ARTICLE

The Palestinian-Israeli peace process and trans-national issue networks: the complicated place of the Israeli NGO

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Abstract

Israeli non-governmental organizations (NGOs) resisting the *security fence* and other Israeli security measures are in 'virtual isolation' in networks dedicated to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and especially to the criticism of Israeli governmental policies and the construction of the *security fence*. The research reported is a hyperlink and term analysis of select issue networks on the Web assembled around the *security fence* and other conflict issues. It shows that attempts by left-leaning Israeli NGO network actors to frame the issue in their own critical terms are ignored by networked trans-national actors working in the Palestinian-Israeli issue space, even though it may be that both kinds of organizations campaign against it. The Israeli organizations, it was found, are largely in an issue space of their own making, distinct from the human rights frame that dominates the trans-national networks. In putting forward the notion of the *separation fence*, theirs is also a particular local 'peace process' approach to issue settlement, different not only from that of the dominant trans-national issue networks on the Web, but also from official Israeli as well as certain Western governmental positions. The article concludes by finding that, according to the Web, the local peace process is not a trans-national issue network affair.

INTRODUCTION
The international relations scholars, Margaret Keck and Kathryn
Sikkink, describe non–governmental organizations (NGOs) as civil initiatives
that form around certain issues (Keck and Sikkink, 1998). They propose to
study further how networked forms of collaboration between trans–national
NGOs working on similar issues may begin to account for their geo-political
impact. Among their other actions, NGOs engage politically by means of issue
framing, which attracts publicity and news, prompts actor networking and
prepares parties for summit and other policy venue work (Rogers, 2005). One
may study the impact of trans–national advocacy networks in terms of their
capacity to 'fit' their issue-framing actions into news, evidentiary proceedings as
well as policy-setting institutional venues, such as United Nations (UN)
summits (Keck and Sikkink, 1998). Noortje Marres and Richard Rogers have
studied such actions in terms of 'issue formatting', discussing, for example, the
implications of making an issue into a rights claim (Marres and Rogers, 2004).
In particular, making an issue into a right may result in trans–national NGO
networking and fit with inter-governmental venues as well as evidentiary
proceedings. It also may result in the abandonment of the previous
('pre–rights–talk') issues, thought crucial for the local resolution of an affair.
In other words, trans–national networked forms of collaboration alone (Riles,
2001), as well as collective issue-formatting actions that befit certain
international institutional arrangements, may account little for the settlement
of an issue on the ground. Previous work, especially on the Narmada Dams
case, has been directed at unresolved issues on the ground, where once active
trans–national networks, together with inter-governmental organizations, have
moved on (to other big dam projects) (Marres and Rogers, 2004; *Issuecrawler
Back-end Movie*, 2005; Marres, 2005). This study, though, treats the
abandonment of local NGOs on the ground, where trans–national NGOs
have not moved elsewhere.

   The case concerns the networks of NGOs and other actors assembling
around the Israeli government's *security fence* and related conflict issues, and
the manner by which the networks may be said to format the issues. We
examine how the issue is being addressed in networks by examining the
terms employed by the actors – *apartheid wall*, *racist separation wall*, *security fence*,
anti-terrorism fence, *separation fence*, *West Bank wall* and others. The network
location exercise and issue-term analysis are preceded by a discussion of the
official Israeli, Palestinian, US, UN, European Union and International Court

of Justice (ICJ) positions on the construction of the obstacle (as of July 2004), with a concentration on the terms employed, and the claims and counter-claims used to justify positions on the construction. The purpose of the discussion is as much to present the official terminological work as it is to show, in the subsequent section of the paper, how Israeli left-leaning NGOs are isolated in much of the official discourse as well as in that of trans-national issue networks, thus mitigating their potential impact. By way of conclusion there is a discussion of the complicated place of the network actor – the left-leaning Israeli NGO – and the extent to which it is distinctive among NGOs (and other actors) in its approach to 'issue settlement' (Marres, 2005). (In a complementary study, on worldwide media usage of the various terms for the obstacle, we draw conclusions about conflict non-resolution (Rogers and Ben-David, 2005).) Here, we conclude that trans-national issue networks, in isolating and being isolated by left-leaning Israeli NGOs, find themselves outside the local peace process.

The location of issue networks (on the Web) begins with a discussion of NGOs' and other actors' linking practices. Previous studies have shown that NGOs are selective in choosing organizations to link to – a selectiveness that also expresses itself by not linking to organizations they may acknowledge directly or indirectly (Park and Thewall, 2003). Organizations may name other actors and not link to them; organizations may name other organizations' terms, slogans, documents and other discursive contributions, and not link to them. The presence or absence of a directional link, of bi-directional links, and of missing links has been discussed in terms of the everyday 'politics of association' on display on the Web (Rogers and Marres, 2000; Rogers, 2004). Previously, the point of the politics of association was an attempt to redirect research (occasionally related to geo-politics), which creates link classification schemes (why organizations link) largely based on 'site features,' site size, amount and quality of information available, or other 'functional' rationales behind linking (Bach and Stark, 2004). The assumptions behind such studies may be questioned. In previously introducing the related term 'hyperlink diplomacy', we were pointing to the delicately social aspects of linking (Rogers, 2002). Here, however, the notion appears more germane, for we have found distinctive linking practices between Israeli NGOs, Palestinian NGOs and trans-national advocacy NGOs working on the obstacle and related conflict issues. We also have found, by and large, a correspondence between linking practices and issue terms. More remarkably, we have found a departure from the archetypal finding of trans-national NGO recognition of local groups working on the same side of an issue, suggesting an absence of diplomacy (through the study of hyperlinks as well as the key words).

We have been surprised by the link findings, up to a point. Studies have characterized a .org style (or especially an NGO style) of linking, contrasting it from other domain or organizational styles (Rogers and Marres, 2000;

Shaw, 2001; Bach and Stark, 2004). Apart from our own findings, the work on the Zapatista is a case in point. Whilst the international Zapatista 'movement' was known for its extensive use of the Internet and for its international networked forms of collaboration, a mapping of the network was thought necessary in order to analyze the geography of support (Garrido and Halavais, 2003). In 2001, researchers at the University of Washington deployed a specially constructed crawler that fetched the external hyperlinks on the Zapatista's main Website, http://www.ezln.org. The NGOs linked from the Zapatista's main site were scraped for their external links, and in a snowball method, the target pages were also scraped for links. Sorting out all non-NGOs as well as any activist groups without its own host, a total of 392 sites, within two degrees of separation away from the main Zapatista site, were retained for the analysis. From a cluster analysis of the strength of ties between the sites, it was found that the Zapatista NGO activist network has a dense structure, with only about 20 per cent of the actors weakly linked. The core of the network was identified as Zapatista information sites and Zapatista development groups (dedicated to the social development of the area), as well as international human rights, women rights, and peace groups.[1] Strong relationships were identified between the Zapatista-related groups and the international human rights groups, suggesting an international human rights frame in the international Zapatista support network (to use the terms developed by Keck and Sikkink), and a likelihood that the issues were being formatted into rights claims (to use the language of Marres and Rogers). The resulting map shows relationships between global and local NGOs; more specifically, it shows that the second tier of the Zapatista-related sites bridges the global NGOs and the main Zapatista sites. (In social network terms, they were highly 'between'.) The authors conclude that these sites bind the global NGOs with the local Zapatista network. Global human rights organizations are central players in the network, and as such the network represents typical relationships between local and global NGOs working on the same issue. Indigenous organizations are supported by their international collaborators often working in the area of human rights (Keck and Sikkink, 1998).

International NGOs supporting Palestinian organizations fighting against the obstacle would fit the archetypal relationships between local and global NGOs, described above. Atypical in this case, however, is the positioning of Israeli NGOs that fight against it from the other side of the structure. These groups engage both in online and on-the-ground activities, alone and together with Palestinians. The activities include demonstrations in Israeli cities, sit-ins by the fence and checkpoint monitoring, as well as joint olive harvesting and demonstrations with Palestinians in the seam zone where the obstacle is being built.[2] On the Web, these organizations wage campaigns intended primarily to influence measurable Israeli public opinion (which strongly supports the construction project), and in some cases, to gain

international support for this resistance, in the form of urgent appeals to the UN, or to other international institutions, on their behalf.[3] Here, however, the archetypal global support pattern is difficult to locate. Many left–leaning Israeli organizations do link to Palestinian organizations that resist the obstacle, but Palestinians largely do not reciprocate (except in their occasional links to Israeli human rights NGOs). Furthermore, there is hardly any reciprocity of linking between International and Israeli NGOs. Thus this case serves as an example of a deviation from the pattern that shows .org's linking locally to other NGOs on the same side *as well as* internationally to supporters. It also deviates from the case described above, where international NGOs link to local NGOs – international linking to Israeli NGOs is missing.

One account could be that the Israeli groups wish to position themselves on one side of the issue, and act only locally. Another, perhaps complementary account, is that the other participants – Palestinian and especially international actors – may be refusing to include them on the side of the resistance, 'pushing them' almost literally to the other side of the fence. In any case, we found in the hyperlink analysis that the Israeli organizations resisting the obstacle are in 'virtual isolation' in the overall issue space by virtue of missing links from the internationals and the Palestinians. To attempt to account at least in part for the isolation, we have sought the linking patterns between Israeli, Palestinian and international NGOs, together with the terms being used for the obstacle. In finding distinctive networks using different terms, we report the virtual isolation of Israeli NGOs in terminologically organized networks. (We are not claiming here that terms alone organize networks, however.)

In the following, the obstacle is introduced where the focus is on the terms employed for it by the various actors. Thereafter, the hyperlink and issue key word study is discussed, which concludes with the implications on the ground of trans–national networking for issue settlement, with a focus on the distinctive local approach taken by Israeli NGOs.

THE SECURITY FENCE

Since September 2000 and the beginning of the second intifada, the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians has been slowed by violence. Israeli civilians have been killed by Palestinian suicide bombings and other attacks, and Palestinian civilians have been killed by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) and Israeli settlers. In June 2002, as the frequency of attacks in Israel increased, the Israeli government decided to begin building a partial barrier along the Green Line border with the West Bank (or close to it) (Harel and Alon, 2002). The Green Line is the 1949 ceasefire line that separated Israel from the West Bank until 1967. In 1967, the Six Day War ended with an Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza strip, and the Green Line came to be the boundary between Israel and the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. In November 1967, the UN Security Council resolution

number 242 called for the Israeli army to withdraw from 'territories occupied in the recent conflict', which resulted in an international acknowledgement of the Green Line as Israel's border, however much the Israeli government did not acknowledge it as an international border. After signing the Oslo Accords in 1993 and amending the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) charter in 1996, the Palestinians, for their part, agreed to recognize Israel's existence behind the Green Line. Up until today, there is a controversy over whether the Green Line should be Israel's final border.

The *security fence* has a precedent. In 1994 an electronic fence was built around the Gaza Strip and was considered successful in preventing the infiltration of attackers. (Fenced off, the Gaza Strip is referred to occasionally as a prison without a roof.) Unlike the West Bank obstacle, the delimiting line of the Gaza fence was negotiated and agreed upon as part of the Israeli–Palestinian interim agreement of 1995 (Israel and PLO, 1995).

The construction and approval of the obstacle has taken place in stages. The first stage, approved on 23 June 2002, comprised the construction of a 116 km-long obstacle in the northern part of the West Bank. The second stage, approved on 14 August 2002, included a further 60 km-long stretch, connected to the first. On 5 September 2003, stage three marked the beginning of the construction of a 64 km-long portion in the area of Great Jerusalem (see figure 1) (High Court of Justice, 2004). If completed, there will be a 650 km-long, continuous obstacle stretching from Beit-Shean (in the north) to Arad (in the south), at an estimated cost of two and a half billion dollars (see http://www.btselem.org/english/Separation_Barrier/Statistics.asp). In part it is a wired fence, and in a smaller part, it is a concrete wall. According to Israeli official documents, the parts built as a wall comprise less than five per cent of its total length, and are built in 'sensitive areas' where the threat of attacker penetration to Israel is greatest (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2004c). According to the Israeli government, gates are to be provided at an average distance of 1.8 km along the *fence*, in order to grant Palestinian farmers access to their fields and enable children to go to school (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2004a).

The technological sophistication of the current and future border project is presented at surveillance technology trade fairs and low intensity conflict conferences, where one learns of Israeli military plans for a 'remote-control border' (BBC News, 2004; Defense Update: International Online Defense Magazine, 2004). The current system (seen from east to west) consists of barbed wire coiling, a ditch, an electronic intrusion detection fence with all-weather sensors, a smooth dirt track for footprint detection, a military vehicle road, a further dirt track and another barbed wire fence. Observation cameras and manned observation posts run along the stretch. Automatic and manually detected intrusion data are fed to the control centre where commands are issued. Reports from defence trade events discuss the future use of unmanned

vehicles as well as picture-taking drones (unmanned aerial vehicles), the most recent ones (named Birdy and Mosquito) being the size of small birds. Interested customers for Israeli surveillance technology include India.

Israeli official information sources stress the necessity of the construction as a 'last resort' measure for preventing suicide bombers and other attackers from entering Israel and harming civilians. (A second justification is to stop illegal immigration, as well as car theft and other criminal activities.) The two official terms, 'security fence' and, later, the 'anti-terrorism fence', reflect the principle Israeli justification. Other points repeatedly stressed are that the obstacle is not an act of border stating – it is temporary – and every measure has been taken to mitigate the harm to Palestinian civilians living along its path. Above all, Israeli information sources wish to undermine the image of a wall. On June

• Figure 1   The route of the West Bank obstacle, march 2004
Source: BTselem.org

2004, the Israeli government put forward a plan to paint the wall portions with anti-graffiti paint, so that it will not resemble the former (and extant portions of the) Berlin Wall.

The Israeli information sources discuss the effectiveness of the obstacle by presenting statistics about the decline in the number of suicide bomb attacks on Israeli civilians since the beginning of its construction. (See figures 2 and 3.) Before the construction, 502 Israelis were killed by suicide attacks originating from the West Bank (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2004b). In the northern part of the West Bank, or Samaria, the number of suicide attacks originating from that region declined from 17 before the construction (in the period of April to December 2002) to five after its construction (in all of 2003). In other parts of the West Bank, where the construction of the barrier is yet to be completed, the number of suicide attacks originating from that region has risen slightly from 10 to 11 (over the same period) (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2004c).

The Palestinians seek to undermine the Israeli justifications with counter-terms and claims as well as different kinds of statistics. The barrier has nothing to do with security, but rather with racism, human rights violations and land annexation; the 'apartheid wall' and the 'racist separation wall' are the official Palestinian terms (Khatib, 2004; Palestinian National Authority State Information Service, 2004). According to the Palestinian National Authority, the barrier is not being built along the 1967 Green Line but rather cuts deep into the West Bank. Different reports estimate that when completed, the barrier will annex between 17 per cent of the West Bank (according the human rights organization B'Tselem) and 48 per cent (according to Palestinian National Information Center), isolating communities into cantons and 'military zones' (B'Tselem, 2004; International Press Center, 2004). The term 'ghetto' is used frequently in official Palestinian documents, with allusion to racism, the Second World War and the Holocaust. Generally speaking, Palestinian information sources are not merciful in their word choice to describe the impact of the barrier and the damage it causes to the Palestinian people. Repeatedly, one reads the words 'theft,' 'Israeli schemes and plots', 'confiscation', 'isolation', 'border modification' and 'crimes' (Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2004).

According to Palestinian official information sources, the number of Palestinian residential gatherings that have lost their lands by an Israeli military order is 26, the number that have lost their lands 'forcibly' is 18, and the additional number that have lost their lands through these two methods combined is 31: this has caused the expulsion of 1,412 Palestinian families, and has left families from the same village on either side of the barrier (Palestinian National Authority State Information Center, 2003). Residential and industrial buildings situated on the planned route have been demolished. The same reports also present human rights and economic rights claims against the barrier, by pointing to the uprooting of olive tree plantations
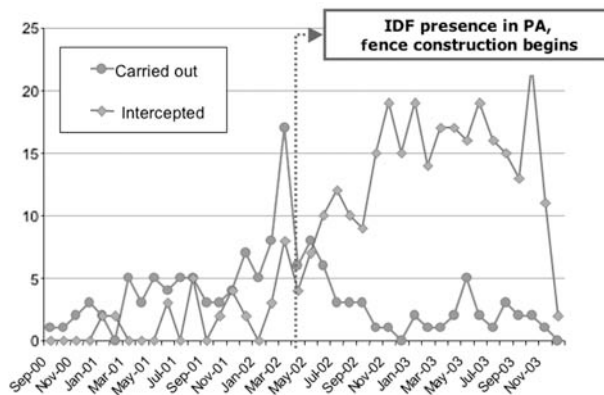
Suicide attacks and their origins
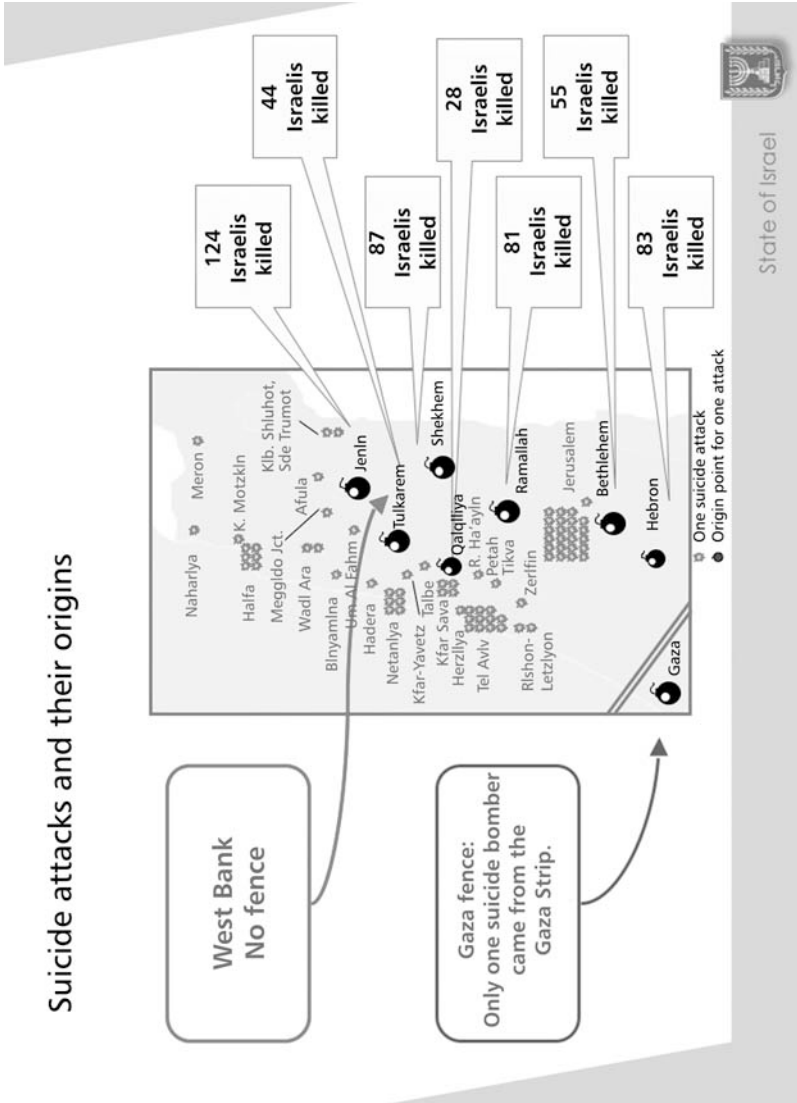
● Figure 2   Suicide attacks and their origins graphic from the Israeli ministry of foreign affairs, february 2004
Source: http://securityfence.mfa.govil/mfm/Data/49058. pps (consulted January 2006)

• Figure 3   Effectiveness of the fence graphic from the Israeli ministry of foreign affairs, february 2004
Source: http://securityfence.mfa.gov.il/mfm/Data/49058.pps (consulted january 2006)

belonging to Palestinian civilians, as well as the loss of Palestinian control over water supplies. Israeli efforts have included the replanting of trees and providing compensation, should Palestinian families apply. The Israeli government rejects any claims of water deprivation.

The international community has not remained indifferent to the construction. On one hand, the Bush Administration has expressed comprehension for Israel's security arguments, but does not want it to prejudice negotiations or threaten the prospect of creating a contiguous Palestinian state, as offered in US President Bush's Road Map peace plan. The administration has pressured Israel to restrict construction to the area along the pre-1967 border, or as close to it as possible (United States Department of State, 2004). US pressure on Israel also has led to a number of changes to the route of what the administration calls a 'security fence' (United States Department of State, 2003).

The European Union, on the other hand, has condemned Israel for building the structure, claiming that it 'could prejudge future negotiations and make the two-state solution physically impossible to implement' (Commission des Communautés Européennes, 2003). Considering that the 1967 Green Line is not an internationally recognized border, the EU is also alarmed by the creation of a closed zone between the barrier and the Green Line.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNWRA) and Amnesty International have both issued special emergency reports on the damages the obstacle may bring upon the Palestinians, in terms of violations of human rights (United Nations Relief and Works Agency, n.d.; Amnesty International, 2004). Condemnations of the obstacle have also been issued by select NGOs worldwide. In September 2001, before the Israeli government's decision to build the obstacle, the human rights forum running parallel to the UN World Conference on Racism in Durban, South Africa, ended with a declaration that branded Israel a 'racist apartheid state' guilty of 'war crimes, acts of genocide and ethnic cleansing' (Hanafi, 2004). The declaration was adopted by a majority of the delegates to the World Conference's NGO Forum. In May 2004, over a hundred European NGOs from France, Belgium, Luxemburg and Holland submitted a petition to the European Union's rotating President, demanding the EU take steps against 'the *Apartheid Wall* Israel is constructing in and through the occupied West Bank' (*The Palestine Monitor*, 2004) (emphasis added). In all, the NGOs have employed language consistent with the Palestinians.

The controversy was also brought into the legal arena. Since Palestine is not a state, and since Israel has not agreed to the jurisdiction of the court, the Palestinians could not sue Israel before the ICJ. The Palestinians therefore addressed the UN General Assembly, which then asked for an advisory opinion from the ICJ (Lapidoth, 2004): 'What are the legal consequences arising from the construction of the *wall* being built by Israel, the occupying power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory?' (United Nations General Assembly, 2003) (emphasis added).

Member states of the European Union, although condemning it, concertedly abstained on the vote by the UN General Assembly that requested an advisory opinion from the ICJ. (The vote passed.) In the official statement at the European Parliament, Minister Roche explained that 'transferring the matter of the *Wall* to a legal forum would do nothing to advance the political process necessary for peace. Abstention did not in any way suggest that the European Union's position that the *Wall* was in contravention of international law had changed' (European Union, 2004) (emphasis added).

The state of Israel is of the opinion that the court does not have jurisdiction to deal with this question for a number of reasons, among them being that the subject is mainly of an internal political nature and therefore should be dealt with by diplomatic and political means. Furthermore, since the General Assembly itself already decided on the legality of the obstacle, it is superfluous to submit the question to the ICJ. Israel submitted to the ICJ a detailed written statement dealing with the question of jurisdiction and the propriety of giving an advisory opinion. Israel, however, refused to appear at the oral hearings in February 2004. Hence, the question of the fence's legitimacy and legality has become, in part, an issue of the legality and legitimacy of the ruling of the ICJ (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2004d).

On 9 July 2004, the ICJ in The Hague ruled that 'the construction of the *wall* being built by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime, are contrary to international law' (International Court of Justice, 2004) (emphasis added). Moreover, the ICJ advisory opinion called upon Israel to dismantle it and to make reparations for all damage caused to the Palestinians by its construction. A parallel call was made to the world's nations neither to recognize the illegal situation resulting from its construction nor to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by such a construction.

Unlike for the ICJ ruling, in Israel there is no question of the legitimacy of the ruling of the High Court of Justice. On 30 June 2004 it ruled that the state must reroute 30 kms of a 40 km stretch of the *fence* northwest of Jerusalem (Yoaz and Benn, 2004). The Justices wrote, 'only a *Separation Fence* built upon the foundation of law will grant security to the state and its citizens. Only a separation route based on the path of law will lead the state to the security so yearned for' (Israel High Court of Justice, 2004) (emphasis added). The Israeli government has accepted the High Court ruling and announced that changes to the route will be made accordingly (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2004e).

The issue is far from settled. Terminologically, we note associations between the Palestinian National Authority, the UN, the ICJ, the EU and the NGOs, all terming it a wall, albeit often with distinct adjectives. (The ICJ has employed the term 'West Bank Wall'.) Officially, the Israelis are divided between 'separation fence' (High Court) and 'security fence' or 'anti-terrorism fence' (Israeli government); US officials tend towards 'security fence'. We now turn to locating the NGO networks and their terms, where we attempt to account for the isolation of left-leaning Israeli NGOs campaigning against the obstacle in trans-national issue networks.

LINKING IN TIMES OF CONFLICT

From the standpoint of politics of association projects, as described above, not linking to an organization perceived as a foe, or as an opponent, is thought understandable. Deliberate non-linking could be interpreted as a dismissal of an organization's contribution or relevance. It may be thought of as an act of boycotting, or an attempt to de-couple an organization from an issue space, reducing its presence and its rank (or its page-rank in dominant search engines). In terms of (hyperlink) diplomacy, it may be considered as a snub, whether or not a specific linking gesture has been requested. In any case, it would be archetypal to find non-linking behaviours between known, oppositional groups (Sunstein, 2001). It would not be archetypal, and perhaps surprising, to find non-linking among groups positioned on the same side of an issue. In keeping with previous studies on the linking behaviours of NGOs, moreover, it would be non-archetypal to find non-linking between similarly positioned actors in the .org domain (whether top-level or second-level, as .org.il).

The hyperlink analysis seeks to show and also account for the isolation of local, left-leaning Israeli organizations resisting the obstacle. We found they snub, and are being snubbed by, the international NGOs and other international actors. This lack of acknowledgement (by hyperlink) implies not only that there could be potential cases in which the relationships between local and global NGOs participating in the same larger issue network could be unsupportive: resistance as well as issue-framing efforts by Israeli NGOs may be overshadowed, or even masked. (We return later to this point.) In the issue network, the resonance of the attempts of the Israeli organizations to frame the issue in their own terms might thus be under-acknowledged by the international pro-Palestinian attempts to frame and term the issue differently.

For the location of the issue network, we used the 'public trust' heuristic for our selection of starting points to launch a crawl and locate a network (Marres and Rogers, 2000; Rogers and Zelman, 2002). Selecting organizations as starting points for a network location exercise by the public trust heuristic implies that there are organizations that a non-issue-expert (e.g. a search engine user) would turn to and expect a broad disclosure of the issue, from 'information' to actor (link) lists. Here, two such organizations were chosen to represent the Israeli NGOs and international groups, respectively. To be chosen as representatives, the organizations had to be not only trusted organizations, but also organizations to which the issue is central. The chosen organizations were gader.org – an Israeli coalition of left-leaning NGOs united in their efforts to campaign together against the obstacle (*gader* is Hebrew for fence). This umbrella organization unites most of the active left-leaning NGOs in Israel at the moment. From an international perspective, endtheoccupation.org, a US-led coalition of international organizations, was chosen to represent the most prominent international actors in the issue space. By referring to umbrella organizations, an attempt was made to capture as many NGO networking actors in the issue space as possible. It should be noted here again that the distinction between Israeli (and therefore local) and international (and therefore global) organizations is misleading at times, as actors in local activist networks often also participate in trans-national advocacy networks. As a consequence, actors in the Israeli network also may participate as actors in an international network (and vice versa), and that Palestinian organizations and actors could participate in both international and Palestinian campaigns. In this case, the international umbrella organization does mention two Israeli organizations as partners to their struggle (B'Tselem and Gush-Shalom).[4] Nevertheless, and as the results of this case study show, it seems that here the nationality of an organization *does* play a role in its positioning in the issue space. Therefore, the distinction between the Israeli organizations and the international ones could not be blurred by the fact that actors in these organizations could work both on the national and trans-national level.

The organizations belonging to each umbrella organization were chosen as starting points for the location of the issue network. A list of 13 Israeli organizations and 13 International ones – respectively, organizations that work locally versus organizations that approach the issue globally (see table one in the appendix) – were fed into the Issue Crawler (the tool which crawls the outgoing links from a set of starting points chosen by the researcher, finds co-links and returns a set of interlinked organizations).[5] (The specific demarcation of the network in this exercise is described below.)

Using the Issue Crawler, three parallel crawls were launched. The first crawl included both Israeli and international starting points, the second crawled international ones only and the third Israeli only. The creation of three network maps helped to identify whether there are differences in linking styles between the local and global participants, and whether there are sub-issues (potentially organizing sub-networks) inside larger issue networks. In this case, we made two sets of maps (six in total), using different criteria for inclusion in the network for each set. The first set is comprised of the overall networks for the Israeli, the Israeli-international and the international groups. The second set shows core networks for each, where the criteria for inclusion in the network were the top 20 nodes (by inlink count or 'indegree centrality') that have a frequency of at least three links between them. Thus we compare larger and core networks. The latter are particularly densely interlinked networks, where frequency of page ties serve as the determination of networked-ness.

The returned maps and actor lists enabled an analysis that focused on the relationships between the Israeli and international organizations. However, the identification of an organization as Israeli or international could not be determined automatically from the organization's domains, as many Israeli and Palestinian NGOs prefer the .org suffix over the second-level domains .org.il and .org.ps. Therefore, a manual examination of the identified organizations determined their 'nationality'. The analysis and the results of the crawls are detailed below.

## THE DOMINANCE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS FRAME AND THE ISOLATION OF ISRAELI NGOS

The first graph or map (figure 4), entitled 'The Overall International and Israeli Network', seeks to provide an indication of the issue network as a whole, resulting from both international and Israeli starting points. The crawl and co-link analysis yielded a network comprised of 89 nodes. The second map (figure 5) is entitled 'The Overall International Network', and with 91 nodes is almost identical to 'The Overall International and Israeli Network'. The size of 'The Overall Israeli Network', depicted in figure 6 (34 nodes), is much smaller relative to the whole, showing one indication of Israeli NGO isolation.

It would be inaccurate to claim that the Israeli organizations are completely thrown out of the issue space. Both the 'the overall international and Israeli network' and the 'the overall international network' maps include Israeli nodes, some of them playing a crucial part in keeping the international issue space together. Focusing on the network's central players and the inter-relationships between them brings into focus relationships between the core international and Israeli NGOs participating in the issue space. To view the cores, filtering measures were applied: the networks consist of the 20 'fittest' nodes with a high frequency of the links between them, as mentioned above. Generally speaking, most of the actors in the depicted core issue networks are non-governmental, with the exception of UN bodies (reliefweb.int), NGO-style news aggregators (oznik.com, electronicintifada.net) and a Palestinian official Negotiation Affairs Department site working under an NGO framework (nad-plo.org) (Benn, 2004). The two core international maps (with and without Israeli actors) are almost identical. There are two additional actors in 'core international network.' (See figures 7, 8 and 9.)

Btselem.org, an Israeli NGO advocating human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, is the central player that connects three sets of organizations: the Palestinian-led activists' campaigns, the Israeli peace movements and the internationally oriented human rights organizations. Without the intermediation of btselem.org, it seems that three separate networks would emerge, indicating perhaps three separate sub-networks on the same issue. This general configuration also reveals the nature of the relationships between global and local NGOs. The global NGOs frame the issue in terms of human rights, whereas the local NGOs engage in other issue politics (Israeli peace movement versus Palestinian resistance movements). In addition, whereas most of the time Israeli organizations include only Israeli activists, many of the nodes in these networks represent a Palestinian-international collaboration, indicating the archetypal relationships between local oppressed groups and their global supporters. The fact that the link to Israeli organizations is being made through Israel's most outstanding human rights NGO implies that in terms of legitimacy, the Israeli organizations are welcome in the issue space if they frame it in terms of human rights. That is, when it comes to human rights, nationality does not play a major role in acknowledgment. When it comes to non-human rights on the other hand, nationality appears crucial.

The linking behaviour of the identified groups in the internationally oriented maps is striking. In a way, the NGO linking style, discussed above, fails to appear in this case. Organizations expected to exhibit high levels of cross-linking and external linking are characterized rather by a strong tendency to link 'internally'. B'Tselem links exclusively to human rights organizations. Although they do not differentiate between the nationalities of human rights organizations and therefore present a cross-group linking
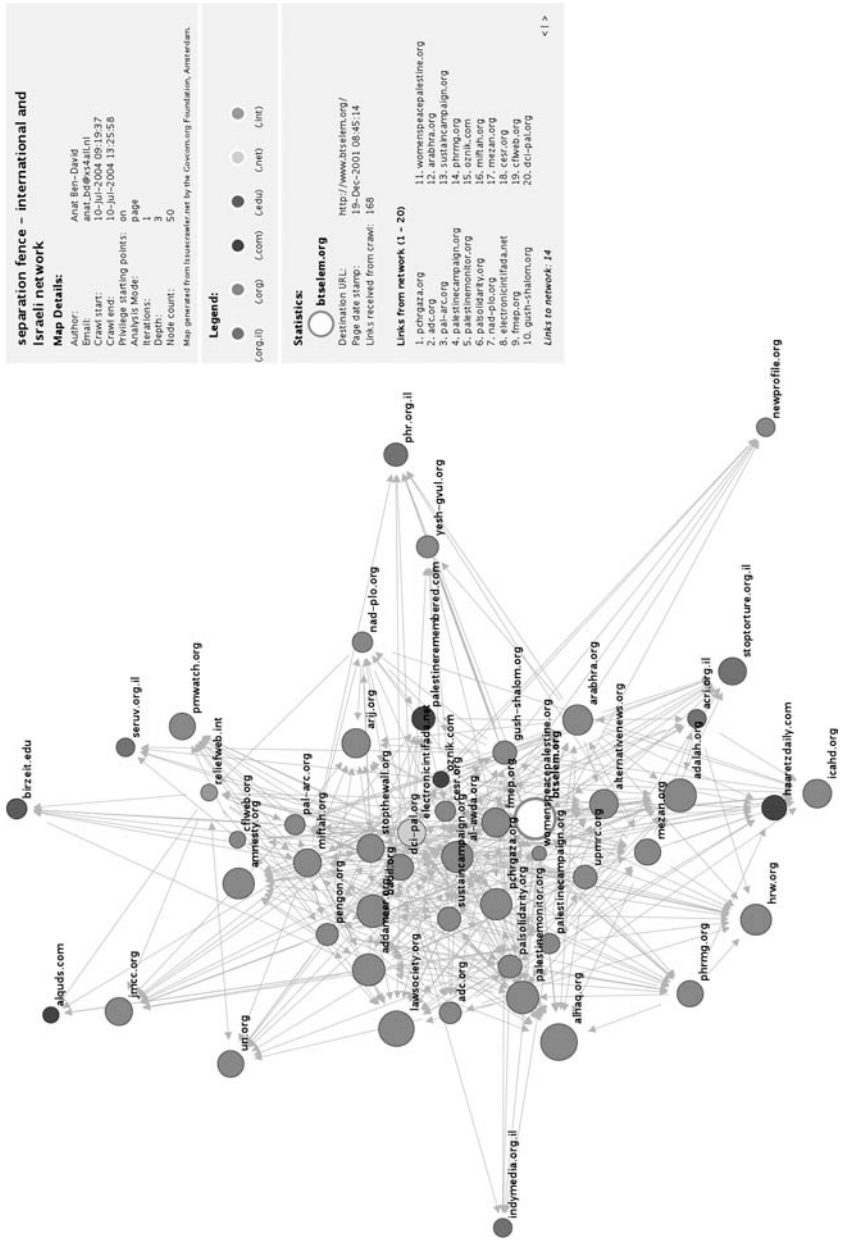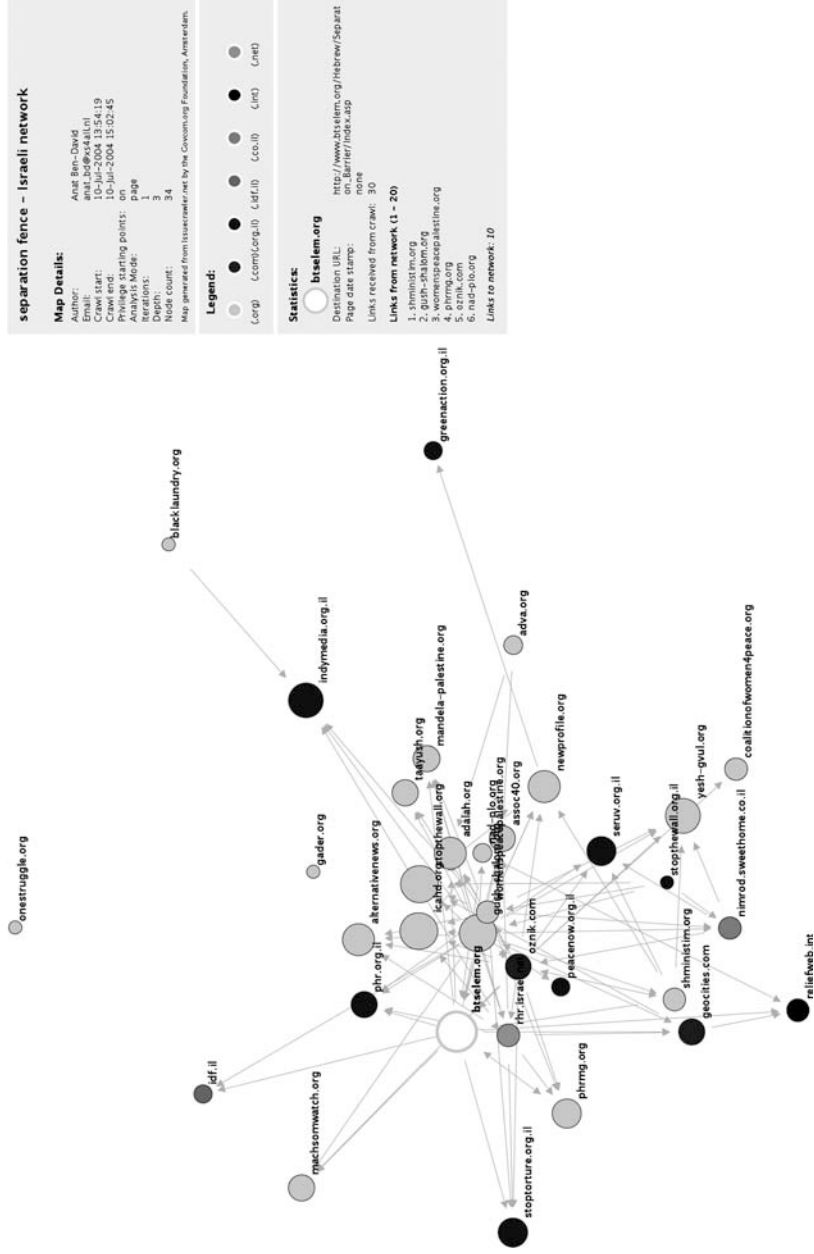
• Figure 4   The overall international and Israeli network. Top fifty nodes only. Graph by issuecrawler.net
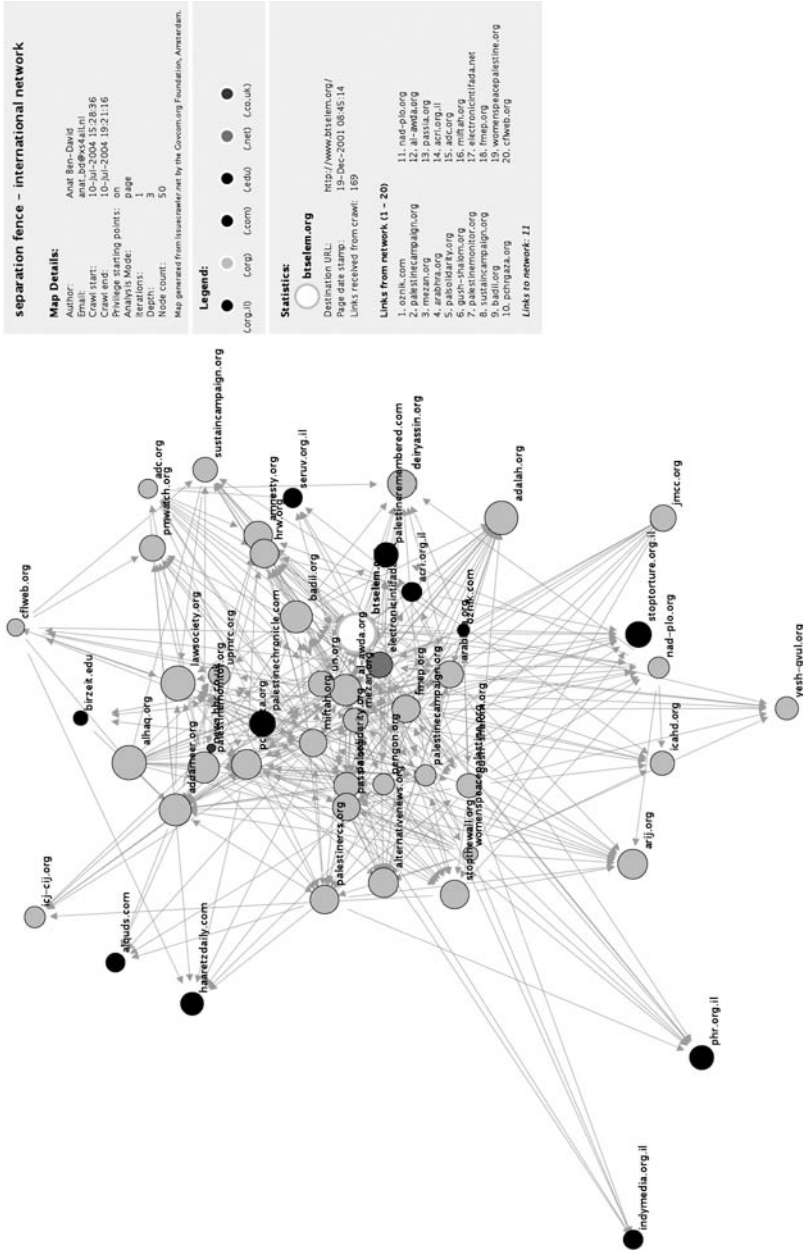
• Figure 5   The overall international network. Top fifty nodes only. Graph by issuecrawler.net

• Figure 6   The overall Israeli network. Graph by issuecrawler.net
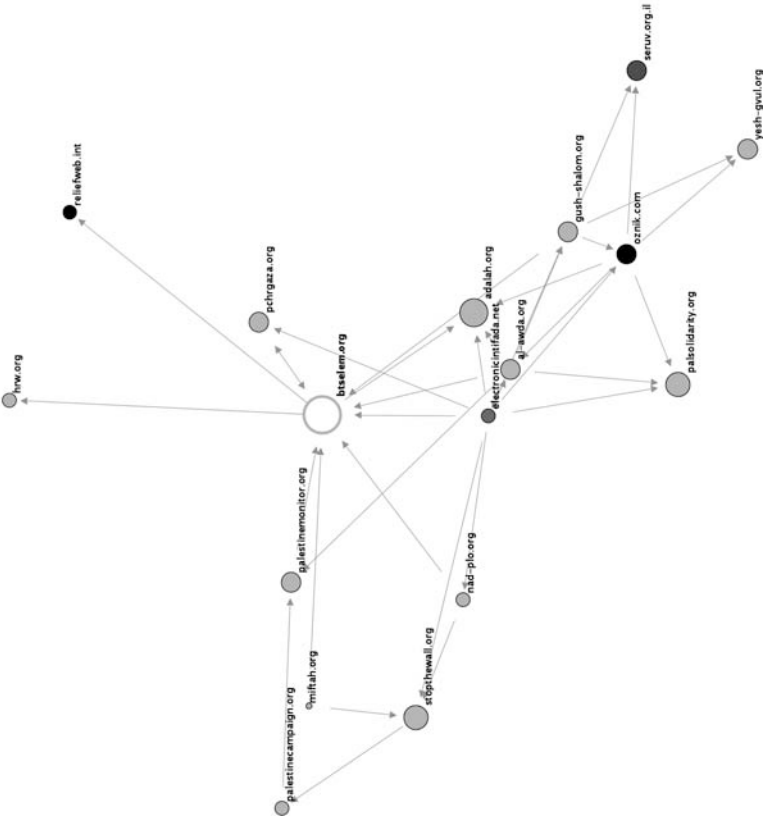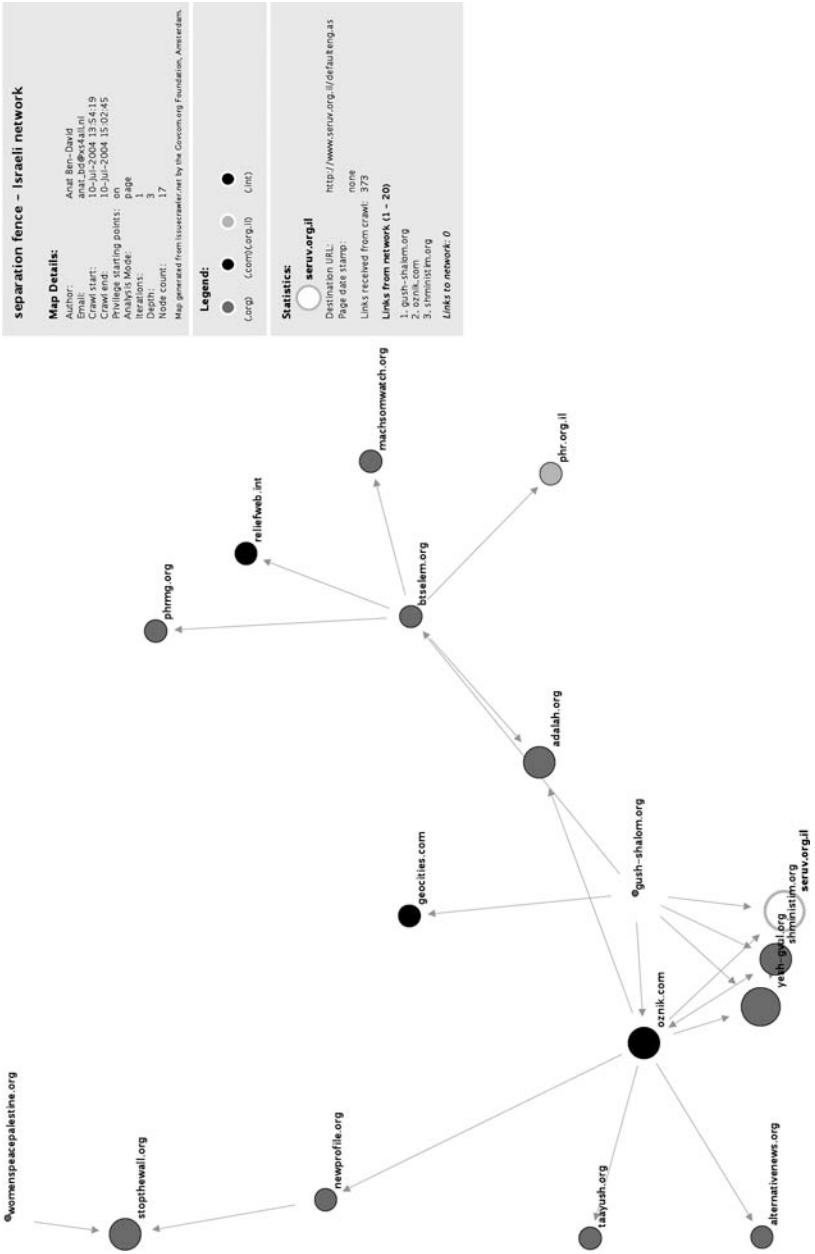
• Figure 7   The core international and Israeli network. Graph by issuecrawler.net
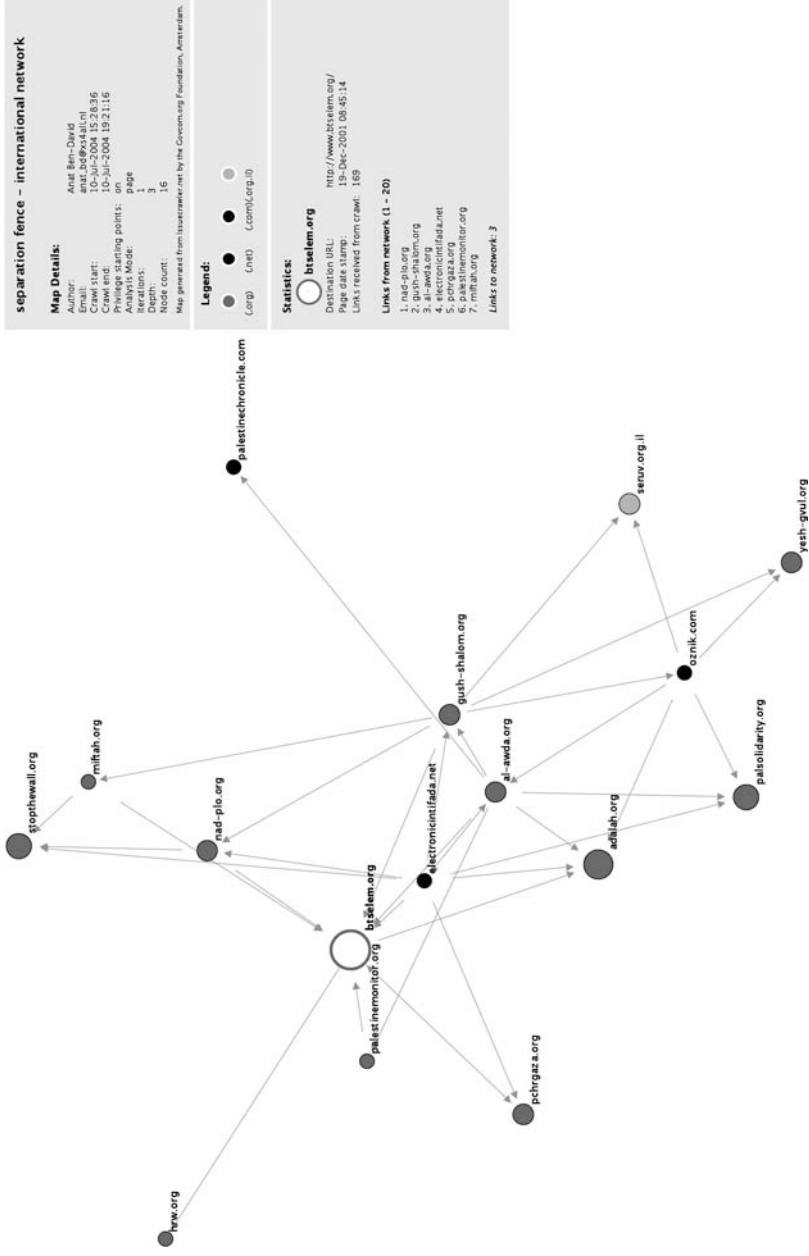
• Figure 8   The core international network. Graph by issuecrawler.net

● Figure 9   The core Israeli network. Graph by issuecrawler.net

behaviour, they do restrict themselves to human rights organizations and do not include other groups. Palestinian and international collaborations link almost exclusively to like-minded and like-structured organizations. Israeli organizations link to other Israeli NGOs and far less to others in the network.

The 'Core Israeli Network' map, depicting the network crawled from Israeli anti-obstacle NGOs, shows a similar internal hyperlinking behaviour. (See figure 9.) Here again, if any international organizations are brought into the space, it is by virtue of B'Tselem. However, there is evidence to some extent of cross-group linking to Palestinian actors, as a number of Palestinianled organizations do play a central role in the network. On the local level, other issue-framing attempts appear, such as anti-militarism, social justice and feminism – issues not picked up by the internationals. Compared to the international actors' maps, which are very issue-specific, the Israeli map includes actors that do not address the obstacle issue directly.

Another striking finding has to do with the fact that in the 'overall network' maps, many Israeli organizations link to the international–Palestinian main anti-barrier campaign: stopthewall.org. Moreover, although one of the network's actors is an Israeli franchise (stopthewall.org.il), the pointing at the barrier issue by the Israeli organizations remains unilateral. This could be interpreted, rather metaphorically, as an obstacle facing the Israeli attempt to become part of the issue space, with only one gate that enables them to pass through – again, the human rights frame.

The divide between the parties trying to frame the issue as a local issue or a trans-national one is expressed in the different terminologies for the obstacle used by the participants. In the core international network map, the majority of the Palestinian and international organizations use the term 'apartheid wall'. With the exception of oznik.com (the Israeli alternative media outlet), the Israeli NGOs do not employ 'apartheid wall', but rather choose terms ranging from 'the wall' or 'the fence' to 'separation barrier' and 'separation wall'. In the overall Israeli network, many NGOs use the term 'separation fence'; in the core Israeli network, the most frequently appearing term is 'separation wall', followed by 'apartheid wall'. None employs the official term 'security fence'. None of the organizations in the overall international network uses the term 'fence', with or without 'security' and 'separation'.

A dual shift in terminological development may be traced. First, we report the local, Israeli organizations' rejection of their own government's framing of the issue in terms of security and temporary measures. However, when this rejection is brought to the international arena, it comes to the extreme, with the rejection of the 'separation fence' and the retention of the official and metaphorically richer Palestinian 'apartheid wall'. The discursive gap between the Israeli and the international terminology supports the hyperlink findings by demonstrating an international rejection of the leading Israeli NGO framing of the issue, even though the framing attempts come from organizations in

opposition to the barrier. The Israeli NGOs included in the international network maps are those that use the terms 'separation wall' and 'apartheid wall', where both 'wall' and 'apartheid' are terminologically closer to the international framing. No 'separation fence' NGO is included in the overall issue network. Moreover, the difference in the terminology used by Israeli NGOs between the overall and core networks suggests an internal terminological divide among the Israeli NGOs.

The Israeli NGOs in the overall Israeli network are alone in the use of the term 'separation fence'. On the one hand, this term is closer to the local framing of the issue, and aligns with the terminology used by the Israeli High Court. On the other hand, the core of the Israeli network rejects this terminology as well, taking one step further towards the international framing by replacing 'separation fence' by 'separation wall', and even using 'apartheid wall'. The fact that there are more Israeli NGOs using the term 'apartheid wall' in the Israeli network than in the international one strengthens as well their hyperlink isolation on the international level.

CONCLUSION: ISSUE SETTLEMENT AND THE TENSION BETWEEN TRANS-NATIONAL AND LOCAL ADVOCACY NETWORKS

We opened the analysis with the question of the potential impact of trans-national issue networks on geo-politics, especially networks working within the dominant human rights frame. As the human rights frame migrates across issue areas, and the introduction of 'rights talk' becomes a viable option for issue professionals, it becomes crucial to examine the consequences of choosing such an issue-framing. Though the number of case studies on the impact of rights talk is limited, we have found previously instances of issue abandonment by trans-national NGO networks as they move on from one local case to another that is more urgent (Marres and Rogers, 2004). We pointed out at the same time that we have not witnessed issue abandonment in this case, but rather distinct networks with terminological divides as well as actor abandonment. In the event, we found trans-national issue networks working in the area of human rights, and left-leaning Israeli NGOs working in isolation, with terminological disagreement as to what the obstacle should be called. We sought to account for left-leaning, Israeli NGO isolation.

One could contextualize the place of Israeli NGOs (with the aid of studies that largely exclude trans-national issue networks) by concentrating more on the official international mediation of the peace process. After all, the 'separation fence' is the term employed also by the Israeli High Court, as one may recall. As an international relations article in the Spring of 2004 recounts, the obstacle's recent origins lie in left-leaning Israeli governmental circles, and a kind of peace fence (which is not the term used) found expression in the negotiations between former US President Bill Clinton, former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and former Palestinian Authority President and PLO leader Yasser Arafat,

prior to the establishment of the Sharon government. In the article, the
'fence' is also made into an issue of doing peace politics through good design.

> It is somewhat ironic that Sharon, Barak's successor as prime minister, has been
> the one to finally oversee the construction of Israel's fence – an idea originally
> favored by Israel's liberals. As an architect of the settlement movement, Sharon
> had long agreed with the settlers that a fence would create a *de facto* Palestinian
> state in the West Bank and would mean abandoning those settlements that
> ended up on the wrong side. […] On a different note, the fence, if built
> correctly, could also act as a spur for peace. (Makovsky, 2004: 54–56)

The author goes on to examine four different 'fence' proposals, largely in
terms of their routes, together with the questions of land and population on
either side of what effectively becomes an interim border for conflict mitigation.
(The issue list, or peace parameters, is far longer and more complicated than
we describe.) Here, however, we have found that trans-national issue networks,
working largely in the human rights frame, are more likely to use terms that
befit more evidentiary proceedings (the ICJ and the international network
both use the term 'wall') and the inter-governmental institutional venues (mainly
those that run in parallel, as the NGO Forum on racism at Durbin), than the
mediated 'peace process' or the world news, where (in a different study) 'apartheid
wall' (for example) has the greatest frequency of mentions, but, relatively
speaking, the fewest number of sources picking it up (Rogers et al., 2004).

   This brings us to how to characterize the Israeli NGOs. Instead of fitting
archetypes, the left-leaning Israeli NGOs are complicated issue network
actors. Theirs is a dual attempt to advocate for the Palestinians while gaining
support from Israeli public opinion. In research based on Israeli public opinion
surveys, Tamar Hermann describes the Israeli NGOs' 'classic entrapment',
where on the one hand, too much Palestinian recognition of their initiatives
would endanger their legitimacy within Israel and, on the other hand, lack of
Palestinian acknowledgment would raise doubt about the realism of their
efforts (Hermann, 2002). Reading between their links, one also could say that
left-leaning Israeli NGOs are seemingly not as comfortable exchanging URLs
at the NGO counter-summits, or partnering in the NGO world news
aggregators, as they are at home, campaigning around nationally and
internationally mediated peace processes and national legislation, and trying to
make the national news. In other words, their isolation may be read as a
considered rejection of typical trans-national NGO 'leverage politics' whereby,
as in the Palestinian case, the purpose of internationalization – the reliance on
the 'third party' and on joint networks with the international NGOs – is to
pressure the Israeli government by proxy. The Israeli NGO attempt to confine
the debate to national and regional politics (that is, by addressing Palestinian
organizations for communal action, and addressing Israeli news and public
opinion in order to bring a change in Israeli policy) is in contrast to the actions

of archetypal trans–national issue network actors. Indeed, the hyperlink maps thereby reflect what we view as a tension between the well-studied trans-national advocacy networks and the under-studied local and regional advocacy networks, especially ones that attempt to do not global issue network politics (if you will) but something else. Intriguingly, although the Israeli NGOs resisting the obstacle oppose the Israeli claims of its necessity and its characterization as a security measure, they do align with the official Israeli policy that frames it as a national political issue, however differently.

The Web does not seem to provide a clear picture of the effectiveness of the Israeli NGOs (and by extension that of local networks) – that is, whether their issue publicity and issue settlement approach have been seriously noticed beyond the NGOs or other network actors located in the trans-national arena. We do not wish to conclude that their noteworthiness is being overshadowed necessarily by international–Palestinian collaborations. We rather would like to point out that the linking and terminological findings indicate that theirs is a different approach to local issue settlement.

In seeking the potential context for their effectiveness, one could shift the focus on Israeli NGO work to a more classic political mediation sphere, more in tune with international relations writers (as above), but that would assume there is a clear division between trans-national advocacy networks and classic diplomacy by the international community, however defined. One division seems clearer, though: human rights is the window international NGOs and others open to Israeli NGOs and this reflects our concluding view that the local peace process may be disentangled from the conflict-related affairs of the trans-national issue network.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1   The full list of the highly interlinked domains includes 13 core domains that are mentioned in descending order: Zapatista global development, human rights, women's rights, peace groups, Zapatista information, trade issues, Latin America focus, health and family planning, cultural exchange, grassroots media, Guatemala and miscellaneous.
2   See, for example, the joint Palestinian-Israeli sit-in camp, demonstrating against the construction of the fence in the area of the Mas'ha village, URL (consulted January 2006): http://stopthewall.org.il/mashacamp/FrontPage.html.
3   The Tami Steinitz Center for Peace Research of Tel-Aviv University conducts a monthly Peace Index Survey, measuring Israeli Jewish and Arab public opinion about issues concerning the Peace process and the conflict. In June 2004, 78 per cent of the Jewish public supported or strongly supported constructing the fence and 16 per cent opposed or strongly opposed it. URL (consulted January 2006): http://spirit.tau.ac.il/socant/peace/peaceindex/2004/files/June2004e.pdf.

4 B'Tselem (www.btselem.org) is an Israeli NGO advocating human rights in the occupied Palestinian Territories, and Gush-Shalom (www.gush-shalom.org) is a left-leaning Israeli social movement. See the Appendix.
5 Issuecrawler.net by the Govcom.org Foundation, Amsterdam.

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APPENDIX

• Table 1   International and Israeli starting points for issue network location

SOURCES FOR STARTING POINTS	STARTING POINTS FOR THE CRAWL
International umbrella organization http://www.endtheoccupation.org	http://electronicintifada.net http://stopthewall.org.il http://www.alquds.edu/wall http://www.btselem.org (Israeli NGO) http://www.endtheoccupation.org/ http://www.gush-shalom.org/thewall/ (Israeli NGO) http://www.opendemocracy.net http://www.palestinemonitor.org http://www.palestinereport.org http://www.palsolidarity.org http://www.pengon.org http://www.stopthewall.org http://www.stopthewall.org http://www.vtjp.org/background http://www.womenspeacepalestine.org
Israeli umbrella organization http://www.gader.org	http://www.alternativenews.org http://www.blacklaundry.org http://www.coalitionofwomen4peace.org http://www.gader.org http://www.geocities.com/women_against_ the_wall/ http://www.greenaction.org.il http://www.gush-shalom.org http://www.icahd.org http://www.indymedia.org.il http://www.onestruggle.org http://www.taayush.org http://www.yesh-gvul.org

• Table 2 Actor information – core networks

ORGANIZATION	CATEGORY	LOCATION	URL	TERMS USED
Adalah– Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel	Human Rights– Arab Israelis	Israel	www.adalah.org	The Fence or the Wall
Al Awda– Palestine Right to Return Coalition	Human Rights, Refugees	International	www.al-awda.org	Apartheid Wall
Alternative Information Center	Media Activism	Occupied Palestinian Territory/Israel	www.alternativenews.org	West Bank Wall
B'Tselem– Israeli Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories	Human Rights	Israel	www.btselem.org	Separation Barrier
Coalition of Women for Peace	Human Rights, Solidarity	Occupied Palestinian Territory/Israel	www.coalitionofwomen.org	The Wall
Electronic Intifada	Media activism	Occupied Palestinian Territory/International	www.electronicintifada.net	Apartheid Wall
Gush Shalom (Peace bloc)	Peace movement	Israel	www.gush-shalom.org	Separation Wall
Human Rights Watch	Human rights	International	www.hrw.org	Separation Barrier
International Solidarity Movement (ISM)	Solidarity	Occupied Palestinian Territory/International	www.palsolidarity.org	Apartheid Wall
International Women's Peace Service	Solidarity	Occupied Palestinian Territory/International	www.womenspeace palestine.org	Apartheid Wall
Machson Watch (checkpoint watch)	Human rights	Israel	www.machsomwatch.org	Separation Wall
Miftah	Human rights	Occupied Palestinian Territory	www.miftah.org	Separation Wall
New Profile, Movement for Civiliziation of Israeli Society	Anti-Militarism	Israel	www.newprofile.org	Apartheid Wall

(*Continued*)

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• Table 2   (Continued)

Organization	Category	Location	Url	Terms used
Oznik.com	Media activism	Israel	www.oznik.com	Apartheid Wall
Palestine Chronicle	Media activism	Occupied Palestinian Territory/International	www.palestine chronicle.com	Apartheid Wall
Palestine Monitor	Media activism	Occupied Palestinian Territory/International	www.palestine monitor.org	Apartheid Wall
Palestine Solidarity Campaign	Solidarity	International (UK)	www.palestine campaign.org	Apartheid Wall
Palestinian Center for Human Rights	Human rights	Occupied Palestinian Territory	www.pchrgaza.org	Israel's Annexation Wall
Palestinian Human Rights Monitor Group	Human rights	Palestine	www.phrmg.org	The Wall
Palestinian Negotiation Affairs Department	Governmental	Occupied Palestinian Territory	www.nad-plo.org	Israel's Wall
Peace Now	Peace movement	Israel	www.peacenow.org.il	Separation Fence
Physicians for Human Rights	Human rights	Israel	www.phr.org.il	None
ReliefWeb	International	UN	www.reliefweb.int	Separation Wall
Seruv	Anti-militarism, refuseniks	Israel	www.seruv.org	None
Shministim	Anti-militarism, refuseniks	Israel	www.shministim.org	None
Stop the Wall	Solidarity Territory/ International	Occupied Palestinian	www.stopthewall.org	Apartheid Wall
Ta'aush, Arab Jewish Partnership	Human rights– Arab Israelis	Israel	www.taayush.org	Apartheid Wall
Women Against the Wall	Solidarity women_against_the	Israel	www.geocities.com/ _wall/act01.html	Separation Wall
Yesh-Gvul (There is a border)	Anti-militiarism, refuseniks	Israel	www.yeshgvul.org	Separation Wall