Israeli Backpacking Since the 1960s: Institutionalization and its Effects

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Introduction

Backpacking constitutes a widely-echoed time-honoured rite of passage within Jewish middle-class sectors of Israeli society. For over three decades, scores of youths, who shortly after completing their mandatory service in the army, backpack extensively in Asia and South America to explore ‘exotic’ and ‘authentic’ destinations. These youths participate in a burgeoning tradition, which embodies a widespread practice of initiation and embraces an impressive variety of populations, practices and experiences (Noy and Cohen 2005b).

The impressive popularity of ‘the great journey’, as it is called, is both facilitated and enhanced by processes of institutionalization. Countrywide chains of stores selling backpacking gear, specialized travel agencies, insurance agencies, and even mental health clinics have recently emerged—all catering to backpackers. News items concerning backpackers appear in the headlines and back pages of newspapers on a daily basis. Books, movies and television series about backpackers, as well as various widely held activities and gatherings celebrating the backpacking culture, are flourishing.

It could be said that currently backpacking and its many cultural representations amount to a backpacking mania. This paper explores how this state of affairs has come about by tracing the development and flourishing of backpacking over the past four decades. The paper commences with a theoretical discussion of the process of institutionalization—its dynamics, facets and consequences. This is followed by a portrayal of historical transformations in Israeli backpacking, with a consideration of the changing socio-cultural background against which these changes took place. This description is divided into four sub-sections depicting chronological phases of institutionalization. Beginning with early backpacking and its antecedents in the 1960s, it progresses to the state of heightened institutionalization, commercialization, and mediated representation that backpacking has assumed in the last decade.

Through such a socio-historical exploration of the case-study of Israeli backpacking, this research seeks to advance the investigation of global backpacking, shifting from close ethnographic research to a chronologically informed perspective, attending to the vicissitudes of cultural fantasies and social trends. The paper is a response to the call for ‘long-term qualitative research’ (Binder 2004: 110) which would offer more than an ethnographic ‘snap-shot’ (Richards and Wilson 2004a: 14) of contemporary backpacking. The theoretical contribution of the paper, although resting on empirical material limited to backpacking tourism, transcends the confines of backpacking and provides a wide perspective on the convergence of cultural and social change in a given period and on the

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formation and normativization of tourist styles and practices (Adler 1989; Urry 1990). It draws upon and, in return, contributes to an understanding of the grassroots emergence of general, large-scale social practices. In this respect, tourism supplies an interesting site or laboratory for the study and evaluation of social change, its contexts and consequences, in various societal contexts.

Nonetheless, researching institutionalization in the context of backpacking tourism is of a singular interest, because this tourist category has traditionally been conceived of (and romanticized as) ‘non-institutionalized’. In this respect, the present research is a contribution to the ongoing sociological discussion of institutionalization processes in tourism (Sørensen 2003; Welk 2004; Westerhausen 2002).

**Institutionalization in Tourism: A Processual, Socio-cultural Perspective**

The present discussion of institutionalization processes is an attempt to elucidate the emergence, the vicissitudes and the implications of a social trend (a ‘custom’), in the shape of a popular form of tourism, namely backpacking. It rests upon the underlying observation that Israeli backpacking has undergone considerable changes over the last few decades, which have altered time and again the meaning of the trip for individuals as well as for society in general (Cohen 2004).

The discussion is inspired by theories that consider the role of institutions— together with the practices, discourses and experiences they promote—in modern and late-modern times (Eisenstadt 1985, 2004). Yet, while the theoretical literature has generally focused on the institutionalization of the nation-state and its subordinate institutions, global tourism is of international and transnational nature. Thus, the earlier theorizing has been unable to fully elucidate it. Tourism scholars argue that travel, institutionalized and monopolized by the industries of tourism, is a *Geist* of late modernity. Accordingly, the term ‘tourist’ is a metaphor that encompasses experiences and identities that are viably constructed through the repeated engagement in institutional practices (Giddens 1991; MacCannell 1976; Urry 1990).

In the context of tourism, institutionalization refers to complex processes involving interaction between various organizations of different sizes, pursuing different aims in different global locations. The smooth orchestration of these different functions constitutes the efficient operation of the global tourism industry as a whole, and amounts to the conglomerate nature of the industry.

The present inquiry focuses on social change in a given culture, rather than on social structure *per se*. Accordingly, the emphasis is on the fact that backpacking is ceaselessly changing and on the unique effects of these changes, insofar as these relate to ‘institutionalization’ (Certeau 1984; Giddens 1984; Lavie *et al.* 1993). The inquiry does not consider what type of institution tourism is, but rather addresses the dynamic and processual qualities of social movements.

Dynamic notions accord well with a historically-oriented inquiry. A processual perspective entails the notion that the present is not an advantageous, Archimedean point of observation. Rather, people’s experiences and lives are webbed in the broader flow of social and cultural contexts and changes, and so are the trajectories of institutions. Whether relating to culture or to social structures, a processual notion promotes the view that the present is continuously being (re)created. An inquiry along these lines considers institutionalization in and of itself, simultaneously as process and outcome.

The research of institutionalization, therefore, means attending to the exciting interface between the personal (micro) and the social (macro), between the spontaneous and the normative, between the grassroots (‘bottom-up’) and the hegemonic (‘top-down’), the private and the public, and so on—as all these are evinced in modernity (Giddens 1990: 4-5). To be sure, these apparent oppositions in fact overlap in everyday life. As observed by Burkitt (2004: 221), while ‘the aim of institutional practices is to make themselves official’, the official and the unofficial are not two separate realms: rather, they are open, permeable and necessarily interdependent (p. 214, cf. Eisenstadt 2004).

**Institutional Beatings: Experiences and Meanings**

The institutional dimensions of modernity bear upon people’s lives in formative ways. From maternity wards in industrialized hospitals, through schools and institutions of higher education, to old-age institutions, people’s biographies are ‘institutionalized’. More strongly expressed, contemporary lives have no independent biographies that pre-exist without crossing ways with modern institutions (Giddens 1991: 14). People commonly view themselves and their identities as the outcome of experiences accumulated over a lifetime (‘memories’, ‘reminiscences’). These experiences, in turn, are the impressions of ‘sceneries’ supplied by modern institutions (Gubrium and Holstein 2001).

It is in this capacity—of tourism-as-institution—that travel impacts on people’s lives. Edensor (1998: 70), Neumann (1999), Elsrud (2001) and others have shown how backpackers make use of the backpacking trip and its representations as vital resources of cultural capital and identity.
The experiences and stories shared by backpackers before, during and after the trip amount to these people’s sense of who they are, how they talk about it, and how they establish their identity. As indicated by Richards and Wilson (2004b: 254), the backpacker is a ‘collector of experiences’. In fact, backpacking has been shown to bear a formative, even transformative, impact on identity (Noy 2004b).

**Dimensions of Institutionalization: Organization, Culture and Personal Experience**

In the following, institutionalization and its effects are appreciated through an inquiry into three interrelated dimensions; the psychological (experiential), socio-cultural, and organizational dimensions. However, since not everything can potentially be subject to institutionalization, it is important to acknowledge that spontaneous public behaviour is required. The transformation of this behaviour into a social practice that is performed jointly and that amounts to a coherent symbolic system is a necessary precondition for institutionalization to take place. In Giddens’ words, institutionalization is the process that holds together the ‘boundedness of social systems’ (1990: 14). This exploration concerns the symbolic capital endowed by collective participation in tourist practices, which systematically and repeatedly generates, maintains and endows symbolic capital and identity (Bourdieu 1984).

Organizationally, the initial institutionalization of a social practice requires an infrastructure, even if only a nascent one, which affords services and spaces of interaction. After all, if no interactions take place between the backpackers, there is no social system to talk about and if no services are supplied or commodities offered, no common ground for comparisons among the backpackers exists and no transactions of capitals (financial, symbolic, or cultural) can take place.

‘Culture’ refers to a particular set of symbols and narratives, shared by backpackers and offering a more or less coherent worldview. As such, it may be conceived as a link between the various organizations promoting the social practice, on the one hand, and the individual experience of the participants, on the other. In any case, the concept of ‘culture’ touches upon the individuals and upon the organizational mechanisms that motivate the overall social system.

‘Experience’ refers to the consumer’s subjective point of view, or, in other words, to the tourist’s travel-related personal experience. After having been consumed, experience is ‘cached’ — it is performed and relived repeatedly in various social interactions, in an effort to establish social identity and a sense of social belonging or community (Edensor 1998; Noy 2004a). Experience may also encompass implicit or explicit ideological convictions, suggesting that at times tourists are not the passive consumers they are commonly thought to be. In this sense ‘experience’ denotes an active ideology, which can be — and indeed, in the present case is — an affective dynamo igniting the initial phases of institutionalization.

Institutionalization includes a historical dimension, in the shape of evolving interactions between organizational, cultural and experiential spheres. It also refers to the interaction of the entire system with broader organizational and socio-cultural structures (such as Israeli culture at large and global tourism). Interestingly, participants are sometimes aware of the historical dimension of institutionalization of their practices. By referring to this process they situate themselves in the present, thus establishing a sense of shared collective memory, a prerequisite of any cultural continuation and change (Ben-Amos and Weissberg 1999; Noy forthcoming).

In line with Giddensian thought, the view maintained in this paper is of a constructivist orientation. Moreover, the view is adopted to integrate themes and concepts from tourism studies into the larger frame of contemporary sociological and anthropological thought. Hence in the capacity of delineating a ‘middle-range theory’ (Singh 2003), the paper seeks to discuss social structure in terms of mobility (embodied in ‘modern tourism’), or, in other words, to negotiate the dualities — not dichotomies — evidenced in such familiar pairs as permanence and transience, continuation and change. These are discussed in a specific historical-cultural context, namely Israeli society chiefly during the second half of the last (20th) century.

**Methodology**

In the present study various methods were used to obtain information regarding the period in question — from the 1960s to the present. Because the research partly concerns the experiential changes that took place throughout this period, in-depth interviewing was employed (Kvale 1996). In this capacity, two sets of interviews were conducted with Israeli backpackers after they returned from the trip (which lasted over three months and took place in Asia or South America).

The first set of interviews included forty backpackers, who were interviewed in 1998-99, within three months of their return (the ‘younger group’). The second set consisted of eighteen interviews (eight in-depth ones and ten informal ones), conducted with backpackers who had travelled during
the 1960s, the 1970s, and the early 1980s (the ‘older group’). The interviews included detailed references to the motivations and experiences of travel, the influence of social networks on decision-making processes regarding the choice of itineraries and activities before the trip and during it, and to the backpackers’ contact with various tourist institutions. A study of each set of interviews, coupled with a comparison of the two sets of interviews with each other and with other cultural representations of backpacking (such as those appearing in media), made it possible to depict the evolution of various aspects of backpacking, from the tourists’ perspective.

The qualitative data was supplemented by statistical records, obtained from reports published by the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics since 1971. These reports tend to be general, and specific parameters, such as age, length of trips, country of destinations, are indicated only intermittently. For this reason it is difficult to estimate the number of past and present backpackers (see Loker-Murphy and Pearce 1995; Richards and Wilson 2004a). Nevertheless, because the present research concerns social trends and processes, exact figures are not crucial, and approximated figures suffice in indicating changes over different phases of institutionalization.

In addition, the exploration makes use of earlier research of Israeli backpackers, as well as of the personal experience of the author, himself an Israeli who backpacked in Asia in 1991.

Phases of Institutionalization

Before approaching the early stage at which backpacking developed to be a steady social system, it is necessary to inquire into an earlier period, when romanticist cultural preoccupations with travel played an important role in the evolving culture of Zionism.

As early as 1920s, in fact, groups of wanderers (called ‘fraternities of wanderers’) embarked upon extensive hiking tours criss-crossing the Land of Israel (then Palestine), a ritual through which youths performed their patriotism — ‘knowing’ the country to which they or their pioneer parents had recently immigrated. In the ensuing heyday of Sabra (native Israeli) culture, travelling extensively by foot was, as observed by Katriel (1995: 6-7), ‘an important element in the complex of ritualized cultural practices... [which carried] a special aura in Israel public culture... as a native-Israeli form of secular pilgrimage’.

These adventurous trips, which in extreme cases involved the risky trespassing of borders of neighbouring (hostile) countries, were pursued ardently in cohesive groups by various youth organizations. In subsequent years, the rise of institutionalized, state-organized hiking tours reflected the ‘institutionalization of the wanderer ethos’ under the ideological conviction that travelling by foot is an important ‘educational’ and ‘patriotic’ activity (Zerubavel 1995: 119-125).

As a cultural preoccupation, these trips suggested travel narratives that could be followed and enacted by later generations of youths in the form of backpacking. It so happened that the early backpackers of the 1960s and early 1970s came from the hegemonic centres of Sabrasociety. This suggests that not only were they aware of the culture of adventurous hiking and travelling, but that the people who embodied this culture, one or two generations earlier, were of the same social milieu. Indeed, the fathers of two backpackers of the ‘older’ group interviewed for this study were prominent figures in ‘wandering fraternities’. Thus, a prestigious chain of travelling (male) role-models was instigated, pertaining to travel in the first and second halves of the twentieth century, in the vicinity of and far away from Israel.

Early Beginnings: From the late 1960s to the late 1970s

The beginnings of backpacking as a coherent social system, linked to present-day backpacking, are rooted in the mid-1970s. Sociologically, the common narrative accounting for developments of Israeli society attributes fundamental social change to this decade, designating it as a transformative phase in society’s evolution (Eisenstadt 1985).

Among the major events that took place during the 1970s was the ‘1973 War’, which shattered the national sense of self-confidence. The ‘1973 trauma’, as it became known, generated a poignant sense of distrust and disillusionment. This was experienced in particular by youths in their early twenties who had fought in the war. Yet because the war had eventually ended with a (celebrated) Israeli triumph, it was also felt that once the hardest of predicaments had been successfully overcome, there was a need to seek new thrills and manly challenges elsewhere. As expressed by one of the backpackers who had fought in that war prior to his travelling (in 1979), ‘after the triumph in the Yom Kippur War [1973 War] the world drew near for us’.

Another major event of the 1970s was the dramatic political upheaval that occurred in the 1977 elections, which resulted in a new government that was of a neo-liberal economic ideology. The government strongly propelled various reforms and large-scale privatizations, aiming at a free market, encouraging Westernized patterns of consumption, and making leisure activities and alternatives
increasingly available. This change should be appreciated against the shadow of the harsh economic times of the fifties, when food products, clothing, and other basic commodities were severely rationed, and in relation to the previously dominant socialist ideology, which curbed the development of heightened patterns of consumption and leisure. This had begun to change during the 1970s, as consumption and leisure practices became more widespread, and as a middle class, with typical patterns of consumption culture, had begun to emerge.

The socio-political changes of the 1970s were part of a broader historical course that led to the decline of the socio-political and cultural hegemony of the Sabra culture (Kimmerling 2001). With this decline, processes of sectoralization of Israeli society took place, and with them the beginnings of a fierce competition over cultural capital and collective identity in public (and political) spheres. It is in relation to these dynamic politics of collective identity that the emergence of backpacking as a social system embodying considerable cultural capital is construed.

While these processes amounted to 'push' factors, rebellious youth movements worldwide gave rise to a 'pull' factor, Asia. The pilgrimage of western youths to India and other sites during the 1950s and the 1960s suggested a direction for the pursuit of disillusioned Israeli youths, who wished to partake in contemporaneous global youth culture. Hence, a rebellious and alienated motivation to engage in counter-hegemony practices was also inspired by global movements of that time.

It should be noted at this point that international travel, including backpacking, existed before the 1970s, but in considerably smaller numbers. Although, the total number of Israeli tourists who travelled for over three months in the first half of the 1970s was double the number in the previous five years, it remained less than 2.5 per cent of the total population.

Travellers of the 1960s and early 1970s do not qualify as the 'first link' of backpacking because they did not indicate any social interaction with other Israeli travellers before, during or after their trip. They did not play a significant role for later (generations of) backpackers, and indeed, were not mentioned by later backpackers ². The early travellers either clearly stated that they did not interact with Israelis, or else said that they did not recall any such interactions. These indications locate them outside of the loop of the social system, a loop which is sustained through constant social interaction. For the later backpackers—even those who travelled only a few years later, toward the end of the 1970s—social interaction with backpackers was an important aspect of the trip, one to which they alluded repeatedly.

The backpackers of the 1970s originated from the socio-economic (centres) or elites of Israeli Jewish society, against which they were reacting and protesting. These youths had the capital (or the means) to afford an extensive trip. Most of them were from Kibbutzim (collective settlements), which traditionally afforded the youths a 'year off' after completing their military service. Lamdan's (1991: 14-19) research indicates how, during the mid-1970s, the function of the 'year off' changed dramatically. While in earlier decades this period was used for socialization purposes, including broadening the youths' social circles (commonly in order to meet potential spouses), since the mid-1970s it was used much more frequently (three times more than before) for travelling abroad. These dramatic changes indicated a shift in meaning and a reversal in function: instead of a normative search for spouses and the end of (late) adolescence, the decade following the completion of the youths' mandatory military service played an extension of (late) adolescent years, subsuming a wish to postpone familial commitments and perhaps protest against the norms of the home society.

Backpackers who travelled since the mid and late 1970s indicate that they met frequently with Israelis and heard stories from them before they left and/or were approached by youths preparing for the trip. In this way they locate themselves within the social network of web of travellers, a network which continues uninterrupted until the present and amounts to the core social infrastructure of backpacking. In the interviews, these backpackers could easily recall several names of travellers of their age group, whom they knew from the army unit, from the youth movement, or from their school class. Such widespread acquaintances were not evident among those who travelled earlier.

In order to maintain and perpetuate itself, a social system in a pre-institutionalized phase needs an available external social infrastructure. During the mid-1970s, when celebrated centres and enclaves of Israeli backpackers had not yet been established, a social network independent of the nascent social system of backpacking was required in order for backpacking to persist. Such cohesive social networks were available in the Kibbutzim—highly cohesive small-scale social organizations—and in military units, particularly elite combat units. These social systems, which often overlapped socially, afforded webs of social acquaintance whereby exchange of travel information and lore took place in a convenient manner. They, thus, allowed for the beginning of routinization of itineraries and with it the emergence of a sub-culture.

Subsequently, Israeli sites emerged abroad, functioning
as social centres. They too existed prior to and were independent of the global backpacking infrastructure. They consisted of various accommodation and dining facilities, owned by local Jewish communities or Israeli diligences organizations and embassies abroad.

Backpackers who travelled between the mid-1970s and the early 1980s commonly state that they lodged and dined at various local Jewish community centres, country clubs (‘Club Hebraica’), or offices of Israeli delegations (such as the Hashomer Hatzair [lit. ‘The Young Protector/Guard’] youth movement). In these centres, which are legendary among those travellers, accommodation and dining were provided to Israelis at no cost (as the travellers repeatedly point out). Note that these locations, crucial in the development of backpacking to South America, reveal some of the intricate relations between Israel and Jewish Diaspora. In the case at hand, youths of hegemonic cultural background (Ashkenazi descent) were catered by the South American Diaspora, as well as the Israeli delegations operating there at the time, because both had a similar ethnic background.

While this was the case in South America, Israeli centres in South Asia emerged within the global backpacker centres. This is not surprising because by the mid and late 1970s a vibrant backpacker infrastructure already existed in these regions (Cohen 1973), including well-organized backpacker centres (which were operating since the rush of Western youths to India in the 1960s).

Elaborate, semi-formal channels of information exchange and dissemination emerged in these centres. Like previous generations of Sabra travellers, who wrote prolifically about their travel and hiking experiences in Israel (Katriel 1995), these youths evinced an impressive level of documentation of their trips. This often took the form of letters and personal travel journals, which depicted in detail the youths’ travel undertakings and included specific recommendations, warnings, and so on. Crucially, the interviewees indicate that they wrote these informative descriptions and narratives during the trip, in order to share them with others either during the trip or later, after its completion. Like documenters or witnesses, they felt a desire to capture in words and to communicate in letters and by word-of-mouth everything they experienced (Noy 2002; 2005). Furthermore, akin to the ideologically-suffused patterns of communication among the Sabra generation, their writings were hued with pedagogy and were aimed at instructing others in the ‘right’ and ‘proper’ paths.

Indeed, the travel journals and many letters the backpackers sent home were addressed not only to personal acquaintances, but also to public audiences. These included a variety of local bulletins, which were published by the Kibbutzim Movement, and were read by the backpackers’ primary, albeit large, social reference group5. Many of the backpackers who travelled since the late 1970s enthusiastically mention these genres of travel writing. Only those who travelled between the mid-1970s and the early 1980s, however, mentioned specific names of known contributors to this spontaneously-emerging body of literature, who were celebratory among the backpackers at that time. Evoking individual names indicated a sense of a small and perhaps familiar social system (i.e., a community), the members of which either knew one another or, at the very least, knew the leading figures, the communal role-model travellers.

While processes of routinization had gradually taken place, note that the infrastructure that sustained and facilitated them, both in Israel and abroad, was non-integral to that of the global backpacking infrastructure. It depended on and was sustained by external social systems. This is important to note since it evinces a transitory phase of institutionalization, which was surpassed in the following decade.

A few of these early backpackers, particularly those who travelled to South America, galvanized the cultural and social capital amassed in their trips, and opened successful tour companies and stores selling travel gear. Three of the interviewees were either owners or senior employees in tour companies specializing in Third World destinations. These and other backpackers of the mid and late 1970s were the Tony Wheelers of Israeli backpacking. Their enthusiasm for travel, their zeal to share their experiences, and the period in which they travelled qualified them as social agents, serving a crucial role in the institutionalization of backpacking and in the emergence of backpacking lore. When asked about this zeal, several interviewees, who had backpacked in India and in South America in the late 1970s, indicated that they had felt a call or a mission (shilahut). Clearly, this was no mere recreation for these backpackers. They, and the generation to which they belonged, were the first to realize the provinciality of Israeli society. It is due to this feeling that they took onto themselves the role — the ‘call’ — to ‘educate’ Israeli youths and to acquaint them with the ‘world outside’, the horizons of which became accessible through backpacking. These processes were part of the emergence of what Singh(2003: 220) termed a ‘frontier ethic’.

The Norm of Backpacking: Mass-travel and the Emergence of Centres in the Eighties

The decade of the 1980s evinced a worldwide expansion of the number of youth backpackers, a
consolidation of their itineraries and a modification of their
earlier oppositional ideologies (Riley 1988). It is notable that
there was a steady growth in the number of Israeli tourists
during this period, as well as in the number of tourists
leaving Israel for over three months—both of these figures
nearly doubled during the 1980s.

Further social change led the way to the blossoming of
backpacking as en masse cultural practice. The war in
Lebanon (1982) further sharpened feelings of alienation
between individuals and groups, on the one hand, and the
State on the other. The 1977 peace treaty with Egypt and
Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula (1980-82), which
was a popular destination that served as a haven for hikers
and backpackers, also contributed to the rapid growth of
backpacking in the 1980s. Indeed, a few of the older
backpackers interviewed in this research mentioned that
their travel companies had conducted commercial hiking
activities in Sinai. In this respect, tourism to Sinai, which
was a local ‘periphery belt’, served as an intermediate phase
in the dynamic expansion of Israeli youth tourism, and
facilitated the emergence of popular travel to more distant
sites.

The early 1980s also displayed the effects of far-reaching economic reforms inaugurated in the previous
decade. While these reforms totally transformed the sphere
of consumption, some of them specifically concerned foreign
currency and had immediate effects on tourism. For instance,
it was only in the early 1980s that exchanging and owning
foreign currency and leaving the country with substantial
amounts of foreign currency were legalized.

Finally, changes in policies of granting visas and of
international transfer of money to various destinations
further facilitated the growth in the number of backpackers.
For instance, obtaining an individual tourist visa to India
became possible in the late 1980s, when it replaced the earlier
‘Group Landing Permit’. In addition, transferring money
from Israel to India became possible only in 1987. These and
other bureaucratic reliefs made travelling to and in various
destinations considerably easier and financially safer. They
allowed for the participation of populations that did not
view risk-taking and adventure-seeking activities highly.

It is against this background that backpacking underwent further institutionalization in the 1980s, in two
closely related aspects: the inclusion of different social
systems under the umbrella of backpacking, and the
emergence of a social norm.

While in earlier phases some of the social systems that
perpetuated backpacking were independent of the
backpacking infrastructure, during the 1980s all available
information, and the communication webs through which it
circulated, were integrated into the backpacking
infrastructure. Thus, accommodation and dining facilities
that had hitherto been non-integral to the backpacking
infrastructure, gradually became unavailable during the
1980s. The growing number of travellers, as well as a number
of instances of misbehaviour of these youths, led Jewish and
Israeli facilities in South America to close their doors. This
process was paralleled by further developments in the global
backpacking infrastructure, making more convenient
locations for Israeli backpackers possible in the form of well-
equipped global backpacking centres. Unlike backpackers
in the 1970s, those who travelled during the 1980s do not
mention Jewish or Israeli organizations. Instead, they used
facilities that catered to backpackers in general, and were
located in global backpackers’ centres.

Crucially, Israeli travellers transposed their venues of
sharing and disseminating information into these global
centres, leading to the location of the public spaces that afford
these interactions and exchanges within the general
backpacking infrastructure. In other words, while Israeli
backpackers now shared a global infrastructure with Western
backpackers, they nonetheless maintained an insular sub-
eneclav social system of their own.

In this process, in which sites of backpacking sociability
were incorporated into the tourism infrastructure, the
legendary Lameteyel store (lit. ‘For the Traveller’) played a
pivotal role. Established in Tel Aviv in 1982 by a former
backpacker, Lameteyel soon became a ‘must’ site, where
knowledge and lore were exchanged extensively between
veterans and newcomers. However, the Lameteyel offered
much more than the travel gear it sold.

Jacobson (1987) describes designated spaces in the
store where customers, mostly yet-to-be backpackers, were
able to read through the many folders containing hundreds
of letters sent directly to the Lameteyel by backpackers. The
opening pages of the many travellers’ books that
accumulated there indicated the following, written by the
store’s staff (for whom all were enthusiastic backpackers):
‘The services given here to the travellers are given solely out
of love of backpacking, its principles and ideals. We appeal
to all travellers to update us on the best deals or on the flops
in Israel and abroad, so that we can communicate them
further to future travellers’ (cited in Jacobson 1987: 17).

Furthermore, the store’s staff readily shared information
and advice with costumers in semi-formal settings: ‘lectures’
were conducted by experienced backpackers (who travelled
during the mid and late ’70s), who recounted their
experiences and offered detailed information about specific sites, and accommodation and dining facilities. These semi-official activities (offered at no cost) expressed and advocated an explicit ideological view of the trip and of the image of the backpacker. They promoted an elitist image. Some of the guides employed in the Lametayael were ‘backpacking missionaries’ who played an important role in the emergence of both community and culture, while explicitly advocating how one should backpack properly, they implicitly conveyed the notion that living properly had to include the constitutive experience embodied in the backpacking trip.

The success of the Lametayael, located in the center of Tel Aviv, also indicated the spread of the backpacking culture to urban settings, and made this culture accessible to urban youth. Situated in one of the first shopping malls to be built in Israel, the store signified the gradual shift of backpacking from closed, elite social circles to the emerging public consumer space of an urban shopping mall.

The spread of the backpacking culture into urban circles heterogenized the backpacker populations and their variety of travel styles. This is perhaps the reason why the ‘educational’ agenda of the staff of Lametayael (including ‘The Good Advice Club’, which operated in the mid-1980s), was in fact a reaction to the emergence of different forms of backpacking, which the veteran backpackers did not consider to be as ‘proper’ or as ‘genuine’ as the earlier ones.

Indeed, clearly delineated Israeli enclaves were beginning to form in the 1980s within global backpacking centres (called ‘little Israel colonies’), and normative itineraries were being established. In Kathmandu (Thamel), several stores and accommodation facilities were serving strictly Israeli clientele in 1990. Local operators, who frequently came in touch with Israelis spoke Hebrew fluently, a fact which frequently fascinated the Israeli travellers. In the KoSan in Bangkok, a local Thai girl was reputed to be able to sing the traditional Hebrew song Hava Nagila in its entirety. These enclaves were, and continue to be, hiving with Israelis, who deliberately (neo-colonially) establish a spatial sense of ‘Israeliness’ (Noy and Cohen 2005b): Israeli music is played loudly, Hebrew signs and ads are placed on shop windows, food is brought by the backpackers from Israel and local book stores exhibit shelves dedicated to Hebrew literature.

These enclaves are frequently mentioned in backpackers’ accounts, often with negative connotations. They epitomize the institutionalization of ‘elite’ backpacking and the loss of its unique identity as being a contrast to mass tourism. Backpackers who travelled in the 1980s say that they deliberately avoided routes and sites known to be frequented by Israelis. As one of the backpackers who travelled in Nepal recalls: ‘we were ashamed of the Israelis ... They dominated and spoiled every piece of land they travelled on’. Such an evocation voices ‘backpacker angst’ (Wilson and Richards 2004). This type of rhetoric indicates and establishes distinctions among backpacker groups, attesting to the proliferation of different ways of backpacking, as well as the obvious fact that those who pursue these ways are constantly competing with one another over the ‘true’ or the ‘proper’ way to backpack.

A second ramification of institutionalization is the fact that backpacking assumed a state of a normative rite of passage among secular (Jewish), middle-class youths. Regardless of whether they ultimately travelled or not, all youths in these social circles faced the opportunity to backpack. While the norm concerned the very pursuit of the backpacking trip as a whole (Noy 2002), it was powerfully manifest in the various intricacies of the trip (once on the road). As demonstrated by Riley (1988) regarding the European backpackers of the 1980s, an elaborate system of social control and regulation is evinced during the trip. The emergence of the norm (which gradually became more inclusive and detailed) facilitated further institutionalization and promoted the channelling and tightening of travellers’ behaviour. Institutionalization, as argued by Pruijt (2003: 134), is evinced whence social behaviour is channelled into stable patterns, whereby ‘expected behavior becomes clearly defined; sanctions are in place’.

The immediate result of the process of normativization is the emergence of hierarchies among backpackers, which had two effects. First, as noted by Sørensen (2003), ‘hierarchization’ tightens the social structure and the sense of communality shared by backpackers. This is because hierarchization does not exclude people from the community. No one, Sørensen (2003: 858) points out, is ‘on the bottom rung’.

Second, different hierarchies, which promote different ideals or models of the proper backpacker, are constructed within different sub-communities. Indeed, ideologies are clearly manifest among the backpackers, creating divisions and hierarchies among sub-populations and sub-cultures (Wilson and Richards 2004: 144). In this sense too, backpacking as a whole undergoes further institutionalization and assumes the state of a bound complex of social systems that steadily produce cultural capital.

A social norm of this type assumes authority and develops its range of influence through an intensification of
interpersonal interactions, which now carries a formative effect on the trip. All interviewees travelling since the early 80s indicated that they met with Israeli backpackers before, during and after the trip (Noy forthcoming). These social occasions are at times spontaneous conversations and at times more structured events (such as the ‘lectures’ and ‘consultations’ in the Lamei Tegel store), which take place in the centres and enclaves that emerged.

The ‘End of Backpacking’: From the Mid-90s

In the final phase of its institutionalization, from the mid-90s to the present, an accelerated growth in the number of backpackers is accompanied by dramatic changes in three spheres. First, one witnesses an unprecedented degree of heterogenization of travelling populations and a proliferation of backpacking practices and experiences, which amounts to a new state of travel. Second, there is a profusion of cultural representations of backpacking in the broader public spheres in Israel (primarily through representation in the mass media). This profusion accelerates transformations in backpacker culture and blurs the limits between them and broader travel and consumer cultures. Third, this profusion of cultural representations is part of a bi-directional flow of culture between backpacker enclaves abroad and the homeland, which gives rise to an interesting variety of globalization processes in tourism.

Heterogeneity and the ‘Post-Backpacker’

There has been a significant increase in the number of tourists leaving Israel since the mid-90s, an increase which provides a heightened cultural context of travel consumption within which backpacking flourishes. In the decade between 1991 and 2001, the general number of departures nearly quadrupled from approximately one million to more than three and half million (54 per cent of the total population), and the number of Israelis in the age group of 20-24 years who travelled, reached a peak of nearly 300,000 (4.5 per cent of the total population; see www.cbs.gov.il, Table 23.1).

Institutionalization in this context, then, has not homogenized the backpacker population, but instead has allowed for youths of increasingly diverse backgrounds to partake in it, making it ‘more composite and multifaceted than ever’ (Sørensen 2003: 848).

Consider, for instance, the age of the backpackers, which varies considerably at present, correlating with different patterns of backpacking travel. Over and above the typical age range (22-25), the older population of backpackers can be divided into at least four age sub-groups, including: i) Backpackers in their forties to eighties (Maoz 2005); ii) ‘trampoline’ backpackers, who travel repeatedly for years or decades (Noy and Cohen 2005a); iii) Parents of backpackers, usually in their fifties, who join their young adult offspring and travel for parts of the trip; and iv) Backpackers in their 30s, travelling with their school-aged children. Typically, the latter were themselves backpackers a decade or two ago. Note that at least two of these emerging constellations are familial, a fact which interestingly points to the relationship between institutionalization, on the one hand, and generational shifts in Israeli society, on the other hand (Welk 2004: 85). While some travel because they missed the backpacking experience in their young adulthood (when it was not yet a norm), others, who did travel, wish to share and re-experience the trip with their siblings and offspring.

The variety evident across one exemplary variable (age) is indicative of the unprecedented variety of present-day backpacking populations and modes of travel. Other varieties are based on religious, ethnic, gender and socio-demographic distinctions (or on a combination of these factors)—all of which allow the contemporary scene of Israeli backpacking to mirror the intricate politics of identity in Israel.

Due to the heightened state of institutionalization, some youths choose to travel to countries and sites not frequented previously by tourists or by backpackers. Others, who find it increasingly harder to get off the beaten track, seek different attractions and experiences on it. Indeed, in both new and old itineraries, backpackers partake in a variety of newly-emerging activities, which provide them with diverse and extreme experiences; they pursue an experiential extension of the backpaker itinerary.

The synagogues of the orthodox and missionary movements of Chebab constitute a poignant illustration of this. Dozens of these synagogues were established over the last decade in Israeli enclaves in Asia and South America. The Chebab movement has established very successful outreach centres, called ‘Chebab Houses’, directed at Israeli backpackers. Conversion activities are promoted in these centres on regular bases, playing effectively on the youths’ thirst for spiritual experiences. Indeed, quite a number of backpackers begin their ‘born again’ process upon visiting these sites, only to assume full orthodox identity in the homeland after the trip. As one backpacker of the ‘younger group’ recalls, ‘[at the Chebab House] they refused to reveal their affiliation, saying only that they were Oravei Yisrael (‘Lovers of Israel’)’ “… An extremely kind woman there told us a really interesting story, which showed us that what we were actually seeking was to be found here, in Israel, and not in remote, faraway places’.

Backpackers who travelled in the 1980s say that during
the Jewish High Holidays they either returned to Israel (‘to be with the family’) or joined spontaneous gatherings where youths celebrated the holidays together; in the 1990s these gatherings were institutionalized by Chabad and other missionary organizations. In Kathmandu, for instance, Chabad’s famed and immensely popular passover service is attended by over one thousand backpackers. As such, it amounts to a significant (Israeli) backpacker attraction in and of itself.

Sites like the Chabad Houses are part of a new variety of experiences available, which constitute both an aspect and a consequence of institutionalization. These experiences embody various ideologies (more or less explicitly), with which the backpackers experiment and around which they form groups and congregate. As observed by Wilson and Richards (2004: 144), ‘backpacking today is perhaps better seen as a series or continuum of sub-ideologies of its own, rather than as one part of a general tourist typology’. The backpacking scene now consists of sub-communities in which itineraries and experiences supply distinct socio-cultural capital. Moreover, the many available attractions amount to nearly infinite combinations of activities and experiences. Under this condition ‘multi-type’ (Uriely et al. 2002) backpackers emerge, who embody and playfully experiment with different ideologies, experiences and identifications throughout a single trip, very much like Feifer’s (1986) characterization of the ‘post-tourist’.

Mediated Representations and Flow of Cultures

The blurring of the limits of experiential, behavioural and organizational spheres of backpacking is facilitated by recent processes of travel back and forth of sub-cultures between Israel and Israeli enclaves, and related to it, mass-mediated representations or ‘mediatization’ (Jansson 2002).

In the former process, certain aspects of Israeli culture are ‘exported’ into backpacker enclaves, and certain representations of backpacking culture(s) are ‘imported’ back to the homeland. This bi-directional flow is evinced ubiquitously in backpacker enclaves, where Israeli food products are available in specific grocery stores catering to Israelis, mainstream Israeli musicians and performers regularly give concerts to audiences of backpackers, and a variety of backpacker and tourist services and amenities are currently being run by Israelis.

This abundance of cultural commodities and representations engenders a process of auto-institutionalization, whereby local entrepreneurs (former backpackers and other Israelis) now own and/or run facilities and amenities that cater specifically to Israelis. One such entrepreneur, who opened a commercial complex in Kathmandu, including a clothes store, a restaurant, and a travel agency, is quoted as recalling: and then, in the middle of the trek [in Nepal], I looked at the scenic mountains and said to my wife ‘I want to see if we can do business here’ (Levinger, cited in Palti 2001). An institutionalized ethnocentric infrastructure has, thus, reached some closure, with backpackers travelling between Israeli enclaves through Israeli-run ‘corridors’.

The spread of backpacker culture is clearly evident in the home society too, where it assumes the role of a mediator of travel and New Age cultures. As far as travel cultures are concerned, the infrastructure that catered to the backpackers of the 1980s has become greatly enhanced and commercialized, and now caters to a heterogeneous population of both local and international tourists. The changes that the Lametayel store (discussed above) has undergone are a case in point. During the last decade, the store has turned into a countrywide chain, establishing several branches in every major city in Israel (several similar chains have also emerged). The many branches now sell travel gear and equipment to tourists of different walks of life. Furthermore, Lametayel has launched an impressive Internet site, which includes many forums of interaction and a variety of activities and information, by no means restricted to backpacking consumers (see www.lametayel.com). Finally, it has also opened a travel agency that carries the legendary store’s brand name.

Commercialization processes, such as those affecting Lametayel, are also evident in the mushrooming of tourist shopping centres. In a new shopping mall in Haifa, for instance, the local Lametayel branch is part of a commercial complex, the construction of which cost approximately two million dollars (Sheffer and Shmul 2001). Such complexes typically include stores that sell travel gear, travel agencies, insurance agencies specializing in travel, and medical and paramedical clinics that specialize in tourists’ and backpackers’ particular needs and demands. Here again, institutionalization assumes the shape of inclusion of services that were initially supplied by independent institutions (unrelated to backpacking or tourism). These have now become an integral part of the new backpacking tourism infrastructure. As a result, these commercial complexes, which cater to tourists in general, further promote the blurring of distinctions between backpacking and other types of tourism (Welk 2004: 85).

Backpacking sub-cultures also play a major role in promoting sub-cultures of New Age and spirituality. Vipasana Seminars, Full Moon Parties, local (Israeli) ‘gurus’, and gatherings such as the Boombamela and the Shantipi
festivals were all recently instigated by backpackers and backpacker entrepreneurs. The Boombamela festival, for instance, commenced in 1999 as a relatively small, semi-spontaneous occasion with ‘five Indian Chai shops’ (see www.boombamela.co.il), and it rapidly became institutionalized and commercialized. Transportation to the site is now available throughout the country, organized security measures are taken, and a substantial entrance fee is charged. The festival now amounts to a mass gathering, advertised in credit card brochures that are sent to dozens of thousands of households.

The bi-directional transport of cultures flourishes in and through a state of heightened ‘mediatization’ (Jansson 2002). Israeli television underwent dramatic changes in the 1990s, which included, for the first time, commercial and multi-channel broadcasting (Peri 2004). While Channel One was once the only available viewing option, over the last decade two additional public channels have entered the market (Channel Two and Channel Ten) as well as several cable and satellite-communication companies, offering an array of local and global viewing possibilities. These include programmes, movies, and indeed entire channels (such as the National Geographic channel) devoted to travel and tourism, which stimulate cultures of travel-related consumption. Within this context, there has been a significant growth in local television production relating specifically to backpackers in the last decade. These include a variety of documentaries, television (and cinematic) feature movies, mini and long-running series—all of which have backpackers and backpacker culture in their foreground or background.

Consider, for example, a cartoon which was published in a national newspaper (Ha’aretz, December 25th, 2005, Figure 1). In the cartoon, former prime minister Shimon Perez, who recently lost the office as a head of the Labour Party, is sitting under a tree on a remote backpacking trail in South America. Upon bumping into the defeated politician, two Israeli backpackers report back via a mobile phone: ‘We found another lost Israeli’. The meaning conveyed by this and by many other mediated representations rests on well-known images pertaining to the role backpacking spaces and activities have in various spheres of Israeli society—national politics in this example.

Furthermore, many books of different genres have recently been written on, about and by backpackers. In previous decades backpacking produced only a small body of literature, limited to two, albeit influential, books, by A. Carlebach (1956) and Y. Ghinsberg (1985). In contrast, the last decade has witnessed novels written both by canonic writers, such as A.B. Yehoshua (1994), and by popular

![Figure 1. Cartoon: Courtesy Ha’aretz, December 25, 2005](image)

writers—some of whom researched backpackers. Several English-language guidebooks have been translated into Hebrew (such as the complete Lonely Planet series) and local (Hebrew) series of travel guides have appeared (such as the Shihor and the Steinhart-Katzir publications).

Considering the close relationship between literature and travel in general, and between literature aimed at backpacker readership and backpacking culture in particular, this proliferation of literature represents an important development in the emergence of backpacking culture (Wilson and Richards 2004). More specifically, the impressive proliferation of mediated products of a variety of communication media and genres is aimed at various backpacking populations, each with its own motivations and travel interests.

With the spread of images and representations of backpacking, and in line with Urry’s (1990: 82) work, Israeli backpacking has now reached its ‘end’ phase. Its multifarious representations have drawn so near, so ‘inside’ home society and culture, that it could be argued that one could be considered a ‘backpacker’ without even undertaking what used to be the usual practice of backpacking—the great journey’.

Finally, the use of new media of communication, including electronic mail and audio-visual communication, Internet chat rooms, and mobile phones, carries far-reaching consequences. By making frequent, culturally-bound use of these new media, backpackers have transposed their elaborate and intense patterns of face-to-face communication
to electronically-mediated communication and to virtual public spaces. Since cyber-communication offers a radically different mode of interaction, it changes modes of backpacking sociability, travel and experience.

Conclusions

This paper examines the evolution of Israeli backpacking over the last four decades, and suggests a conceptual framework through which tourism phenomena—backpacking in particular—can be fruitfully explored and construed. It considers three dynamically-interrelated dimensions of institutionalization—experiential changes, social and cultural vicissitudes in social systems and subcultures, and organizational processes—across three phases of evolution, which are periods during which the above three aspects undergo significant concomitant changes.

The first phase, extending from the mid-1970s to the early 1980s, includes the inauguration of backpacking as a steady and bound social system (a social phenomenon). The second phase covers the decade of the 1980s and the mid-1990s, during which a quantitative intensification is evident, accompanied by the inclusion of commercial services and social systems under the umbrella of backpacking, and by the designation of backpacking as a social norm. The third phase extends from the mid-1990s to the present, and evinces the heterogenization of backpacker populations and practices and the mediatization of backpacking representations. The depiction and discussion of these phases was preceded by a brief portrayal of an earlier period, which illuminates the unique cultural role and roots carried by outdoor activities in the Zionist ethos in the first half of the twentieth century.

On an organizational level, the research indicates the incorporation of travel-related services, initially supplied by separate institutions, under the umbrella of tourist infrastructure. This process accounts for the conglomerate state of contemporary backpacking and tourism in general. The state has led to a blurring of the distinctions between the various categories of consumers of travel, who together share spaces of consumption and meaning.

On the cultural level, institutionalization is shown to be present in the emergence of compound yet stable social patterns, which repeatedly establish socio-cultural boundaries and (re)produce cultural capital and social prestige (Sørensen 2003). These socio-cultural assets are embodied in the performance of backpacking culture, in travel-related knowledge and experience, and in social interactions and social ties that are established during the trip. A designation of sites and spaces occurs through institutionalization, which facilitates social interaction and the exchange of symbols and images. This is manifest in the transformation of backpackers’ sites into centres and later into enclaves, which carry ‘a central function in the maintenance of backpacker (sub-)culture’ (Richards and Wilson 2004b: 261).

On the experiential level, institutionalization clearly affects the motivations, experiences and identities that are stimulated by backpacking; at the same time, however, it is affected by the experiences and motivations of travellers. For instance, the above portrayal shows the crucial role played by zealous backpackers of the late 1970s in advancing the culture of backpacking. Nevertheless, as often happens with the institutionalization of grassroots social phenomena, ideological and possibly revolutionary impulses are moderated and transformed. In contrast to their ideological ancestors, Welk (2004: 85) observes, ‘today’s backpackers lack an important driving force of the drifter days: a mission... If they do want to change something, then it is about themselves’. This description, however, does not account for the entire picture of Israeli backpacking, primarily because the process of institutionalization itself plays a role in the backpackers’ experiences and motivations. Backpackers often reflect nostalgically about the past and compare their imagined ideals to the present, institutionalized state of affairs. In addition, the research suggests that backpacking still entails a social mission—one that concerns the solidification of cultural capital—in relation to the intense politics of identity in the home society (Noy 2004b). Furthermore, for some of the early Israeli backpackers, travel motivations did not include the reactionary experience of alienation, but also the patriotic experience embodied in a wish to familiarize youths to the opening ‘big world’ and to overcome a sense of parochialism.

As indicated earlier, around the early-mid seventies a moment in culture had come when travelling was possible or affordable (both economically and culturally). More accurately, travelling was possible yet again. That is, due to generational and other sociocultural changes, the travelling youths of the seventies were (re)embodying an older culture of travel (cf. Singh 2003, 2004). In the capacity they were cultural repositories of hegemonic (Zionist-Jewish) tenets, their trips indicated and indeed brought forth social change. But within and underneath processes of social transformation, processes of formation and maintenance occur. That is processes that re-establish the existence of the social structure of ‘Israeli-ness’. Indeed, the creation of permanent temporal-dwelling spaces of/for Israeli youths has opened a social—and societal—space for ‘objectifications’ of collective and national identities.
(Domínguez 1989). Through these objectifications, generations of travelling youths, who were born after the inauguration of the State of Israel—and to whom the State and the social state of being an ‘Israeli’ are trivial—can reproduce and ‘objectify’ the social existence of the heterogeneous category of ‘Israeli’, and regain their identity whilst travelling.

It is also worthwhile to note that in the context of Zionism, the culture of travel in its touristic manifestation is intertwined with a more hegemonic culture of mobility, manifestation of which is that of militaristic expansion and colonialization. Though often not juxtaposed, in the Israeli context these two embodiments of movement and travel correspond, and the tensions between them account for much of the underlying formation of Zionist-Israeli social structure.

The historical perspective provided in this paper is but preliminary, and is necessarily incomplete. With specific regard to Israeli backpacking, the paper proposes a variety of areas to be researched empirically, including the emergence and vicissitudes of South American versus Asian backpacking, the ultra-orthodox conversions that transpire during the trip, the relationship between families and touristic practices and symbols, the interaction between (mass) media and (mass) tourism, and from a comparative perspective, the interrelations between backpacking and other rites of passage that are undertaken by various youth populations in Israel. In relation to the near future of backpacking, the deep recession of the Israeli economy in recent years has had a particular affect on tourism (evinced in a sudden decline in departures since 2001). This fact is in fact compatible with the present phase of institutionalization, suggesting that while backpacking has reached its quantitative peak, its sub-cultures supply flourishing simulated spheres (Hazar 2001).

Yet the paper delves on the details of Israeli backpacking in the capacity of offering a general conceptual platform on which future research and theorizing can be expanded. Since the emphasis in the present case-study was on the tourists’ socio-cultural dynamics, future research might productively explore institutionalization processes pertaining to other backpacker source countries and societies—both western and non-western; alternatively, it might depict a historical trajectory from the perspective of the hosting countries. Such research (cf. Adler 1985) could potentially draw a broader historical perspective concerning the emergence of backpacking and its socio-cultural changes, and could situate contemporary backpacking cultures, as well as the sites and spaces in which they thrive, in a dynamic, socio-historical context. The opportunity for comparative, cross-cultural account of backpacking institutionalization, which rests on ‘thick’, culturally informed longitudinal and historical studies, now seems timely.

Endnotes

1. In fact, the backpackers of the late 1960s and early 1970s evince a difficulty regarding the very definition of what had come to be counted as ‘the great journey’. Three interviewees said that they had travelled in Turkey and Iran at the time, in addition to a South Asian destination. During the interviews they employed the word ‘defined’ in relation to the trip (‘it wasn’t defined as ‘the trip’), sometimes apologetically, suggesting at the very least, that processes of reconstruction are taking place. It seemed that the interviewees themselves are a cultural site where what is symbolically defined as ‘the great journey’ and what is excluded from this definition are being negotiated.


3. By 1989 approximately 870,000 tourists left Israel (18.5 per cent of the total population), of whom approximately 100,000 (2 per cent of the total population) did so for more than three months. (See, Tourism and Hotel Services Statistics Quarterly, Vol. 18(1), 1990, Table 11).

4. See Statistical Abstract of Israel 2004 (Vol. 55), Tables 23.3-23.4 (www1.cbs.gov.il/reader/). The negative economic repercussions of the present (second) Lebanon war, too, will bear consequences in the near future on travel in general and on backpacking in particular.

References


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