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## The Struggle for Legitimacy: Dissecting Discourse on the Expansion of Gilo

By Elise Goldin

### **Introduction**

In August 2009, the United States called for a freeze on Israeli settlements in order to promote peace talks between Israel and Palestine. Israel agreed to the settlement freeze yet less than three weeks later approved a plan by the Israel Land Administration and the Jerusalem Planning Committee to build an additional 900 houses in the town of Gilo. While much of the international community understands Gilo to be an illegal settlement built on occupied territory, Israel disputes this claim and views Gilo as a legal suburb of Jerusalem. Though many states, international organizations, and human rights groups protested Gilo's expansion at the time of announcement, development continued nonetheless. A great deal of media and other forms of propaganda projects were issued from a multiplicity of perspectives in an attempt to sway the world towards certain political positions on Gilo's expansion. In order to do this, various parties worked to influence the way that the public imagined or perceived settlement expansion as legal or illegal, humane or inhumane. The Israeli growth coalition and Palestinian groups manipulated the geographic imagination to legitimize or delegitimize claims for land. This idea will be explored through the case study of Gilo to demonstrate how competing actors employ history, race, nationalism, and rhetoric to stake claims to land.

## *Roadmap*

During the course of this paper, I attempt to place Gilo's expansion in a theoretical context, using the Political Economy of Place, to demonstrate the ways that various groups attempt to manipulate the public's geographic imagination to promote and legitimize or delegitimize settlement growth. I will first introduce the history of Israeli settlements and the history of Gilo in order to provide historical context for Gilo's expansion. I go on to define important concepts in my paper such geographic imagination, and discourse, as well as the major actors involved. I lay out relevant international laws which are cited in arguments for and against expansion. Next, I discuss relevant theories incorporated into the Political Economy of Place, the theory which guides the framework for the paper.

I then look to strategies employed by the Israeli growth coalition to manipulate the geographic imagination and to secure claims to both Gilo and Jerusalem as the capital. The Israeli growth coalition impacts the power of naming places, the ways that international laws are interpreted, the use of racial and religious rhetoric, constructing history, and finally the ways that the media influences discourse as strategies to influence the value of the land and the way development can take place. Similarly, Palestinian groups, such as media outlets in Palestine or Palestinian solidarity groups internationally, attempt to place Gilo's expansion in a human rights discourse and present Gilo's expansion as a human rights abuse against international law. Although Palestinian groups often have less power than Israeli growth coalition, actors are able to compete for claims to land through the manipulation of how the land is perceived and valued. Palestinian groups use racial rhetoric such as apartheid, names in the media, art, or international organizations to jump scale and gain an international voice in order to influence the geographic imagination of settlement expansion and impact development. Finally, I conclude the paper by

analyzing about the broader significance of Gilo's expansion as a commentary on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict today, as well as its commentary on how political players attempt to control land.

### *Settlements in Jerusalem*

The creation and expansion of settlements has been a contentious issue since the first Zionist groups began moving to Israel and forming new colonies. In 1948 after the end of World War II, the United Nations officially recognized Israel as an independent state within the boundaries of what is now known as the "green line." In the first few years, Israel established itself as a powerful nation-state with the support of many strong international actors, most significantly the United States. At that time, Israel forced over 70, 000 Arabs out of West Jerusalem and embarked on major development projects (Abowd 2000, 35). Through the extension of property taxes to Palestinian controlled land, many indigenous Arab communities were forced to sell their land to the Israeli government, and Israel confiscated 60- 70 percent of Palestinian Arab land (Kirby and Abu-Rass 1999, 217). Israel continued to grow extensively in its first two decades while the government played a major role in managing capital, banking departments, most natural resources, and housing and agriculture (Kirby and Abu-Rass 1999, 216). In 1967, Israel fought the Six-Day War with Egypt, Jordan, and Syria in which Israel acquired additional blocks of land which extended past the green line. Though Israel has returned pieces of this land to its neighbors, it is this block of land on which new settlements are built today. Most international bodies, including the United Nations, currently consider this land illegally acquired and controlled. Peace negotiations tend to emphasize a "two-state solution" in which Israel would return to its original borders within the green line and Palestine would be established as an internationally recognized state.

While these negotiations have been on the table for decades, Israel continues to expand settlements past the green line in areas around Jerusalem such as East Jerusalem and the West Bank. These expansion efforts make it difficult for negotiations to continue as Israel builds on what would become a future Palestinian state. Between 1992 and 2001, for example, the Jewish population in East Jerusalem rose from 141,000 to 170,000 (Gregory, 2004, 99). In addition, highway systems which connect Jewish settlements to mainland Jerusalem while bypassing Palestinian towns have been deemed a “matrix of control,” or a method for the Israeli government to retain control over territories and future cement claims for land (Gregory, 2004, 103). Defense or explanation of Israeli settlement expansions are often convoluted by propaganda campaigns from various parties, such as the Israeli growth coalition or Palestinian groups that attempt to legitimize or delegitimize expansion. This situation in which both Israelis and Palestinians want access to Jerusalem has developed into what is often referred to as the “Battle for Jerusalem” by prominent politicians such as Prime Minister Netanyahu (Gregory, 2004, 99). The politics and history of Gilo’s expansion as a case study must be understood within this historical and political context of Jerusalem settlements, and the spatial context of land, transportation, and access.

### *Gilo*

Gilo is a settlement located on the southwest edge of Jerusalem and lies within the Jerusalem municipality. Gilo was constructed after the 1967 War over the Palestinian town of Al-Walaja. The map below spatially situates Gilo and demonstrates where it lies in relation to other expanding Israeli settlements.

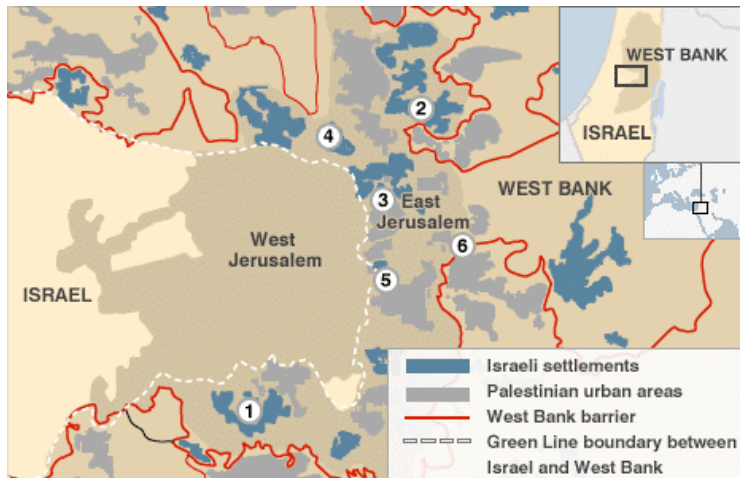


Fig. 1: Jerusalem Settlement Expansions (*BBC* March 15 2010)

- 1 *Gilo*: 850 homes approved for publication and planning objections in Nov 2009
- 2 *Pisgat Zeev*: 600 homes approved for publication and planning objections in Jan 2010
- 3 *Sheikh Jarrah*: Several Palestinian families evicted in past 18 months to make way for Jewish settlers after court ruled in ownership dispute
- 4 *Ramat Shlomo*: 1,600 homes approved for publication and planning objections in Mar 2010
- 5 *Silwan*: Demolition orders on 88 Palestinian homes built without difficult-to-get permits - Israel planning controversial renewal project
6. *West Bank barrier*: Making Palestinian movement between West Bank and Jerusalem harder - Israel says it's for security

In August of 2009, US envoy George Mitchell attempted to sow the seeds for dialogue between Israel and the Palestinian Authority by working to initiate preliminary peace talks. As a segment of these attempts, and as a precondition to dialogue for the Palestinian Authority, Israel was asked to implement a ten-month settlement freeze. Israel agreed to a freeze in all areas past the green line except in East Jerusalem, and as early as September the Jerusalem Planning Committee approved plans to build 900 additional houses in Gilo (*BBC*, November 18 2009). Gilo is a particularly interesting case because while Palestinian groups classify it as an “illegal settlement,” the Israeli growth coalition terms it a “suburb.” These classifications are important when analyzing the rhetoric surrounding Gilo because they impact the ways that people conceptualize the land and consequently understand its plans for expansion. If Gilo is understood to be an illegal settlement, then it racially stratifies the land and oppresses the

surrounding Palestinian population in a form of apartheid. On the other hand, if Gilo is seen as a suburb of Jerusalem, Jerusalem's "natural growth" and the normal process of growing urbanization legitimizes its expansion.

This paper explores how discourse is used to manipulate the geographic imagination, and various strategies of the Israeli growth coalition and Palestinian groups to internationally place value on land. Broadly, this case study will not only analyze the controversy around Gilo but also shed light on the larger Israeli/ Palestinian conflict, as well as how political bodies frame race, history, religion, and law to structure the discourse around settlement expansion.

## **Definition of Terms**

### *The Actors*

Israeli settlement expansion is an extremely convoluted issue and it is difficult to define the key players and perspectives that take opposing "sides" of the issue. I work within three categories of actors, though I recognize that these categories are easily problematized. To even write that Israel promotes settlement growth is an unqualified and easily dismissible statement. This statement discounts a significant portion of the Israeli population (perhaps even the majority) who does not agree with settlement growth and views settlers as extremists. The Israeli government, too, has entered direct confrontations with settlers and has forcibly removed settlers from their homes, and cannot be uniformly labeled as promoting expansion. Thus, I call the group who supports settlement expansion and works to legitimize settlement expansion the "Israeli growth coalition" because it attempts to expand and profit in some way from newly acquired land. The coalition is a conglomeration of governmental policy makers, settlers, interested foreign bodies, and other groups who promote settlement growth and the expansion of

an Israeli state. This coalition is reminiscent of the “growth machine” in Logan and Molotch’s Political Economy of Place theory, which will be later explored in detail, but is different in that singular elites do not necessarily promote growth for personal wealth, but rather for nationalistic or religious ideology.

Categorizing those who oppose settlement expansion is just as tricky and diverse a category as those who promote it. While most Palestinians and the Palestinian Authority generally oppose settlement expansion, there are also many scales of solidarity groups and international bodies that play a major role in promoting settlements as illegally occupied territory. For instance, organized Palestinian graffiti artists use art to establish a voice for themselves in order to relate personal stories of oppression and history to international and local media outlets. Solidarity groups occupy a wide range of places, including groups comprised of Israeli citizens. I refer to these groups who oppose settlement expansion as Palestinian groups or Palestinian solidarity groups.

Finally, I refer throughout my paper to the notion of the geographic imagination- but to whose geographic imagination do I refer? This unnamed “public” I refer to is an English speaking audience who consume the English language newspapers, online journals, or internet blogs which support my paper. These populations are generally in the United States, but also English speaking Europe, and are viewed as politically valuable in terms of building a multi-scale movement. This American and European public is also relevant in that it consumes international media, influencing the way they perceive issues in Israel/ Palestine, and inherently effect trans-national politics.

### *International Laws*



A series of international laws are significant to the background content of this paper, and are necessary to cite in order to contextualize any analysis of Gilo's expansion. First of all, Article 49 of the Geneva Convention deals with ways that the "occupying power" may or may not act in regards to land and population transfers to that land. The most relevant and cited piece of the article which refers to Israel and Palestine is that "the Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies" (ICRC 2005). Those who attempt to delegitimize settlement expansion argue that Israel has violated this law in that the occupying power, or Israel, transfers members of its population into occupied territories, or settlements like Gilo. On the other hand, the Israeli growth coalition debates the applicability of this law to the settlement situation, namely whether or not Israel is an occupying force.

Next, Resolution 242, written in 1967 after the Six-Day War, calls for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from its newly acquired land. Resolution 446, written in 1979, reaffirms that the 4<sup>th</sup> Geneva Convention applies to Israel, including East Jerusalem. It states that "settlements constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East" and advises Israel "to desist from taking any action which would result in changing the legal status and geographical nature and materially affecting the demographic composition of the territories occupied and, in particular, not to transfer parts of its own civilian population into the occupied territories" (Diakonia 2009). Resolution 465 in 1980 again asks Israel to dismantle all settlements and for other states to halt their funding and support of settlements.

Lastly, Resolution 478 is particularly relevant to the case study of Gilo because it lies within the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem. This resolution addresses what is known as "Israel's Basic Law." The "Basic Law" states in the Israeli constitution that Jerusalem is to be Israel's "eternal and indivisible" capital, including the occupied territory in East Jerusalem. This

law is important to acknowledge while addressing the legitimacy of Gilo's expansion because if Gilo is seen as an extension of Jerusalem, there is the inherent right within the constitution for it to remain forever on Israeli soil. Resolution 465, however, reaffirms that the territory in East Jerusalem is illegal and therefore the Basic Law is null and void (Diakonia 2009).

### *Legitimacy*

Legitimacy in this paper refers to the belief that an action is just and warranted. Legitimacy supersedes actual laws or policies, and refers to the ethical or moral convictions that allow for actions to be understood as appropriate or necessary. Conversely, illegitimacy refers to actions that are morally or ethically "wrong" and thus inappropriate. This paper specifically looks to the ways that the Israeli growth coalition or Palestinian groups shape the discourse around Gilo's expansion to make the expansion appear either legitimate or illegitimate to the international public. The geographic imagination surrounding settlements, or the ways settlements like Gilo are perceived as legitimate or delegitimate, dictate the possibilities for the development to take place.

### *Geographic Imagination*

The geographic imagination is a major concept throughout the course of this paper. This concept refers to the way that people imagine space, whether that be the space they are standing on or somewhere on the other side of the world. Doreen Massey in her article "The Geographical Mind" writes that we "carry around with us mental images" of the world and that those images are influenced by the media and the ways in which we speak (Massey 2006, 3).

Mental images which form the geographic imagination have very real consequences on the ways we interact with other people, the environment, and politics since the ways that people understand and value space impact the ways that space is used. For example, when Europeans colonized the United States, their mental images of the land was that it was empty space ruled by savages. This geographical imagination and way of thinking about their space allowed for colonization to take place.

The story of Gilo is heavily shaped by the ways that geographic imagination has been manipulated in order to legitimize or delegitimize expansion. Parties from multiple places and political frameworks attempted to influence the ways that Gilo as a place is understood in order to push a political agenda and shape development. Settlements are either imagined as illegally occupied or rightfully inhabited by Israelis, and specific histories are imagined as connecting either Palestinians or Israelis to the land. The focus on American and European conceptions of settlements is particularly interesting because these perspectives are generally quite removed from the actual land and events taking place. Americans and Europeans, at least on a day to day basis, often have are exposed to very little about settlements except what the media and other propaganda presents to them.

### *Discourse*

The geographic imagination is shaped through discourse, the linguistic structures through which we navigate and give meaning to the world. Establishing and pushing certain types of discourse around Gilo's expansion is a major way that both the Israeli growth coalition and Palestinian groups work to legitimize or delegitimize the expansion. In *Doing Discourse Analysis* Gordon Waitt writes that "there is no geographic knowledge of the world other than the

ordering that people impose on the world through their linguistic description of the world” (Waitt 2005, 164). Through discourse, particular ideas and systems become normalized and understood as common sense or unchallengeable while others are rendered impossible, silenced, or thought of as folk-law. In terms of Israel and Palestine, this notion of normalization becomes evidenced in the ways that specific histories are told while others are silenced, or in types of names given to places to promote certain types of ideas about the places. These processes establish a value system which privileges certain communities over others, and gives power to those favored communities. People are embedded in these systems of discourse, though classifications and identities remain unstable. Through that instability, people are able to claim power and agency, such as Palestinian groups using international media to influence politics on the ground. Discourse analysis is the process of “uncovering the support or internal mechanisms that maintain certain structures and rules over statements” (Waitt 2005, 165). This paper will analyze the ways discourse as set by the Israeli growth coalition and Palestinian groups shape the geographic imagination to legitimize or delegitimize Israeli settlement expansion. In order to analyze Gilo’s expansion, we will first take a glance at the data used in the paper, as well as the Political Economy of Place theory which serves as a useful lens to guide analysis.

## **Data and Methods**

### *Data Sources*

The data for this paper is derived from international media sources intended for English speaking audiences in the United States or Europe such as *The New York Times*, *The British Broadcasting Corporation* (BBC), and online blogs and other articles written in English. These sources are intended for parties outside of Israel and Palestine, and thus have relevant symbolic

discourse. Because this paper studies the ways that the Israeli growth coalition and Palestinian groups present themselves on an international scale, it is necessary to engage with sources that present those perspectives. The sources were easily accessible to me as an American with access to the internet, further illustrating that the fact that Israel and Palestine are widely reported in the English language media.

I also decided to focus on the United States and English speaking populations because these populations are quite powerful and have a large level of involvement with Israel and Palestine. The United States' historic relationship with Israel and lack of involvement with Palestine is both fascinating and constantly challenged, as seen through the media. The media portrays the Obama administration, for example, as acting in stark contrast to past administrations in terms of how unrelentingly accepting and supportive of Israeli policies the United States has been. Through an analysis of international English language media, Gilo makes an interesting case study in that it not only highlights policies of settlement expansion, but also the changing of U.S.-Israeli relations.

It is important to note the flaws in this methodology, as well. Through eliminating media and articles written in other languages to non-English speaking audiences, I ignore a vast and rich range of perspectives on the issue of settlement expansion. In particular, I do not engage with media sources on the ground intended for Israeli and Palestinian audiences directly involved with expansion, and this omission has impacted the level of accuracy and complexity of my paper. Through locating Gilo in the Political Economy of Place framework, I hope to complicate Gilo's case study, and gain a deeper understanding of strategies employed by both the Israeli growth coalition and Palestinian groups.

*Theories*

Placing the story of Gilo's expansion and the discourse surrounding expansion within Logan and Molotch's Political Economy of Place framework is useful in order to better conceptualize how and why competing actors manipulate the geographic imagination of Gilo's expansion as legal or illegal. In addition to Logan and Molotch, Kevin Cox's theory on scale and Anthony Giddens's structuration theory are explored in the following section.

Logan and Molotch theory is found in chapter two of their book Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place entitled "Places as Commodities." This chapter maps out a theory explaining how places change and grow over time, providing a useful framework to understand settlement expansion. Place-based elites manipulate the *value* attached to land to drive economic growth in order to accumulate personal wealth. In this paper, I refer to the manipulation of the geographic imagination as connected to the value of land because the way land is imagined and perceived places a certain amount of value and worth to that land. Growth, as manipulated by the elites, is fostered through the interplay of a place's use value and exchange value. Logan and Molotch write that "whether the geographical unit of their interest is as small as a neighborhood shopping district or as large as a national region, place entrepreneurs attempt, through collective action and often in alliance with other business people, to create conditions that will intensify future land use in an area" (Logan and Molotch 32, 1987). Thus, growth is the result of individuals working within the capitalist structure in order to claim personal benefits. I will use this framework to understand the ways that both the Israeli growth coalition and Palestinian groups compete to stake claims for land.

This theory, however, falls short in that it is focused on 'elites' and while the Israeli growth coalition or Palestinian solidarity groups such as the United Nations might have a certain

level of power, the bulk of these movements to legitimize or delegitimize settlements tend to be in the hands of citizen activists internationally. The Palestinian movement to delegitimize settlements, for instance, claims some types of power in order to manipulate the geographic imagination, but this group is certainly not ‘elite.’ Also, the idea that elites manipulate land commodity is very applicable in this case, but the idea that they do so to gain personal wealth is somewhat flawed. Nationalism, religion, and human rights convolute what it means to gain ‘personal wealth.’ Thus, while this theory is useful, it is important to understand that it is not universally applicable to Gilo or settlement expansion.

Next, Kevin Cox’s theory is constructive for contextualizing Gilo’s expansion involves space and scale. In his essay *Scale of Dependence, Spaces of Engagement and the Politics of Scale, or: Looking for Local Politics*, Cox writes about the importance of scale in understanding how people strive to retain their level of comfort and security. He defines spaces of dependence as the social relations that people depend on for “the realization of essential conditions for our material well being and our sense of significance” (Cox 1998, 2). In order to secure those spaces of dependence, people act within in spaces of engagement. Scale becomes a particularly relevant unit of analysis because actors constantly expand or minimize social networks from local to global scales as they secure their spaces of dependence. Both the Israeli growth coalition and Palestinian groups use scale to secure their spaces of dependence, or to allow for or prevent construction in Gilo. International media, for instance, allow Palestinian groups to jump scale to the international level by picking up local stories on the ground and diffusing them outwards to an international audience. Local governments and media also allow the Israeli growth coalition to jump scale to secure its space of dependence by establishing further control over smaller areas of land and gaining external support.

Third, Anthony Giddens' structuration theory is useful to analyze how these various actors are simultaneously constricted and empowered by existing structures. While Israeli settlement expansion projects have some sort of agency to promote growth, it is also important to think about existing structures in which the Israeli growth coalition functions. Structuration theory describes the way that actions shape and are shaped by social structures. Agency is thus embedded in social structures and historically and socially significant places (Pred 1984). For instance, the Israeli growth coalition must work within international human rights codes, but also has the agency to define and work around those codes. As structures are reproduced over time, the agency of the actors continues to shape them. Now that there is a basic theoretical framework to work from, we can analyze strategies implemented by the Israeli growth coalition and Palestinian groups to manipulate the ways an international public understand Gilo's expansion as legal or illegal, humane or inhumane. We will begin by exploring the various tactics that the Israeli growth coalition uses to promote growth in Gilo and stake land claims.

## **Strategies Employed by the Israeli Growth Coalition**

### *A Theoretical Context*

The Israeli growth coalition's ability to control discourse directly impacts its ability to control space, an idea that fits smoothly into the Political Economy of Place theories. Israeli settlements, and particularly the case of Gilo, illustrate the importance of the Israeli growth coalition acting as the "elites" to manipulate land commodity in order to spark growth. The coalition manipulates land commodity directly in order to set value to that land and expand. In East Jerusalem, for example, Palestinians outnumber Israelis, but the Palestinian population continues to flow outwards as a result of "exorbitant Israeli taxes, obstacles to constructing



homes on their own land to accommodate family needs and harassment and discrimination” (Abowd 2000, 35). Another way that the Israeli growth coalition, specifically the government, has manipulated land value is through subsidizing new Israeli settlements. Many settlements provide a quality education, health care, subsidized construction, and cheap housing for Israelis and settlers moving to the West Bank have been able to receive a 7% decrease in income tax (Dunsky 2008, 174). One extreme case of subsidies and benefits for settlers was when Israeli Prime Minister Sharon backed a plan to attract settlers to the Jordan Valley in the West Bank. He offered young couples who planned to move into the settlement and live there for at least four years free housing, to underwrite college payments, and grants of \$2,700 (Dunsky 2008, 186).

In addition, the Israeli national government as part of the growth coalition jumps scales to the local government in order to secure its space of dependency, as Cox’s theory illuminates. Andrew Kirby and Thabit Abu-Rass write about the ways that local governments in Israel have manipulated land access in occupied territories in order to cede land from Palestinian territories.

#### Local governments

under Arab control have fewer urban development grants allocated to them by central ministries, taxes have been lost to neighboring Jewish local authorities, property has been confiscated without compensation, and the physical growth of Arab settlements has been restricted. In addition, the Israeli state has established procedures for the incorporation of new settlements that require little consultation with the local residents” (Jonas and Wilson 1999, 17).

In this way, the Israeli government can shift scales in order to promote growth within the confines of international laws.

This section focuses on the ways the Israeli growth coalition, as interpreted through the Political Economy of Place, attempts to influence the geographical imagination in order to evoke sentimental feelings about the land, and place a high value on that land to legitimize settlement expansions. Rather than point to the specifics of direct land commoditization such as taxation or

buying or selling of property, I look at how discourse, as read through names, media, and religion and historical references, impacts the ways people understand the land and subsequently how they value and politicize it. I first discuss the impact of names and the construction of history as singularly Jewish in order to stake claims to land. Next, I examine how the interpretation of international laws and racial and religious rhetoric are utilized by the Israeli growth coalition to impact the ways that internationals imagine and value settlements as legal. Finally, I look at the ways the Israeli growth coalition constructs history and influences the international media in order to manipulate the geographic imagination and legitimize Gilo's expansion.

### *The Power of Names*

In the debate over settlement expansion, the power of naming space has been a major point of contestation. Names influence the ways that people imagine that space and how that space is given meaning. Through the naming places, elites, such as the Israeli government, are able “mobilize ideologies that function to socialize local people into accepting, or at least not resisting, growth coalition goals” such as settlement expansion (Short 1999, 58). In the case of Gilo, the ways that Gilo is referred to and categorized through discourse have had a great deal of weight as to how it is perceived and subsequently how it develops.

One way that names have been manipulated in order to legitimize settlement expansion has been to distinguish Israeli communities from Palestinian communities. In both mainstream English international media outlets and official Israeli government addresses, Israeli settlements are often “named” and perceived of as *townships* or *cities* while Palestinian settlements are referred to as *villages*. Each category of place has certain connotations that follow it, particularly

within the context of international English media. For instance, government officials such as the Prime Minister names Gilo and other settlements on the periphery of Jerusalem as *Greater Jerusalem* or *suburbs* of Jerusalem, and these are the terms that the international mainstream media picks up and uses in coverage to English language audiences, such as Americans. In order to understand the connotations of the term *suburb*, it is necessary to explore the association of the word “suburb” in an American context. In the United States, suburbs have historically established as privatized, white spaces. During the civil rights movement as “blacks began to demand an end to Jim Crow laws and started moving north, the country was creating, on a massive scale, a new white place called the suburbs” (Powell, 2005). When international media thus presents Gilo and other settlements as “suburbs” to American and European audiences, these audiences reflect on their own experiences with suburbs and imagine Gilo in a similar capacity. To Americans, these names connote white, developed communities that would legitimately expand as part of continued capitalistic development, just like suburban America. Through the promotion of these settlements as extensions of Jerusalem, Israel manipulates the geographic imagination to legitimize their expansion and built form, particularly to an American audience.

At the same time, the names chosen by the Israeli government and mainstream international media reporters downplay the existence and legitimacy of Palestinian communities in the same region in order to influence the geographic imagination and legitimize Israeli claims to land. Palestinian communities are generally referred to by political figures and mainstream media as *villages*. The term village connotes backwardness, an underdeveloped Other. Though in general size would distinguish villages from cities or suburbs, “Jewish towns may contain fewer than three thousand people while Arab villages may have in excess of ten thousand

inhabitants” (Kirby and Abu Rass 1999, 218). Through the promotion of certain categories for Israeli communities and promotion of other categories for Arab communities, Arab communities are understood to be less permanent than Israeli communities.

Another concrete way that the Israeli government, as a piece of the growth coalition, uses names to manipulate both the geographic imagination is through naming specific types of settlements significant number of migrants as *frontier settlements*. When a town is labeled a *frontier settlement*, that community is qualified to receive money and benefits from the government. All but three settlements defined as *frontier settlements* have been Israeli. Again, in this way, the government is able to legitimize giving money and resources to promote growth to select towns (Kirby and Abu Rass 1999, 218).

In their article “Place-Names in Israel’s Ideological Struggle over the Administered Territories,” Cohen and Kliot identify two leading categories of place-names in Israeli territories. These categories reflect either stagnant conceptions that reinforce biblical names or modernity as seen through modern Zionist values or military heroes. It is estimated that after the emergence of the State of Israel, only “73 out of 899 Hebrew/ Jewish place-names retained their Arab origin” which has a significant effect on the way that State of Israel and its territory is conceptualized (Cohen and Kliot 1992, 658). The Gush Emunim is a group of religious settlers who work as part of the Israeli growth coalition, militantly building settlements in lands mentioned in the Old Testament. This group seeks “to project to the public in Israel and abroad is that the Jewish people have returned to the land of Israel” (Cohen and Kliot 1992, 671). One way they work to achieve this goal is through naming settlements after biblical towns in order to stake Jewish claims to land and impact the ways that people imagine that land. Though not founded by the Gush Emunim, Gilo is also named after a town mentioned in the Torah. While

few people believe that Gilo is in the actual location of the place in the Torah, the use of the name Gilo connotes that biblical birthright to the land, the sense of Jewish history, and the idea that Jewish people have “returned” to their land, all very intentional on the part of settlement developers.

### *Interpretation of Laws*

It is useful to understand the Israeli growth coalition’s attempts to legitimize settlement expansion through the lens of Giddens’s structuration theory. The negotiation of structure and agency of the Israeli growth coalition within the structures of international law influences the ways that settlements such as Gilo are able to grow and be sustained. International law allows for governing bodies and organizations to criticize settlement expansion in order to uphold what they understand to be human rights as dictated through law. At the same time, while these laws have been in place, Gilo was able to expand to an additional 900 housing units though expansion is often understood as contrary to the law. This case of expansion illustrates the agency of the Israeli growth machine and its ability to promote growth. While Palestinian groups and other solidarity groups consider Gilo an illegal settlement, the strength of the Israeli growth coalition to control discourse around laws and expansion allowed Gilo to be understood as a legitimate suburb by a large group of people.

Through reframing the discourse surrounding settlements, the Israeli growth coalition, such as government officials, disputes whether or not international laws are relevant to development projects and asserts that settlements outside of Jerusalem are legal. Israel asserts, for instance, that it acts as an administrator rather than an occupier, changing the applicability of the law. Through this discussion, Israeli officials refuse to “include annexed areas as part of any

accommodation of Mr. Obama's past calls for 'restraint' in settlement construction" because officials interpret those areas as legally Israeli (BBC November 18 2009). This framing of these laws preaches an ideology that influences Zionist organizations and the widespread geographic imagination that impact implementation of policy and allow for expansion. To employ Cox's theory of scale, the Israeli growth coalition navigates control of the media and the ability to frame influential discourse to a powerful international public coalition in order to secure stability and legitimacy for settlement expansion.

Security rationale for Israeli citizens and the Israeli state is also used to legitimate expansion. Aharon Barak, the former president of the Israeli Supreme Court, stated that "those settlements which have a security rationale are legal, those settlements that have no security rationale are illegal" (BBC January 7 2010). Because 'security rationale' is up for interpretation, he is arguable in a position to legitimize the expansion of desired settlements while appearing to remain within international legal structures. As the Israeli growth coalition uses its power to interpret international laws to legitimize Gilo's expansion as legal, actors in the growth coalition, particularly the media, implement racial and religious rhetoric to impact the ways settlement growth is understood internationally.

### *Racial and Religious Rhetoric*

Racial and religious rhetoric is used by the Israeli growth coalition to manipulate the geographical imagination to legitimize settlement expansion. Edward Said argues that the Israeli growth coalition works to position non-Israelis and non-Jews as "radically other, fundamentally and conservatively different" (Gregory 2004, 88). In doing so, it becomes easier to promote Israeli interests while simultaneously downplaying Palestinian interests. The Israeli growth

coalition manipulates a victimhood mentality, as seen through the media and politics, and has translated into the imaginations of a large population who support settlement expansion. One reporter from the *Christian Science Monitor* interviews Bukchin, an Israeli settler who faces eviction from his home. “The bible says this is our homeland. This is my birthright. If not here, where else can I live?” asks Bukchin. “I have no other place. Every other place I go, you kill me, you murder me, you burn me. We have to do what we have to do. We have to stay here, and we have to fight for what we believe in. Especially when we know it's right” (Dunsky 2008, 171). Horrible and very real tales of Anti-Semitism around the world are used to promote settlements as the sole safe havens for the Jewish people. Interestingly, this notion of a safe haven can be linked to suburbs in the United States and elsewhere as a “safe-haven” from people of color arriving into traditionally white people’s neighborhoods.

Religious and racial rhetoric is manipulated in order to evoke a certain type of necessity for the Jewish people to the claim settlements and project a historical right to it. The phrase “undivided, eternal capital” is often used to discuss Gilo and other settlements around Jerusalem in reference to a Biblical birthright of Jerusalem to the Jewish people and biblical claims to Jerusalem (Abowd 2000). Morton Klein writes in a press release for the Zionist Organization of America that “Jerusalem is Israel’s religious and historical capital. In contrast, it is not mentioned even once in the Quran” (Klein 2010). In 1995, the Jerusalem Embassy Act was signed into U.S. congress, ensuring an undivided Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. As a result, the U.S. embassy was moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem as a symbolic message that the U.S. supports Jerusalem as Israel’s capital (Klein 2010). These actions and discourses induce religious and historical sentiments and produce important international political implications.

Additionally, Gilo is promoted as a suburb of Jerusalem which will remain in Israel's sole possession eternally as a part of the capital. This understanding and manipulation of history and religion has created an enormous challenge for peace negotiations which call for a two state solution. Prime Minister Barack, for example, pledged to the settlers of Ma'ale Adumim "that every house, tree planted will be Israel's forever" (Abowd 2000). These religious references and assertions of racial rhetoric have very real implications in the ways that Israelis and the international community understand the geographic landscape, and how that landscape will continue to take shape in the future.

Finally, there are actors who believe that preventing settlement expansion is racist. This idea comes from the notion that by excluding Jews from living in settlements prevents the freedom of Jews from living in certain spaces. Klein writes that "preventing Jews, because they are Jews, from moving into or developing their communities in Jerusalem is a racist policy which aims to weaken Israel's claim to Jerusalem and is a first step towards dividing the city" (Klein 2010). This notion is manipulated by the Israeli growth coalition to point to racist and Anti-Semitic policies in order to shape the way that people understand and imagine settlements.

### *Construction of History*

Another way that the Israeli growth coalition, such as Jerusalem city planners, attempts to manipulate the geographic imagination of settlement expansion is through the ways that religion and history are intentionally presented to promote and sustain Israel nationalist growth. Through presenting Jerusalem as the historic capital city of Israel, Jerusalem is further legitimized as Israel's "eternal capital."



The establishment of national sites as tourist destinations, and the ways the city plans are constructed to attract and highlight certain groups of people and their histories demonstrate the ways that history is constructed to allow for Jewish claims to land. According to the article in the *New York Times* on a new park development, a \$100 million multiyear development plan has been presented in Jerusalem which the government explicitly stated is meant to “to strengthen the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel” (*New York Times* May 9 2009). This plan involves projects such as clearing garbage dumps and wastelands to be “turned into lush gardens and parks, now already accessible to visitors who can walk along new footpaths and take in the majestic views, along with new signs and displays that point out significant points of Jewish history” (*New York Times*, May 9 2009). Bronner relates that parks and city plans are often partially outsourced to private developers which buy up Palestinian land in order to grow. The selective history represented in these parks highlights Jewish claims to land while at the same time excludes and silences non-Jewish historical claims to the land. Gilo, too, is implicated in similar projects. Gilo now rests on over a third of the territory that used to be the Palestinian community of Al-Walaja. Gilo has planted a large forest that began on the green line, but has crossed over into “occupied territory” (Irshaid 2004). This park is used to promote tourism into both Israel and particularly to Gilo, while at the same time providing a selective history of the land to secure Gilo as Israeli territory. In this way, Israeli growth coalition again utilizes the power of discourse to shape history. Through discourse, the coalition silences certain histories while simultaneously presenting Jewish history as the singular and normalized framework to imagine Gilo and other settlements around Jerusalem. In this fashion, the coalition manipulates the way that land is perceived and valued, and subsequently the way development is shaped.

Next, we will explore how the media, particularly the international media, plays a role in constructing discourse and the geographic imagination of Gilo's expansion.

### *Use of Media*

The media, particularly mainstream media, has been a powerful force towards manipulating geographical imaginations and legitimizing Israeli settlement expansion. The media often transmits events as the singular and true perspective, and establishes a worldview for consumers to understand social and political events. Because the media is often the public's main or only source of information regarding the "outside world," people often "find themselves relying on the media for concepts, for images of their heroes, for guiding information, for emotional charges, for recognition of values, for symbols in general" (Dunsky 2008, 12). "Mainstream media" seeks to report without any bias to a wide variety of people (Dunsky 2008). It is important to note, however, that a large proportion of the media is corporately owned so an article's content or subsequently, what is left out of a story are representative of those who have a stake in maintaining the larger social structures (Dunsky 2008, 7). Growth coalitions, such as the Israeli growth coalition, structures the media to "promote local ideologies consistent with growth goals" (Boyle 1999, 66).

As Logon and Molotch write in chapter 3 of Urban Fortunes, the media strives to promote growth and development in order to increase circulation. They write that "because newspaper interests are tied to growth, media executives are sympathetic to business leader's complaints that a particular journalistic investigation or angle may be bad for the local business

climate, and should it nevertheless become necessary, direct threats of advertising cancellation can modify journalistic coverage” (Logan and Molotch 1987, 72). Those who invest in advertisements and who continue to buy the paper are interested in negotiating the paper’s political sway. In the case of Gilo’s expansion, international mainstream media continues to be invested in maintaining readership and advertisements while reporting on settlement expansion. Logan and Molotch write that local media is interested in increased circulation, and thus the more a region grows, the larger the media’s circulation (Logan and Molotch 1987, 70). While this notion of circulation is not directly applicable to the Israeli growth machine’s use of international media because local growth in Israel does not necessarily affect circulation of a paper like *The New York Times*, there is a notable relationship between media and growth. Importantly, Logan and Molotch also write that the media can “play an invaluable role in coordinating strategy and selling growth to the public” (Logan and Molotch 1987, 72). The Israeli growth coalition understands this notion, and uses the international mainstream media to bolster growth in Gilo and other settlements.

Cox’s theory regarding scale and spaces of dependence is useful here to contextualize the Israeli growth coalition’s use of the media to legitimize settlement expansion. Actors both in support of and against Gilo’s expansion compete to influence the development on the ground through jumping scale internationally to broaden support for their political aims. In order to reinforce the strength of the Israeli government, the Israeli growth coalition attempts to use international media to influence the discourse surrounding Gilo’s expansion. Through framing Gilo’s expansion as “natural growth” of Jerusalem or flatly denying the illegal-nature of settlements, the coalition attempts to appeal to the larger international community to legitimize expansion and secure Jerusalem as Israel’s “eternal capital.”

Furthermore, the Israeli growth coalition utilizes the media to limit exposure of the Palestinian experience, and consequently heavily promote a singular worldview that legitimizes expansion. American or Europeans who consume mainstream international media might understand settlement expansion as legitimate because they are unaware of settlement's effects on Palestinians. Thus, international mainstream media has the power to manipulate American and European's geographic imagination to understanding settlement expansion as just. When reporting on settlement expansion, the mainstream media often omits the larger context of how settlements affects Palestinian life, how they stifle progress towards constructive dialogue, or the link between the United States' foreign aid and expansion (Dunsky 2008). News articles covering settlement expansion are often vague or are worded in convoluted ways. Most critically, there is a lack of Palestinian voices in coverage about settlement expansion, contributing to the singular, Israeli growth coalition worldview. Rather than focus on the ways that Palestinians are stripped of their land and resources through settlement expansion, the mainstream media focuses on the need to end Palestinian violence before continued peace talks (Dunsky 2008). Again, this omission of the Palestinian voice values Israeli stories above others and allows for Israeli claims to land.

An article from *Newsweek* offered in Pens and Swords: How the American Mainstream Media Report the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict illustrates the power of omitting the Palestinian voice in international news. This article describes settlers' experiences of living in a settlement. The report was "suffused with apparent sympathy for Behar and her fellow settlers, offering insight into their humanity, hospitality, and personal security..." while at the same time, entirely leaving out any Palestinian voice (Dunsky 2008, 163). In this article, like many of its kind, Palestinians are referenced but never quoted directly. This strategy employed by the Israeli

growth coalition through the media has a great deal of power in that “it related Palestinian concerns via the reporter’s own narrative, which parsed Palestinian demands, but failed to mention their basis in international law and consensus” (Dunsky 2008, 166). Thus, the Israeli growth coalition’s power to control of the media allows for the manipulation of how the international public views space.

In a separate article “Parks Fortify Israel’s Claim to Jerusalem,” Ethan Bronner writes about a multiyear development plan to secure Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. While Israel continues to develop parks and historical sites that highlight a Jewish historical perspective and experience with the land, Palestinian “officials and institutions tend to dismiss the finds as part of an effort to build a Zionist history here. In other words, while the Israeli narrative that guides the government plan focuses largely — although not exclusively — on Jewish history and links to the land, the Palestinian narrative heightens tensions, pushing the Israelis into a greater confrontational stance” (*New York Times* May 9 2009). Again, while not actually quoting Palestinians or placing the events in a larger context of political occupation, the article stresses the legitimacy of Jewish claims to historical roots in the land, and dismisses Palestinian complaints as angry and hindering to the peace process. This article, like countless others, illustrates the symbolic importance of the lack of context in international media to control discourse and to legitimize expansion. Crucially, we must also follow the Palestinian perspective in order to gain that context, as well as to understand the ways that Palestinian groups gain power. The next section of this paper will look at the Palestinian perspective, and how Palestinian groups attempt to place settlement expansion in a human rights discourse in order to manipulate the geographic imagination and delegitimize Gilo’s expansion.

## **Strategies Employed by Palestinian Groups**

### *A Theoretical Context*

When the media began reporting on Gilo's expansion, Palestinian groups and solidarity groups implemented political strategies to manipulate the geographic imagination to delegitimize expansion. Cox's theory regarding the ways that actors jump scale to secure spaces of dependence is extremely relevant in the analysis Palestinian groups responding to plans for Gilo's expansion. Palestinian groups increasingly jump scale to the international level in order to receive international support from institutions that have the power and capability to place pressure on the Israeli growth coalition. In addition, the Political Economy of Place theory is a useful lens for this case in that Palestinian groups attempt to manipulate land commodity through influencing the geographic imagination of the land. The way people understand the land prescribes value to it and impacts politics and legitimacy of those politics. The following section will describe the use of racial rhetoric in the struggle to delegitimize Gilo's expansion and settlement expansion general. Next, there will be a discussion of the significance of names, the use of the media, and finally the use of art in Palestinian groups' attempts to manipulate geographic imagination to delegitimize settlement expansion.

### *Racial Rhetoric*

Palestinian activists and solidarity groups increasingly use racial rhetoric to describe settlement expansion. Racial rhetoric has been a particularly useful tactic, and has led to the accusation that the Israeli government has established an "apartheid state." Through the discussion of Israel as an apartheid state, Palestinian groups manipulate the ways that internationals understand Gilo's growth, as well as build a movement of anti-racist activists to

resist settlement growth. The United Nations defines apartheid as “a system of institutionalized racial segregation and discrimination for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group ... over another ... and systematically oppressing them...by creating ghettos, land confiscation, bans on freedom of movement, speech assemblies and mixed marriages, illegal arrest and detention” (Itisapartheid.org 2010). The term “apartheid” holds a great deal of power in the aftermath of the international movement against the South African apartheid, and framing Israel as an apartheid state is a strong political tool used to weaken the legitimacy of Israeli settlement growth by highlighting its inherently racial elements.

Pulling from a human rights discourse, the apartheid rhetoric has a great deal of merit as seen though Israel’s “separation wall, fencing in of enclaves, parallel laws, closures, pass system, roads for Jews only, land confiscations, closed military areas imposed at will, and so on” (Zreik 2004, 72). At the same time, because the term apartheid holds such strong political connotations, there has been a great deal of discussion as to whether or not the term accurately applies to the Israel/ Palestine case. It is argued that unlike in South African apartheid, the Palestinians and Israelis do not view themselves as the same nationalist entity and are not necessarily looking for unification. Palestinians outside Israeli political borders, particularly since the formation of the Palestinian Authority, are not viewed as Israeli citizens but rather as foreigners (Zreik 2004, 73). Nevertheless, the term “apartheid” has been explosive on a multitude of levels, particularly from the Israeli government working to refute the claim. The Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs argues that “the real goal behind the Apartheid campaign is the denial of the legitimacy of the State of Israel and the determination that the only status the Jewish population in Israel can hope for is that of a ‘protected’ ethnic minority in an Arab Palestinian state” (Sabel 2009, 3). At the same time, many organizations, international student groups, and human rights advocates

promote the term in hopes of shedding light on often untold aspects of Israel and sparking a worldwide human rights movement similar to the one in South Africa. Through framing Israel as an apartheid state, Palestinian groups manipulate the ways that international people imagine Israeli land use and understand settlements as illegal and inhumane. We will next look at how names of places and the media are used by Palestinian groups to influence the geographic imagination of settlement expansion.

### *The Use of Names and the Media*

Though access to power is vastly minimal as compared to the Israeli growth coalition's access, Palestinian groups compete with the coalition to promote land names in order to influence the geographical imagination of settlements. These names subsequently impact the ways that internationals think about and value the land as either Israeli or Palestinian, humane or inhumane. One method through which Palestinians and Palestinian solidarity groups promote land names is through the development of propaganda cartography in which Jewish involvement in Palestine is erased. *The Palestinian Encyclopedia* relates all of the Palestinian place-names in Israel/ Palestine, and refers to many places as having "Canaanite" foundations rather than Jewish history. These maps might also apply Arabic names to "destroyed villages replaced by planted forests or parks" (Cohen and Kliot 1992, 673). In addition, Palestinians often continue to identify themselves as a resident of a village or town that no longer exists. Palestinian taxi drivers, for instance, sometimes use historical Palestinian place-names to identify passenger destinations, even when those places have been replaced over 40 years ago by Israeli towns. Through the continuations of Palestinian place-names, they remain "vivid in the historical memory of the Palestinian people" (Cohen and Kliot 1992, 644). The preservation of these



names is significant in that it impacts the ways that people understand space as Palestinian rather than Israeli and challenges the Israeli growth coalition ideology.

The large structure between Israel and Palestinian territories, often referred to as the “wall” or “fence,” has acted as a site of discourse for both the Israeli growth coalition and Palestinian groups. This discourse subsequently influences the ways that internationals imagine settlements and policies as legal. The different combinations of terms used by both sides have significant “in-built connotations, receptive audiences, associated imagery as well as affiliations to one side or the other in the conflict” (Rogers and Ben-David 2005, 1). The Israeli growth coalition, for instance, uses the term “fence” usually paired with ‘security’ or ‘separation’ while Palestinian groups promote the term “wall.” The Palestinian National Authority’s official term for the structure is the “apartheid wall” which implies that “the structure is far from temporary and it has less to do with security than with occupation and oppression.” (Rogers and Ben-David 2005, 2). Another name for the structure is “Israel’s wall” in order to orient blame and policy control in Israel’s direction (Rogers and Ben-David 2005, 4).

The international media’s decision for which terms to use is a political choice, and demonstrates which audiences the media is attempting to reach. For instance, *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* tend to use “barrier” as opposed to ‘wall’ or ‘fence’ in the attempts to be less blatantly political (Rogers and Ben-David, 2005, 13). On the other hand, the online Palestinian solidarity media outlet *Electric Intifada* “alternates between ‘separation wall,’ ‘separation barrier,’ ‘apartheid wall,’ and ‘West Bank Wall,’ but does not use any of the terms containing ‘fence’ or ‘security,’ thereby consciously opposing the Israeli justification of the obstacle” (Rogers and Ben-David 2005,15). Israeli news sources like Arutz Sheva omits terms such as the ‘wall,’ ‘apartheid’ or ‘separation.’ Many international media outlets do not use the

term ‘fence,’ and the picture in Figure 2 illustrates a school in Gilo behind the “security wall,” utilizing a combination of ‘security’ and ‘wall’ (Rogers and Ben-David 2005, 15). It is important to note when these terms are used and who uses when analyzing the current state of the Palestinian/ Israeli conflict and the strength of each side to mold the international public’s geographic imagination.



Fig. 2: “Jerusalem school behind security wall – Gilo” (*Israel in Sight* 1 February 2009).

### *The Role of Art*

Altering the built landscape is another way that Palestinian groups attempt to change the way that space is understood and the legitimacy of settlement expansion. Through contesting the meaning of built structures in Palestinian territories, Palestinian groups explicitly intervene into an otherwise Israeli growth coalition dominated discourse. Julie Peteet writes about the usage of graffiti in Palestinian resistance during the intifada in the late 1980s and early 1990s. While this paper does not focus on the intifada in Gilo, Peteet’s article is useful to understand strategies of Palestinian solidarity groups to comment on settlements. During the intifada, graffiti acted as an agent of power and intervention within the present power structure. Though the graffiti during the time of the intifada were often fleeting, “for Palestinians as a readership, graffiti

simultaneously affirmed community and resistance, debated tradition, envisioned competing futures, indexed historical events and processes, and inscribed memory” (Peteet 1996, 140).

Graffiti also acted as an internal mechanism to negotiate power, and producing graffiti was seen as a rite of passage into the underground resistance movement. Cox’s theory of scale is relevant in this discussion in that graffiti acted as a means to jump scale to the international arena.

Graffiti was directed towards multiple audiences, sometimes in English for an international audience, particularly when an international delegate was in town (Peteet 1996, 45). Graffiti during the intifada provided a voice to those who were historically powerless in the international arena.

Giddens’s structuration theory is also relevant in that graffiti provided a means to exercise agency within the confines of the structures at play. Graffiti and other forms of art continue to influence scale and structures throughout Palestine, particularly along the “wall.” For instance, Figure 3 illustrates contemporary graffiti art along the ‘wall’ that demonstrates Palestinian feelings of being trapped behind the “wall.” This graffiti pictures the dreams of escaping the existing environment with balloons or life in a tropical paradise. These images not only provide a refreshing way to view the “wall” and Palestinian communities, but also act as media outlets by showing the international media the support, creativity, and desires of Palestinians.



Fig. 3: “Graffiti art along the ‘wall’ in Palestine” (dreamalittledream.ca 2009).

Art along the “wall” has been particularly effective at altering geographic imagination of Palestine and settlements, as well as building a movement of solidarity. Shai Kremer is an Israeli artist who created a piece of artwork in the “Gilo neighborhood” along the shooting defense wall. This wall had been built to obstruct shootings between a Palestinian town, Beit Gala, and Gilo after several months of violence. As seen through Figure 4, Kremer imagines the space free from such defense walls by seemingly erasing it from the landscape. Kremer writes that this piece of art “is a seven year metaphoric portrayal of the military disfiguration of the Israeli landscape” and is an attempt provide a platform for thought and discussion (Kremer 2010). Highly critical of the effects of Zionism, this piece of art shifts the ways residents and internationals normally view a shooting defense wall to humanize and complicate the built structure. The fact that Kremer is Israeli is particularly enlightening because he represents the large numbers of Israelis working against the Israeli growth coalition to reconstruct the landscape and ascribe new

meanings to it. Next, we will examine the role of international solidarity groups who, like Kremer, work to impact the ways that settlement expansion is conceptualized.



Fig. 4: “Shai Kremer’s ‘Defense Wall, Gilo Neighborhood, Jerusalem’” (*Schwartz Art Collection* 2010).

#### *International Organizations*

Perhaps the most significant way that Palestinian groups work to claim power and delegitimize settlement expansion is through collaborating with international groups. These groups often focus on the human rights aspect of the conflict rather than religious or nationalist conflicts. Cox’s theory describing how actors jump scale to secure spaces of dependence is particularly relevant in this case. Palestinian groups on the ground have become increasingly connected to international groups in order to promote a human rights agenda and delegitimize settlement expansion like Gilo. Between 2000 and 2002, 3,200 internationals traveled to Palestine from mostly North America, Europe, and Scandinavia to work in solidarity with Palestinians (Barhouthi 2002, 11). Groups such as the Palestinian Center for Rapprochement between People, the Grassroots International Protection for the Palestinian People, and the International Solidarity Movement draw from international bodies to provide support and sustenance to the Palestinian movement. In an interview, the founding members of the

International Solidarity Movement, Huwaida Arraf and Adam Shapiro express that Palestinians recognized that when internationals joined in demonstrations, there was much less Israeli violence (Stohman and Aladin 2003, 67). In addition, internationals have the power to report to home media sources about the conditions in Palestine. The focus on human rights rather than religion and nationality among these solidarity groups allow them to be more open and accessible to a diverse group of people.

Largely as a result of watchdog groups and human rights activists in Palestine, the United States called for a halt to all Israeli settlement expansion to spark new peace negotiations between Israel and Palestine. These attempts in turn encouraged other international groups to speak out against settlement expansions, particularly once plans for Gilo's expansion were released. The World Council of Churches, for instance, issued a public statement: "The WCC strongly condemns the decision of the government of Israel to expand the illegal Gilo settlement as we believe that this decision will hinder attempts now in process to restart the peace negotiations" (WCC 2009). The White House, the United Nations, and other European states also issued statements insisting "that the status of Jerusalem should be resolved through negotiations between the parties, and that neither should take actions to pre-empt the outcome of such negotiations" (Noy 2009). Not only are these international bodies responding to the material needs of Palestinians to secure their space of dependence as Gilo expands, but they are attempting to reclaim their own "sense of significance" as powerful actors in international law. These actions also highlight the inherently trans-national nature of the settlement issue, and the ways that actors on multiple scales have come together to compete for land claims.

## **Conclusion**

As I have outlined, both the Israeli growth coalition and Palestinian groups employ various tactics in order to manipulate the geographic imagination and legitimize or delegitimize claims to land, and Gilo's expansion. As we explored through the Political Economy of Place theory, each of these groups influences the ways that the international, English speaking public understands settlements as legal or illegal, humane or inhumane, and the value that is ascribed to the land. Elites, or political groups in this case, manipulate this land value in order to further nationalist, religious, or human-rights discourses. Strategies from both the Palestinian groups as well as the Israeli growth coalition included naming places, using the media to further political goals, and jumping scale to appease an international public. Again, the fact that the public is international is key in that this issue is inherently trans-national and suggests a broader analysis on political geography and international relationships in general.

While Logan and Molotch's theory is useful, the case study of Gilo's expansion begs for this theory to think about the interplay of "use value" and "value free" growth. Logan and Molotch argue that land commodity is exchanged through the interplay of these types of growth, but in this case study, use value is much more significant than value free growth which deemphasizes actors' roles in shaping space. Use value is particularly important because nationalism, religion, history, or basic human rights are the major factors in shaping development for either group. Thus, land is shaped by actors being driven by identity, not capitalism. This case study also highlights the need for Logan and Molotch to focus more heavily on the ways discourse and media shape land value, rather than solely the direct manipulation of land value such as zoning laws.

Next, Cox's theory on jumping scale and Giddens's structuration theory are constructive in understanding the ways the Israeli growth coalition and Palestinian groups build support

movements, as well to illustrate their agency within existing international structures. The political struggle to control discourse establishes a value system privileges certain communities over others, and gives power to those communities. Though people are embedded in these systems of discourse, classifications and identities remain unstable and through that instability, people are able to claim power and agency. This claiming of power is clear in the case of Palestinian groups who use the power of a human rights discourse as a way to influence the ways the public understands space.

The case study of Gilo also allows for broader thinking of how actors shape space. Rather than understanding the development of space as inevitable, Gilo points to the role of actors and their ability to draw from a supportive constituency to the development of places. Gilo demonstrates that the ways places are conceptualized by various populations have very real political consequences. Again, while the settlement freeze was technically in place, actors working towards Gilo's expansion as part of the Israeli Growth Coalition made sure that expansion could move forward. We will next look to what Gilo's case study suggests about international politics, the current conflict of settlement expansion, and U.S. - Israeli relations.

### *The Future of Settlement Expansion*

Though there was much press regarding Gilo's expansion from various outlets, it is important to recognize that development proceeded and Gilo did expand. Today, the settlement freeze is still technically in place yet Israeli development companies continue to build settlements. These scenarios highlight the strength of the Israeli growth coalition in its ability to expand settlements even while large, international structures explicitly condemn it. They also



prove to demonstrate how large structures like international law do not determine the way places develop, but rather people with invested interests in places shape development.

While it appears that the Israeli growth coalition is strong and has successfully steered discourse in a direction that legitimizes expansion, as settlement growth continues, U.S.-Israeli relations are increasingly strained. In the last days of March 2010, a major new development plan was approved by Israel to expand an orthodox settlement in East Jerusalem. This plan contradicts the settlement freeze and damages prospects of dialogue. The weekend of March 23, 2010, Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Obama met at the White House for a meeting later described by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton as “insulting” and “David Axelrod, dubbed it ‘an affront’ and a ‘calculated’ attempt to undermine the expected launch of indirect talks” (*BBC* March 15 2010). The mass publicity describing the strain on U.S.-Israeli relations as a result of continued settlement expansion in East Jerusalem diverges from historical trends, and could be illuminating the establishment of a new type of relationship. Perhaps the Israeli growth coalition is losing force and the Palestinian groups have succeeded in altering the way Americans and others understand and value settlements. Perhaps the strength of Barack Obama in the international community has allowed for such a new relationship to take place. In any case, there appears to be shift, a new balance as to how settlements in Jerusalem are imagined and valued.

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