

Smoothing the Striated Space of Occupation – the Struggle over Space in the West Bank

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Introduction: Space of the West Bank and the Increasing Importance of Space in Academia

The international community and its decision-makers are constantly putting an emphasis on solving the Israel-Palestine conflict, but recent initiatives have shown the inability of their plans to bear fruit. The two-state solution dominates the international discourse and is considered to be the only viable option. Unfortunately, while this idea is continually discussed, the Israeli occupation of Palestinian space is increasing and new facts on the ground are being created. More and more settlements are emerging (or being “retroactively legalized”) in the West Bank which makes the idea of a viable Palestinian state more and more remote.

To understand the several dimensions of occupation and their impact on the current debate about the conflict, focusing on space is crucial. Space is a central medium where in the conflict occurs on the ground. On the one side, Israel is constantly reproducing power-relations of occupation over space and controlling Palestinians by regulating their movement. This is done by creating several Palestinian enclaves which fragment the space of the West Bank. As a result, this space is shaped by occupation. On the other side, Palestinian identity is highly dependent on space linked to the prospect of creating a Palestinian state. Hence, resistance to the Israeli occupation of this space exists and even the everyday life of farmers becomes highly political. How is Israel controlling the space of the West Bank and, as a result, reproducing the power-relations of occupation?

Additionally, what forms of counter-powers opposing these plans exist? This article looks at the constant struggle for space in the West Bank, which is an extremely crucial issue for Israel, as well as for the Palestinians.

In recent years, an increasing focus on space in academia is noticeable. The term *spatial turn* (Crang /Thrift 2000, i) indicates the rising importance of this concept in academia, especially in social sciences referring to symbolic, abstract, but also geographical space. Space is a focal point for power, but space is also part of a rivalry between the one who controls it and others who are trying to reclaim it and to resist this dominance.

In this article, I set out to analyze the status quo of the geographical space of the West Bank by looking at how the occupation is shaping space,

but also reproducing its power over it. My basic assumption is that this space is controlled, but that also forms of a constant reclaiming of this space exist. I will base and conceptualize this analysis on theoretical assumptions about the issue of the production of space, as well as on the ideas of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari of *striated* and *smooth* space. With them, I will later interpret the analysis.

I begin this analysis by looking at the macro-level, describing the geography of occupation but also by looking at forms of space reclamation by presenting some important examples. In addition, I will focus the second part of this article on the micro-level by a case study of the area of the South Hebron Hills as a visible form and example of this struggle over the space. Besides existing literature, this paper and especially the case study, is based on interviews and field-research.

Theory: The Re-production of Power within Space and the Struggle between *Striating* and *Smoothing* of Space

The Production of Space

Space is nothing natural and never separated from human actions and society. Spaces are the result of the society which lives in them. Hence, space is constructed and is constantly produced. The concept of the *production of space* is highlighted by several scholars as Henri Lefebvre (Lefebvre 1991) and Neil Smith (Smith 2008), who are both linking the production of space to capitalist societies, which are using space to reproduce themselves. For Lefebvre, space is a result of the societies' structures of capitalism – *social space*. (Lefebvre 1991, 26) The concept of the *production of space* is therefore denaturalizing space by bringing it into the scope of human action. Smith states, "by its actions, this society no longer accepts space as a container, but produces it; we do not live, act, and work 'in' space so much as by living, acting, and working we produce space." (Smith 2008, 116)

As seen in the works of Lefebvre and Smith, space has a crucial role in reproducing capitalism. More generally speaking, space has a double function. It is a result of power but it also reproduces power. We can see how power-relations shape and dominate space, how space is a result of it, but also how this power is reproducing itself in space. For example, Henri Lefebvre analyzed how the city is reproducing capitalist structures. (cf. Merrifield in: Crang / Thrift 2000) Hence, the geographical space as the most visible space is a product of power. The reproduction of domination and power-relations are shaping and interfering in this space. For Smith, the "geographical space is viewed as a social product." (Smith 2008, 107)

Striated and Smooth Space

Space is constructed and hence also constantly transformed– it is contested. This means that besides power-production and domination, counter-powers also exist. An idea that brings an emancipator perspective into the concepts of space. The philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari developed in their book, *A Thousand Plateaus*, a concept of *striated* and *smooth* space which includes this contestation over space. (Deleuze/Guattari 1987) In a very dense philosophical and abstract way, the two authors describe two forms of space which are at the same time interlinked and are mostly not existing exclusively. On the one hand, there is the *striated* space. This space is homogeneous and centered, as well as ordering and structuring space as by lines. (cf. *ibid*, 370) *Striated* space is described as the space of the state. (*ibid*, 474) In contrast, *smooth* space is heterogeneous, not centered to a point and fluid without lines. (cf. *ibid*, 371) Deleuze and Guattari describe this space as the space of nomads, which is opposing the state. (cf. *ibid*, 380 et seqq.)

In their concept, a constant struggle over space is taking place. *Striated* space is aiming to control the *smooth* space which can be seen by the aim of states to *striate* their spaces. They say "One of the fundamental tasks of the State is to striate the space over which it reigns." (*ibid*, 385) An example of this aim to striate space is the state's control of the sea, which

for Deleuze and Guattari's model for *smooth* space but controlled by routes or techniques of observation. (cf. *ibid*, 387) In contrast, the city is described as an example for *striated* space. (cf. *ibid*, 481) These two forms of spaces are constantly interlinked and visible in space. "Smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space." (*ibid*, 474) For Deleuze and Guattari, "even the most striated city gives rise to smooth spaces: to live in the city as a nomad, or as a cave dweller." (*ibid*, 500) Hence, space is constantly transformed and changing.

Even though the concept of Deleuze and Guattari is mostly abstract and theoretical, it can be used for looking at geographical space. Generally, we can sum up from this concept, that space is contested between the ordering of space by the state and the opening of it by other forces. Space is part of this *striation* and *smoothing*. Whereas *striated* space orders and regulates, *smooth* space opens space. Both spaces are interlinked and space is in a permanent process. This can be seen as the emancipator outlook of this theory, as *striated* and controlled space can also be *smoothed* and as a result, challenged.¹ Concerning the geographical space, this abstract concept becomes visible in several aspects. For example, the state defines and regulates its territory, places people at residences, and orders its public space by controlling the streets. In contrast to that, other forces are opposing this control over space by reclaiming the public space or by challenging the state's attempt to regulate its people. Whereas the state draws the lines in the space, and *striates* it, in order to control and dominate it, these actors are *smoothing* this space by disordering and opening these lines. The movement of space between *striation* and *smoothing* opens up the concept of space and adds counter-parts to the domination of space. As a result, the struggle over space becomes central.

¹ Even though Deleuze and Guattari do not claim that *smoothing* necessarily leads to liberation, it always includes a struggle which can have an emancipatory outlook. (Deleuze/Guattari 1987, 500)

The External Production of Space

Society, which lives in a space, is not the only actor which produces or influences said space. Additionally, the state controls and *striates* space. As space is a result of power and reproduction of this power, space can also be externally controlled and produced – externally *striated*. Occupied spaces are shaped by the occupying actor in order to produce a space of its interest, as well as to control and order this space – occupying actors are *striating* space by drawing lines in it which are reproducing their power. As an occupied space, the space of the West Bank can be analyzed in this context. By which processes is this space exactly *striated* by an external power and on the other side, what forms of *smoothing* of this space are opposing this process?

Part I: The Macro-Level – The Space of the West Bank

The Striated Space of the West Bank

How is the *striation* of space visible in the space of the West Bank? The geographical space of the West Bank is shaped by occupation. In this space, the power-relations between occupied and occupying actors are constantly reproduced. This "geography of occupation" (Efrat 2006) is constantly being transformed. In the 1967 war, Israel occupied the territory of the West Bank which was formerly under Jordanian control. After this date, settlement creation and expansion, the Oslo Accords, and other events and processes have shaped the structure and composition of this space and produced a highly fragmented and controlled space. Although the Oslo process seemed to grant autonomy to Palestinians, including the expectation of Palestinians to establish a Palestinian state in the space of the West Bank, this space has been further controlled and divided in recent years.

The West Bank, located between Israel and Jordan, contains 5,655 km² (130 km North to

South and 40-60 km East to West) where in approximately 2.7 million Palestinians were living in 2013 (PASSIA 2014, 351et seqq.). This small space is highly contested and shaped by Israel, under the pretext of security. Some Israeli actors, specifically religious settlers, see this space as a part of the heartland of the Jewish people and as an integral part of Israel. In fact, the occupation has several humanitarian consequences for the Palestinians in this space as shown in reports of United Nation's Office for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). (OCHA 2007) In this space, the power-relations of occupation are becoming visible: an extremely fragmented and controlled space divided into different areas of responsibility and authority and further fragmented and scattered by settlements, checkpoints, and barriers. This fragmentation is also linked to the seizure of land, as well as to the eviction and destroying of Palestinian property. Currently, a system of different mechanisms and instruments is *striating* the space of the West Bank which is backed by adichotomy of power and legitimized by law.

Areas A, B, and C

The division of the space of the West Bank into three different levels of authority, Areas A, B, and C, is a central part of fragmenting and controlling this area. As a result of Oslo II in 1995, the Palestinian Authority was put in charge of civil and security authority in Area A (17% of the West Bank's space, and is exclusively the main Palestinian cities) and civil authority in Area B (22% of the West Bank's space), whereas Israel has in Areas B and C the security authority and in the latter, administrative control. The overwhelming majority of Palestinians are living in Areas A and B, whereas most of the space of the West Bank is classified as Area C (61% of the West Bank), which includes Israeli settlements and military zones, but also at least 150,000 Palestinians. Even though Area C consists mostly of less populated rural land, this division has created, referring to the Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA), 226 enclaves in Areas A and B (PASSIA 2014, 367), and it also divides the space by a fragmentation of authority.

Settlements, Military Zones, and Natural Reserves

Besides the division into these areas of autonomy, the space of the West Bank, especially Area C, is also characterized by Israeli closed military zones and Israeli controlled natural reserves, which further control and fragment this area and whose creation often implies land confiscation. The rising number of Israeli settlements and outposts are crucial for the re-production of Israeli dominance in this space. OCHA states that there are 520.000 settlers living in 135 settlements and 100 outposts in the occupied territories of the West Bank (OCHA oPt 2012a, 3). The rising number of outposts and expansion of settlements makes a viable Palestinian state nearly impossible, even though the praxis of placing their own population in an occupied territory is illegal under international law. Settlements are scattering the space of the West Bank. The process of declaring chosen territory as "state land" to build these settlements also indicates who controls this space and reproduces this domination.² This becomes visible as settlements are mostly built on hilltops and/or on fertile land, which is often linked to loss of Palestinian land. A process that is also called a *civilian occupation* (Segal et al.2003). Specifically by settlements, the space of the West Bank is further divided and dominated.

Roads and Checkpoints

Dividing and controlling this space also includes controlling the movement of the people in this space and their access to the created spaces. In the space of the West Bank, a system of checkpoints and roads is constructing a field of restrictions. On the one side, roads are connecting Israeli settlements with the main Israeli cities of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, and enable a safe and fast travel for settlers. On the other side, Palestinians are restricted to use several roads, have difficult access to them, or

² In this process, a part of land of the West Bank will be declared, in a complex system of bureaucratic and legal mechanisms by Israel, as "state land." Most settlements in the West Bank were established on this land. See Lein 2002 for a precise analysis about this procedure.

have to use so called by-pass roads. (cf. Efrat 2006, 80 et seqq.) In addition to that, a number of checkpoints, some continuous and some sporadic, are increasing the fragmentation of this space and the control of it. According to OCHA, 85 checkpoints, 460 roadblocks, and a permit system for Palestinian cars restrict access to these roads. (OCHA 2007, 58) Neve Gordon states that "Israel's ability to monitor, regulate, and restrict movement (has) served as one of the most prominent and effective forms of control." (Gordon 2008, 35 et seqq.) The roads are fragmenting space, creating enclaves and checkpoints that are controlling the entry and exit to them. This controls and regulates the movement of Palestinians in this space.

The Separation Wall and East Jerusalem

The separation wall, whose construction started in 2002 during the second Intifada, is another crucial issue of occupation in the space of the West Bank. This barrier is restricting the access of Palestinians to parts of the West Bank. According to OCHA, 10% of the West Bank's territory is cut off by this barrier and were partly confiscated. (OCHA 2007, 46 et seqq.) This wall links on the one side Israeli settlements to the Israeli territory and on the other side it cuts off Palestinian farmers from their land and controls Palestinian movement. In early 2014, 62% of this barrier was finished with a length of 442 km (PASSIA 2014, 366). East Jerusalem is especially affected by this system. Occupied by Israel in 1967, the barrier, checkpoints, and a permit system for Palestinians from the West Bank, as well as Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem have transformed the space of the West Bank and separated East Jerusalem, the former economic and cultural center for Palestinians, from the rest of the West Bank (cf. Yousef et al. 2008). This has led "to the creation of a new spatial, functional, and social reality for the Palestinians in East Jerusalem." (ibid., 3) This transformation shows again the power-relations of occupation in the space of the West Bank as to how Israel is able to shape the space and to establish facts on the ground.

A Scattered Landscape

When traveling around the West Bank, you immediately notice this scattered landscape, fragmented into many parts. This fragmentation is produced by all these mechanisms and instruments and which is linked to the control of this space as well as of its inhabitants. Elisha Efrat states:

From a geographical point of view, occupation is usually executed by a massive penetration of military forces into a territory, by dominating roads and junctions, strategic points, important regional and environmental sites, and also towns and villages in which most of the population is concentrated (Efrat 2006, 5).

This is seen in the space of the West Bank by several mechanisms of control. Occupation has fragmented the space and created several enclaves in the space of the West Bank in which Palestinians are living. As Neve Gordon analyzes, "the areas in which the Palestinians had full control were like an archipelago, while areas controlled by Israel were strategic corridors that interrupted the territorial contiguity of the West Bank." (Gordon 2008, 178) Even though Israel claims to use most of these mechanisms for security reasons, many studies report that these mechanisms are heavily affecting the humanitarian conditions of civilians and of their daily life. (cf. OCHA 2007 or Kadman 2013) A Palestinian activist adds in an interview with me, "I think one of the biggest successes of the occupation is the ability to divide the Palestinian community, most profoundly geographically, and within geographical divisions you also have different systems of belief." (Interview with a Palestinian activist) Hence, the geographical fragmentation leads also to social and political fragmentation of Palestinians in the West Bank.

A Fragmented Space of Enclaves

The Palestinian cities in the Area A, and some villages in Area B, can be considered as these enclaves. By keeping people in several and separated enclaves, the inhabitants are perfectly controlled as Palestinians are placed in several populated areas, which are not connected and

where movement between is restricted. This process can be called enclavization. With this situation, occupation is reproduced and power generated. The remaining people outside these enclaves are facing several difficulties in daily life, as well as land confiscation especially in the rural area. (cf. OCHA 2007, 102et seqq.) This has led to a growth in the main cities in the West Bank – an urbanization that changed the space of the West Bank including a decline of the agricultural sector. The Palestinian activist Fadi Quran describes this process in the context of occupation and enclavization, as “people end up leaving their land and leaving their homes and leaving their rural areas. And this creates space for Israel to take over these areas.” (Interview with Fadi Quran) By this spatial change, economic bubbles such as Ramallah, were created without any real economic base and mostly supported by foreign aid. As a result, Fadi Quran argues, the international community is supporting this enclavization and he states that “all that creates a new infrastructure of the West Bank. So the international community is helping to build this separation and segregated infrastructure, which Israel wants.” (ibid.) The role of the international community in this process can also be seen in funding the paving of by-pass roads as by USAID and others, which also contributes to the fragmentation of the West Bank. (cf. Hamdan 2011, 88)³ This enclavization and increasing fragmentation of the West Bank can be interpreted and read within the concept of *striated* space. Space is divided and regulated. Lines of enclaves are drawn in order to control this space. These enclaves of the space of the West Bank can be described as *striated* space(s).

Smoothing the Striated Space of Occupation

Which forms of reclaiming of this space and opposing the occupation related to space are existing? Which new spaces are created? The *striation* of the West Bank’s space, the creation of enclaves, and the dominance of the occupying power are challenged in several ways. Some

actions are more academic, some performed in art, others linked to protest and direct action or occurring in daily life. In the following section, some selected examples of projects and forms of reclaiming space, opposing occupation, and *smoothing* space are presented.

Architecture and Art

How does architecture shape space? The architectural group DAAR (*Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency*) works at an academic, and also practical, level on architecture with the aim of decolonizing space. (Petti/Hilal/Weizman 2013, 18) In the book, *Architecture after Revolution*, they describe their aim as “liberation from architecture, understood as a political strait jacket, an instrument of domination and control.” (ibid., 2013, 19) Subversively, they try to re-use the architecture of occupation by “discursive and spatial interventions.” (ibid., 2013, 28) In several projects, they are developing architectural ideas to transform space, mostly on a theoretical level without an actual implementation, which includes the re-use of an abandoned Israeli military base by creating a nature area, or the re-use of settlements in order to break the architectural logic. A more specific project is called *Campus in Camps*, whose idea was to reformulate the space of a refugee camp as a space of politics and representation. (Petti 2013, 19et seqq.) The work of DAAR is trying to reclaim the space of the West Bank practically, but also on a theoretical level, by utilizing to knowledge-production. Focused on specific places, they try to change the spatial order of the occupation – a very specific method of the *smoothing* of space.

Another form of a more abstract, creative, and aesthetic way of reclaiming space is art. A central space for projecting ideas of reclaiming and subverting the physical structure of occupation is the separation wall. Especially in urban spaces, street art and graffiti are visible on the wall, and messages are placed which criticize the occupation and Israeli domination. The scholar Charles Tripp sees this *art of resistance* as a reclaiming of public space:

³ For a further analysis of the international role in this context see: Hamdan 2011

It demonstrates that public space is no longer monopolized by the politically powerful and the military occupiers. This is a powerful message of resistance that has been used in countless places. When the Israelis built the separation wall, surrounding and closing in the West Bank, they were inadvertently building a massive space on which graffiti could flourish. Flourish they did, with a mass of graffiti, with images, sometimes of Arafat, sometimes of Palestine, and words sometimes in Arabic, sometimes in English. (Tripp 2012, 398)

For him, through street art, people try to escape the oppression and domination of daily life, but also to deride authorities. (Tripp 2012, 398) Other art projects and installations, such as the project *The Bridge*, are trying to overcome the division of space and presence of occupation in space.⁴ Through art, subversive messages and symbols of resistance are placed on symbols of occupation. This reclaiming of specific and selected elements is a symbolic resistance and symbolic *smoothing* of space, even though it does not directly change them.

Protests and Direct Actions

Protests and direct actions against occupation are often linked to space, particularly to land confiscation. After the second Intifada, and especially with the construction of the separation wall, several local committees emerged, as well as several forms of protest, which are mostly known as non-violent or popular resistance.⁵

In several villages in the West Bank, Palestinians are organized into opposing land confiscation. The weekly protests and demonstrations such as those in al-Nabi Saleh or Bil'in are two prominent examples of Palestinian non-violent, popular struggle against settlements, land confiscation, and the separation wall. In Bil'in for example, people have been active for nine years in resisting land confiscation by settlement expansion and the construction of the barrier that will cut off an overwhelming

majority of their agricultural land. (cf. Mata 2014) Besides this, there are also campaigns as *Stop the Wall* who are constantly trying to face spatial developments of occupation – in the case of *Stop the Wall* against the separation wall. The construction of this wall, justified by reducing terrorist attacks in Israel, is cutting off land of the West Bank, and as a result, changing the Green Line, the internationally recognized 1967 border and includes with it, the confiscation of Palestinian land. "In the north, huge areas of cultivated land and water resources, which were the main source of livelihood for thousands of Palestinian families, fell under control of the Israeli military authority." (Jumaa 2014, 39) The campaign organized for example protests, tree plantings, and awareness work against the wall's construction.⁶ These actions are trying to reclaim space, and additionally, the route of the wall changed.

Also direct actions, more symbolic and proactive, are taking place in this field. An example which raised a lot of attention, also in the international media, was *Bab Al-Shams* which took place in January 2013. Several Palestinian activists and international supporters set up a village of tents in the so-called area of E-1, east of Jerusalem. This area is considered by the Israeli government to be a prime location for settlement construction. A pending Israeli plan, which would further separate the West Bank from East Jerusalem, would complete a circle of Israeli settlements around East Jerusalem. Around 200 Palestinians from different political and geographical backgrounds participated in *Bab al-Shams*. Even though the place was evicted by Israeli special police forces after 48 hours, it raised a lot of attention from international media outlets.⁷

Concerning the strategy of *Bab al-Shams*, one of its organizers states in an interview that "the idea here was to be proactive and to reclaim land that was going to be confiscated, but before there was an actual fact on the ground." (Interview with a Palestinian activist) *Bab al-Shams* reclaimed space by a proactive action and people from different backgrounds came together and participated in this action

⁴ See: thebrdg.net for more information.

⁵ Nevertheless, this idea has a much longer tradition and is very heterogeneous. One Palestinian activist which interviewed states that popular resistance is everything that has the "aim to destruct the status quo and to break the public order of occupation." (Interview with a Palestinian activist)

⁶ See: stopthewall.org for more information

⁷ For an overview and analysis about the protests see: Kopty 2013

in order to overcome the social and political fragmentation, despite the fact that political parties as Fatah were partly trying take it over. (cf. Kopty 2013, 101f) The short duration of this action did not change things on the ground directly and the village was evicted quickly. But as Fadi Quran, an activist and participant of *Bab al-Shams*, states, it was “more a symbolic act to show the world how Israel is taking away the space than an actual effort to take back the space.” (Interview with Fadi Quran) Abir Kopty, another organizer of *Bab al-Shams*, concludes, “Bab al-Shams has become a symbol; we have to turn it into a reality. This means Palestinians need to return to the land that belongs to them and succeed in remaining on it.” (Kopty 2013, 103) Ideas like *Bab al-Shams*, to be proactive and reclaim space, were also used in several cases later on such as in Ein Hijleh in February 2014.

Popular resistance is in several ways linked to the reclaiming of space. Demonstrations, as well as direct actions, were used to oppose spatial interventions of occupation in the West Bank. In this context, *Bab Al-Shams* must be seen as a specific moment in this process where many people from the popular resistance came together. (Interview with a Palestinian activist) *Bab al-Shams* reclaimed space in a proactive action. By bringing people together, it also overcame the spatial and therewith political and social fragmentation. It created its own facts on the ground and smoothed space - even if only for a short while.

The Daily Life of Farmers

Reclaiming and *smoothing* space are also happening in daily life, especially in the daily life of farmers. Even though this action is not most visible, less action-oriented and covered by international media, Fadi Quran argues, that “the most effective way of reclaiming space in Palestine is the agricultural sector.” (Interview with Fadi Quran)

As shown before, the process of urbanization is central for the *striation* of space, including the fragmentation and creation of enclaves in the space of the West Bank. In this process,

the decline of Palestinian agriculture plays an important role. On one side, people were evicted from their homes and had to leave their land, but due to economic pressure and the creation of a new economy based on foreign aid, people also left the country side in order to find a job in the cities. (ibid.) Furthermore, people in rural areas of the West Bank are facing several challenges as the threat of land confiscation and settler violence, as well as gross discrimination in the allocation of services such as water, electricity, and development. (cf. OCHA 2007 103-119)

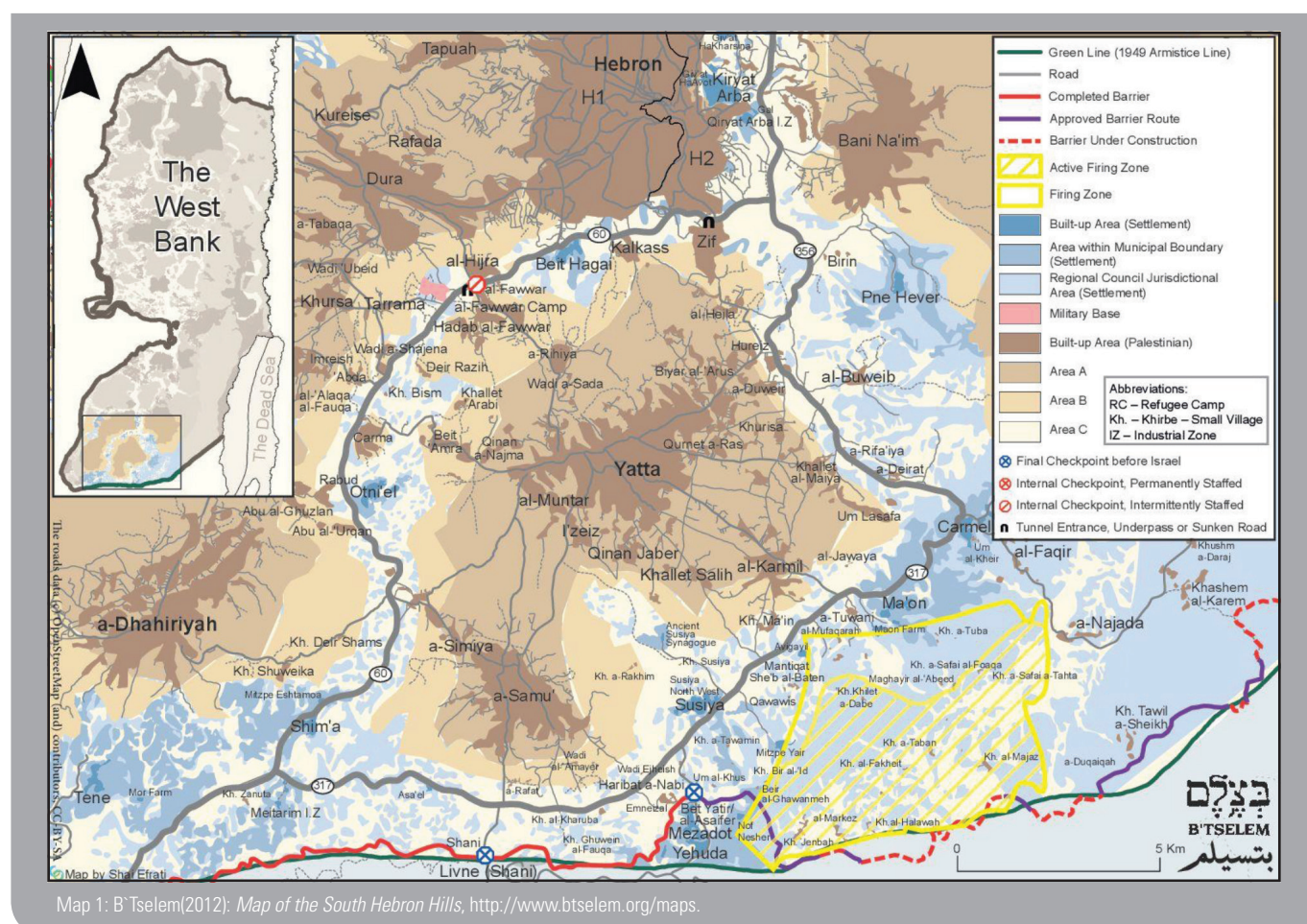
Especially in Area C, these developments are visible and impact the humanitarian conditions of Palestinians. Several reasons are contributing to these conditions. First, the seizure of land through the creation of closed military zones, firing zones, natural reserves or settlements which are linked to demolition and eviction of Palestinian land and property. (cf. OCHA oPt 2013a) In addition to that, Palestinians in Area C have less access to services and no possibility to construct and develop their land. (OCHA 2007, 105 et seqq.) Construction is prohibited for Palestinians in 70% of the Area C and heavily restricted in an additional 29% (Kadman 2013, 15), whereas settlements are expanding, including illegally built out posts. Hence, Palestinians are starting to construct “illegally” as well and face demolition orders. Infrastructure such as roads, clinics, schools, or the provision of water, electricity, and sanitation are less provided and difficult to develop. According to a study by OHCA, the rural life of Palestinians is impacted by the occupation, including Palestinians’ access to jobs, markets, water, and land. (OCHA 2007, 102 et seqq.) For them, “Palestinian communities in Area C are among the most vulnerable in the West Bank.” (cf. OCHA oPt 2013a) Additionally, there are around 5,000 Palestinians living in closed military and firing zones (18% of the territory of the West Bank) and are in a constant fear of displacement, demolition of their houses, and face difficult access to services. (OCHA oPt 2012b)

This dire situation gets especially obvious in several areas of the West Bank: Most of the Jordan Valley, 28.5% of the West Bank, is classified as Area C where in construction is extremely restricted and development nearly impossible.

Although they face these restrictions, farmers continue to stay there even though the overwhelming majority of fertile land is now used by Israeli settler farmers. (Kadman 2013, 59-76) Another example is the area of Ma'ale Adumim, East of Jerusalem, where Israel plans to expand its settlements in the area under the E-1 plan, as well as constructing the separation wall. Here, Bedouins are facing eviction, loss of their land, and live under harsh conditions but they stay and continue with their daily life. (ibid.,43-58)

of enclavization, opening the space and finally, *smoothing* the space. Fadi Quran relates this action to popular resistance, as he states:

Those who are doing the best job reclaiming space are small farmers who continue making use of their land when they enter their land, threatened by Israelis, and plant that land with different agricultural products and then defend that land against settler attacks and against Israeli attacks. (Interview with Fadi Quran)



These examples indicate that despite these various threats and hardship for Palestinian farmers, they stay on their land, which is located outside of the enclaves of the *striated* space of the West Bank. Remaining in these places and continuing to cultivate their land, as well as to go out with their livestock on a daily basis is an extremely effective form of resistance in everyday life. They are disrupting the process

Part II: The Micro-Level –The Case of the South Hebron Hills⁸

One specific case and place where the *striation* and the *smoothing* of the space of the West Bank is exercised, is the area of the South Hebron Hills, especially the area of Masafer Yatta (Greater Yatta). As visible in the map (Map 1), this area is located at the very south of the West Bank, directly at the border to Israel and close to the Negev desert. The center of this area, the town of Yatta which is in Area A, is a perfect example of an enclave, as this town is surrounded by Area C. The area around Yatta is an extremely rural area and is characterized by smaller Palestinian villages where farmers, shepherds, and Bedouin are living, partly in a semi-nomadic way, as well as in temporary housing structures as tents. People in this area are living mostly on a subsistence level or produce for the local market. In recent years, the occupation has been getting more and more visible in this area which increased the problems for its Palestinian residents. But on an everyday level, Palestinians are opposing these developments.

The Increasing Occupation of the South Hebron Hills Area and its Scope of *Striation*

According to Mohammad Eweidat, from the Palestinian NGO the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC), the area of the South Hebron Hills “[has] suffered from three factors: from occupation, from desertification, and also from the settler and settlements in that area.” (Interview with Mohammad Eweidat) All these factors are interlinked and create a situation of hardship for the Palestinian people there, including limited access and the provision of basic services.

As this area is located in Area C, development is limited as very few construction permits are issued. Hence, construction of water pipes, solar panels, or houses are often built without Israeli permission and as a result are at threat of demolition. For that reason, people in this area often are living in temporary houses such as tents. This situation is described in a report of this area by the human rights NGO, B’Tselem, as “the threat of demolition and expulsion.” (Kadman 2013, 27) Besides the limited construction, the living conditions in that area are also characterized by an insufficient access to water, electricity, and sanitation. Concerning water, people in this area especially suffer in the summer due to their dependency on high-priced tanked water which is brought to the villages by tractor or by a private company. As agriculture is the people’s main source of life, water is “the main factor in that area.” (Interview with Mohammad Eweidat) Even though some small villages in the past years have been provided with electricity, many are still not allowed to build connections to the already existing networks. Besides the missing or insufficient provision of these services, there is also a lack of access to services such as schools and medical care. These services are rare in this area and their construction is extremely limited by Israeli authorities. Additionally, most of the area is serviced by unpaved roads which make travel to these services even harder.

In contrast to the situation of Palestinian communities, several Israeli settlements, including agricultural farms, were built in this area beginning in the 1980s. These settlements visibly show the contrast to Palestinian villages in the area as settlements have regular access to more and cheaper water, services, and electricity as well the permits for construction. In this dry area, green settlements stand out in the landscape. Besides the eviction of Palestinians, settlements and outposts have another impact on Palestinian life, as settler violence in that area is significant. (cf. OCHA 2007, 117) One example for the impact of settlements is the Palestinian village of Susiya, south of Yatta, built in the 19th century and based on agriculture. The inhabitants of Susiya are suffering from the current situation. In the 1980s, a settlement was built close to Susiya

⁸ This chapter is mostly based on field visits and interviews as well as on analyses of OCHA (OCHA 2007, 103-119 and 2013b) and B’Tselem. (Kadman 2013, 27-42)

and some years later the land of Susiya was declared an archeological site by the Israeli Civil Administration. This led to the eviction and expulsion of the 25 families of Susiya and to a demolition of their buildings. (cf. Kadman 2013, 37et seqq.) The people of this village built up a new village, only a few hundred meters away from their old village. This village consists of temporary buildings such as tents. People have no access to the water piping and electricity towers, which are running just a few meters next to their village, which are meant to service the nearby settlement. On the archeological site of the old village, Susiya, an Israeli outpost has been constructed illegally but does not face the threat of demolition. In addition to limited construction and less access to services, Palestinians in Susiya also suffer from violent attacks, demolition of their property, and destruction of their land by settlers. (ibid.)

In addition to the general situation in Area C and the impact of settlements, closed military and firing zones were also declared in parts of the area of the South Hebron Hills, which has caused several impacts for Palestinian communities in the area. Mainly, it has prevented Bedouin and shepherds from access to these areas, limited their movement, and led to demolishing of Palestinian communities inside these areas. Hence, these people, who are based mostly on livestock, face crucial problems.⁹ The so-called *Firing Zone 918* directly led to these main consequences. Firing Zone 918 was established in the 1980s despite the fact that Palestinians were living in twelve communities on the 3,300 hectares of this zone for decades. (ibid.,31 et seqq.) For the first years, the firing zone did not have direct consequences for them, but in 1999 the Israeli army evicted most of the Palestinians in that area and destroyed or confiscated their property. (OCHA oPt 2013b) Noga Kadman described this process in a study for B'Tselem:

Dozens of unrecognized and unplanned villages, whole villages under threat of demolition, and a thousand people threatened with expulsion on the grounds that their homes are in a firing zone: All this is the result of Israel's policy in the South Hebron Hills. (Kadman 2013, 40)

⁹ Indeed, Bedouins everywhere in modern nation-states face some form of limitation of movement, but in the case of the South Hebron Hills and also in the West Bank this process is reinforced by occupation, which is absent from other cases

Even though this case was taken to the Israeli High Court of Justice, "in July 2012, the Israeli authorities confirmed their intention to evacuate eight of the twelve villages of Masafer Yatta." (Al-Haq 2014) In addition to the eviction plans, construction is nearly impossible in this area, services such as schools are far away and settler violence is present.

The occupation impacts the humanitarian conditions of Palestinians in the South Hebron Hills by creating a space where daily life is extremely hard. Development is limited, people live in fear of demolition and settler attacks, access to basic services and the providing of essential services is limited or even absent, and movement is restricted. According to OCHA, "between 1998 and 2002, 75 families (837 people) from 11 hamlets (clans) were forced to leave the area of Masafer Yatta." (OCHA 2007, 117) This action is against international law because it forbids an occupying power from displacing civilians in an occupied territory. Concerning this process, one of my interview partners argues that:

Basically the Israeli government's strategy is to cleanse the whole area of the South Hebron Hills and concentrate most Palestinians in either Yatta or Hebron. [...] To remove, cleanse as much land as possible from the Palestinian population and close them in specific enclaves that are controlled and restrained. (Interview with a Palestinian activist)

This is the basic mechanism of *striating* space in the West Bank. The occupation creates conditions in the space of the South Hebron Hills which are leading to an increasing enclavization and fragmentation of the space of the West Bank. The extremely visible division and difference between Israeli settlements and Palestinian communities in this area indicates who has the power over resources. Nevertheless, Palestinians are opposing this process.

Opposing the Process of Enclavization in the South Hebron Hills

Despite these conditions, which make life for Palestinians in the area of the South Hebron Hills extremely difficult, Palestinian farmers and shepherds are resisting their displacement and dispossession. They are doing this through protest and petitions, but also on a daily basis by continuing to stay on their land and cultivate it. This struggle is supported by several NGOs and political groups. Firing Zone 918 has raised a lot of attention through the utilization of campaigns and petitions.¹⁰ On a daily basis, Palestinian organizations such as Al-Haq and UAWC are providing legal support to Palestinians by fighting against demolition orders and plans of eviction through the legal process, by appealing orders in court. Besides this legal support, Palestinian and international NGOs are also supporting Palestinians in the South Hebron Hills through several other projects. For example, UAWC is working on a project on the distribution of fodder to a Bedouin area based on community cooperatives and the German NGO *medico international* is managing a mobile clinic, as well as a project to distribute solar panels and wind turbines to Palestinian communities in the South Hebron Hills. All these actions and initiatives are helping the people to stay on their land.

Besides the support and solidarity from outside actors, most crucial for opposing the process of enclavization and expulsion, are the people, who are living in this area and are resisting by staying on their land. The NGO B'Tselem has collected testimonies of Palestinians from the South Hebron Hills, especially from villages in Firing Zone 918. These sources and statements from inhabitants in the area are rather indicative of the situation both in terms of their harsh reality, but also in terms of their determination.

For example, 65 year old Meyasar Dababseh from Khirbet a-Safai states:

The land, the animals, the work, and the fact that I've gotten used to life here are the main reasons why I'm here and am holding on to this place. [...] In 1999, the military expelled us from the village and we went to live in al-Baraka for a few months until we returned. [...] I have no other place apart from here. I'd rather die here and go to hell than leave the cave where I spent my childhood and my adolescence and my entire life. [...] The sheep and the land are our source of life. We inherited them from our fathers and forefathers. (Dababseh in: Kadman 2013, 36)¹¹

The strong will to reclaim the land, as well as to stay and to oppose the plans to be expelled from this area, is a form of direct resistance which is practiced in actions of Palestinians on an everyday level, by going to their fields or by just living in the area. This praxis was also highlighted by my interview partners and can also be seen in many other parts of the West Bank as a form of resistance. The Arabic term *sumud*, a central political slogan for Palestinians, meaning steadfastness, also expresses these actions of Palestinians in the South Hebron Hills, as my interview partners Riad Othman and Mohammad Eweidat both stressed. For example, Mohammad Eweidat stated that, "*sumud* means they stay on their land despite occupation and desertification." (Interview with Mohammad Eweidat) Without romanticizing the hard rural life, the daily struggle of Palestinians in that area can be considered as highly political and an effective opposing of the process of enclavization.

But why do people act like this, come back to evicted and destroyed villages to build up communities again, "illegally" and under threat of demolition? Meyasar Dababseh's words above illustrate a common theme found in interviews. Living on this land is the core of people's life, their tradition, and culture. Hence, people stay there and return. Riad Othman, the Representative for *medico international* in Palestine & Israel, states that if these people would surrender and move to an enclave as Yatta, this would include losing their livestock and therewith lose their culture and identity, which would destroy their lives. (Interview with Riad Othman)

¹⁰ Several Palestinian, and also some Israeli groups, are supporting the petition *no firing zone 918*. In this petition, human rights violations are addressed, the eviction plans rejected, and the right for Palestinians to live in this area claimed. This petition can be found at: <http://nofiringzone918.org/petition/>

¹¹ More testimonies can be found in Kadman 2013 or at: <http://www.btselem.org/testimonies?tid=225>

By looking at the case and the space of the South Hebron Hills, two main developments are noticeable, which are also linked to happenings in the space of the West Bank on the macro-level. On the one side, these are the results of occupation which are worsening the humanitarian conditions of Palestinians in the area and impact their daily life. Linked to the process of enclavization, this can be interpreted as a *striation* of space, creating a fragmented and controlled space of separated enclaves in this space. On the other side, Palestinian farmers and shepherds in this area are opposing this process through their daily life. They stay on their land and if they are expelled, they return – they reclaim the space. This can be interpreted as an example of *smoothing* the space. The lines of the enclaves, the *striated* space, are made fluid by these daily-life actions of Palestinians in the rural land outside of these enclaves. Hence, these enclaves are not completely able to be enclosed. Subverting the space of occupation by everyday actions in the rural sphere can be described as a *smoothing* of *striated* space.

Conclusion

How is Israel controlling the space of the West Bank and as a result reproducing the power-relations of the occupation? Additionally, what forms of counter-powers opposing these plans exist? Referring back to the initial questions of this paper, interpreting the space of the West Bank with the concept of *smooth* and *striated* space shows several results:

On the one hand, the space of the West Bank is a space of occupation. By several mechanisms and instruments, the geographical space is *striated*. Lines are drawn around several separated enclaves. This fragmentation of space

is also a reproduction of power-relations of occupation as Israel is able to control the space, as well as the people in this space by placing them into these enclaves. Movement is limited and people suffer in daily life from this order.¹² In addition to that, the process of enclavization and fragmentation of geographical space is also linked to a social and political fragmentation: People are divided from each other and are living in different realities.

On the other hand, various ways of *smoothing* this *striated* space are visible in the sphere of art, architecture, demonstrations, and direct actions, as well as in the daily life of farmers. All of them are trying to open this fragmentation by focusing on several instruments of occupation. These actions are making the enclaves fluid by opposing the idea of being controlled in these separated entities. The *smoothing* of space in the West Bank is very heterogeneous and has varying degrees of effectiveness. Some actions include reclaiming space and searching for new spaces others are subverting and transforming it. Nevertheless, no form can be seen as the only solution. Opposing occupation in space is performed on several and interlinked levels.

One quote from Deleuze and Guattari, addressing the basic difference of *smooth* and *striated* space, comes very close to what we see in the space of the West Bank:

There is a significant difference between the spaces: sedentary space is *striated*, by walls, enclosures, and roads between enclosures, while nomad space is *smooth*, marked only by "traits" that are effaced and displaced with the trajectory. (Deleuze/Guattari 1987, 381)

The space of the West Bank is fragmented into several sub-spaces, but this space is contested by *striating* and *smoothing* it. Space is a product of power-relations and reproduces them, but space is also constantly changing. This includes an emancipatory outlook to overcome the order of occupation. In this context, it is also important to mention that this paper mostly focused on the geographical space which is even so interlinked with for example the symbolical space and the space of knowledge.

If we finally use this outcome to refer back to the role of the international community and their

¹² Nevertheless, the actors in this space are complex and not only dividable into Palestinian actors resisting and Israeli actors occupying space. Both sides are heterogenic. Some Palestinian elites are also profiting from the status quo, as from the enclave and economic bubble of Ramallah as well as from international aid which supports the process of fragmentation and enclavization. In addition to that, the *striation* of space and the process of enclavization is not solely a result of occupation. It is also supported by state-building initiatives and linked to global level neoliberal development. On the other side, there are several Israeli or joint Israeli and Palestinian NGOs, groups, and activists, who are opposing settlement expansion and giving support to Palestinian actions.

attempts to solve the Israel-Palestine conflict, the focus on space has several implications: As seen in Part I of this paper, the international community is supporting the process of fragmentation and enclavization with their aid-policies in Palestine by paving by-pass roads or producing economic bubbles. This is contributing to the process of Palestinians leaving their land. Fortunately, there are also some examples of NGOs and international aid countering these processes as the work of the German NGO *medico international* to support Palestinians in the South Hebron Hills or the Palestinian agricultural NGO, UAWC, which received some funding from the European Union for programs to strengthen farmers in the West Bank.

This shows that the international community is heterogenic, but nevertheless the dominant forces and programs support the *striation* of space. Additionally, these policies of the international community are also linked to the international discourse to solve the Israel-Palestine conflict. As stated in the introduction, a two-state solution appears as the dogmatic solution for a true peace and end of the conflict in the discourse of the international community. This paper has shown that for this aim, looking at space is crucial, including a reflection of the aid-policies by the international community. The space of the West Bank in the status quo has no possibility for the establishment of a viable Palestinian state. Furthermore, by initiating projects such as paving by-pass roads, this process is further disturbed and blocked by international aid.

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Interviews:

- Interview with Fadi Quran (Palestinian activist in several actions of Popular Resistance also working for the Palestinian human rights organization al-Haq) in Ramallah, 20.04.2014.
- Interview with a Palestinian activist involved in several actions of Popular Resistance (anonymized) in Ramallah, 23.04.2014.
- Interview with Mohammad Eweidat (employee of the Palestinian agricultural NGO Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC) supervising projects in the South Hebron Hills) in Hebron, 07.05.2014.
- Interview with Riad Othman (Representative in Palestine & Israel for the German NGO *medico international* including the management of projects in the South Hebron Hills) in Ramallah, 06.05.2014.

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