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Tali Hatuka

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## **Transformative Terrains: Counter Hegemonic Tactics of Dissent in Israel**

TALI HATUKA

*Department of Geography and Human Environment, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel*

*What makes citizens choose a particular mode of protest? This paper discusses the role of space in recent protests by three Israeli groups, Machsom Watch, Anarchists Against the Wall, and Women in Black, in Israel/Palestine. It looks at the way groups protest state violence (i.e., the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and the construction of the separation wall) by initiating counter hegemonic strategies and tactics, and by creating new terrains of opposition. More specifically, I elaborate on their model of action and its function within a range of spheres (physical, geographical and virtual), supported by four key principles (difference, decentralisation, multiplicity and informal order). I argue that unlike more conventional protest rituals, often led by the dominant political parties, contemporary dissent takes place in parallel spheres constructing what I call transformative terrain – a social platform that challenges bounded politics by using imagination and space in creating new possibilities.*

Thinking the spatial in a particular way can shake the manner in which certain political questions are formulated, can contribute to political arguments already under way, and – most deeply – can be an essential element in the imaginative structure which enables in the first place an opening up to the very sphere of the political.<sup>1</sup>

The above quote by Doreen Massey pinpoints one of the primary features in contemporary dissent actions – using imagination to think the spatial. Looking at how space and boundaries are defined and envisioning new potential demarcations and structures imaginatively, one cannot work within

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Address correspondence to Tali Hatuka, Laboratory for Contemporary Urban Design (LCUD), Department of Geography and Human Environment, Tel Aviv University, POB 39040, Tel Aviv 69978, Israel. E-mail: hatuka@post.tau.ac.il

the conventional hegemonic boundaries of either space or discourse. Instead, one must approach them as an exploratory project, an expression of the desire for dialogue, and as a call for the alteration of the concept of space. This focus on re-imagining space stands at the core of the numerous recent protests worldwide and particularly in the Middle East, presenting us with the challenge of the ongoing and ever-specific project of dissent practices through which society is to be configured.<sup>2</sup>

Thinking the spatial as a departure point to explore dissent, this paper assesses dissent's underlying contemporary principles. More specifically it examines the way actors employ various spatial spheres and organising principles to enhance their messages and claims. Tracking the way actors acts reveals a sophisticated multifaceted configuration of dissent which goes beyond the boundaries of the nation-state and questions of national identity, thus pushing us to give up notions of resistance that assume a subject standing vis-à-vis the established state's structure of power.<sup>3</sup> Instead, and to better understand the spatial choreography of dissent, I offer to explore the socio-spatial means through which we define our newly imagined, at times concrete, territory.

In exploring these ideas I analyse three activist groups in Israel: *Women in Black*, *Machsom Watch*, and *Anarchists against the Wall*, all active for years and still active to date. Perceiving power as a means of control over space, the general aim of these groups is to challenge the legitimacy of the violent actions taken by the state, seeing them as a mechanism of occupation that guarantees hegemonic ideas about the space associated with nationalism and national identity. Yet, the motivation for choosing these groups – which emerged from within the political boundaries of the state and have been affected by its actions and policies – is not their (similar) ideological stands but rather their creativity in crafting new spatial geographies of dissent by employing novel practices of protest that depart from the hegemonic traditional protest rituals taking place in central Israel. *Women in Black* situates the group's protests at key physical junctions in Israel, *Machsom Watch* monitors checkpoints on the West Bank, and *Anarchists against the Wall* mainly protests at the separation wall itself, joining the Palestinians' protests in their villages. While these strategies may seem significantly different, an empirical analysis exposes parallel structural principles.<sup>4</sup> I argue that though all three groups share a similar resistance to state violence and the occupation of Palestinian lands, and each uses a different socio-spatial strategy, these groups employ a similar model of action.

In this paper, I elaborate on this model of action and its function within a range of *spheres* (physical, geographical and virtual), supported by four key *principles* (difference, decentralisation, multiplicity and informal order). Unlike more conventional protest rituals, often led by the dominant

political parties, contemporary dissent takes place in parallel spheres constructing what I call *transformative terrain* – a social platform that challenges bounded politics by using imagination and space in creating new possibilities. In essence, this platform, which advances discursive change, is based on a flexible strategy that tolerates various forms of action and conflicted positioning and allows activists to modify its character based on what is actually happening on the ground. Using terrain, rather than space, emphasises the intentionality and active role of participants in defining the spatial and political configuration of both present acts of dissent and future spatial possibilities.

In the context of the three groups I am analysing, my argument is twofold: first, these groups' activism marks a change in the spatial and discursive focus of protest in Israel by departing from abstract calls for peace to more concrete pragmatic calls and actions against violence and occupation; and second, this dissent approach creates new geographies of opposition, generating alternative maps for understanding the geographies of domination in Israel/Palestine.

Yet, while this paper is focused on Israeli cases, I suggest that crafting *transformative terrain* is not context-specific, and this model of action could be found, with modifications, in different contemporary actions worldwide, in both democratic and non-democratic regimes. Moreover, this model could be applied, with some contextual modifications, to many of the recent protests that have taken place in the Arab world during 2011 (i.e., the Arab Spring), to Israeli social justice protests during the summer of 2011, and to the US Occupy Wall Street protests of the autumn of 2011. I argue that the reason that this model is so widely applicable is its elasticity and its configuration as an open system. In abstract terms, I am suggesting that contemporary dissent offers a new way of thinking about space, social relations and territory, departing from the structural (often bounded and hierarchical) system of political powers and enhancing a diffused, flexible system. The key question then, is how these different conceptualisations of space/structure by political powers and activists can co-exist.

Starting with theorising *Transformative Terrains*, the paper addresses the spheres and principles of this mode of action. The subsequent section, an introduction to the empirical case, includes a short description of the action's context, methodology and author positioning. Based on the theoretical framework, the paper proceeds to explain and interpret the strategies and tactics used by *Women in Black*, *Machsom Watch*, and *Anarchists against the Wall*. The paper concludes by arguing how and why these spatial strategies are imaginative, building alternative world views that challenge the national discourse of geographical and spatial boundaries of a place.

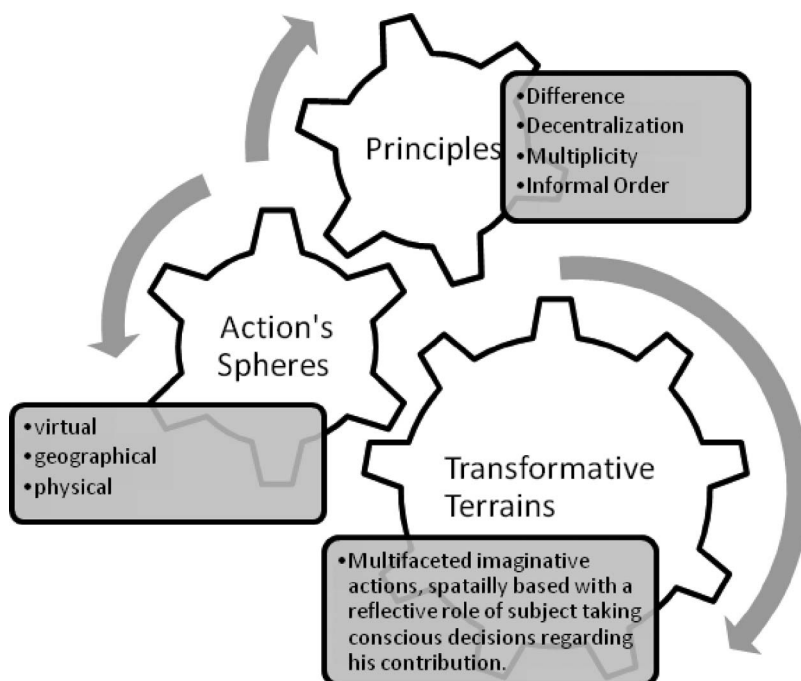
## TRANSFORMATIVE TERRAINS: EXPLORING DISSENT'S SPATIAL INTENTIONALITY AND PRACTICE

Over the last few decades, the spatial perspective of dissent has been receiving increasing attention, particularly in the fields of geography and anthropology.<sup>5</sup> The recognition that space matters also includes addressing issues of scale, location and order, which influence the design of a place and relations of power.<sup>6</sup> As has been argued by scholars such as David Harvey and Manuel Castles, space is constitutive not only of relations of power but also of the needs, demands and actions of protest movements.<sup>7</sup> This perspective challenges the structural analysis of power that tends to assume that there are no spaces outside of power.<sup>8</sup> Adopting this perspective assists in capturing the dynamism and contradictions in contemporary acts of dissent and the process through which actors organise and articulate symbols, scripts and performances to craft their dissent.<sup>9</sup>

Generally I define dissent as an imaginative action taking place in a terrain(s) (concrete, virtual or both) with participants constantly making conscious decisions regarding their involvement and strategy – crafting *Transformative terrain*.<sup>10</sup> A terrain should be seen not as a place but rather as a complex array of multiple associated places within space, as a discursive process. In that respect, terrain, space and place are complimentary and related concepts.

The notion of *Transformative* comes to designate a twofold dynamic: a group's structural dynamic, which enables growth and adapting to changes, as well as an action's spatial dynamic, which works through various spheres in placing a call for change (Figure 1). This dynamic requires sophistication and careful planning in setting a dissent action as well as social tolerance among members in achieving the above framework. Thus, the boundaries of the terrain defined by activists is one of the creative tasks in crafting dissent and has significant meaning and affect on: (1) the social dynamic among activists; (2) the political/ideological message; (3) and the imagined future.

The definition of the terrain should be seen in the context of both the spheres and the array of the action's principles. First, one of the key characteristics of contemporary dissent is working concurrently through different spheres of action: the physical place, the virtual space as well as the geographical spread, in which parallelism enhances the scale of the event. Though many activist groups are active through the Web, physical space is still an important sphere in challenging socio-spatial order. In placing their dissent physically in a place, emphasis is given to the symbolic transformation of place, even temporarily. With an aim to enhance the spatial-concrete impact, activists also often plan a geographical spread by creating multiple events simultaneously. Geographical spread and multiple settings also provide ideological means through which activists may create an alternative vision (social, political, etc.) to the ones crafted by a central



**FIGURE 1** Transformative terrains, conceptual framework.

power. Finally, the virtual sphere is significant in terms of both approaching the remote viewer/supporter (by taking advantage of Information Communication Technologies) and in terms of crafting and spreading the event among participants. The virtual sphere is a means through which activists communicate among themselves, fuel the Web's need for a steady supply of spectacular images and stories, and gain the attention of more spectators with the assistance of the media.

Yet, it is important to note that we should not see these spheres in isolation but rather as related and connected, as a dynamic array, influenced by the social relations of activists and the scale of the event.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, this dynamic array dictates a particular character to dissent. First and foremost, it requires the dismissal of a rigid social structure or a totalising political vision, the adoption of flexibility as a means of responding to unexpected happenings (physical and virtual), and of tolerance to the actors' varied identities. More specifically, this array of action implies four underlying principles:

1. *Difference*. The demise of a totalising vision of change has forced contemporary movements to accept a plurality of actors, visions and instruments for social transformation, as part of the nature of dissent. Accepting difference refers both to identity and to ideological positioning, with groups limiting and expanding their membership in a way that suit their goals.

Either way, difference as an underlying value assists in expanding the scope and scale of events, but can also give rise to conflicts among participants. In many cases, this leads to pragmatism in the way dissent is performed and organised, often including a basic set of symbols and ideas that creates a sort of unified image and message while also leaving flexibility for differences. Plurality and differences also mean difficulties in terms of decision-making and the need to handle multiple and changeable problems, which often result in socio and spatial decentralisation.

2. *Decentralization.* Difference, plurality and the way actors are recruited to the act of dissent can result in spatial and organisational decentralisation. Leadership is not concentrated but diffused, and often restricts itself to specific goals. In some cases individual cells operate on their own entirely independently of the rest of the movement, although they maintain links to it through the circulation of information and persons.<sup>12</sup> Embedded in everyday life and responding to ongoing changes, this complex multifaceted structure does not fall apart due to the communication and virtual exchange, used with different intensity by different groups. Virtual exchange is used as an information tool, passing from one unit to another, but also as a mechanism that creates patterns of communication and behavioral codes, bringing a degree of homogeneity to the whole. In other words, these groups resemble an amorphous nebula of vague shapes with variable densities.<sup>13</sup> The principle of decentralisation is also spatial, contributing to dissent's geographic spread and multiplicity.
3. *Multiplicity.* The organisational structure of activist groups has been translated into a new spatial and geographical logic. Instead of a mega-scale event taking place in a city center, many actions are taking place in multiple venues simultaneously. Each of the acts is organised by its associated local group, which is entitled to relative freedom in setting the event. This strategy allows activists to: 1. set actions on the ground tentatively, changing/adding new locations to their map of dissent; 2. be flexible in terms of activists' participation and growth; 3. maintain difference while diminishing conflicts among participants. In many cases, the spatial spread of dissent is a mirror of the internal order of the groups' organization, which has not only generated conflicted actors, but also a segmented, reticular, multifaceted structure of power. Multiplicity also implies waiving the option to protest near or at governmental institutions and choosing instead to act in informal places, generating alternative maps to the geographies of power.
4. *Informal order.* Choosing to act in everyday places does not mean activists operate without order, but rather with relative flexibility in defining the array of the acts themselves, as manifested physically in a specific place. The order of dissent responds to the physicality of place, which includes the setting's topography, boundaries, traffic movements, and building uses (i.e., governmental buildings, commercial, residential



buildings). These are all taken into account, influencing the set of actions, making dissent time-space specific. In addition, different from the geographic and virtual dynamic and flexibility of growth, the local order of dissent itself (i.e., the performative components), is more stable. This is most needed, as the order of the dissent and its ritual components (i.e., marching, gathering, singing, etc.), clothing, and schedule (i.e., timing and length of the event), represent the way participants see themselves and the way they want to be seen. In other words, this representation has significant symbolic meaning, both internally, in creating a temporal unity, and externally, in projecting their message clearly.<sup>14</sup>

In sum, when practiced by multifaceted actors, dissent is an opportunity to challenge the discourse through defining a *Transformative Terrain*, opening space for transformation. Yet, the particularity of contemporary dissent is that it takes place in multiple platforms and across various spheres simultaneously. What matters is the spatial and functional juxtaposition of spheres and the way it contributes to a terrain's configuration.

#### CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY: AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO THE EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Early one morning, while driving to their 4:00 a.m. *Machsom Watch* shift at the checkpoints in the West Bank, one activist commented to the other passengers, "I realize that we have left the occupied territories to the settlers. And why is that? Because we thought that beyond the '67 line is occupied territory and we should not go there as occupiers. But now we realize that we should cross the green line," and then she said with irony, "and not protest as a 'lefty' activist of the Peace Now movement, in Rabin Square in Tel Aviv."<sup>15</sup> This irony has been discerned by many contemporary activists, who view both Rabin Square (i.e., the central square) in Tel Aviv and the Peace Now (PN) movement itself as hegemonic and anachronistic, challenging the structural and the ideological character of dissent together.

The structural turn is the departure from the traditional mode of political protests in Rabin Square organised by PN, which was established in 1978 and is associated with political parties such as Meretz and the left wing Labour that have access to social capital and power.<sup>16</sup> PN aims at appealing to as wide a section of the population as possible without committing to operate according to a determined strategy. Hence, the movement encourages and calls for the participation of people of different political party affiliations in its rallies, and has even organised some joint demonstrations with the Labour Party and other parties of the political left. The second related turn is ideological. The PN movement's demonstrations carefully



maintain their moderate, ideological patriotic image, with all slogans and placards approved in advance by the organisers, and unapproved ones often removed.<sup>17</sup> The acts themselves usually take place in the centre of Israel far from the occupied territories.

These turns should also be seen in the context of the geopolitical dynamic along the borders of Israel/Palestine. Historically, the borders of the Israeli state were set out in the 1949 armistice agreements between Israel and its Arab neighbours. These borders came to be known as the Green Line after the 1967 war and Israel's occupation of vast additional territory, and stopped functioning as the border between two sovereign entities (Israel and Jordan). From the Israeli point of view, the character and manifestation of the Green Line has been dynamic, shifting from an approach of separation (1937–1967), to an approach that advocates territorial inclusion with no political rights for the occupied Palestinian population (1967–mid-1990s), to an approach that again fosters separation (since the Oslo agreements signed in 1993).<sup>18</sup>

With the escalation of the conflict in October 2000 during the events known as the *Second Intifada* (the second Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation), and the Israeli repressive, violent response to it, the conception of a physical border emerged in the form of a separation wall.<sup>19</sup> Creating a “new political geography”, the wall further contributed to the unjust conditions in which the majority of the West Bank territory and resources are controlled by Israeli citizens, and Palestinians, lacking real sovereignty, have only limited self-governance in restricted areas.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, the Israeli practices of control along the wall separate the movement of Palestinians and Israelis who reside in the West Bank, and have created multiple layouts of the border line that include the Green Line as an imagined line with historical and symbolic importance, the separation wall, the array of checkpoints, and the legal system that separates Israeli citizens from Palestinian inhabitants. Although all of these practices significantly influence the Palestinians' daily life and rights, the wall and the checkpoints stand most clearly as physical embodiments of the socio-political Israeli control.

The reality of the occupation and Israel's contemporary control practices is the moral departure point of all the groups examined. Believing in their transformative capacity to intervene in a given set of events and in some ways to alter them, *Women in Black*, *Machsom Watch*, and *Anarchists against the Wall*, have created new terrains of opposition aimed at creating a discursive change towards state violence as well as critically addressing the mechanisms of the state regulating violence.

Methodologically, the empirical study of these groups is part of a larger research project that looks at dissent strategies used by peace activists worldwide. My position as researcher was that of an observer, and I did not have any personal familiarity with any of my contacts in any of the groups

before I began. Yet, studying the groups, effort was given to build trust relationships. Once gained, activists were generous in sharing data, seeing it as a means to spread their ideas. The study of the three groups, begun in October 2009 and completed in January 2011, was based on identical sets of interview questions (focussing on space, organisation, symbols and action itself), participant observations during acts of dissent, activists' private archival resources (documentations of group's meetings, photos), and newspaper reports. The following analysis is largely based on observations and interviews and organised in two sections: the first presents each group and discusses the action's spheres; the second addresses the underlying shared principles of their actions.

### Analysis of Actions' Scales: Activities Creating Juxtaposed Spatialities of Dissent

Generally, *Machsom Watch*, *Anarchists against the Wall*, and *Women in Black* are negotiating the geography of citizenship and law. Bound up in the regulation of the nation-state, space and citizenship in Israel and Palestine have been structured through a legal hierarchy of rights. Law determines who is allowed to do what under what conditions and where. Because law-making is about power-making, it is also an immediate manifestation of violence. Thus, by addressing occupation and state violence, groups are negotiating the jurisdiction that separates both territories and types of people, seeing law as a discursive body.<sup>21</sup> Yet, each group practices different forms of action and different modes of orientation (or, position toward the state), which are also manifested in the spaces chosen for their dissent. Mapping the groups' spheres of action, some similarities are identified: 1. all groups hope to catch global attention. Thus, they all use ICTs but with different scopes and at different levels of expertise (the evolution of WIB started in the 1980s before the spread of ICTs); 2. The three groups share a similar geographic strategy, spreading action in multiple venues; 3. Concretely, all three groups act weekly in informal settings with particular attention given to the choice of place and its influence on their practices and performance. Notably, they all choose a key spatial typology in which to display their multiple simultaneous acts: junctions, checkpoints and wall (see Figures 2–5).

### JUNCTIONS: ENHANCING ISRAELI AWARENESS OF STATE VIOLENCE

Triggered by the outbreak of the first *Intifada* (1987),<sup>22</sup> *Women in Black* was formed by a small group of Jerusalemite women. Started as a weekly vigil of women dressed in black, the organisation soon became a *national* network of some thirty vigils<sup>23</sup> around Israel. At its peak, the Jerusalem vigil, characterised as the largest, was estimated to include some 350–400 activists,<sup>24</sup>



**FIGURE 2** The geographical spread of dissent.

Note: In all groups place is still an important sphere in challenging socio-spatial order. In placing their dissent physically in a place, emphasis is given to the symbolic transformation of place, the monitoring of place, and the interruption of order, even temporarily.

1. vigil location (based on their activities in May 1990);
2. Checkpoints visited by Machsom Watch, [based on a map sent by the group that represents the general activity in the years 2001–2010. Changes of activity are influenced by day-to-day events and political decisions, Oct 2010];
3. Actions of Anarchists Against the Wall based on data from AATW website, Oct, 2010.



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**FIGURE 5** Dissent in Bil'in.

with a steep decline after the Gulf war (1991), and even more after the Oslo Accord (1993). Today, only four<sup>25</sup> vigils are active in Jerusalem, Haifa, Tel Aviv, and Gan Shmuel with 8–15 women participants each. The vigils occur at the same spot every Friday between 1 and 2 p.m., with participants wearing black to symbolise their mourning for the tragedy of both peoples, and carrying signs with the slogan: “Stop the occupation” in three languages (Hebrew, English and Arabic).<sup>26</sup> Verbal violence and physical assaults characterised the dynamic between the vigils and crowd during the early years, and also influenced the strategy of the group<sup>27</sup>. Today, threats have become scarce, though the women still suffer from some verbal violence,<sup>28</sup> and the Jerusalem vigil is regularly accompanied by two policemen.

In terms of its mode of orientation vis-à-vis the state and society, Women in Black seek to raise public awareness of the occupation in the West Bank and the humanitarian situation in the Gaza strip among an Israeli Jewish audience. Though participants hold different political views, they are united by their resistance to the occupation. This is evident from their statement in a leaflet from 1991: “We are women who hold different political convictions, but the call “Stop the Occupation” unites us.”<sup>29</sup> They aim to convince Israelis that “what happens to the Palestinians is their problem and *our problem, and it's hurting us*.”<sup>30</sup> Yet, the pain is not personal but rather ideological; thus, comparing themselves to the vigil of mothers of Plaza de Mayo, the activists comment, “We have a different reality, the mothers of the Plaza de Mayo are talking about their own children, a very very personal thing for them; we are talking in general about the situation in Palestine.”<sup>31</sup> Fighting against the occupation, these activists do not have direct contact with Palestinian women.

For WIB place matters, and physically, the vigils stand in traffic junctions. These sites are not places where power is in situ, “well-established places of public demonstration, or sites of particular contention. Rather, they are “regular” places, which ordinarily do not provoke controversy.”<sup>32</sup> The decision to place dissent in junctions and in small groups is pragmatic and based on three considerations: 1. proximity, a crucial factor for women with families in attending the vigil; 2. familiarity (small familiar places near their homes); and 3. visibility, with the relatively small scale of the place enhancing their impact. Place matters, but during dissent acts, the activists do not modify it in any way. On the contrary, their strategy is to create a distinction between the hectic colorful dynamic of place and their act. By standing in silence, wearing black, they stand out in the landscape. The essence of this approach is duplicated, with nuances, nation-wide, and the map of the vigil locations (Figure 2 and 3) shows the multiple locations of the coordinated acts, all located within the boundaries of Israel before the 1967 war. The decision to spread the act nationally, on the one hand, and to place it within the boundaries of the Green Line, on the other, was a response to the orientation of the act toward the Israeli Jewish public. These two spheres – the physical and geographical – are the group’s focus. Yet, the global scale is also apparent, not so much in terms of the use of ICTs or as an aim to aspire for, but rather as a strategy being adopted and spread internationally – a formula for action that has been used in Spain, Italy, Croatia, Bosnia, and India, to name some of the locations. So, the global scale is an outcome rather than the means to an end.

In terms of communication, contact among activists of the first vigils in 1988 was conducted via exposure in the general media and by word of mouth among friends.<sup>33</sup> Growth was spontaneous and flexible and, in situations when decision-making was required, participants used paper notes that were distributed during the shifts. In communication between the participants, they also have used fax and, recently, a Facebook group. The decision to create the page took place in a meeting held on 13 March 2010 in Jaffa. The thirty participants who arrived were not in full consensus regarding this tool, as most of them do not use Facebook, thus the 190 members of the Facebook group do not represent the number of activists in the movement. In addition, though their strategy is successfully “exported” worldwide, Women in Black to date does not have an independent website; rather, they have a page on the (Israeli) ‘Coalition of Women for Peace’ website, and a description of their early activities appears on the international website of Women in Black.

#### CHECKPOINTS: A CRITICAL APPROACH TO THE SYSTEM OF STATE VIOLENCE

Triggered by the second *Intifada*<sup>34</sup> (October 2000), “Machsom Watch” (checkpoint watch)<sup>35</sup> is a volunteer organisation of women monitoring Israeli checkpoints in the West Bank. It began with an initiative of a few women



from Jerusalem who, following newspaper reports about the violation of basic human rights, decided to observe the happenings in the checkpoints. The first volunteers were drafted from Women in Black and – because they felt that “they can do more and what they do is not enough”<sup>36</sup> – they started monitoring the Bethlehem checkpoint in February 2001. Over time, the growth of the organisation led to the monitoring of checkpoints across the West Bank. At the height of their activities, Machsom Watch (MW) included between 300–400 activists, operating in shifts seven days a week. Each shift includes two to five volunteers, driving in a car between checkpoints and producing a summary report of the activities taking place there.

MW defines itself as an “organization of peace activist Israeli women against the Israeli Occupation of the territories and the systematic repression of the Palestinian nation. We call for Palestinian freedom of movement within their own territory and for an end to the Occupation that destroys Palestinian society and inflicts grievous harm on Israeli society.”<sup>37</sup> Politically, though volunteers hold various political views, they come together through their resistance to the Israeli occupation, as they state in the declaration quoted above. The focus of their activity is oriented towards securing human rights by being in contact with Civil Administration officers (a military arm responsible for the control of Palestinian civil affairs in the West Bank) and other army officials.<sup>38</sup> Activists perceive gender as highly significant in maintaining their dissent as non-violent, and participants believe that women are better able to approach both the soldiers and the Palestinians in their aim to secure human rights. As H. Kotef and M. Amir explain, “These sexist presuppositions, which are common to many other societies, especially nationalistic and militaristic ones, place women in an external position vis-a'-vis the political domain.”<sup>39</sup>

This strategy and the aim of Machsom Watch to expose the repression of Palestinians in checkpoints has affected their decision to act by focussing on the geographical spread of checkpoints and by exposing their findings to the international community. On a local scale, Machsom Watch marks a change in the strategy of the protests, moving dissent from the city junctions to the checkpoints, where “occupation is taking place” (Figures 2 and 4).<sup>40</sup> MW activists do not leave any mark in place. In that sense, place matters only in its association with repression. When the army decides to close or abandon a checkpoint, it is also taken out of the activists’ driving route. Geographically, this dissent is time-space reflective and requires constant attentiveness to international diplomatic efforts, national policies and actions. Different from WIB, where physical junctions create the network of places chosen by activists, here the departure point is the network of checkpoints dictated by the central government. During MW shifts, activists drive through the space of the West Bank or the Palestinian villages, where the checkpoints are perceived as temporal and sometimes unfixed.

This dynamic reality and strategy is being complemented by the virtual space, which is being used as a venue through which the group spreads its



findings. MW's active website,<sup>41</sup> in English and Hebrew, is part of the dissent strategy, containing reports uploaded at the end of each shift, list of checkpoints, images and movies.<sup>42</sup> In addition to the site, the group has a page on Facebook, with approximately 1,762 friends to date,<sup>43</sup> which coordinates members and assists communication. The role of the website, as they see it, is to illuminate and emphasise incidents and events at IDF checkpoints in the Occupied Territories, about which the public should be informed. For the most part, these events are not reported in the conventional media.

#### WALL: CONFRONTING THE ARMY WHILE EXPROPRIATING PALESTINIANS' LAND

The third group, *Anarchists Against the Wall*,<sup>44</sup> is an Israeli group of activists initiated in 2003, triggered by the beginning of the establishment of the separation wall. The group declares itself a non-violent action group, following other international solidarity organisations working in the West Bank,<sup>45</sup> and its activities are coordinated with the Palestinian villages' local popular committees who lead protests against the separation wall.<sup>46</sup> These activists are aware of their privileged status as Israelis, and seek to use it as a "tool for solidarity" with Palestinians. As they declare, "It is the duty of Israeli citizens to resist immoral policies and actions carried out in our name. We believe that it is possible to do more than demonstrate inside Israel or participate in humanitarian relief actions. Israeli apartheid and occupation isn't going to end by itself – it will end when it becomes ungovernable and unmanageable. It is time to physically oppose the bulldozers, the army and the occupation."<sup>47</sup> Though operating in various villages (Figures 2 and 5),<sup>48</sup> the group is well-known for its involvement in the Palestinian struggle in the village of Bil'in. The protest in Bil'in started in February 2005 with the beginning of construction work on the wall near the village<sup>49</sup> and continues to date in what has become a regular Friday ritual attended by Israelis, international activists, and locals. Participants include a wide range of ages, with a majority of younger participants.<sup>50</sup> As set by the Palestinians, weekly demonstrations in Bil'in, as well as in other locations, strategically begin around 13:00<sup>51</sup> after the Friday prayer. Israeli activists come either by private carpool from Tel Aviv, or on their own. Starting near the mosque, the demonstrators march together from the village street through the agriculture fields towards the gate of the fence separation. The gate of the wall is a meeting point between the activists and the Israeli army. Upon the activists' request to open the gate, the army declares demonstration to be illegal. At this point, the two parties escalate their actions, with the army firing tear gas and Palestinians throwing stones. An hour or two later, if nothing unusual happens, the protest ends. There are frequent arrests and legal prosecution against both the Palestinian demonstrators and the Israeli anti-wall demonstrators.

For AATW all spheres matter. Place is *key* and dissent often includes symbolic actions such as demonstrators chaining themselves to olive trees

(symbols of both peace and the longevity of Palestinian ownership of the land) or locking themselves inside an iron cage (the literalisation of their captivity and powerlessness), as a way to impede the construction of the wall. Other demonstrations are more conceptual, such as those in which demonstrators have worn black viper dolls around their necks to symbolise the suffocation that the wall causes.<sup>52</sup> This strategy of re-appropriating place is being duplicated in nuanced ways in other places along the wall. The aim is to battle all places where immoral policies and actions are carried out. Importantly, the spread and array of local protests is along the wall, regional, and affected by what is happening on the ground. In that respect, it is both the local and the international community that are the group's focus.

Like with MW, the use of virtual space is a key tool in the action of dissent, and activists maintain a website where video and stills as well as textual reports (in English) are uploaded regularly after the weekly Friday demonstrations. Yet, if MW is focussed more on the situation and human rights as a whole and their role in exposing the reality on the ground, the website of AATW is more concerned with the documentation of the protests and its outcomes (arrests, violation of human rights, etc.). In May 2010, the group opened a Facebook page rather than a group, which gives them more control of membership, and it currently has 774 friends.<sup>53</sup> Through Facebook, members can coordinate their arrival for the demonstrations and also can update each other regarding other events and calls against state violence.<sup>54</sup>

### The Underlying Principles of Groups' Dissent: Exploring Similarities

Clearly, the three groups presented have created new geographies of opposition, generating alternative socio-spatial readings to understand the geographies of domination in Israel/Palestine. These readings are dynamic and diverse, creating different transformative terrain. Yet, they are similar in the way they use the different spheres, a use which contributes to the performance and character of their dissent. How does this juxtaposition affect the management of the action? Does it influence the profile of the actors participating in the action, the decision-making processes, or the order of the event? Engaging with these questions, analysis reveals that the three groups share similar interrelated organisational principles. These key principles assist in bridging the ideological gaps among participants, in bypassing conflicts and in managing coordinating action in the various spheres.

### DIFFERENCE

At first glance, comparing the profile of the groups' activists, we find two very different groups. In the case of WIB and MW, the activists are Israeli women between the ages of 50 and 80, of a relatively homogenous socio-economic status, who have participated in different non-violent organizations

for many years (since as early as 1987). Yet to become a member of each group, one must fit two eligibility criteria: gender and nationality/civilian identity. The female identity of the activists is seen as critical and powerful. Some members view women as capable of approaching the checkpoint without creating antagonism, which helps them to keep the act *non-violent*, while others stress a political feminist agenda; all agree that female identity is imperative.<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, the AATW is a heterogeneous group in terms of age, gender, and national identity, and they join the Palestinian villagers (all men) and international activists, thereby crossing national and discursive boundaries. Yet what is similar in all groups is the *tolerance* towards different political positions within each group as well as towards new initiatives. Arguments are unavoidable and from its earliest days, WIB had many arguments over what their protest signs might represent: "Some of the women were very much . . . to the center of the political map, and others were more to the left, and they finally decided on just the hand that says 'Stop the Occupation', ('Dai La'Kibush')." <sup>56</sup> Both WIB and MW activists are generally welcome to initiate activities independently, and frequently do so.<sup>57</sup> This relative "openness" allows volunteers to hold varied political views and at the same time to come together under their general resistance to the Israeli occupation.<sup>58</sup>

Gender clearly affects the dynamic among actors and soldiers, especially when one compares these groups activities with AATW acts that tend to end in violence. Unlike WIB and MW who use female identity as a tool of power, AATW approaches national identity as a tool of power, as something to be enacted. AATW activists – like those in MW – are Israelis using their civilian privileges in favour of Palestinians, seeing their citizenship as an important asset in their struggle.<sup>59</sup> Their status is especially important in softening the reaction of the soldiers towards the Palestinians. According to the activists' testimony, soldiers act differently when Israeli citizens are present, which provides them with a significant reason for being there.<sup>60</sup> So, for AATW difference is tackled in multiple ways, in terms of the varied identities of participants as well as positioning, and arguments arise from these differences. In all three cases, the groups do not define a strict ideological agenda but stick to actions, protesting directly against what they perceive as an intolerable reality. This, as well as the structure of their activities, enables the groups to encourage participation of activists who are not necessarily identified with it.

#### DECENTRALISATION

When examining the groups' organisation, we see that all of them function as networks with diffused power relations. Each WIB vigil is absolutely autonomous, with its participants able to determine the time, place and the array of the shift as well as responsible for the placards and signage. Meeting

together each year, members hold general discussions about the situation on the ground and new initiatives from members. This diffused structure is based on personal relationships within each vigil group, enhancing the members' commitment to the smaller group. In the case of MW, diffusion is further enhanced. Although it is assisted by a secretarial body (with no power to make decisions), a regional coordinator of shifts, and a website manager, shifts include two to three members who are free to decide the way they wish to organise the shift. Similar to WIB, MW's decisions are taken in general meetings held approximately every three months, by the vote of those who choose to attend. Daily connection among activists is kept via a mailing list. Likewise, AATW does not define itself as a formal organisation nor does it function as one; rather, it is a dynamic group. Activists take decisions in a non-hierarchical manner during periodical meetings. Membership is dynamic and in constant change, though some of the founders of the group are still active.<sup>61</sup> Thus, roles like organising transportation from the centre of Israel to the demonstrations as well as sorting out the communication with the media are taken on a voluntarily basis and might change from time to time. Furthermore, activists are welcome to initiate new forms of protest.<sup>62</sup>

Thus, in all three groups, decentralisation is a mean through which the activists are able to maintain differences but also to grow (and shrink) with minimal management. As a whole, decentralisation enhances: 1. The flexibility of the action's design and setting; 2. the personal will and voice within the team; 3. an elastic organisational structure which relieves activists from the care and maintenance of a rigid, hierarchical, and expensive management structure. Yet, this lack of control has a dual face; it might influence growth but also might result in the shrinking of the group, if participants find the groups' agenda insufficiently defined or ineffective.

#### MULTIPLICITY

Spatially, all groups choose *key typological places* of dissent, which contribute to their identity as well as the terrain's configuration. Even when they shift from one location to another, they choose a similar type of place. Waiving the option to protest near or at places where governmental institutions reside, they generate alternative maps to the geographies of domination. More specifically, addressing the political (lack of the) state's boundaries, we also see how dissent is moving east – a shift that marks activists' acknowledgement of the need to act where the daily violent action takes place.

The maps of these actions, either within Israel's boundaries or along the borders, challenge colonisation by illuminating unnoticed and concealed places from the general public. WIB stands in traffic junctions in Israel (within the '67 borders) with varied access/exposure to Israeli pedestrian crowds. MW stands in checkpoints in the West Bank and along the Green Line, acting where human rights are discounted. Both groups do not attempt

to re-define or challenge existing spatial boundaries, but in their choices of places and target audiences, they challenge discursive boundaries. Yet in the case of AATW, where participants act from Palestinian villages where land is expropriated, activists challenge both spatial and discursive boundaries and the mechanisms of the state. This is also the place where the most violence and arrests are taking place. In the case of Women in Black, vigils emerged in different places spontaneously in the early 1990s, and though later many vigils stopped being active, this did not affect the performance of the other vigils. The same is true for MW. The map of checkpoints is dynamic, affected by both foreign and national policies and, in the case of AATW, the map is also influenced by Palestinian decisions regarding the location of protests that is sensitive to what happened on the ground and to the changes in the ongoing construction of the wall. In sum, this particular strategy allows activists to design shifts and routes dynamically.

Beyond identity and flexibility, multiplicity also contributes to the message of the activists that the grievance they are pointing to is not particular, but should be seen in plural, taking many forms in different places, and thus be relevant to various audiences. In this sense, multiplicity is both a pragmatic means to enhance impact but also a means to project a message about the repetitiveness of phenomena, being relevant to large portion of a society.

#### INFORMAL ORDER

As opposed to the spatial dynamic, the order of dissent itself (i.e., the performative components), is more stable. As knowledgeable participants who are highly aware of their strengths and limitations, activists in all groups have created repetitive patterns of action in concrete places: WIB stands with signs in silence in a weekly vigil, Fridays from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. MW watches checkpoints during two shifts a day, seven days a week. AATW joins the Palestinian demonstrators weekly, every Friday at 1:00 p.m., starting near the village mosque, and they march to the gate of the wall carrying Palestinian flags and yelling slogans in encounters with soldiers. The traffic junction, the checkpoint and the fence/wall in Bil'in are all places. And it is precisely because these are real concrete places where things happen not in a vacuum but in reality and in a specific context, that the dissent becomes effective and draws much local and international attention.

In all cases, the body plays a significant role in personalising the struggle. In Women in Black, the body is marked and not taken for granted; the body is the message – knowledge is performed and communicated through the protesting body. With their black clothing, WIB enacts images that confound existing cultural codes and thus become more difficult to tolerate because they challenge the daily look of the secular woman.<sup>63</sup> In MW, the body's detection, mobility assaults is the subject of dissent. Challenging gender boundaries by monitoring the regulators of checkpoints (soldiers and

private security companies) they seek to personalise, by sharing stories and experiences, the body of the other, the Palestinian. In the case of AATW, the body is part of the performative dimension of dissent (e.g., chaining themselves to olive trees, wearing particular outfits to symbolise the suffocation that the wall causes).<sup>64</sup> Using this creativity to gain media coverage, activists seek to *personalise* the struggle and to *fill* the place with evidence of its Palestinian landowners.<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, the bodies of Israeli protestors are also used as human shields for the Palestinians protesting with them in the confrontation with the Israeli soldiers, who often use tear gas and other means of protest dispersal. Thus, different from the symbolic reminder of WIB and the normative reminder of MW, in the case of AATW, the body is a living reminder of wounds, death and loss.

As a whole, the principles described are related as part of the complex array of spheres (see Table 1) where place and space are not opposites but rather complimentary. It is the dynamic relationships among all these spheres that assist groups in creating alternative spatialities – defining new transformative terrains. This has been achieved by addressing terrain as both a mechanism for constructing meaning and for interpreting social reality, and as a device for negotiating between the state and the citizen. Furthermore, in their actions activists use their imaginations to change a terrain, which is perceived as a tool for constructing reality, and thus, by introducing their own data and experiences in their websites (in particular, MW and AATW), they expand the boundaries of dissent by participating in amending reality. And as has been shown, though they respond to the same grievance (i.e., the state of occupation and violence), each group responds differently, crafting

TABLE 1 Spheres of Actions

	Women in Black	Machsom Watch	Anarchists against the Wall
Physical	Performing in place. Traffic junctions with varied access / exposure to pedestrian crowd.	Monitoring place. Check- points in the West Bank / along the Green Line.	Re-appropriating place in Palestinian villages.
Geographical	Creating a net of vigils. Action duplicated, with nuances.	Multiple shifts of dynamic driving routes along the Green Line.	Action duplicated, with nuances along the wall.
Virtual	Limited use of ICTs,* international adoption of strategy.	Use of virtual sphere for exposure and awareness.	Use of virtual for exposure and awareness.

\*When WIB started (1989) ICTs use and the Internet were not as accessible as today. Nevertheless these women established a network that challenges injustice even before the availability of such electronic means. They accomplished an unusual achievement, “exporting” their way of dissent to different places and situations across the world, where it was successfully applied.



its own spatial-discursive method. WIB focusses on creating a discursive change within Israeli society, while MW and AATW challenge the mechanisms of the state by confronting its violent actions on the ground (i.e., the checkpoints and construction of the wall) – a difference that is also apparent in their target audience. MW addresses Israeli society and decision-makers (attempting change from within); AATW addresses the actions taken by the army and speaks to the international community and Palestinians (as an act of solidarity). Thus, this mode of action, with its key generative principles and spheres is flexible enough to allow creating distinct dissent strategies spatially (through the choice of dissent location, its physicality and materiality), socially (through the setting of a dynamic of alternative social relations, between authorities and activists) and politically (through challenging the patterns of institutions that stabilise both the spatial and social dimensions of a place).

### RE-IMAGINING SOCIO-SPATIAL RELATIONS, CHALLENGING POWER

In the last decade, there has been a major shift in the way citizens take to the streets. Contemporary protests do not look for a unified group. Instead, protestors reflect a variety of outlooks and positions. A protest can be a mass compound of different groups coming together under a general slogan. The 15th of February 2003 was a crucial, watershed moment. On that day, a worldwide protest was organised against the American invasion of Iraq. The protest spanned more than 800 cities, and participants were encouraged to contribute their own voices and opinions. This was a distinct break from the protests of the 1990s, which were localised and focussed on national issues.

To date, the ability of a protest to spread relies on its capacity to bring together a multitude of media, leaders, and points of view in a complex way. Though different groups now come together for a common cause, they often maintain their identities through the action. The organisational structure of protests is like a web instead of a strict hierarchy, which contributes to the widespread dissemination of different protests in different places. Most recently, this spirit has characterised the “Arab Spring” and New York’s “Occupy Wall Street”, which were protests based on informal leadership and a multitude of voices.

In these cases as well as in the cases presented, we have witnessed a growing awareness of the range of spheres as a tool in organising dissent’s form and as a means in challenging power geometry. It is this awareness and the employment of the different spheres, through which activists transcend dichotomised definitions of power-relations (power versus resistance) and configure new “processual” *terrain*. In this respect, terrains become a complex array of multiply associated concrete places and virtual spaces.



And these new terrains are being viewed by the police, by the regime and by remote spectators. Paradoxically, as our daily reality is kept and enhanced by cameras and controlling forces, the gaze of authorities and surveillance assists dissent. Activists have adjusted to it, making it a source of strength, playing with the gaze. Moreover, the gaze of controlling practices (of the police and army), enhances the sense of safety among participants. Thus, surveillance serves protesters. It is the sense of safety and solidarity that allows participants to feel, even temporarily, that they belong to an imagined society, nurturing hope for a better future. Yet, in contemporary reality, it is the gaze of the media whose attention activists wish to catch, an aim which also serves well the media's need for a steady supply of spectacular images and stories. Unlike the local gaze of controlling forces and regimes, the media gaze repackages the occurrence and spreads it to the remote viewer worldwide.

This brings us back to the notion of sphere(s), or the ability of activists to: 1. expand the scope of the event with simple means and also 2. to play with the gaze and take into account its multiple roles. Activists do not worry about the gaze, they manipulate it. They innovatively design dissent using it as a source of power, and in some cases switching roles, designing acts of protests that gaze at the regime's representative's actions (as in the MW case).

Activists' awareness of the specificity and accuracy of a terrain's definition and boundaries also includes a realistic acknowledgement of its social and spatial temporality. The understanding that the configuration of terrain is always under construction enhances the adaptation of activists to both a structural dynamic (through a group's configuration) and a spatial dynamic (through the actions' design). And this sober to temporality marks a change in the way space has been perceived in the modernist version (all temporality, no space) and the postmodern (all space, no time), moving towards the configurations of multiple spheres, trajectories and histories. In other words, activists have grasped that "for the future to be open, space must be open."<sup>66</sup>

Thus, *Transformative terrains* start with a civilian consciousness of the mutable nature of space and power and should be seen as an expression of citizens' imagination in generating change. Therefore, working through the logic of how these expressions are put together is crucial to how they work, and to that which their designs enable them to accomplish. And yet, this conceptualisation of contemporary dissent raises new questions about the relationships between the diffused, open system suggested by activists and the structural (often bounded) system of political powers. How do these two systems correlate each other? Can their different conceptualisation of space co-exist?

A pessimistic reply would point to the miscorrelation between the two and the difficulties bridging between them. This reply would assist in explaining violence towards activists and the need for a geography of domination

to keep a system stable (i.e., the state). An optimistic reply would argue that transformative terrains are platforms that can help fortify knowledge-based democratic dialogue, built upon the free exchange of dissenting ideas. A pragmatic response would argue that this is a process that cannot be stopped, and thus both states and citizens, in democratic and non-democratic regimes, need to get immersed in a mutually reformatory adaptation process that takes into account the juxtaposed spheres in which we exist and act.

In a global world of thought, dissent practices are also places where we can find new possible ideas that can be assessed, debated, and offered. Engaging in this process, citizens must also consider themselves as part of a larger whole, not retreating to the private sphere in isolation. To counteract discrepancies, imagination may be all that is left. If it can be attached to place and practical action, that is all the better. And this is the social space, juxtaposed trajectories of imaginative dissent projects and projections, symbols and visions.

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#### NOTES

1. D. Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage Publications 2005) p. 9.

2. Ibid., p. 195.

3. Here I built on the use of the term "resistance" suggested by Nigel Thrift in his essay 'The Still Point'. He later developed this approach in his book *Non-Representational Theory*. N. J. Thrift, 'The Still Point', in S. Pile and M. Keith (eds.), *Geographies of Resistance* (London/New York: Routledge 1997) pp. 124–151; N. J. Thrift, *Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect* (London/New York: Routledge 2008).

4. Though the groups under analysis have been the subject of study for the last decade, particularly within the context of a women's grassroots movement, none of the studies has looked *comparatively* at the groups' dissent strategies and their spatial manifestations. For *Women in Black*, see for example, D. Baum, 'Women in Black and Men in Pink: Protest against the Israeli Occupation', *Social Identities* 12/5 (2006) pp. 563–574; T. Benski, 'Breaching Events and the Emotional Reactions of the Public: The case of Women in Black in Israel', in D. King and H. Flam (eds.), *Emotions in Social Movements* (London: Routledge 2005); O. Blumen and S. Halevi, 'Staging Peace through a Gendered

Demonstration: Women in Black in Haifa, Israel', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 99/5 (2009) pp. 977–985; S. Helman and T. Rapoport, 'Women in Black: Challenging Israel's Gender and Socio-Political Orders', *The British Journal of Sociology* 48/4 (1997) pp. 681–700. In the case of *Machsom Watch*, see for example, M. C. Hallward, 'Negotiating Boundaries, Narrating Checkpoints: The Case of Machsom Watch', *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 17/1 (2008) pp. 21–40; I. Halperin, 'Between the Lines: The Story of Machsom Watch', *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 47/3 (2007) pp. 333–339; Y. Levy and S. Mizrahi, 'Alternative Politics and the Transformation of Society-Military Relations: The Israeli Experience', *Administration & Society* 40/1 (2008) pp. 25–53; I. Kaufman, 'Resisting Occupation Or Institutionalizing Control? Israeli Women and Protest in West Bank Checkpoints', *International Journal of Peace Studies* 13/1 (2008) pp. 43–62; For Bil'in, see, M. C. Hallward, 'Creative Responses to Separation: Israeli and Palestinian Joint Activism in Bil'in', *Journal of Peace Research* 46/4 (2009) pp. 541–558.

5. For example, T. Cresswell, *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1996); C. Irazábal (ed.), *Ordinary Places, Extraordinary Events: Citizenship, Democracy and Public Space in Latin America* (London/New York: Routledge 2008); D. Mitchell, *The Right to the City* (New York: Guilford Press 2003); D. Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion: Society and Difference in the West* (London/New York: Routledge 1995); E. W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: the Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London/New York: Verso 1989).

6. See for example, L. Findley, *Building Change* (London/New York: Routledge 2005); A. Kunso, *Behind the Postcolonial* (London/New York: Routledge 2000); D. Storey, *Territory: The Claiming of Space* (England: Pearson Education Limited 2001); L. J. Vale, *Architecture, Power and National Identity* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1992).

7. M. Castells, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements* (London: E. Arnold 1983); D. Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers 1996).

8. This assumption has vastly challenged, see, for example, the works of J. P. Sharp, P. Routledge, C. Philo, and R. Paddison, *Entanglements of Power: Geographies of Domination/Resistance* (London/New York: Routledge 2000); J. Allen, *Lost Geographies of Power* (Malden, MA : Blackwell Pub. 2003).

9. This process of appropriation and transformation of space has become a focal issue in much of the literature on politics and space, and on how societies negotiate their identity and claims through modifying their mode of operation. See for example, J. A. Agnew, *Place and Politics: the Geographical Mediation of State and Society* (Boston: Allen & Unwin 1987); D. Cosgrove and S. Daniels (eds.), *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design, and Use of Past Environments* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press 1988); D. Mitchell, 'Iconography and Locational Conflict Form the Underside', *Political Geography* 11/2 (1992) pp. 152–169; P. Routledge 'Critical Geopolitics and Terrains of Resistance', *Political Geography* 15/6-7 (July–Sept. 1996) pp. 509–531; P. Routledge, 'Backstreets, Barricades, and Blackouts: Urban Terrains of Resistance in Nepal', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 12(5) (1994) pp. 559–578.

10. A. M. Brighenti, 'On Territorology: Towards a General Science of Territory', *Theory, Culture & Society* 27/1 (2010) pp. 52–72.

11. Following the debate on the notion of scalarity, I suggest scale not as linear principium divisions but rather as a polymorphous dynamic which works in association with particular scales, and across scales. For further discussion see: B. Jessop, N. Brenner, and M. Jones, 'Theorizing Sociospatial Relations', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 26/3 (2008) pp. 389–401.

12. A. Melucci, *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press 1996) p. 115.

13. Ibid.

14. D. Handelman, *Models and Mirrors: Towards an Anthropology of Public Events* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press 1990).

15. Participant observation report, MW shift, West Bank, 2 Sept. 2010.

16. N. Gordon, 'The Israeli Peace Camp in Dark Times', *Peace Review* 15/1 (2003) p. 41.

17. D. Newman and T. Herman, 'A Comparative Study of Gush Emunim and Peace Now', *Middle East Studies* 28/3 (1992) p. 518.

18. S. Arieli & M. Sfarid, *Wall and Omission: The Separation Barrier – Safety or Greediness?* [in Hebrew]. (Tel Aviv: Yediot Ahronot 2008) pp. 21–50.

19. Ibid., p. 21.

20. O. Yiftachel & H. Yacobi, 'Barriers, Walls and Dialectics: The Shaping of "Creeping Apartheid" in Israel/Palestine', in M. Sorokin (Ed.), *Against the Wall: Israel's Barrier to Peace* (New York/London: The New Press 2005) pp. 138–157.

21. As has been argued by Kathleen M. Kirby, patterns of belonging and exclusion may function at first to divide a conceptual space, but they finally operate materially, structuring physical space and discursively defining political operative laws to material effect; K. M. Kirby, *Indifferent Boundaries: Spatial Concepts of Human Subjectivity* (New York: The Guilford Press 1996) p. 13. On the relationships between law and dissent see: D. Mitchell, *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* (New York: Guilford Press 2003) pp. 161–194; B. D'Arcus, *Boundaries of Dissent: Protest and State Power in the Media Age* (New York: Routledge 2006) pp. 27–30.

22. The *first Intifada* ('uprising') refers to the Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip that lasted from 1987 to 1991 and was repressed by Israel.

23. The map of locations in Figure 2 is based on their activities in May 1990.

24. According to an estimate made by S. Helman and T. Rapoport, 'Women in Black: Challenging Israel's Gender and Socio-Political Orders', *The British Journal of Sociology* 48/4 (1997) p. 698.

25. Interview with Alia Strauss, Women in Black Activist, 24 Dec. 2009.

26. Today, the Jerusalem vigil maintains these signs, and also includes a sign calling for the lifting of the siege of Gaza. The Tel Aviv vigil now carries different signs, that relate to ongoing events. Participant observation notes, WIB shift, Tel Aviv, 25 Dec. 2009.

27. A radical example is the July 1989 assault on the Jerusalem vigil by a group of Kahana supporters. Following this event, the Jerusalem group met and decided on three rules of conduct: "1. Women participants only; 2. Wearing black; 3. "Stop the Occupation" sign." (Quote from a summary of a meeting held on 12 July 1989, women in black archive held by Daphna Kaminer.)

28. Participant observation notes, WIB shift, Jerusalem, 22 Jan. 2010.

29. WIB Jerusalem leaflet, March 1991.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. S. Halevi and O. Blumen, 'What a Difference a Place Makes: The Reflexive (Mis)management of a City's Past', *Journal of Urban History* 37 (2011) pp. 384–399.

33. The development of the vigils was rather spontaneous, "Somebody decided to start, or a couple of women met and decided to start, and started inviting their friends, people they knew. At that time there was not the computer like there is today; very few people had computers then, but it went by word of mouth, and telephone calls and inviting friends, and then I showed up there, and they said 'oh good, lovely' and then I was part of the group"; Alia Straus, Women in Black Activist, 24 Dec. 2009.

34. The Second Intifada, also known as the al-Aqsa Intifada, refers to the second Palestinian uprising which began in September 2000. Palestinian tactics ranged from carrying out mass protests and general strikes (as in the First Intifada [1987–1993]) to mounting suicide bombing attacks and firing Qassam rockets into Israeli residential areas. Israeli tactics ranged from creating checkpoints and constructing the West Bank barrier to conducting arrests and targeted attacks upon terrorist leaders. During the Chomat Magen operation in 2002, the Israeli army reoccupied parts of the West Bank that had previously been relinquished. See <<http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?entry=t48.e1821&srn=1&ssid=1679471#FIRSTHIT>>.

35. The checkpoints have been in place since 1991, when Israel started monitoring the movement of the Palestinian population, while at the same time bringing in cheap foreign labour from developing countries. During the Oslo years, more checkpoints were established and all Palestinian residents of the West Bank and Gaza were required to obtain permits to enter Israel. See also, D. Naaman, 'The Silenced Outcry: A Feminist Perspective from the Israeli Checkpoints in Palestine', *NWSA Journal* 18/3 (2006) pp. 168–180. For more information, see: <<http://www.machsomwatch.org/en>>.

36. Interview with Yehudit Elkana, Machsom Watch, 31 Dec. 2009.

37. From "about us", available at <<http://www.machsomwatch.org/en>>.

38. Since Israel has lifted or changed a large number of its internal barriers in the past few months, the organisation, especially its Tel Aviv branch, is facing some decline in activity and a need to face the question of "what now?" One answer might be that of some activists originally from Machsom Watch who formed another human rights volunteer organisation: *Yesh Din* (there is a law) who have been working to assist Palestinians using legal tools since 2005. For more information, see *Yesh Din's* website at <<http://www.yesh-din.org>>.

39. H. Kotef and M. Amir, '(En)Gendering Checkpoints: Checkpoint Watch and the Repercussions of Intervention', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 4 (2007) pp. 973–996.

40. The map in Figure 2 is based on a map sent by the group and it represents the activity in general in the years 2001–2010. Changes of activity are influenced from day-to-day events and political decisions, Oct. 2010.

41. < <http://www.machsomwatch.org/>>.

42. <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/8116065@N08/sets>>.

43. <<http://www.facebook.com/#!/profile.php?id=100000566011688&v=wall&ref=ts>>.

44. For more information, see AATW's website at <<http://www.awalls.org>>.

45. Interview with Shay Carmeli Polak, Tel Aviv, 18 Jan. 2010.

46. Ibid.

47. <[http://www.awalls.org/about\\_aatw](http://www.awalls.org/about_aatw)>.

48. Map in Figure 2 is based on data from AATW website, Oct. 2010.

49. AATW leaflet.

50. Parallel to the activity on the ground, the village has also won an appeal to the Israeli high court of justice to change the route of the wall (2006). However, destruction and reconstruction according to the new route has not yet begun.

51. See the AATW website invitation to the weekly demonstration.

52. On the aesthetics and politics, see N. Roei, 'Molding Resistance: Aesthetics and Politics in the Struggle of Bil'in Against the Wall', in M. Bal and M. Hernandez-Navarro (eds.), *Politics of Living: In Migratory Culture* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, forthcoming), available at <<http://home.medewerker.uva.nl/m.g.bal/bestanden/Reader%20Encountro%20Mieke%20Bal%20Final%2030%20augustus.pdf>>, accessed 21 Jul. 2012.

53. <[www.awalls.org](http://www.awalls.org)>.

54. <<http://www.facebook.com/#!/profile.php?id=100001023133341&ref=ts>>.

55. Interview with MW activist Yehudit Elkana, 31 Dec. 2009.

56. Interview with MW activist Yehudit Elkana, 31 Dec. 2009.

57. Participant observation: Machsom Watch Shift, 28 Dec. 2009; Participant observation: Machsom Watch Shift, 2 Sept. 2010.

58. Machsom Watch, main page, n.d., available at <<http://www.machsomwatch.org/en>>, accessed 13 April 2011.

59. Anarchists against the wall, *About AATW* [in Hebrew], 2009, available at <<http://www.awalls.org/hebrew>>, accessed 13 April 2011.

60. Interview with AATW Activist, 18 Jan. 2010. While we could not validate this statement in regards to current reality on the ground, it is in line with a news report from 2007 (R. Sharon, 'Rules of Engagement Only for Arabs' [Hebrew], *NRG-Ma'ariv*, available at <<http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART1/590/452.html>>, accessed 15 May 2011).

61. 'Crossing the Line: —. Inside the Israeli Anarchists Against the Wall', *Palestine News Network*, 28 Nov. 2010, available at <[http://english.pnn.ps/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=9201](http://english.pnn.ps/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=9201)>, accessed 19 Dec. 2010.

62. Interview with AATW Activist, 18 Jan. 2010; 'Anarchists Against the Wall', *About AATW*, 2009 [in Hebrew], available at <<http://www.awalls.org/hebrew>>, accessed 13 April 2011.

63. O. Sasson-Levi and T. Rapoport, 'Body, Gender, and Knowledge in Protest Movements – The Israeli Case', *Gender & Society* 17/3 (2003) p. 398.

64. On the aesthetics and politics see, N. Roei 'Molding Resistance: Aesthetics and Politics in the Struggle of Bil'in Against the Wall', in M. Bal and M. Hernandez-Navarro (eds.), *Politics of Living: In Migratory Culture* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, forthcoming), available at <<http://home.medewerker.uva.nl/m.g.bal/bestanden/Roei%20Noa%20paper%20Moulding%20Resistance%20READER%20OPMAAK.pdf>>, accessed 2 Dec. 2009.

65. M. C. Hallward, 'Creative Responses to Separation: Israeli and Palestinian Joint Activism in Bil'in', *Journal of Peace Research* 46/4 (2009) pp. 541–558.

66. Massey (note 1) p. 148.