The Separation Wall: A Symbol of Power and a Site of Resistance?

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Abstract: This article seeks to address the joint Israeli and Palestinian activism that has developed in response to the building of the separation barrier or what I will term the "Separation Wall" and to argue that the tactics of resistance witnessed are informed by the networks of power bound up in and represented by the physical structure of the Wall. It will aim to draw connections between physical realities and the hidden relations they represent and the act of resistance by suggesting that the Separation Wall offers not only a site of resistance in a world of increasingly invisible and multi-factorial power, but that the networks of power it represents call for specific forms of resistance. These specific forms focus on direct action over more traditional modes of claim-making undertaken by state-based social movements premised on a liberal understanding of representative politics.

Keywords: activism, direct action, Israel-Palestine, power, wall

Introduction

The decision on 14 April 2002 by the Israeli cabinet to establish a permanent barrier inside the Occupied West Bank made up of a series of electronic fences, rolls of razor wire, deep trenches, security cameras, motion sensors, patrol roads and, in urban, built-up areas, a nine-metre-high concrete wall, what this article will call the Separation Wall or simply, the Wall,[1] has resulted in one of the most visible symbols of the Israeli occupation of Palestine (see Figures 1 and 2). A deeply repressive structure impacting on the lives of many occupied Palestinians—especially those living in close proximity—the Separation Wall has facilitated the emergence of a joint Israeli and Palestinian resistance movement. This movement articulates new[2] forms of joint resistance against the Occupation but also re-articulates an anti-geopolitics and an autonomous culture of resistance that has developed transnationally and concomitantly with the spread of neoliberal forms of governance (Routledge 2008). Such autonomous resistance eschews the logics of more traditional social movements, such as claim-making (Tilly 2004), for a tactic of struggle that refuses to engage with those in positions of power for fear of conferring legitimacy while the Separation Wall

**Figure 1:**   The Wall near Ramallah

Figure 2:   The Wall near Bethlehem

itself and the complex networks of power it represents renders such state-based tactics of struggle ineffective, resulting instead in attempts at pre-figurative forms of direct action (Gordon 2007; Pallister-Wilkins 2009).

In laying out my argument I will first set out to interrogate and situate myself within the relevant literature concerned with the politics of space and the spatial aspects of the Israeli occupation of Palestine. I will then set out to render visible the complex power relations that I argue inform the tactics of struggle deployed by those resisting the Separation Wall, by offering the case study of Modi'in Illit with which I hope to ground my argument in the spatial and material realities of the Occupied West Bank. Finally, drawing on recent studies of autonomous resistance and direct action that eschew a state-logic and instead advocate a separate, autonomous socio-politics (Amster et al 2009; Day 2005; Franks 2006; Gordon 2007; Graeber 2009; Pallister-Wilkins 2009), I will move on to analyse the resistance to the Separation Wall in three villages that have been the focus of my research, Budrus, Biddu and Bil'in (see Figures 3 and 4) and the Palestinian and Israeli activists resisting the Wall in these places.

If political geography is concerned with the study of barriers and resistance (Agnew et al 2008), how can we make sense of a real physical barrier that simultaneously dominates—one people for the benefit of another—and offers a site for resistance? This is the role the Separation Wall plays in the West Bank and among autonomous groups in Israel. As a site of resistance the Wall offers a clear, non-metaphorical and literally concrete structure representative of the multi-factorial nature of power that operates in both Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). If Moshe Dayan once said that his goal was to make the Occupation "invisible" (Gazit 2003:163), then it is rendered "visible" in the physicality of the Wall. The Wall and its surrounding "borderland" is constitutive of the interaction of many economic and political forces (Horstmann 2007:137–157) and thus offers a visible opportunity for resistance to the "hyperreality" (Baudrillard 1981) of the Israeli State, the Occupation of Palestine and the neoliberal economic order.

Yet it must be stated that this article does not seek to present a simple argument based on the idea that resistance and domination are representative of some form of Manichaean dualism, engaged in some essentialist dialogue of good and evil destined never to break free of the other's grasp. I do not wish to reproduce a one-sided notion of power as being simply oppressive while ignoring its productive potential (Agnew 1999; Allen 2002; Routledge 1997; Slater 2008). It is not the purpose of my argument to suggest a simple understanding of power in Israel and the Occupied Territories by deconstructing resistance to the Wall (Pile 1997). I want to explore the relationship of power and space articulated by the Wall but more importantly how such spatial articulations of
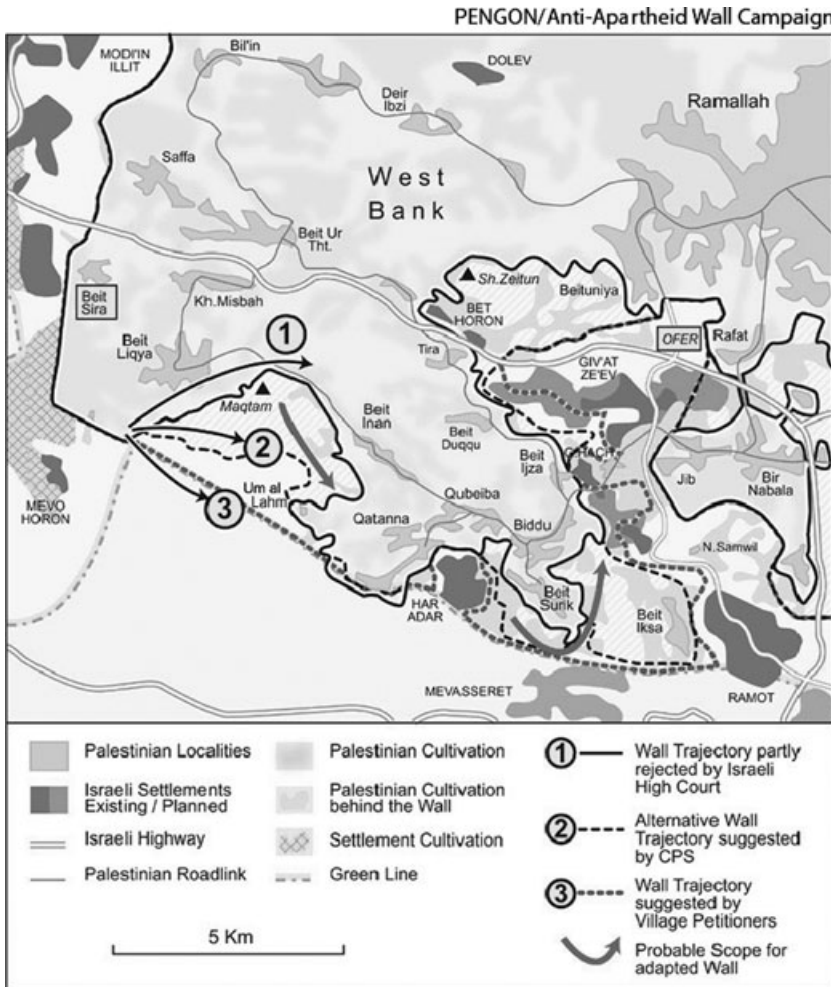
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Figure 3: The villages of Biddu and Bil'in in relation to the Separation Wall

power interact, and enable and restrict possibilities for political action (Routledge 1997). In short I wish to continue Steve Pile's (1997) problematisation of resistance as simply a "mode for understanding power" by suggesting that in uncovering complex power relations we can better understand practices and tactics of resistance. Seeing resistance as a poor relation to power denies the ability of resistance itself to construct power relationships of its own and reproduces somewhat romantic and utopian notions of heroic resistance movements (L Abu-Lughod 1990; Kellner 1995; Khalili 2007; Moore 1997), within which power relations are absent.
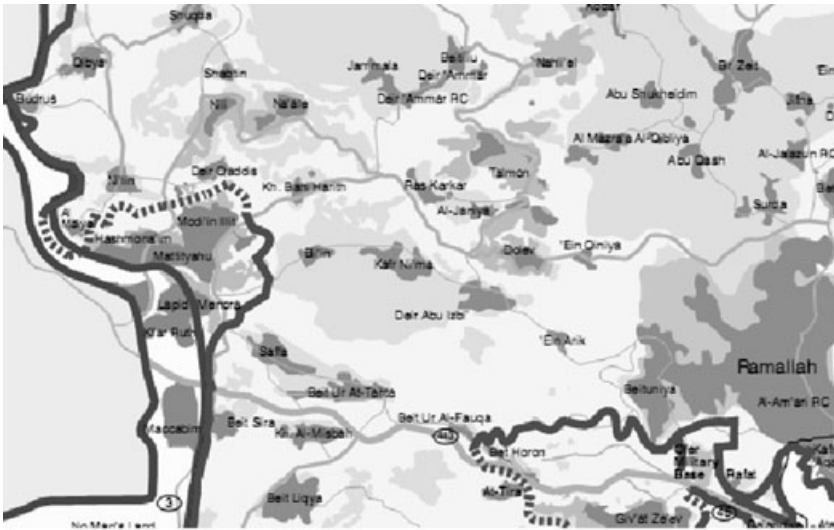
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Figure 4: The villages of Bil'in and Budrus in relation to the Separation Wall and the settlement bloc of Modi'in Illit

The argument put forward here, concerning the informing of resistance by the complex power networks rendered visible by the Wall, rejects the simplistic binary of domination and resistance that insists on re-articulating resistance's relationship to simplistic political subjectivities where those who benefit from oppression continue such oppression and those who suffer engage in resistance. The resistance to the Separation Wall, through the involvement of Israeli activists, challenges such mainstream concepts that see resistance as being the preserve of the "have-nots" (Lipsky 1965). Resistance is to be seen as more than a mode for the deconstruction of power and the altering of meanings—although I do not dispute that this is an important and necessary aspect of resistance—in that it creates its own structures of power and its own meanings that themselves can be oppressive to the "outsider". Resistance is also to be more firmly grounded and understood in relation to *where* it takes place and *who* resists, or in other words, it is to be grounded within its physical reality, not within abstract theories of domination (Kirby 1985; Staeheli 2008:160). Such theories may be useful to the academic in the act of unpacking and uncovering "thick" meanings and complex networks, but the activists resisting the Separation Wall are not dealing with conceptual understandings of power (see Routledge and Simons 1995) but are instead concerned, in the case of the Occupation, with very real, literally life and death, everyday practices of power.

Therefore, in relation to the Separation Wall and the resistance against it, I argue that the complex networks of power that are responsible for the building of the Wall and the regimes of control surrounding it inform the type of resistance undertaken by the Palestinian villagers and their Israeli comrades and this resistance is itself capable of generating its own structures of power. In my specific case study of the villages of Budrus, Biddu and Bil'in, the complexity of the power relations bound up in the Wall has meant direct action becoming the tactic of choice. The aim of this article then is to understand and interrogate such tactics within the wider context of "what is being resisted". When first confronting the joint-resistance to the Separation Wall I sought to understand and analyse just that, the joint resistance. The idea that the constitution of power behind the building of the Wall and the wider Occupation was in fact important in influencing why and how the Wall was resisted was something that slowly developed in my understanding during my fieldwork. In effect the complexity of the Occupation was, as Moshe Dayan had wished, "invisible". My attempts to understand specific practices of resistance against the Separation Wall were/are not carried out solely as a diagnostic of the power relationships of the Occupation, but also as a lens through which we can better grasp the direct action against the Wall.

Situation

Here, I feel it necessary to situate myself and my research. I came to focus on these particular actors and this particular context in my research while working as a socio-political activist in Israel/Palestine in 2003. In May of that year I became aware of and involved in a newly emerging collection of Israeli activists who were coalescing around the building of the Separation Wall in the West Bank. Keen to be seen to be working with Palestinians in relationships of solidarity as befitted their political, specifically autonomous/anarchist, approach, these activists sought out a community with which they could work. This resulted in the Mas'ha camp (Jamoul 2004:586–88). The Mas'ha camp was a community of Israeli, Palestinian and international activists who maintained a presence on land slated for confiscation by the Wall in the village of Mas'ha south of Qalqilya throughout the spring and summer of 2003. Out of the activists' concerted attempts to work together against the Wall came the continued relationship of solidarity that moved to other villages further along the Wall's route, and came the activism that is of concern to this article. My research took me back to the West Bank, to the villages of Budrus, Biddu and Bil'in, for a period of fieldwork in 2007, during which I conducted interviews with Israeli and Palestinian activists (of which, due to the limits of space, only a handful are utilised here) and observed their tactics of resistance against the Wall. I have also had

the opportunity to interview the activists in other parts of the world as we have travelled to various global-activist gatherings. Therefore, my relationship with not only the activists concerned but the act of resistance itself is both personal and political; it is of concern to me as both an academic and an activist. As an activist I want this article to give voice to the activists against the Wall that I have struggled with; while also challenging state-based assumptions of socio-political change.

The Geo-Politics of Israel-Palestine

The argument presented here problematises two overlapping central themes: the centrality of state-centric discourse and the construction and role of space in relation to political resistance. Conventional thinking about space and the state relies on three geographical assumptions, something John Agnew (1994:53) calls the "territorial trap". This "territorial trap" sees states as fixed units of sovereign space with a clear demarcation between the domestic and foreign spheres and as "containers" of societies. This relates to Israel-Palestine on all three assumptive levels. The idea of Israel and/or Palestine as fixed units of sovereign space is palpably absurd, while the idea of a spilt between the domestic and the foreign spheres in Israel-Palestine is also problematic. It may be the Israeli Foreign Ministry that deals with the Palestinian issue on the international level, yet this belies the reality of a foreign minister discussing a contested space. A space—the OPTs—that is at one and the same time occupied and lived on not only by Palestinians but by Israeli citizens; while the internationally recognised State of Israel is inhabited by Palestinians who while being "foreign" and under occupation— in the OPTs—also reside in Israel and are Israeli citizens. The state as a "container" of society is also awkward as both societies claim to represent extraterritorial communities outside of their borders. Israel and the Zionist project make claims on and are recognised not just by Jews in Israel but also by some in the Diaspora, while Palestinian society with its large refugee and Diasporic communities has a distinct transnational identity. It is, therefore, necessary to reconceptualise the traditional concepts of the state and its relationship and role in the shaping of space, as state-centric thinking that assumes fixed territoriality. This is not to belie the role of the state in shaping power both territorially and extraterritorially, but rather to suggest that assumptions concerning its fixed location and boundaries and its omnipotence are problematic. Like Paul Routledge (2008) I argue that the notion of the central role played by the state in constructing and shaping space is also problematic when applied to an age of increased neoliberal economics and a multiplication in the sites and locations of power. The Wall itself is certainly symptomatic of this multiplication of power among architects and beneficiaries of the neoliberal economic order. Critical thinking

about neoliberalism argues that neoliberal power is exercised beyond the territorially bound space of the state (Bauman 1999); however, the Wall not only makes visible neoliberalism's multiplication and de-territorialisation but re-grounds it in fixed geographical locations, such as "offshore" technology factories in West Bank settlements. The Wall acts to aid the onward march of neoliberalism with the full support of the Israeli state. Gone are neoliberalism's traditional fetters of state regulation, to be replaced with government subsidy, resulting in an intricate relationship between the state and neoliberal economics that becomes almost impossible to untangle yet is conversely made visible by the building of the Wall and its attendant projects.

Traditionally, positivism within the social sciences has taken the relationship between boundaries/borders and territories for granted. Boundaries/borders are seen as neutral lines that are located between separate power structures, usually states. However, boundaries/borders also operate as lines of inclusion and exclusion (Doty 1996; Paasi 2008). These boundaries can be both physical and metaphysical, both structural and bureaucratic, creating divisions between "us" and "them", the "haves" and the "have-nots". Israel has a history of controlling Palestinian space: not just the borders demarcating a Palestinian space, but also the very space within those borders. Control has been both structural and bureaucratic. The Wall operates as an attempt by Israel to consolidate control over Palestinian space and extend Israel's territorial reach. The Wall acts as a boundary/border within which territories of control can be created and sustained (Sack 1986), and the direct or civil control of the subject population can be abrogated. Falah and Newman (1995) have argued that ideas about security and the removal of the "other" from a specific space have helped to construct the concept of the boundary between Israel-Palestine in the dominant discourses. Yet the border, while repressive and a modus operandi of power, control and exclusivity (Agnew 1998; Ó Tuathail 1996; Paasi 1996), also paradoxically creates a zone for resistance and agency (Kumar Rajaram and Grundy-Warr 2007). In the case of Israel-Palestine such resistance questions not only the physical position of such boundaries and borders but also seeks to question their very existence—both physical and metaphysical—informed by non-state-centric anarchist ideas of flexible political space (Eva 1998:50).

The extent to which such an Israeli-Palestinian "borderland" actually exists in reality is questionable and, I would argue, far more fluid, contested and context-specific (Paasi 2008) than any fixed notion of "us" and "them" represented through separation both theoretically and physically. The "territorial trap" of Israel-Palestine shows how assumptive notions of separation between Israelis and Palestinians and the creation of a clear boundary/border between the two communities is problematic, if not nigh on impossible when Israel is occupying the

Palestinian West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza. The movement and location of populations of the "other" in both Israel and Palestine—such as Israeli settlers, neoliberal economic ventures and military personnel in the Occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, Palestinian citizens of Israel, those recognised as resident in East Jerusalem and Palestinians living in villages on the "Israeli" side of the Separation Wall—have all meant that the concept of clearly defined borders and sovereign territorial "state" units, when applied to Israel-Palestine, fails to capture the complex reality of constantly shifting terrains of power. Such a realisation has seen proposals concerning "mixed government" in Jerusalem (Eva 1998:51). Yet Falah and Newman's (1995) intervention concerning boundaries between Israelis and Palestinians (even if the boundary in reality remains only conceptual) is crucial if we are to understand the construction of the Wall as an intended tool of separation.

Neve Gordon (2008) has recently argued that the Israeli occupation has shifted in its modes of power from both disciplinary power (the use of violence and the rule of law to control the population and change social practices) and bio-power (the use of bureaucratic modes of control to change patterns of behaviour and social practices) to the policies of separation (whereby control is maintained over the space but responsibility for the people who live in it is abrogated), meaning that the Occupation has come to be increasingly articulated through the re-making of space. The reduction in what Gordon (2008) defines as both disciplinary power and bio-power in Israel's occupation of Palestine, concepts he has borrowed and adapted from Foucault's (2002:218–222) notion of governmentality, have resulted in a reduction in potential sites and modalities of resistance as no one is deemed to have "control" over the decision-making within the "separate" space. This in effect has resulted in a reduction in the effectiveness of traditional claim-making. Lisa Taraki's (2008) recent work has dealt with the increasing spatial dismemberment of Palestine that has left Palestinian grassroots and autonomous resistance spatially isolated in urban centres where resources necessary for political activity are available and has meant many rural areas have become isolated in a series of disconnected archipelagos or, as some people have argued—drawing parallels with Apartheid South Africa—bantustans (Tilley 2009). Continuing Gordon's argument—that the Wall is part of a change from the Oslo era to the present day in how Israel seeks to maintain and control the Occupation—Ariella Azoulay and Adi Ophir (2005) suggest that the Wall's primary objective is to reproduce domination and "re-inscribe it in space". While there has undoubtedly been a shift by Israel towards a policy of separation of populations with a maintenance of territorial control, the subtleties of how such a policy reflects on physical space and its effects on political behaviour, as Gordon (2008) suggests, is far more complex and open to extra-territorial and non-state influences

(Weizman 2007), as shall be seen from the study of Modi'in Illit. Such complexity at the same time restricts opportunities for traditional socio-political resistance, as argued by Neve Gordon (2008) and Lisa Taraki (2008).

Meanwhile Samer Alatout (2006:604) argues that in the Israeli-Palestinian context, extra-territorial notions of power—or as Gordon (2008), influenced by Foucault, calls it, biopower—are sidelined in favour of a narrow territorial focus, whereby resistance has been almost exclusively focused on territorial rather than extra-territorial notions of power. I wish to continue with Alatout's (2006) thesis, that the distinction between the two is a "myth" and that it misses the important role that extra-territorial dimensions of power play in reinforcing territorial elements. I argue that the Wall is constitutive of the relationship between both territorial and extra-territorial power and, while it is very definitely a symbol of and exercise in territorial power, it is also symbolic of extra-territorial, neoliberal and ethnocentric networks of power against which the Israeli and Palestinian activists are resisting. The inclusion of extra-territorial notions of power into the dynamics of the Wall, while seemingly abstract, are important in understanding the challenge posed to traditional Israeli and Palestinian nationalisms by the joint-resistance against the Wall. They should be viewed in conjunction with the inclusion of non-state actors in constructing the Wall along with more traditional territorial, state-centred actors, combining to form what, to borrow a metaphor from Deleuze and Guattari (2004:3–28), can be described as a rhizome of power that is rendered visible by the construction of the Wall.

The Rhizome Revealed

Although the very essence and presence of the Wall is the obvious solid, material embodiment of state ideology and its conception of national security, the route should not be understood as the direct product of top-down government planning at all. Rather, the ongoing fluctuations of the Wall's route, registers a multiplicity of technical, legal and political conflicts over issues of territory, demography, water, archaeology, and real estate, as well as over political concepts such as sovereignty, security and identity (Weizman 2007:162).

In discussing both the metaphysical and physical meanings of the Wall, Eyal Weizman (2007) clearly articulates the Wall's multi-factorial constitution. Meanwhile Neve Gordon (2008:200) has argued that the Separation Wall is part of a wider Israeli principle of separation that aims to alter the logic of the Occupation from one of direct control of the population to one of indirect control of the population, at the same time as simultaneously maximising control over resources, be they

physical resources such as water and land, or more abstract resources such as space. What Oren Yiftachel (2006:82–83) has termed "creeping apartheid" is accelerated by the building of the Wall. It is "creeping", Yiftachel (2006:83) argues, because it unfolds without any real open and official declaration and it is "apartheid" because of the focus on separation. This shift towards separation and abrogation of direct control over the occupied population,[3] combined with control over the area's resources, is suggestive of a greater trend towards neoliberal forms of domination, both within Israel and transnationally (Yiftachel 2006:169–196). All of this was and continues to be done, Neve Gordon (2008:209) argues, through the controlling of and reconstitution of Palestinian space. That, in turn, creates a plethora of bureaucratic forms of control, as permission and permits are needed by Palestinians wishing to negotiate such a spatial reality. This move towards a more neoliberal, pluralistic rendering of power has resulted in the Wall being a product of the policy of separation and also, importantly, being representative of other interests, some bound up in a neoliberal capitalist project, and others representative of interests as divergent as the settler lobby and environmental activists. As Weizmann (2007:162) suggests, the Wall represents the interests of:

> . . . a multiplicity of organisations and agents—Palestinian "popular farmers' committees", Israeli real estate developers, settler associations and their political lobbies, environmental activists, Jewish religious organisations, political and human rights groups, armed paramilitaries. Local and international courts and international diplomacy.

The Wall is thus not merely a reflection of the government's political will. The continually changing, meandering route is a reflection of a constellation of different influences and the actions that they have and/or could have instigated. While I do not reject the very real role of the Israeli government, I also want to avoid glossing over the complexity of interests bound up in its physical creation. For example, the Wall's route is not the result of top-down government planning and is open to interpretation and influence from a whole host of interested parties, as I will show below. The public articulation of the "need" for a barrier was itself not an outcome of a government discussion but a debate instigated by the Israeli public themselves.[4]

In June 2001, a grassroots organisation called "Fence for Life—The Public Movement for the Security Fence" began a grassroots campaign for the erection of some form of barrier following a suicide bombing at a nightclub near the Dolphinarium in Tel Aviv. By using traditional claim-making methods, "Fence for Life" hoped to tap into the increase in public demand for some sort of barrier (Yiftachel 2006:78) and pressure the government into erecting a barrier to help prevent suicide

attacks. However, when these traditional tactics did not yield results, communities who were set to benefit most from a barrier began to construct one directly on the Green Line themselves using their own funds (Ratner 2002). "Fence for Life" also suggested that it was the influence of various interests outside of immediate government control, such as real-estate interests and settler groups, that were holding up the future construction of a barrier (Bowman 2004).

The government of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon announced the project for building the Wall on 14 April 2002 and delegated the construction to the Ministry of Defence, acting together with the Department of Regional and Strategic Planning of the Israel Defense Force's (IDF's) Central Command. Since 1994 the Department for Regional and Strategic Planning has been staffed by civil engineers specialising in "security design" and directed by Danny Tirza, an expert map maker, reserve officer in the IDF, and perhaps more importantly for the Wall's links to the settler lobby, a national-religious West Bank settler.[5] Tirza and the Department for Regional and Strategic Planning were authorised by the government of Ariel Sharon to adapt the general political outline of the Wall's path that the government had envisaged to the specific topographical terrain of the West Bank. Yet according to Weizman (2007:162), Tirza, by being in charge of the detailed design, was able to influence the path and nature of the entire project.

The apparent lack of definitive hierarchical responsibility for the Wall meant that the final result would not be the clearly articulated finished product of a specific vision. In the early stages of planning the projected route was divided up into 12 subsections and individually tendered out to 22 private building contractors, meaning 22 private businesses being responsible for the actual construction of the Wall itself, not taking account of the inevitable subcontracting for specific skills and machinery. This resulted in sections of the initial phase being built at different times, at different speeds, and some not built at all. However, the most important aspect of this initial planning and building phase was that what was being proposed and built was a "concept" rather than a precise, complete route allowing for different interested parties, like Tirza himself, to interfere with and influence the route of the as yet unbuilt sections. As has already been noted, the Wall clearly represents a policy of separation; however, the route should not be understood as the product of top-down hierarchical government, but as a byproduct of the complex, rhizomatic networks of power that operate independently, in spite of or in accordance with state policies. Throughout the process of its construction, therefore, the Wall has continuously "deflected and reoriented", repeatedly changing its route along its length and, as Tirza himself has noted, it can be seen as a "political seismograph gone mad" (Tirza in Weizman 2007:162). The wiggles, folds and wrinkles reflect not only the government's will and desire for "separation", but also the

myriad of political interests and actions that have collided in the political space created and rendered visible by the Wall.

So what of these plural, non-state forces at play in determining the Wall's route? Having explored the policies of separation behind the concept of the Wall, I now want to explore the other interests that have coalesced to produce the precise social, political, economic and spatial reality of the Wall in the location where my research has been focused, in three villages to the west of Ramallah. One of these villages, Bil'in, more than any other, has been active in resisting the Wall, whose route across the village's land is heavily influenced by the neighbouring settlement bloc of Modi'in Illit (see Figure 4). A report published jointly by Israeli human rights organisation B'Tselem and Bimkom (Lein et al 2005), an Israeli planning rights group, claimed that in some cases, including the case of Bil'in, the reasons for re-routing the Wall reflected the concerns and interests of real estate and construction companies which sought to profit from settlement expansion on land confiscated by the Wall. Therefore, I will aim to show how the Separation Wall is representative of a myriad of interests and is itself tied up within wider networks of power and domination by exploring the case of Modi'in Illit.

Modi'in Illit: A Case Study

Resistance to the building of the Wall is fundamentally concentrated within one or two locations as part of a wider fracturing of socio-political space in Palestine (Taraki 2008). One of these is the village of Bil'in, whose land is being confiscated to allow for the annexation into Israel of the settlement bloc of Modi'in Illit (Lein et al 2005). One of those seeking to profit from a future expansion of the Modi'in Illit bloc and planned future neighbourhoods is Lev Leviev, originally a diamond tycoon and one of Israel's most powerful businessmen, with countless contacts both nationally and internationally. Many of these neighbourhoods are planned and being built on land belonging to the farmers of Bil'in. One of them, "Green Park", is a $230 million development, comprising 5800 apartments (Algazi 2006:31), most of which are intended for the economically disadvantaged who cannot afford to buy in Israel. In fact, in the Modi'in Illit bloc, and planned for its expansion in the neighbourhood of Matityahu East, there is not only housing, but also jobs and social housing which are unavailable on the Israeli side of the Green Line, making the Modi'in Illit bloc, according to Gadi Algazi (2006:30), "a powerful magnet for those struggling to subsist".

The Modi'in Illit settlement bloc serves as a fitting example of the many interests and sites of power in Israel and the Occupied Territories. The settlement includes Israel's largest software company, aptly titled Matrix. In recent years the company chose not to relocate

offshore but rather across the Green Line, describing the solution to the neoliberal preponderance for moving production offshore, as "Zionist local offshore outsourcing" (Eisen 2007). Located in Modi'in Illit and called Talpiot after the IDF's elite combat unit, this subsidiary "outsourcing company" uses low-paid ultra-orthodox female workers. At work these women are themselves exploited and dominated within the networks of power at play. They are paid the minimum wage of $725 per month which rises to $1045 per month in their second year. This is in contrast to the $3500–$4000 per month an experienced programmer in Israel would earn or the $5500 per month earned on average by programmers in the USA. All the while the State of Israel is subsidising Matrix to the tune of $215 per month per worker. The women have no chance of competing for bonuses as they simply do not exist and the women are tied to the company for a minimum of two years; if they leave they have to pay a large fine equivalent to two months' salary. There is of course no union representation for these women within the Histadrut, the Israeli trade union congress. Unsurprisingly the women also have strict working conditions which they seemingly adhere to as their rabbis have instilled in them a strict capitalist work ethic in a partnership between religion, gender division of labour, and capitalism.

But why do these women accept these working conditions? The answer is the same as the one for why Palestinian labourers construct the very Wall and settlements that ensure their continued subjugation: poverty. The ultra-orthodox community is historically one of the poorer among Israel's Jewish population.[6] As welfare payments have been reduced in an attempt at neoliberal restructuring, the women have been forced into the workforce to support their families. Gadi Algazi (2006:35) rightly asks, "where else can these women work?" As one of the female managers at Talpiot states: "There is no work in Modi'in Illit, and women do not have cars . . . Most of them do not have a driver's license" (Shim'oni 2005). Modi'in Illit in fact has one of the lowest levels of car ownership in Israel, with just 60 vehicles to every 1000 people. Why then do the ultra-orthodox choose to move to Modi'in Illit in the first place? The severe housing shortage in Israel, resulting in high property prices and overcrowding in the traditional ultra-orthodox communities in Jerusalem and Bnai Brak, have meant that many ultra-orthodox, as well as other Israeli Jews, have seemingly no choice but to move to settlements like Modi'in Illit. In fact some have emphasised that they do not consider themselves "settlers" at all, as only the housing shortages and lack of government assistance in Israel has forced them into settlements in the Occupied West Bank (Rotem 2003).

We can clearly see, therefore, how the existence and continued expansion of the Modi'in Illit bloc is not only government intervention but an amalgamation of the forces of separation and poverty, as well as the real-estate sector and broader neoliberal economics seeking

new ways to maximise profits. Furthermore, there are other non-profit and non-governmental interests affecting the route of the Wall. The interests of environmentalists have also impacted on the route. In the northern West Bank the Wall was re-routed in response to Israeli environmentalists' calls for the protection of a nature reserve of rare irises which they said could only be guaranteed if the reserve were to remain under Israeli control—which says more, in fact, about the environmentalists' opinions about the Palestinians than it does about their concern for rare irises. The message is clear: Palestinians cannot care for such rare flowers themselves. In other areas the route has been changed to preserve special and sensitive areas such as cliffs, springs and eagles' nests. What seems clear in all of these re-routings for for-profit or non-profit concerns, is that when it is Israelis petitioning for reasons as diverse as enabling their Palestinian housemaids to travel to work or to incorporate a forest onto the Israeli side of the Wall, action is invariably taken. When it is the Palestinians, or in the interests of the Palestinians, that such petitions are made, then action is invariably not taken. Consider for a minute whether action would have been taken if it had been the Palestinian housemaids of Ar-Ras petitioning to keep their village on the same side of the Wall as their employers in Sal'it instead of the other way around. Of course, we cannot know the answer, but I think it is significant that in the number of successful petitions for a change of route, on the whole the petitioners have been Israeli or the re-route has been in the interests of Israelis.

The issue here is of course power and agency. Who has it and who does not? Who is able to appeal and who is not? Who is successful, who is not? These issues cut to the heart of the struggle against the Wall studied here. When the Israeli High Court finds in favour of the village of Bil'in, the people of Bil'in are shocked. Why should this be a shock to the residents of Bil'in when the International Court of Justice has ordered that the Wall be removed from Palestinian land? It is a shock because, as the residents of Bil'in readily point out, the Israeli High Court does not work in the interests of occupied Palestinians (Mansour 2007). The fact that this Israeli High Court decision is still to be implemented suggests a court incapable of enforcing its own decisions, a situation that is worthy of further exploration for the legal implications it suggests.[7] What this complexity of the building of the Wall says to Palestinians and their Israeli comrades is twofold: first, that traditional avenues of making a claim to the state are not open to Palestinians; and second, that the interests represented in the route under contestation (let alone the entire project itself) are not simply those of a centralised, hierarchical government that can be easily identified and readily appealed to.

Eyal Weizman (2007), in his dissection of the theoretical architecture of the Wall, refers time and again to the Wall's "elasticity" and

the separate "life" of each of the segments, shaped by the forces through which the route passes. What this suggests and what my example of Modi'in Illit has shown is that these forces not only create the elasticity, they in fact create the Wall itself. The Wall might be considered "temporary"—a discursive tool—in order for the government to legally requisition land, and even if it were to be temporary what it highlights is in fact, perhaps, more important than the Wall itself. Previously unseen or only individually seen structures of power—Moshe Dayan's "invisible" occupation—have become collectively visible in the structure and route of the Wall. The "elasticity" of the route, which may or may not reflect a policy of separation, certainly shows that a top-down hierarchical model of power alone is inadequate. The government, while it is significantly involved, has only been one protagonist in creating the Wall's elasticity. As Weizman (2007:173) says, "the frontier continually remoulds itself to absorb and accommodate opposition, which gradually becomes part of its discourse and contributes to its efficiency". What therefore, does this mean for any subsequent resistance to the Separation Wall? How does such a complex environment impact on the type and tactics of struggle?

A Short History of Anti-Occupation Activism

Before I venture further into exploring the joint Israeli-Palestinian resistance to the Separation Wall in the villages west of Ramallah, a short historical summation of previous anti-occupation activism is necessary to place those resisting the Wall within their specific context. There is a long history of Israeli and Palestinian activism against the Occupation that has taken place from their respective "separate" positions as well as attempts—most notably during the First Intifada— to undertake joint-resistance. Reuven Kaminer (1996), an Israeli anti-occupation activist himself, in his comprehensive work documenting and analysing Israeli anti-occupation activism up until and including the First Intifada, suggests that the outbreak of the First Intifada saw a multiplication of Israeli anti-Occupation groups. Smaller, more radical groups with deep ideological and personal commitments tended to focus on single-issue campaigns under the wider umbrella of anti-occupation activism, and were very successful in attracting new activists as well as media attention.

One of the newly emerging groups, *Dai La'kibush* (Enough of the Occupation),[8] offered a framework from within which different factions and groups from the left could come together to oppose the Occupation. There is a clear link between the work of *Dai La'kibush* and the later activism against the Separation Wall, with both concentrating on intensive activity transcending the boundaries of traditional social

movement activism, such as Peace Now.[9] The group even transcended physical boundaries and sought to expand their activism to the OPTs and to seek contact with occupied Palestinians (Tamari 1983). Israeli activists engaged in weekly solidarity visits to the OPTs and had house meetings with occupied Palestinian activists. The physical act of entering a Palestinian's home in solidarity was radical in and of itself without even thinking about what was actually discussed and planned at these meetings. As Kaminer (1996:51) suggests, the weekly visits to homes, villages, refugee camps and hospitals "were an excellent way to bring home to those willing to learn and understand, the cruel realities of life under occupation". The First Intifada also saw a large number of hitherto independent activists marching under the banner of "The Twenty First Year".

The Twenty First Year emerged during the first weeks of the Intifada and was made up of younger university students who aimed to create a new discourse in the approach of Israelis to the OPTs. Rejecting the traditional role of Peace Now, suggesting it was not an effective tool for political protest, Twenty First Year's (1988:68–69) "Covenant Against the Occupation" attempted to draw attention to the fact that for over half of its existence as a state Israel has been an occupying power:

> The fortieth year of Israeli independence is also the twenty-first year of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. For more than half of its existence . . . Israel has been an occupying power. Israel is losing its democratic character . . . The occupation has become an insidious fact of our lives . . . Expressions of protest against the occupation are circumscribed by the national consensus, protests do not transgress the boundaries deemed permissible by the occupation system. The "nice" Israeli expresses his or her anguish, remonstrates and demonstrates, but by accepting the term and norms of political conduct set by the regime implicitly collaborates with the occupation. The presence of the occupation itself is total. Our struggle against the occupation must, therefore, be total . . . We shall resist the occupation wherever we can identify it . . . We shall refuse to collaborate with the occupation.

It is clear from the Covenant that The Twenty First Year was the most radical group against the Occupation yet to appear in Israel. It is interesting that many of its themes and positions are continued by the Anarchists Against the Wall some 15 years and a new Intifada later.

The history of socio-political activism within Palestine unsurprisingly centres on the Israeli occupation, be it the Israeli occupation of 1967, or the colonisation of Palestinian land by the future state of Israel in the early twentieth century and following the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, with the First Intifada acting as a watershed

moment for Palestinian socio-political protest against the occupation (I Abu-Lughod 1990). However, as Mubarak Awad (1984) asserts, Palestinians have been engaged in socio-political struggle alongside armed struggle since the 1930s. Such a connection can be seen very clearly in the role of *al-Shabiba* (The Youth) in the late 1970s and 1980s. *Al-Shabiba* gave political form to a traditional value in Arab society—mutual assistance—and through the organisation of grassroots popular committees (*lijan shabiya*) sought to overcome the limits of the disconnection between locality and national social solidarity (Jamal 2005:77). During the First Intifada the efforts of *al-Shabiba* to create a shared Palestinian consciousness that transcended urban–rural boundaries came into full effect as they were at the forefront of many of the mass resistance efforts.

Another example of mass resistance on the local level was the village of Beit Sahour that undertook one of the best-known examples of direct action/non-cooperation during the First Intifada when it demanded "no taxation without representation" and ceased to pay taxes to the Israeli occupiers (Andoni 2001; Beckerman 1989; Robinson 1997). Along with the villagers of Beit Sahour one of the most active groups in Palestine engaged in direct action was the Committee for Solidarity with Birzeit University (CSBZU). Set up during the 1970s by a number of academics at Birzeit University, it aimed to try and make contacts with Israeli intellectuals active in peace groups within Israel. Facing the wrath of the non-accommodationists, the Committee engaged in joint demonstrations in the OPTs with Israelis, which were violently put down by the IDF.

Following the First Intifada, and during the Oslo years when it seemed that the idea of "peace" had become institutionalised and legitimised in government policy, more radical groups such as *Dai La'kibush* and The Twenty First Year ceased to have a purpose, while more mainstream groups that were prepared to be seen as part of the "system" and were happy to work with the Israeli government came to the fore once again. However, joint activism between Israelis and Palestinians did not end. During the Oslo years and on into the Second Intifada, other groups emerged that sought to bring Israelis into the OPTs to witness, for example, not only the Occupation as a whole, but ongoing settlement construction and settler violence, as well as the real-life consequences of discriminatory planning practices for Palestinians living in East Jerusalem. Groups such as Gush Shalom[10] and Rabbis for Human Rights (RHR)[11] have sought consistently, for example, to stand and act in solidarity with Palestinians against the different facets of the Occupation as a whole. RHR has focused especially on settler violence during the olive harvest, while the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD)[12] works to highlight the unjust housing practices that favour Jewish Israelis in occupied East Jerusalem.

Yet it seems that since the outbreak of the Second Intifada in September 2000, there has been a marked decrease in the number of people and groups that seek to place working with Palestinians at the centre not just of their discourse, but also of their practice (Golan, interview). Many Israelis who were once willing to work with their Palestinian colleagues feel disenchanted by the perceived refusal of Yasir Arafat of proposals put forward at the Camp David Summit in 2000. Meanwhile, the increase in Palestinian suicide bombings saw the Israeli public as a whole retreating in on itself and, while perhaps not giving up on the idea of a peaceful solution with their Palestinian neighbours, preferring a unilateral approach. This has, no doubt, impacted on the approaches of the peace movements in Israel as they seek to represent their community. Therefore, while there has been a decrease in the number of Israelis crossing the Green Line, the type of work of those who do engage in protest has unarguably become more radical, coalescing around different direct action approaches (Golan, interview).

A Site of Resistance

The Wall and its role in rendering visible the multi-faceted power structures at work in the oppression and domination of Palestinians and Israelis has important implications for the type of resistance that challenges such a multi-faceted structure. Like Lisa Taraki (2008) I suggest that the Wall has created a localised opportunity for Palestinians to resist a visible aspect of the Occupation where the comprehensive bantustanisation of Palestinian socio-political space makes engagement on a national level difficult.[13] In suggesting that the Wall presents an opportunity, what I want to stress is that the multi-layered power structures uncovered by the building of the Wall are enlightening but also central to my argument that the power being challenged, ie the multi-layered interests at work, inform the activists' struggle against the Wall in the villages that I have studied. The key point is that these multi-factorial power structures lead to a different form of protest that challenges the assumptions about state-based social change held by traditional forces in the Israeli anti-occupation repertoire, such as Peace Now (Kaminer 1996). The difficult task of identifying every interested party with power and/or influence over the route and building of the Wall and then presenting claims to them, which can be subsequently ignored, means that direct action, which seeks to act-and-not-ask in accordance with autonomous/anarchist principles of pre-figurative politics becomes—for the activists concerned—the logical course of action (Gordon 2007; Graeber 2009).

Such autonomous politics has its roots, for the (Israeli) activists concerned, in the anarchist revival linked to the growth of the anti/autre-globalisation movement (Gordon 2007; Pallister-Wilkins 2009). In

examining the anti/autre-globalisation movement in relation to the role and site of power, John Allen (2008:105) has argued that such localised yet global forms of struggle address a "*virtual*" target which, echoing Hardt and Negri (2000), is the result of the new neoliberal Empire. I argue this conceptualisation of neoliberal power as "virtual" tells only half the story. First, such a conception fails to take account of the "localised" areas where this "virtual" power is rendered visible and resistance is concretely located. Second, it fails to take account of the many other forms and systems of power against which socio-political activists, including those at the heart of this article, struggle, such as patriarchy, racism and hetero-sexism. While these forms of domination might seem "virtual", they also have very real consequences that are firmly rooted in both time and space. The resistance to the Wall can be viewed within a wider narrative that seeks to confront such "virtual" power *where it is located* and made visible, but is also part of a wider struggle against dominant systems of meaning that play themselves out, for example, in other forms of domination.

The politics of the struggle against the Separation Wall are informed by post-modern understandings of power that have seen the central role of the hierarchical state diminish in our understandings of the operation of political power (Foucault 2002; Mitchell 1991). The state and its power are not discounted; however, there are other equally oppressive conceptual systems of domination, such as those mentioned above, that must also be challenged. As we have seen in the case of Modi'in Illit, the agents of domination are multiple and, thus, traditional notions of representative politics are hard to reconcile with a socio-political landscape that has many actors and many modes of power (Routledge 2008:241). The questions for those seeking to act in this specific milieu are multiple. How does one avoid the politics of demand (Gordon 2007)? How does one speak to power avoiding the risk of cooption? How does one speak to such power without conferring legitimacy upon it? How does one resist without replicating the many systems of domination one is struggling against? How does one talk to a Hydra-like system of power with many faces? The answer for the activists resisting the Wall in the villages I have studied is that they do not seek to speak in turn to each of Hydra's many faces. They instead seek to challenge the visible representation of such virtual power directly, through direct action. They employ what is termed in the lexicon of modern anarchist studies, pre-figurative direct action—in that it aims not to reproduce that which it is resisting, in its own struggle (Gordon 2007). This pre-figurative direct action in turn is built upon a relationship of solidarity which in and of itself challenges the dominant landscape of separation and violence by offering a non-violent joint Israeli–Palestinian struggle in response (Staeheli 2008:167).

The Israeli activists engaged in challenging the Wall, in the villages of concern to my research, predominantly belong to a network of activists called Anarchists Against the Wall (AAtW).[14] These mainly young Israelis belong to wider transnational networks of autonomous/anarchist activists whose consciousnesses have been deeply affected by the anti/autre-globalisation movement and autonomous movements such as those in Chiapas and Oaxaca. Here the group introduce themselves:

> Anarchists Against the Wall (AAtW) is a direct action group that was established in 2003 in response to the construction of the wall Israel is building on Palestinian land in the Occupied West Bank. The group works in co-operation with Palestinians in a joint popular struggle against the occupation . . . 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 (http://awalls.org/about_aatw).

Their *raison d'être* was that the Separation Wall offered the possibility for directly confronting the Occupation and the wider systems of domination tied up within it. In short, there were a number of activists in Israel in 2003 who, having been influenced by their previous work with anti/autre-globalisation movements in Europe, were looking to bring their politics home. The Wall, through its physicality and what it represents, gave them the opportunity to confront the hierarchy of the state, the neoliberal order and the Occupation, as well as to work pre-figuratively and in solidarity with Palestinians. Their decision to concentrate their efforts on the Separation Wall, therefore, was based on both opportunity—as AAtW Kobi Snitz says, "it is only 45 minutes from Tel Aviv"—and tactical choice, in that they wanted to focus on what they considered "was needed the most" while rejecting previous efforts by the Israeli peace movement (Snitz, interview). As a result AAtW grew out of the mobilisations in Mas'ha in 2003 and brought, as one activist says, "these events into our daily lives and was the beginning of a direct action group that was anarchist-organised, non-hierarchical and directly democratic" (Yossi, interview).

It is important that it is understood that the activists are confronting the building of the Wall first and foremost. Yes, those involved are all against the wider Israeli occupation of Palestine and other forms of domination, yet targeting the Occupation as a whole is problematic, especially using pre-figurative direct action, so the Wall takes on a symbolic role, representing the wider apparatus of domination, enabling the Israeli activists to feel that by confronting the Wall they are confronting "virtual" power and that they are doing what is "needed the most" (Snitz, interview). The Israeli activists themselves suggest that the resistance

against the Wall has united the "radical left", as they call it within Israel. As Yossi, a young member of Anarchists Against the Wall and Black Laundry (Kvisa Shchora)[15] (a radical queer group against the Occupation), says:

> . . . in the end we all support each other and work together. There are arguments, but we maintain a dialogue . . . If there are problems that are so crucial, all those endless debates about anarcho-communism or anarcho-syndicalism become insignificant. We do quite well in Israel, and the radical left is acting together all the time (Yossi, interview).

From a Palestinian perspective, while the Wall still offers an opportunity to confront the Occupation, it also acts as a limiting factor (Taraki 2008:8). I do not wish to suggest that the Occupation and its physical manifestations rob Palestinians of agency (Yiftachel 2004:608). Instead, due to the physical constraints of the Israeli occupation and the creation of "facts on the ground", Palestinians are no longer able to struggle en masse for self-determination and the establishment of a state. The struggle for survival has, with the building of the Separation Wall, come down to the struggle for communities. Therefore, from the Palestinian perspective the Wall as a site of resistance is not to be seen as an opportunity to challenge a visible representation of virtual networks of power and dominant systems of meaning, in the way that it is for a new generation of Israeli activists. I am not suggesting that the Israeli activists see the Wall as a positive symbol which frames their underlying political consciousness. They see the Wall as not just a symbol of Israeli oppression in Palestine but also as a physical barrier which constrains and severely hinders the lives of many occupied Palestinians, yet they themselves are not personally affected by it in an obvious, cogent way and, therefore, the reasons behind their activism are different to those of their Palestinian comrades. This is not problematic, as the practice of solidarity around which the Israelis and Palestinians have built their joint-struggle does not mean or equate to uniformity of belief, background or effects. Solidarity allows for a divergence of experiences that can come together under a wider frame.

What I want to stress is that the Separation Wall and the general "matrix-of-control" that Israel has continued to impose on the West Bank have severely limited Palestinian opportunity for national-level socio-political mobilisation—severely limited but not destroyed. Yet within these limitations the Separation Wall becomes not only a symbol of wider oppression, but through the very real oppression it exercises on Palestinian communities it is a concrete, living aspect of the Occupation that can be challenged. The Wall may offer a symbolic opportunity to challenge the Occupation in its entirety and while it is correct to suggest that the Separation Wall has emerged as a symbol of Palestinian dispossession I do not want to diminish the very real and very raw

reality of the pain that the Wall creates in the villages it affects by reducing the physical violence produced by the Wall to a protest opportunity. The Wall is, in fact, primarily a physical barrier, meant to control, separate and subjugate, and as such it is challenged by the very Palestinian communities that it oppresses. The Palestinian campaign against the Wall, therefore, is primarily a grass-roots campaign about the preservation of communities, with the "objective of destroying the Wall and regaining freedom" (Abu Rahme, interview) and the Palestinian villagers themselves are keen for this to remain the case, as is made clear by Ayed Morrar (interview), an activist from the village of Budrus, when he relates:

> Sometimes among our people there are a lot of ideas about what to do against the Occupation. We here have chosen a different strategy. Our strategy in this small village is that we're turning things over . . . Here we think that it is our problem and that we have to defend our land and do something, and the Israelis and international protestors are only supporting us.

Earlier I presented the case of Modi'in Illit and its multi-layered power structures suggesting the settlement bloc offered us a chance to uncover and witness the multi-faceted layers of power and oppression operating in Israel and the occupied West Bank. The key point is that these multi-factorial power structures lead to a different form of protest, one that is not directed against the state in the traditional claim-making relationship (Tilly 2004) understood by much social movement theory; instead the politics of demand (Gordon 2007) are eschewed for tactics of direct action that circumvent the need to appeal to multi-factorial agents, "as they wouldn't listen to what we have to say" (Raz, interview). Such an understanding of the many faces of Hydra is explained cogently by filmmaker and activist Shai Carmeli-Pollak (2007) talking about the resistance to the Wall in Bil'in and the settlement of Modi'in Illit:

> They [the Israeli military] are not protecting their country. They are protecting the interests of millionaires [the property developers]. The only people who have benefits of this route of the fence in Bil'in are those multi-millionaires.

These interested parties have been a focus of struggle by the activists in Bil'in; however, they are deemed unreachable in the traditional representative sense of the politics of demand (Gordon 2007). They are unrepresentative, unelected property developers whose interests concern profit before Palestinians and their land or even the Israelis and their interests. They are, in the words of Abdullah Abu Rahme (interview) from Bil'in Popular Committee Against the Wall, "profiteers who took advantage of the destructive military operations in the West Bank between 2002–3 and the fear of the Palestinian people towards

security companies who would open fire at anyone who tried to approach the settlements". Therefore, alongside and in solidarity with their Israeli comrades for fear of protesting alone, direct action is undertaken to try and halt expansion of the settlements and thus render such construction unprofitable and unworkable (Snitz, interview).

This part of the struggle against the Separation Wall, or perhaps more accurately against the "matrix-of-control" of which the Wall is but a visible part, is recorded by Carmeli-Pollak (2006) in his film *Bil'in Habibti*. The film documents how, while combating the construction of the Wall, the people of Bil'in along with their Israeli colleagues have been struggling against the expansion of the Matityahu East neighbourhood of Modi'in Illit, demonstrating that such a "rhizomatic" form of power requires countless rhizomatic forms of struggle. For example, to challenge the expansion of Matityahu East, activists from Bil'in constructed a "settlement outpost" on a hillside threatened with confiscation in an attempt to make it difficult for building work to take place. Perhaps the most inventive and pertinent of the creative actions taken by the activists in Bil'in was the decision to "build a hotel" on their occupied land, meaning they had to cross the Wall to the "Israeli" side. A large 5.3-metre-high sign advertising the forthcoming hotel, called "Falastin", was erected in the under-construction neighbourhood of Matityahu East (see Figure 5). Planning permission for the project was also sarcastically sought from the Israeli Civil Administration. Earlier,

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Figure 5: Hotel Falastin in Matityahu East

Bil'in villagers had tried to move into the empty apartments built in Matityahu East on Bil'in's land. Both measures were claimed by the activists to be "both symbolic and practical" within the wider meaning of the Separation Wall (Abu Rahme 2007).

The decision to undertake direct action because those in power too often ignore claims presented to them is expressed clearly by Basel Mansour (2007) of Bil'in when he talks about the village's victory at the Israeli High Court concerning the route of the Wall around Bil'in. He says, "We went to this occupation court not out of faith in it, but to prove that these courts are nothing but tools of the occupation." While the High Court in fact ruled in Bil'in's favour, as is clear from Mansour's statement the village was not expecting such a ruling and took its case to the High Court only to show that such bodies are not concerned with issues of justice for occupied Palestinians. The failure of those in authority to heed the claims of Palestinians in the past, since 1948 (and perhaps even earlier) to the present, show not only the failure of the politics of demand in the case of Israel/Palestine but also how the decision by villages confronting the Separation Wall to undertake direct action is part of a progression, a reaction to the failure of past claims, a loss of faith in the traditional logic of state-based social change, as well as an understanding of where they are situated within the structures of power the Wall renders visible.

In this article I have argued that the link between power, space and protest is fundamental to understanding the protest against the Separation Wall in the villages to the west of Ramallah. However, I have also argued that the structures of power rendered visible in the building of the Wall are not the only power relations being challenged. Concomitant dominant systems of meaning are also being called to account, with the most significant of these being the hierarchical relationship between Israeli occupier and Palestinian occupied. Such an unequal relationship is also being confronted and transformed by consciously conceived notions of the activists' positions within the wider structural and normative relationships of power. The practice of solidarity is a central feature of attempts to overcome such relationships, and results in the resistance against the Wall being deliberately Palestinian-led. Meanwhile challenges to classism and sexism are also attempted by the actions of the Israeli and Palestinian activists struggling against the Separation Wall. However, this is not always a straightforward practice and requires continuous and conscious negotiation and re-negotiation, as discussed by AAtW activist Kobi Snitz (interview):

> This type of work of Palestinian-led struggle requires . . . deprogramming in Israeli society. We . . . exist in Israel and we . . . like it or not, we inherit in our group some features of Israeli society and we need to be aware of that enough to try and weed that out. It isn't just

the feeling of privilege that comes along with being an Israeli Jew, the same is true of sexism and classism that much is true everywhere that even in the radical movement outside social structures are inherited, pressure and influence the internals of the group and it is the job of a democratic group to counter those. In the case of joint work with the Palestinians this requires some learning and this is something that expresses itself on the ground, for example, there is a demo, there is a standoff, at some point the soldiers will always assume that the Israelis are in control no matter how many times you tell them, they simply will not believe it that the Palestinians are calling the shots. Whenever there is a standoff or negotiations they will find one of the Israelis and they will say "you tell them to go back, you tell them to do this or that". The soldiers will never understand, that but we need to . . . refuse to take part and to refuse the assumption that the rapport that Israelis might have with the soldiers could be beneficial in some way, that maybe the soldiers might cut us some more slack because there is some more of a familiarity, that familiarity is quite destructive. Just imagine how this might look to the Palestinians standing back who probably might not hear the conversation and with whom you claim to work in partnership, even if you're having an argument with the soldiers you're telling them off, you're telling them "take off your uniform and refuse to serve in the army", your body language might be enough to transmit a familiarity that will undermine the partnership with Palestinians so I think . . . it is wrong for Israelis to do those negotiations in those circumstances unless the Palestinian Popular Committees want us to do it and they usually don't, they speak for themselves pretty well.

In as much as the activists challenge the Hydra-like system of power bound up in the building of the Wall and the settlement projects, combating the notion of separation, the violence of the Occupation (both military and economic), the expropriation of land and discursive practices such as racism and sexism, there is one factor that is—while not overlooked—implied as opposed to openly articulated. Confronting neoliberalism remains a central tenet of the activists' struggle, especially the Israelis, yet it is an assumed struggle emanating from their position as locally located participants in the autre-globalisation movement (Yossi, interview). Their actions in targeting the Wall directly through direct action are their way of confronting the network of power of which neoliberalism is one strand. As the activists themselves say, they "always try and connect struggles: Palestinian liberation, queer rights, capitalist oppression" (Yossi, interview). Some mention is made by the activists, Israeli and Palestinian, of "profiteers" and "millionaires" (Abu-Rahme, interview; Carmeli-Pollak 2007) yet the direct links between their struggle against the Wall and the struggle against the strengthening marriage between neoliberalism, the Israeli state and the settler project remains for the most part inferred.

Conclusion

In attempting to show the relationship between the joint resistance to the Separation Wall in the villages of Biddu, Budrus and Bil'in and the structures of power behind the Separation Wall, this article has stressed the importance of bringing a spatial awareness into understanding not only the Separation Wall and what it represents but also principally into understanding how the politics bound up in the structure of the Wall impact on subsequent resistance. With my argument I hope to have stressed the importance of thinking about the role structures of power either consciously, as in the case presented here, or unconsciously have on resistance. I have tried to analyse a particular form of resistance and in so doing have found it also necessary to understand and analyse that which is being resisted in order to better understand the motivations and decisions taken by activists. In relation to current debates about Israeli-Palestinian geo-politics, I have shown how the Separation Wall and the resistance to it challenges what Agnew (1994:53) refers to as the "territorial trap"; I have questioned the extent to which the discursive boundary between Israelis and Palestinians (Falah and Newman 1995) is achieved in physical reality, while bolstering Samer Alatout's (2006) thesis that the notion of a separation between territorial and extra-territorial notions of "virtual" power in Israel's occupation of Palestine is a "myth", when in fact the two are constitutive of each other.

In rendering visible the complex relations of power bound up in the building of the Separation Wall I have shown how the discussion moves beyond a traditional state-based narrative of much social movement theory and into a socio-political space where the assumptions and logics of state discourses concerning hierarchical power and socio-political change are challenged. I have demonstrated how the joint-movement against the Separation Wall is part of a wider evolution in socio-political mobilisation, one that aims to acknowledge and contest and attempts to reform relations of domination whenever and wherever they are encountered in a world increasingly thought to be controlled by "virtual" power, while building upon pre-existing histories of resistance in both Israel and Palestine.

The role of the state has become increasingly problematic for activists at the forefront of challenging some of the issues we (as academics and activists) currently face. These issues include not only the example put forward here, but also the growth of the neoliberal state, increasing corporate power, the threat of environmental degradation and the problems of climate change. As has been touched upon, research into social activism has traditionally focused on the state and activists' relationship with the state as the agent of change. However, as we have seen with many of the issues of concern to activists today and the increasing fragmentation of power among non-state actors, the state is no longer the sole agent capable of bringing about change and often the

state holds a problematic position within the wider systems that activists are challenging. This has cemented the role of direct action, which has a long and vibrant history in the region, in confronting power, with direct action being the tactic of choice for groups dealing with such multi-factorial and "virtual" power, where such "virtual" power is physically located.

   As an activist and as an academic, I would like to end by exploring some implications of this study for future activism. I have shown that activists could benefit from thinking more closely about how the physical location of power offers opportunities for resistance or not. The relationship of solidarity and the centrality of such a relationship to resistance is an important organisational lesson upon which activists globally can build in an increasingly trans-community, trans-border environment. The importance of acknowledging structural inequalities in power relationships between us is also important so that our activism does not end up reproducing pre-existing inequalities. We must understand that we cannot wholly eliminate power asymmetries in our relationship with the people alongside whom we struggle, but we should be vigilant in our awareness of inequalities and work to overcome them, circumvent them and hopefully transform them in the process. As activists we must aim to understand power as being multi-faceted, being careful to steer clear of the simple binary generated by adopting only an anti-state position. Mobilisation must be against not only the state but other agents of domination, be they products of neoliberal capitalism or discursive practices. We must be cautious and contextually sensitive to the specific relations of power in the locations of our struggles.

Acknowledgements

Endnotes

[1] Throughout this article, I refer to the separation barrier as the Separation Wall, as this is the term employed by those negatively affected by its existence and those engaged in challenging it. The construction itself is known by many names such as security fence, security barrier, separation fence, separation barrier, Separation Wall and Apartheid Wall.
[2] New forms of resistance in relation to Israel-Palestine; I am not suggesting that direct action had not been used in other resistance/activist movements.
[3] This is not to say that Israel has given up all control over the Palestinian population under occupation. Neve Gordon (2008:200) argues that Israel is still interested in controlling, often violently, the Palestinians that live in what he terms the "seam zones" and along the borders. The villagers that have been the focus of my research are to

be found in the "seam zones" due to the presence of the Separation Wall on their land, and thus, Israel is still interested in controlling them and especially their political articulations through the use of violence. It is this continued use of violence on the part of the Occupation forces that partly explains the presence of Israeli activists, who through their presence, standing in solidarity with their Palestinian comrades, hope to minimise the levels of violence meted out by a military force that respects Israeli lives over Palestinian ones.

[4] There had been talk within government circles for many years about the possibility of a barrier and/or territorial and resource control of the West Bank—see Sharon and Wachman's 1977 "H Plan", for example—yet these were discussions emanating from the state, not from civil society itself.

[5] Danny Tirza had originally been involved in outlining the borders of Palestinian Areas A and B during the Oslo era.

[6] The ultra-orthodox community in Israel is historically one of the poorer amongst Israel's Jewish population due to high birth rates and the male practice of eschewing work in favour of prayer and religious learning.

[7] There have been numerous decisions regarding the re-routing of the Wall. My main argument is that they are invariably to the benefit of Israel even when presented as victories for the Palestinians. The 2007 Israeli High Court decision to re-route the Wall around Qalqilya allowing for Ras Tira, Addab and Wadi Rasha to be incorporated onto the Palestinian side of the Wall frees up Palestinian land for the expansion of the neighbouring settlement of Alfei Menashe and allows Israel to guard against any potential "security" and "demographic" threat posed by having Palestinian villages on the Israeli side of the Wall.

[8] Dai La'kibush can also be translated as "End the Occupation".

[9] Peace Now (http://www.peacenow.org.il).

[10] Gush Shalom (http://www.gush-shalom.org/).

[11] Rabbis for Human Rights (http://rhr.israel.net/). This was established in 1988 and claims to be "the rabbinic voice of conscience in Israel [and] was established with the purpose of giving voice to the Zionist ideal of and the Jewish tradition of human rights".

[12] The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (http://www.icahd.org/eng/).

[13] I do not wish to suggest that national-level organising does not take place in Palestine. However, I would argue that the increasing spatial control of the Israeli occupation makes such organising increasingly difficult, especially in non-institutionalised capacities.

[14] http://www.awalls.org/. Anarchists Against the Wall is the group with which this article is concerned. However, there are other diverse Israeli groups all active in resisting, in a variety of ways, the occupation and its oppressive presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Some of these other groups include: Gush Shalom (http://www.gush-shalom.org/); Israeli Coalition Against House Demolitions (http://www.icahd.org/); Ta'ayush (http://www.taayush.org/); Maschom Watch; Rabbis for Human Rights (http://www.rhr.org.il/); and Physicians for Human Rights (http://www.phr.org.il/).

[15] Kvisa Shchora [Black Laundry] (http://www.blacklaundry.org/eng-index.html).

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