipes that run from the West Bank water aquifer to settlements; while for Ahmed this means solidarity in rebuilding and repairing often quickly build houses with a hope the Israeli military is unable to react immediately to cease the construction.

Finally, the geography of hope sketched out here indicates a number of directions for future inquiry. First, it brings forth the need to carefully acknowledge those power relations and politicisations through which the uncertainty of future, and the hope it evokes, are in each case actualised. Our research is limited to the hyperprecarious sites in the West Bank, and practices and topologies of hope are likely different for Palestinians in Gaza, Israel, and the less vulnerable parts of the West Bank, as they are for those large diaspora populations all around the world (e.g.

Feldman 2015). In more general terms, our elaboration recalls a research practice that is cognisant of the way in which hope always denotes a sense of uncertainty, openness and future potentiality, which cannot be reduced to simple nominators, such as ‘lack of sense of direction’ (Kleist and Jansen 2016), ‘cruelty of empty promises’ (Berlant 2011) or processes solely orchestrated by the state (Hage 2013). Second, the discussion here complements and extends those accounts of Palestinian life that attend to the ways that actors continue – or ‘get by’ (Allen 2008; Harker 2011) – under the brutal violence of occupation. It is crucial to show how these modes of getting-by constantly re-emerge and transform by remaining open to future potentials (Massumi 2002), but also to remain open to the ways of living that remain always irreducible to the aims of the occupation (Joronen 2017b). Third, our understanding of hope in relation to *kairos* and *topos* presents a discussion that might well lend insights into diverse geographical contexts where hope and hopelessness coalesce, for instance in the movements of refugees travelling west from Syria, Afghanistan and other places where precarity threatens life (e.g. Khosravi 2017). It is urgent to explore and cultivate spaces and practices of hope in both Palestine and those other contexts where hopelessness seems to have become a predominant register of life due to conditions of extreme oppression.

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<sup>i</sup> Aristotle called such condition *energeia*, but the issue was also related to his teleological understanding of things as emerging through the actualisation of their potential, this clearly reflecting and reinterpreting Plato's understanding of *eidōs*, essential ideas (Heidegger 2003).

<sup>ii</sup> A bureaucratic status that means the Israeli Civil Administration excludes it from infrastructure and services provision while also prohibiting construction and designating residents as "illegal" dwellers (HRW 2008; Yiftachel 2009).