Organizational Aesthetics: Caught Between Identity Regulation and Culture Jamming

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Applying insights from Lefebvre's spatial theory [Lefebvre, H. 1991. *The Production of Space*. Blackwell, Oxford, UK] to an analysis of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs—recently relocated to its new award-winning building—the present study seeks to offer a more comprehensive model of the role of organizational aesthetics (OA) in identity regulation and culture jamming. Our contribution is threefold. (1) At the empirical/methodological level, this study attempts to simultaneously analyze the three Lefebvrian spaces in a single organization, demonstrating negotiations and struggles over interpretations of OA. (2) We analyze aesthetic jamming as a form of intentional and unintentional efforts at collective resistance that not only reveals the aesthetic mechanisms of regulation, but actually uses them as a method of counter-regulation. (3) Whereas most studies in this emerging body of literature focus on the regulation of organization-based identities (bureaucratic and professional), we show how the translation of extraorganizational hierarchies of identities (national, ethnic, and gendered) into the organizational control system is also mediated by OA.

Key words: organizational aesthetics; design; subjugation; identity regulation; organizational identity; power and control; resistance; culture jamming; Lefebvre
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Introduction

Recent years have seen a growth in research interest in organizational aesthetics as an aspect of organizational culture that contributes to processes of control through the construction and regulation of bureaucratic and professional identities within the organization (Berg and Kreiner 1990, Alvesson and Berg 1992). Commonly defined as "a form of human knowledge yielded by the perceptive faculties of hearing, sight, touch and taste and by the capacity for aesthetic judgment" (Strati 1999, p. 2), organizational aesthetics (OA) is often presented as a *sensory map* through which organizations' members and visitors intuitively sense what the organization is all about, what its main values are, and who the organization sees as the ideal worker.

Although most students of aesthetics and space do not explicitly deal with identity (but see Elsbach 2003, 2004; Dale and Burrell 2008) or its regulation (but see Clegg and Kornberger 2006), the vast majority of researchers in the field see aesthetics as an efficient mechanism for shaping the emotions, attitudes, and behavior of the people who use a given space (e.g., Gagliardi 1990, Witkin 1990, Baldry 1999). OA studies further suggest that the discourses that evolve around these material and aesthetic artifacts are part of the process through which actors position themselves within a broader social context. If manipulated successfully by the organization, this feature of OA makes it a powerful mode of control over the organization's identity in the eyes of its clients, competitors, and workers, as well as over the workers' own self-identity (Hatch 1997, Rafaeli and Pratt 2006). OA is thus much more than simply beautifying the workplace; rather, it is deeply imbued with issues of politics and power directed toward clients, workers, managers, and visitors to the organization. Moreover, although most OA students have assumed that architects and managers do not consciously attempt to control workers through their design, some researchers claim that the physical and aesthetical space in which social actors operate is often intentionally designed to shape users' thoughts and behavior (e.g., Henley 1977). Nonetheless, together with the growing recognition of OA's role in constructing the less conscious identification of members and visitors with the organization's goals and values, very recent studies in the field have also started to show that OA may evoke negative feelings toward the organization and even inspire acts of resistance that sometimes take aesthetic forms themselves (Fleming and Spicer 2003, Lewis 2008).

One way of tackling this complex dialectic of control and resistance through the planning, shaping, and organization of space is by implementing in OA analyses insights from the work of French sociologist and philosopher Henri Lefebvre (Ford and Harding 2004, Taylor and Spicer 2007, Dale and Burrell 2008). Lefebvre (1991) analytically divides space into three

dimensions—conceived space, perceived space, and lived space—and distinguishes between the forms of organizational control that take place in each of them. Whereas *conceived space* refers to the discourse of planning and the conceptualization of space by architects and managers regarding the desired identity that the space is meant to project, *perceived space* is the enactment of the architectural discourse translated into material artifacts and bodily gestures. *Lived space*, which refers to the interpretations of the space given by those present in it, is influenced by the two former types, though without necessarily being identical to them. In this space, argues Lefebvre, contradictory interpretations to those intended by the planners might be formed, and resistance to the organization's "attempts at control" through spatial means is possible. However, it is important to note that our understanding of the mechanisms of resistance in lived space is still in its earliest stages, and researchers investigating the possibility of spatial and aesthetic resistance have tended to restrict the range of behaviors that they study. Specifically, they focus on individual resistance to the worker's status in the organization, or to the erasure of individual identity through uniform design. The aesthetic resistance that is portrayed in most OA literature is therefore described as sporadic and spontaneous, and not as an inseparable part of power struggles within the organization.

In the current study, to further develop our understanding of OA and its identity implications, we build upon an extensive study of the three Lefebvrian spaces as they are seen in the case of the recently inhabited home of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (IMFA). Through a systematic and simultaneous comparison of the three spaces of a single organization, we expose the cracks in the apparent homology between the three and reveal the possibilities that we espy through these cracks for understanding the mechanisms of control and the development of collective resistance to them. We show that while in their discourse around the planning and construction processes, planners (architects and managers) created a tight affiliation between the identities of workers that they sought to construct and the aesthetic markers they introduced in the new building; seven years later, the building itself, along with many of the new identity features that the new building was meant to have helped to constitute, are still controversial, and managers keep complaining about continuous acts of vandalism and misuse by workers. Introducing insights from theories of aesthetic and spatial resistance in culture studies, critical geography, and postcolonial studies, we therefore observe OA not only as a terrain in which managers strive to regulate and transform employees' identities and performance, but also as a terrain of *counter-identity regulation*—that is, a social space in which, through the employment of various acts of *cultural and aesthetic jamming* (Lasn 1999), employees seek to maintain and reinforce an identity that their managers have endeavored to weaken or replace.

Ministries of foreign affairs are fascinating cases for researching organizational identities because they are organizations that inevitably construct split identities for their workers because of the unresolved contradiction between local internality and global externality, such that the worker is meant to represent the inside while living in and longing for the outside (Neuman 2005). Furthermore, because the representation of a national collective lies at the core of the diplomatic identity, ministries of foreign affairs, more than other employers, are often engaged in an effort to regulate and shape their workers' off-the-job identities in a way that is more explicit than in other organizational contexts. Under these circumstances, the attempt to forge and regulate extraorganizational collective identities that are meant to serve the organization's needs tends to be more visible than in other organizations, and the identity politics finds its way into the organizational space and its aesthetics. Likewise, while building a new organizational home is always an opportunity to negotiate organizational identities, the close proximity between national and professional identities in the case of ministries of foreign affairs forces them to negotiate, symbolize, and regulate collective identities through aesthetic markers, and it makes the role of aesthetics in the struggle over organizational collective identities easier to trace.

Our study of the organizational aesthetics of Israel's new Ministry of Foreign Affairs building allows us, therefore, to make three interrelated contributions:

1. At the empirical/methodological level, this study is the first attempt (to the best of our knowledge) to simultaneously analyze the three Lefebvrian spaces in a single organization. Such an analysis enables us to show that although the overlap between the three spaces does indeed enhance aesthetic mechanisms for the regulation of organizational identity, the negotiations and struggles over the interpretations given to the organization's aesthetic features bring these mechanisms out into the open, thus making them less effective from the point of view of the organization's management.

2. Whereas the literature on OA has paid only scant attention to the political significance of aesthetic resistance, our simultaneous analysis of the three spaces enables us to expose organized and nonorganized, and intentional and unintentional, efforts at collective resistance that not only reveal the aesthetic mechanisms of regulation but actually use mechanisms of aesthetic jamming as a method of counter-regulation. In other words, we study the way that resistance preserves features of identity that the organization seeks to eliminate through the new aesthetics or demands an explicit discussion of the meanings of the workers' regulated identity.

3. The introduction of aesthetic markers associated with extraorganizational identities, such as national and

ethnic identities, are often used in organizations in an attempt to reinforce workers' affiliation with the organization's identity and goals. As such, they may contribute to the expansion of resistance beyond the scope of regular management–employee relations. When identified as part of the regulation system, national, ethnic, and gendered aesthetic markers become a mechanism through which extraorganizational identity politics becomes part of organizational politics and further complicates employment relations. In these cases, workers may use forms of aesthetic jamming as part of the struggle over the dominant social identity outside the organization in their attempt to reject the identity of the "ideal worker" that the management seeks to advance.

Organizational Aesthetics: From Identity Regulation to Aesthetic Jamming— A Theoretical Background

Broadly depicted as a more or less intentional process by which "employees are enjoined to develop self-images and work orientations that are deemed congruent with managerially defined objectives" (Alvesson and Willmott 2002, p. 619), the notion of identity regulation refers not only to the organization's control over employees' behavior, but also to their emotions, thoughts, and aspirations (Kunda 1992, Rose 1989).

Analyzing organizational aesthetics (Strati 1999, Linstead and Höpfl 2000), office décor (Elsbach 2004), and organizational space, recent studies have shown that architectural decisions concerning the workplace layout, colors, zoning, and shapes have affected workers' conceptualizations of their role within the organization, their internalization of its main values and identification with them, and their tendency to accept the authority of their superiors (Rafaeli and Pratt 2006), making them an integral part of the general process of identity regulation. In a similar vein, Lefebvre's (1991) study of the three social dimensions of space—the conceived, the perceived, and the lived—demonstrates that when the three are congruent, space becomes an especially efficient mechanism for reproducing the social order and giving it a taken-for-granted quality (see Taylor and Spicer 2007, Dale and Burrell 2008). However, unlike most OA researchers, who assume such congruence between the three dimensions a priori and deduce the planners' intentions from their analysis of the perceived space, for instance, Lefebvre (1991) calls upon us to analyze the spaces both in parallel and separately from one another. Specifically, he suggests that interpretations of the lived space might be different from, if not contradictory to, those intended by the planners. As such, it might serve as an alternative space, or as a space for resistance.

According to Lefebvre (1991), the *conceived space* represents the ways in which architects and designers interpret their brief and translate it into a discourse concerning their aesthetic vision and architectural

choices. In the organizational context, managers and their professional discourse sometimes join forces with architects and designers in envisioning and conceptualizing the future organizational space and provide meaning for the chosen structures. The conceived space is thus always anchored in the values, tastes, and interests of the powerful groups. Research into the design of state buildings shows, for example, that in such cases the architectural discourse reflects the dominant outlook among the elite regarding the proper representation of national identity, as well as of gender, class, ethnic, and other identities (Vale 1992). The *perceived space* represents the space as materialized in practice and inhabituated in the body of the users. It relates to the social logic of the organization of the space, or to zoning: who sits where, who sits next to whom, how one moves between spaces, how accessible or inaccessible the various spaces are, and how the organization of the space influences interpersonal interactions (Hillier and Hanson 1984). Finally, the *lived space* comprises the experiences and interpretations of the space by its users. It takes as its starting point the idea that the power of aesthetics to generate emotions, desires, and self-identification is incomplete and that it depends on the way that those who live in the space experience and interpret it (Rapoport 1982, Rafaeli and Pratt 2006). Thus, in applying this distinction, Lefebvre (1991) highlights the power of architectural discourse to shape identities while also limiting it vis-à-vis users' possible alternative interpretations of the same material environment, and therefore their ability to reject the imposed organizational identity (see also Taylor and Spicer 2007).

Although only rarely discussed in OA studies, Lefebvre's (1991) insightful analysis of the subversive potential embodied in the organization of space has recently gained much support from theorists and activists in the field of critical geography and urban studies, but it is less developed in organizational theory. A notable example is Goodman's notion of "guerrilla architecture" (see Körnberger and Clegg 2003) or "vernacular architecture," which refers to authentic and local cultures that design their own spaces according to their specific needs. Another prominent example is de Certeau's (1999) tactics of walking in the city in a way that creates spaces of our own that reject planned and institutionalized paths and that poaches others' territories. When implementing these terms in the organizational context, we highlight the possibility of a bottom-up construction of alternative spaces in which organizational control is less tangible and feelings of emancipation and spatial disorganization are possible.

The most explicit discussion of subversive collective and political spatial and aesthetic resistance that strives for social change can be found among political activists who deploy the practice of culture jamming. Culture jamming is a social action that deploys aesthetic means

to resist the hegemonic power of the cultural images produced by large corporations and the mass media. The aesthetic mechanisms seen as part of such resistance range between the spontaneous, unorganized act of sticking the wrong coin into a supermarket cart to more or less organized and preplanned acts of sabotaging advertisements and other visual symbols in the public sphere in a way that makes them convey a message that contradicts corporate interests. Much like studies of aesthetics and space in general, the notion of culture jamming recognizes the power of aesthetics in shaping thought and emotions. In his two books, *Culture Jamming* (Lasn 1999) and *Design Anarchy* (Lasn 2002), designer and leading social activist Kalle Lasn lays the foundations for a systematic analysis of resistance through aesthetic means. Drawing in part on Lefebvre's (1991) critique of capitalism, Lasn analyzes the ways in which media messages conveyed through aesthetic means become memes through which people conceptualize and experience their world. Memes are the core units of cultural transmission: they are condensed images that stimulate visual, verbal, musical, or behavioral associations that people can easily imitate and transmit to others. The jamming of such memes through aesthetic means is, in his view, the best way to spread a subversive message. According to Lasn (1999), the spread of alternative memes that compete with those that reinforce the taken-for-grantedness of consumer capitalism can be intentional, through the professional design of posters and video clips whose messages have been carefully thought out, or spontaneous, expressions of anger or revulsion that lead people to attack symbols that are identified with values that the individual wishes to harm. If we accept the working assumption in the OA literature that aesthetics creates a sensory map that guides the actions and emotions of people exposed to it, then harming organizational aesthetics brings that latent sensory map to the surface. This then forces the people who are exposed to the aesthetics to create for themselves, and sometimes for others as well, an account of the messages embodied in those aesthetics and to make a conscious decision as to how much they agree with those messages or wish to resist them.

In this article, we draw on the view of culture jamming as a strategy of collective aesthetic resistance and on the insights of de Certeau (1999) and critical geographers to put forward a deeper and broader theorization of aesthetic resistance in organizations and its meaning for our understanding of the mechanisms of identity regulation in organizations. Based on the case study of the building of the IMFA and on the conceived, perceived, and lived spaces constructed in it, we show how everyday changes in the IMFA's space, which were conceived of so as to serve the goal of identity regulation, actually constituted a mechanism for culture jamming.

Methodology

Studies of workplace aesthetics and the ways in which it affects identity regulation and identity work have been commonly grounded in qualitative analyses of one or more case studies (Gagliardi 1990, Yanow 1995, Strati 1999). The current study follows this pattern and is based in the interpretive-hermeneutic approach in organizational studies (Alvesson and Deetz 2000). Qualitative methods are seen as particularly appropriate for studies in which local grounding or specific sites are important; the context in which the investigated phenomenon is embedded is crucial for its understanding, the richness and holism of the collected data are essential, and the perspective of the people involved is central to the study (Lee 1999, pp. 39–40). A single case study, often seen as adequate for the purpose of generating theory (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007, Siggelkow 2007), allows for the juxtaposition of the researcher's interpretations of the space with those of the various organizational participants: workers, managers, clients, and designers (Stake 1994, Yanow 2006).

The Case

The research site chosen for this study is the IMFA, which was relocated in 2002 to a new and impressive location in the new Jerusalem government precinct. Planning a new "home" for an organization mandates all those involved to account for the significance they attribute to various design and architectural decisions, thus exposing them to the researcher's eye. Moreover, for the various actors, the stages of becoming accustomed to the new building illuminate the significance of the space as a factor that impacts the way they situate themselves within the organization and understand their place in it. Thus, the current study traces how workers in an organization reposition themselves or are repositioned through their experiences and interpretations of the new aesthetic space that surrounds them at their newly relocated workplace. These two perspectives, the planners' and the users', are crucial for understanding the space under study.

The Ministry's building won a prestigious award from the American Institute of Architects and was declared "one of the ten most beautiful buildings in the world in 2004." To celebrate this exceptional achievement, two books were published about the building by its designers and by the Ministry itself, telling the story of the design and its social and symbolic significance. Yet, despite all the resources and efforts invested in the building, the relocation was (and still is) accompanied by bitter resistance from the workers, who have deployed it as the basis for prolonged labor disputes.

Data Collection

Our initial entrance into the research field followed the lively public debate aroused by the building among the

Israeli public and the struggle it gave rise to among the organization's staff. Therefore, we started by looking into the architectural concepts behind the building (the conceived space, according to Lefebvre 1991) that formed the basis for its design. To this end, we collected organizational texts that were directly related to the building and its aims: the book that the organization published about the new building, which was distributed to all workers and is still given to all guests today; the program that details the organization's needs and the "spirit" of the desired design; a DVD that was given to all staff members before the relocation to the new building; and articles in which the architects discussed their intentions and overall view of the building. We also interviewed the architects and managers who were involved in planning and constructing the building with the aim of examining whether and how they translated their outlooks into aesthetic identity markers (Elsbach 2003, 2004). Together with above-mentioned texts, the interviews provided us with a clearer picture of the conceived space.

To study how aesthetic identity markers were actually expressed in the field and to study the Lefebvrian perceived space, we wrote a field diary based on 20 observations of between 30 minutes to one hour in length. These observations were carried out at various sites over multiple visits. The aim of the field diary was to document the material artifacts in the space, as well as the workers' gestures and body language, noise, movement through the space, more and less common social interactions, random chats in the building's corridors, and the changes that the users made to the space via the infrastructure created by the architects. Following Dale and Burrell (2008), we also studied how OA are embodied by the workers and influence the way they use the space, namely, the spatial practices of everyday organizational life that are based on bodily habits and their associated habitus. This dimension is seen as particularly important because Lefebvre (1991) assumed that the embodied subject is the most central tool for understanding the negotiations between the material and the social in the process of creating space.

The third stage of data collection involved studying the lived space. To this end, we conducted interviews with 35 users (mostly workers and managers who had not been involved in the planning of the new building). These interviews were aimed at capturing users' accounts of their aesthetical surroundings and their interpretations of them. The 43 interviews that were conducted in total, which were held between 2003 and 2007, were sampled equally from each sector and each story. The questions were relatively open-ended, asking workers, managers, and those involved in the design process about their thoughts and feelings regarding the new building, as well as their own physical gestures.

Data Analysis

We adopted a constructive-critical perspective supported by cultural-symbolic theory, which is used in critical studies in organizational research. In this tradition, the various data collected by the researcher are analyzed according to a hermeneutic reading, which involves searching for repetitive patterns to decipher concealed meanings (Denzin and Lincoln 1994). The main advantage of this method is that it provides a rich description that enables the researcher to derive broader theoretical conclusions from a specific experience.

Following Gagliardi (1990) and Yanow (2006), our analysis is grounded in a meticulous comparison between the workers' interpretations of the space, those of the designers and managers, and our own interpretations as visitors. Identifying the similarities between the interpretations offered by the researchers, the planners, and the participants in the conceived and perceived spaces makes it possible to validate the connection between the use of various aesthetic markers, the organization's attempt to regulate identity, and the users' efforts at actively resisting this regulation. Such a comparison was carried out at a number of levels and through a number of stages using the collected data (see Table 1). For an extended and detailed depiction of our research and analysis process, please see the electronic companion to this paper, available on the *Organization Science* website (http://orgsci.pubs.informs.org/ecompanion.html). Table 1 offers an overall view of the methodological procedure and the interpretative process of our data.

The Conceived Space: New Israeliness and Western Professionalization

In analyzing the conceived space of the new IMFA compound, we focus on the ways in which the architects and designers conceptualized and interpreted the space that they planned and created. As in other cases of tailor-made organizational spaces, some of the Ministry's top managers were deeply involved in the design process, and their own vision became part of the discourse surrounding it. Thus, drawing on interviews with architects and managers involved in planning, and on the two books they published to accompany the opening of the new Ministry compound, we were able to identify the logic behind the design of the new Ministry building, the connections the planners sought to create between the design and the professional identities workers would develop within it, and the message delivered to the members of the organization through their exposure to the planners' vision.

Professionalism

Analysis of the interviews and organizational texts shows that the planners thought it particularly important to sharpen the workers' and the organization's

Table 1   Methodological Process

	Conceived space	Perceived space	Lived space
Defined as	Architects' and managers' discourse regarding space, the organization and the identity and behavior of the "ideal worker"	The space as it was materialized and users' physical gestures	Users' interpretations of the conceived and perceived spaces
Data	Books published by the architects and the IMFA about the new compound, interviews with architects, IMFA's managers and other state functionaries involved in the planning and construction process	The material space: shapes, size, colors, zoning, artwork, technologies, light; bodily practices and spatial habits: movement, gestures, social interactions as seen through researchers' observations and users' depictions. Divided into two noticeable layers: architects' design and users' design	Interviews with users (mostly IMFA workers), union leaders, and media depictions of the space
Mode of analysis applied	Discourse analysis aimed at detecting the main issues emphasized by planners	Space analysis based on "spatial vocabulary" and "design gestures"	Interpretive-hermeneutic analysis of users' interpretations (regarding the architects' discourse, the material space, and their own practices within it)

Note. For specific examples, see Table A.2 in the appendix.

professional/diplomatic identity, and that they defined diplomatic professionalism in terms of behavior and representativeness. At the behavioral level, the planners sought the adoption of a habitus identified with good manners, respectability, and discipline exemplified through maintaining quiet, order and tidiness, formal dress, restraint, self-control, and acceptance of the formal division of labor within the organization and the organizational hierarchy and the division between public and private. The diplomats' identity as "representative" is also bound up with the definition of the values and character that their very bodies are meant to represent, with their behavior, and with the aesthetic environment in which they act. The conceived space of the planning discourse included values such as modernity, technological progress, Westernness, political power, openness, and transparency. All of these, according to the planners, are expressions of the new Israel that the Ministry was meant to represent. As S. from the compound's management put it,

> We wanted to change the organizational culture of the governmental offices, and therefore we wanted to be completely up to date in all things that are connected to the quality of the work environment.... In Europe and the U.S., workers work quietly and do not shout over the phone or at their kids at home at the workplace's expense.... Their appearance has to be more representative and professional, more orderly.... We wanted to change all this, so that we would be like in all other normal countries.

This quotation, which was repeated with various nuances in conversations with other partners to the planning process, clearly shows the contradiction between the new identity that the organization wished to create by means of the new building's aesthetics and the aspects of identity that are perceived in Israeli society as its authentic expressions, such as talking loudly and disorder. Although many Israelis see order, discipline, and quiet as values to strive toward and implement in their bodies, they are nonetheless perceived as foreign values. Comments made by A., a manager who was very active in planning the building, show that the planners linked the various aspects of the desired professional identity with the selection of materials, colors, and shapes in the material space:

> We wanted a respectable, orderly, and clean image, because we thought that it is a more appropriate representation of Israel, and the workers had workshops about talking more quietly in a way that would suit the new layout of the building.... I think that diplomats have to appear more professional, and you can't just behave like you're a "common Israeli," like we're used to behaving. It's not professional.... So the architects also chose a nice look, interesting materials, and large spaces that would represent it to the outside.

The above quotations illustrate that this linkage was openly and intentionally made by the planners, and that it was aimed at creating an associative connection between certain values, behaviors, and aesthetics among both external visitors and the building's inhabitants. In other words, there were two purposes of this creation of

a new Israeli identity: one was directed outward toward guests, whereas the other was directed inward toward the Ministry's staff, who were meant to internalize this new identity in their bodies and behavior.

The Metaphor of the Display Window—
Technology as Western

These two aims were integrated in a central metaphor that drove the architectural concept and was a crucial component in the planning of the building: the metaphor of the *display window*. This metaphor referred to the public presentation of Israel's Westernness, progress, and power, as well as the values of professionalism, respectability, and restraint, and it was explicitly mentioned in the book published about the new building and in interviews (Kolker et al. 2003). The intended role of the building as a display window for the new Israeli identity affected aesthetic choices. For instance, unlike other official Israeli buildings, including the old Foreign Ministry compound, which are surrounded by massive security fences, the wall of the new compound is completely transparent. N., the deputy director general for administrative affairs, stated,

> I thought that the building should be a display window for the world. It should be welcoming, not threatening or ugly as one would expect in a state like Israel [Here, N. refers to the massive and heavy fences commonly surrounding Israeli public buildings for security reasons]...therefore, we have no ugly security fences like all other Ministries, but plant pots that look innocent, but that are actually security-proof.

Beyond its appearance, the transparent fence is also a product of highly advanced technology that Israel now exports to the rest of the world.

The technologically advanced image that the designers sought to construct was translated into advanced architectural technologies and materials, such as those in the extended use of glass and metal, typical of hi-tech and modern construction; the floating zinc roof of the Minister's wing; the curved lines in the Minister's wing; camouflaged safety aids; onyx stone as a construction material; highly advanced technological innovations for overseas communication and computation; and so on. The emphasis on technological advancement was translated into materials such as glass and metal and other quite singular materials that were chosen as a symbol of Israeli progress and westernization (onyx and zinc). These architectural choices, which were aimed at representing "high-quality taste," were consciously intended and openly declared and were part of a broader process of national identity construction (or branding). R., one of the managers, argued,

> Israel is in a process of branding.... This is a very important target in the foreign policy of Israel, because

people abroad hear only about the conflict with the Palestinians. One of the contemporary targets is branding and presenting Israel as Western and progressive; as a country that a European could say to himself, "I can identify myself with it. This I can support." Architecture, technology, and sport—these are all perfect domains that can use for branding.... We are not like our neighbors and architecture can help us to prove it.

Whether intentional or not, the above quotation shows that the presentation in the display window, which was aimed at Western eyes, was not only meant to portray Israel's Westernness but also its advantages vis-à-vis its Arab neighbors ("We are not like our neighbors"). Partly because of the Israeli–Arab conflict, and partly because Israel is an immigrant society that is nationally and ethnically stratified, Arab symbols are often seen in Israeli society as traditional, backward, and primitive, and they are therefore excluded from the Israeli public sphere. As part of the branding process, such aesthetic motifs were denied and excluded, and prestigious materials that were identified with Western sophistication and "good taste" were given prominence instead.

In line with studies in critical geography and postcolonial theory, we might argue that in the current case the branding of Israel as Western was accompanied by processes of inclusion and exclusion between the "us" (Western and modern Jews) and "the other" (the Arab neighboring countries) (see also King 1990, Yanow 1995, Mitchell 1998). Moreover, analysis of the books and managers' comments in interviews reinforces this supposition that the Western and technological identity shown off in the national display window was meant to be stripped clean of local conflicts and Israel's socially and politically tense reality. The branding carried out by the planners required the sterilization of the local and the creation of the illusion of a normalized country. The outcome was the negation of the old Israeli identity, especially that of the state's first decades, which was markedly represented in the old IMFA compound. As stated by N., a senior manager who was active in planning the new building,

> I don't think we should present all our problems outwards...it is not possible to present Israel as so lagging behind...it is a Western and developed country and we should show this to our visitors. You don't hang your dirty washing there.... It's meant to change our face, to show something different, something more fitting than a kibbutz, whose time has passed. It's more professional too, and more befitting to show Israel's power and might.

Westernness was also commonly connected to representations of Israel as a strong and powerful country (stressing the differences between Israel and its Arab neighbors) to display the state's authority both inward and outward. As Vale (1992) and Dovey (1999) have shown in their studies of state buildings, here too the new Ministry building aims at representing the nation

in all its glory as seen by its elite. The impressive, large, and often symbolic shapes characteristic of such structures are usually aimed at giving citizens a sense of belonging to something larger than themselves, but in this case it was also aimed at visitors from abroad (Goodsell 1993).

Representativeness

From the planners' point of view, representativeness was linked with Westernness, modernity, technology, and professionalism. To ensure diplomatic "representativeness," the management ran workshops aimed at teaching the workers how to behave in the new building. These workshops instructed the workers to talk more quietly and updated the dress code that required all workers to dress more formally than in other Israeli workplaces. At the aesthetic level, representativeness, respectability, professionalism, and normalization were linked to specific aesthetic characteristics. These two aspects—the managerial and the aesthetic—came up very frequently in the planners' discourse. For instance, S. from the compound's management said,

> Israeli workers are not used to meeting high standards of work, and so it was hard for them to move to the new building, which is entirely directed towards the most developed countries in the world. We wanted to change this whole outlook and, by means of the highest architectural standards, to develop more a professional and respectable workplace.... Every single work procedure had to change because of the move. That was part of the plan. You can't behave in our customary barbaric ways.... Everything looks so representative and beautiful when you walk into the building.

Representation, it should be noted, is at the heart of diplomacy. The diplomat is expected to represent her country in her words, her behavior, and even her bodily aesthetics. Making sure that diplomats do indeed represent the new Israeli image therefore required the reconstruction of their professional identity. At the aesthetic level, this value was highlighted through the homogeneity of the building's aesthetic appearance such that order and uniformity in the eyes of the external observer became a crucial focal point for the planners. This, for instance, is how the architect talked about the external windows:

> The windows of the workers' building do not open outwards...it's very aesthetic from the outside. When you open a window it disrupts the uniform appearance from the outside, and it doesn't look as harmonious and representative as it should.

Hierarchy

The aesthetic homogeneity was indirectly involved in another distinction made by the planners: the formalization and open expression of the hierarchical division of labor. This hierarchy was expressed through a number of

spatial and aesthetic means: in the distinction between the Minister's building and the workers' building, which are not only separated in space but also in their form, in the crowdedness of each of them, and in the materials used to construct them; in the allocation of workers according to story; in the size and nature of the offices (cubicles or private rooms); and in the distribution of parking spaces to senior staff in the underground car park, whereas others had to walk to the building from a more distant car park.

As can be seen from what we have presented so far, it would appear that the planners saw the new building as more than just an opportunity to change the organizational environment. Rather, they created a clear linkage to extraorganizational aspects of identity. This linkage between internal professional/bureaucratic aspects and extraorganizational aspects of identity, such as national/ethnic identity, was made quite openly and was aimed at a broader cultural change. In line with OA insights, the planners hoped that the embodiment of the new desired identity would go smoothly, because it would be taking place at a less conscious level. In their discourse, and through the training programs that accompanied the relocation to the new compound, the architects and managers sought to reinforce the aesthetic message and make sure that it was understood and internalized in the "right way." As we show in our analysis of the perceived and lived spaces, the users did indeed get the message that the planners aimed to convey. However, although some internalized it, at least partially, it did not go unnoticed at the conscious and political level, and the message that was meant to be latent has since become the subject of a fierce, semiorganized intraorganizational conflict, which, reflecting the introduction of "external identities" into the organization's control system, has made extraorganizational identity politics part of the employment relations within the organization.

The Perceived Space—The Materialization of Core Values

Studies of the perceived space have focused on the materiality of the organizational space and the ways in which the conceived space is translated into the physical space and everyday bodily practices (movement, interpersonal interactions, body language, gestures, and so on). It is important to note that although Lefebvre (1991) sees the power of the materiality of the perceived space as becoming even more significant when embodied in the workers' bodies, in their everyday interactions, and their bodily gestures, we shall make do with a short description of the building, the materials in use, and the bodily practices that we observed. This is because we assume that negotiations over identity mostly take place between the conceived and lived spaces.

As implied before, all of the core values that the planners sought to express were materialized in shapes,

materials, and colors. Analyzing the "design vocabulary," as suggested by Yanow (2006), reveals that all values were translated into aesthetic expressions:

(1) *Professionalism* was translated into expensive and luxurious materials in representative areas, and the areas where diplomats are located are more spacious and private. For example, diplomats' rooms are much more formal and orderly, whereas in the cubicles there are traces of what is called guerrilla architecture: colorful pictures, wall carpets, ornaments and plants, family pictures, and desks and furniture moved from their original locations in the cubicles, if not taken away altogether, all of which are aimed at disrupting the formal demands for professionalism.

(2) *Representativeness* was emphasized through the use of special materials (such as onyx, zinc, marble, and glass floors) and transparent materials, which highlight the metaphor of the display window. These expensive and technologically sophisticated materials were used in the areas that visitors see and were supposed to create a luxurious appearance, especially in those areas that are oriented outward.

(3) *Hierarchy* was mostly emphasized by means of aesthetic differences between managerial areas and workers' areas, as well as those of diplomats and administrative clerks. For example, the ministerial building, which houses no more than 70 people, is covered with an imported and impressive zinc roof, has striking rounded stairs, and is very spacious. In contrast, the workers' building, which contains a staff of 700–900, has no expansive spaces, was constructed with cheaper materials, and boasts no unique design elements (see Figure 1).

The Lived Space—The Dialectics of Internalization and Distancing

For Lefebvre (1991), the lived space stands for the space as it is constituted through users' interpretations of their aesthetic surroundings and the ways in which they negotiate the meaning of the aesthetic artifacts and their own place among them. To illustrate the complexity and dialectic nature of this space—which serves simultaneously as a means for reinforcing the mechanisms of identity regulation as well as a potential channel for resistance to this regulation—we shall show how the workers interpreted the two other spaces as regulatory mechanisms. In the following section we shall deal with the ways in which they resisted and disrupted these mechanisms to create their own counter-regulation.

The new *professionalism*, which was presented in the conceived space as a central value in the new identity, was understood by the workers exactly as the planners had intended. Perhaps in contradiction to the planners' intentions, though, from our interviews with workers it transpired that the workers were aware of the regulation enacted by the new aesthetics. Despite this awareness, a sizable proportion of the interviewees (mainly those from the diplomatic sector) saw this change not only as desirable but also as a way of improving their personal and professional status. For instance, Y., a manager in one of the diplomatic departments, said,

> The new building is much more beautiful..... We've got all the technological tools that make work more efficient than before, and I think it looks a lot more professional now than it did in those run-down huts.... Now it really looks like a ministry of diplomats and not of street cleaners.

M., also from one of the diplomatic departments, expressed herself similarly: "That's what a diplomatic building looks like...it looks good, impressive, and representative, and it helps me with my work as a diplomat."

In contrast, in relation to *representativeness*, there was no significant difference between the diplomatic and administrative sectors: in both sectors, around one-half of the interviewees talked about representativeness and the pride that they take in the new aesthetics. The acceptance of this mechanism among a significant proportion of the workers perhaps hints at the greater transparency of this regulatory mechanism or perhaps at its effectiveness. Interviewees used a wide range of expressions that indicated their identification with the aesthetical values imbued in the building, such as "I feel proud," "the

Figure 1 Differences Between the Three Buildings
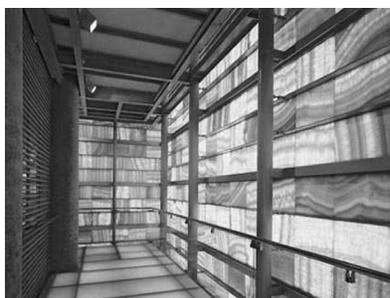
| The Minister's building | The entrance hall | The workers' building |

Source. Kolker Kolker Epstein Architects (1991) Ltd. Used with permission.

building is impressive," "the new look is more representative," "the place gives you a sense of prestige," and "it's nice to show it to people from overseas." It may be that this value is seen as more acceptable because it does not detract from the administrative workers' status in relation to that of their peers in the diplomatic sector, and it enables both sectors—the administrative and the diplomatic—to elevate their status regardless of their actual job. In addition to overt statements, we could also discern different behavioral practices as part of the acceptance of the value of representativeness. For example, even those workers who expressed personal dissatisfaction with the aesthetics of the new building are happy to show it off to guests during formal and informal tours and clearly take pride in the technological achievements of the State of Israel. As put by N. from one of the administrative departments,

> When someone comes here I'm proud of it. I take them to the Avriel Hall [the Minister's meeting room] and to see the media center because of its modernization and the journalists who can all hook up even though personally I don't like being there . . . . But it looks good from the outside . . . it's impressive!

L., another worker from one of the administrative departments, who was promoted to a managerial position and currently sits in a closed office, made similar points:

> The building is impressive, beautiful and very representative. It feels good to feel part of something that is so important and looks so good, so I show the building off to every single one of my guests . . . . I also think it's excellent that we've finally got some more quiet, slightly more sophisticated dress, slightly more mature and representative behavior, not like Israeli riffraff. It represents us better to the outside, though it's clear to me that the price for that is personal, all the people sitting in the open cubicles.

These quotations show that the linkage between the goal of representativeness by means of certain aesthetic standards was seen as legitimate and acceptable because it improved the workers' collective status, both as members of the organization and as Israeli citizens. The pride that L. talked of relates not only to the planners' aesthetic standards but also to her acceptance of the organizational meanings and the personal prices entailed by the change in identity.

A third value that was represented in the conceived space and that serves as an aesthetic regulatory mechanism is *Westernness*, which was seen by many workers as important for the functioning of the organization as well as for the status of the country. Technology is seen as a central mechanism in the representation of the Westernness and sophistication of the state. N., from the administrative department, said,

> It [the technology] shows them a sophisticated Israel that is at the center of things, a go-getting Israel that can

see everything. There's a lot of power to that—you give people the feeling that we are not getting lost.

N.'s interpretation of the space as expressing power and progress is identical to that put forward by the architects and planners, although she is entirely unaware of this similarity and its influence on the architectural discourse that she is exposed to or on her experience of the space. Likewise, D., a clerk from the administrative department, also emphasized the connection between the advanced technological aspects of the space and the Israeli identity that it represents:

> When I came here for the first time and I saw all the sophisticated technology, all of a sudden I understood that we're not provincial any more, for better or for worse . . . . For better, because there's no doubt that it's impressive and important that we should show our guests that they're no better than us, that we're not some remote country in the primitive Middle East. For worse, because it's not really Israeli, it's something imported.

As with representativeness, the new identification with Westernness is approved of by most workers (94%), mostly because they see it as important to the functioning of the Ministry and as furthering its interests. At the same time, though, as well as wishing to belong to the "Western world" and reap the benefits of being part of the West, many workers (40%) expressed feelings of discomfort regarding the "lack of authenticity" of this imported culture and argued that the building was not Israeli (for more on the resistance to this value, see the following section). Unlike the other values, where we indicated a less critical acceptance of the architects' values, in relation to Westernness, attitudes were clearly more ambivalent and dialectical. Moreover, a small minority of workers (8.5%) identified the building's "Westernness" with "Ashkenaziness" and condescension toward the local. In Israeli culture, Ashkenaziness reflects the culture of Jewish immigrants from the United States and European countries. These immigrants and their second, third, and fourth generation offspring still enjoy notable advantages in terms of labor market opportunities and in shaping the Israeli cultural field. Portraying the adoption of European or Western culture—with European or American Jews representing themselves as its authentic bearers—continues to constitute an ideological justification for ethnic differences in the labor market.

The IMFA does not publish data about the ethnic composition of its workforce, but it is plain to see that a substantial majority of the diplomatic staff is Ashkenazi, whereas the proportions among the administrative workers are different, such that most of the less desirable positions, such as drivers and clerks, are held by Jews from Arab countries. In Israeli identity politics,

the aspiration to "Europeanness" is represented by the excluded groups as condescension and as expressing a desire to detach the country from its geopolitical position. Just like the discourse of identity politics outside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, both Ashkenazi and Mizrachi workers automatically translate the aesthetics that strive to give the building a European appearance into the exclusion and distancing of values associated with the local space and the reproduction of Ashkenazi rule over Israeli society. A., for instance, a junior non-Ashkenazi worker from the extra-administrative section, argued,

> The building is an Ashkenazi building . . . . There's nothing warm about it; everything looks like it's taken from journals that people who think they are sophisticated read. It makes you feel small and inferior, especially if you don't belong to that group of people . . . . And everyone thinks it's beautiful, so who am I to say anything?

Similar to Bourdieu's (1984) text on taste, it would seem that A. sees the building as an expression of legitimate taste in the eyes of its planners, but also as a harsh statement about who should be using it, who is to be excluded from it, and who is not invited to feel at home in it. Based on this outlook, people might be culturally socialized to instinctively identify certain aesthetic artifacts and patterns of space design as Western, modern, and more "appropriate." Because architecture first and foremost constitutes a materialized statement about the ideological program of the powerful in their attempts to impose one specific form of collective identity and social hierarchy on other people, the power of the ruling group and the architectural elite to shape space is supplemented by its ability to promote a system of interpretation that constrains the ways that others experience their physical surroundings (see also Vale 1992, Markus 1993, Dovey 1999).

Unlike the three other concepts mentioned so far, the idea of *hierarchy* was not accepted as a legitimate mechanism except among 8.5% of the interviewees, all of whom came from the diplomatic sector. The following comments made by Y. from the diplomatic department were not very common, although they are important in showing how all of the architectural values that were intended to create a new identity were identified by the workers, interpreted in a manner similar to that intended by the architects, and sometimes even fully accepted by the Ministry's staff:

> I'm embarrassed to say so and it's really disgusting, but ever so slowly I'm starting to feel I'm a little more successful than the workers who sit in the cubicles, because if that wasn't the case then why I am getting much better conditions? For me, the people in the cubicles are getting more and more transparent. Perhaps they were like that before, but somehow it's clearer now. I'm rather mortified

by your writing it down, in fact I've never said that out loud before. Weird. Can you delete it?

In line with Foucault's (1977, p. 170) notion of subjectivization and the hierarchical gaze, this quotation shows that the organizational hierarchy that was regulated and reinforced with the transition to the building had been internalized and came to define both the "self" and the "other." The organizational aesthetics produced a work environment with significant implications for self-perception, for the identity of the group that the worker belongs to, for the privileges to which she is entitled (or those withheld from her), for perceptions of other groups, and so on.

The mechanism for reproducing the hierarchy and regulating the space was interpreted by most workers as intended to reinforce the class and professional gaps between the diplomatic sector and the administrative sector (this was the view of about 91% of the interviewees). The regulatory mechanism did not remain latent, meaning that anyone who fully identified with the new values and aesthetics was conscious of the hierarchical meanings of the new building. At the same time, because this was a particularly sensitive issue in the IMFA, where the movement between sectors had never been clearly defined, it is hardly surprising that there were so few who admitted to internalizing this mechanism. We can assume that one of the reasons for the high awareness regarding the new aesthetics' hierarchical messages was the workers' union, which waged a struggle for equal rights between the Ministry's various sectors and placed the issue firmly on the organization's agenda. I., for instance, a representative of the union who has an administrative role in the diplomatic sector, said,

> We mostly opposed the hierarchical divisions in this building, and we tried to raise it for discussion here . . . . The hierarchy here is so obvious that it's really shouting out: there's a hierarchy in the separate floors where the state and administrative sectors sit, there's a division between the ministerial building and the workers' building, there's a hierarchy in terms of types of office, and worst of all, there's a hierarchy in the car parks . . . . Important people don't have to walk outside, and the simple people have to walk through the rain . . . . It's true that I've got a nice room and my own convenient parking spot, and I could have just been happy with my lot like lots of other people here, but it shocked me and brought me to the committee to fight for justice . . . .

The union's role in interpreting the aesthetic symbols and mediating between the conceived space and the lived space was significant in this case. Not only did the union bring the issue of aesthetics onto the organizational agenda rather than letting it be forgotten, but it also contributed to interpretive processes and the

creation of associative linkages between various physical forms and discriminatory messages. For instance, the union's members related the size of the windows and the inability to open them to hierarchical messages that belittled the junior staff (the windows were also related to high rates of sickness). It also campaigned for the closing of open spaces. These messages were transmitted via chats in the corridors, in presentations by the committee to the workers, and in manifestos about "the sick building" that were distributed to staff. It is hard to measure how much influence the union had over the workers' interpretive processes, although it is clear that the union went to great lengths to bring the mechanisms of regulation to the surface, especially that of hierarchy, so that it would not become transparent and taken for granted.

By way of summary, we might argue that all of these values can serve as mechanisms for regulating identity. Indeed, they were seen by the workers as having been embedded by the management to discipline their behavior and modes of thought within the new space, and so the workers interpreted their aesthetic environment accordingly. They were able to identify in this interpretation of the organizational aesthetics the image of the ideal worker that the organization sought to create, and they located themselves in the organizational hierarchy in relation to this image (for additional citations, see Table A.1 in the appendix).

The OA literature and Lefebvre's (1991) three spaces assume that most of the aesthetic devices for identity regulation are transparent and act as a sensory map that shapes the object's emotions and actions in the space without him being entirely aware of being aesthetically manipulated. It follows, then, that examining the workers' interpretations of the disciplining mechanisms embedded in the space implies focusing on the mechanisms that have become overt for the workers. In the following section we argue that the intended and overt acts of resistance of the workers' union, as well acts of aesthetic jamming—not of all which were necessarily intended by the workers—played an important part in exposing the mechanisms of aesthetic regulation. We also argue that it is significant that even those workers who chose to identify with the values represented by the building continued to demonstrate intense discomfort regarding its blatant segregation. This discomfort was not confined to the professional sphere but reflected the reproduction of extraorganizational hierarchies of identities within the organization itself.

Aesthetics Resistance as Culture Jamming

As mentioned previously, Lasn (1999) sees culture jamming as a form of disruption that plays on the emotions of viewers and bystanders. Jammers want to disrupt the unconscious thought process that takes place when most

consumers view popular advertising and bring about a détournement instead. The role of culture jamming is to cancel out the taken-for-granted demands of the messages embedded in existing aesthetic (and textual) symbolism. Ridiculing symbols that are meant to represent respectability; disrupting order, which is meant to represent discipline; and intentionally sabotaging various representations are all expressions of jamming. In Lefebvre's (1991) terms, aesthetic jamming can be described as an effort at counter-regulation in relation to the lived space and its intended identities by discursively the challenging the conceived space, physically challenging the perceived space, and interpretively challenging the lived space.

Out of the many strategies proposed by Lasn (1999) and his followers, the following were found to be relevant to our analysis of counter-identity regulation at the IMFA. Here, we first present the relevant acts of jamming and then show how they were used in the context of the IMFA:

(1) Subvertising is a strategy referring to the practice of spoofing or parodying corporate and political advertisements to make a statement. This can take the form of a new image or an alteration to an existing image.

(2) Détournement is when the jammer reuses elements of well-known media to create a new work with a different message, one that is often opposed to the original.

(3) Reclaiming the streets is a strategy aimed at expropriating public space from the social actors who claim it as their legitimate right to design it in accordance with their own interests. In Lasn's (1999) theory, this strategy is aimed against those advertisers whose giant billboards are seen by jammers as contaminating the public sphere. In our case, the expropriation of the space may take the form of "rezoning," namely, a different organization of the space in opposition to the designers' zoning logic;

(4) vandalism and aesthetic sabotage of the commercially designed space; and

(5) public protest through demonstrations, petitions, and complaints.

As well as these strategies, the OA literature and writings in cultural studies on spatial resistance list another series of aesthetic strategies that we identified in the case of the IMFA. These are as follows:

(1) personalization of the organizational space (see also the review in Elsbach and Pratt 2007);

(2) vernacular architecture, a reorganization of the space by its users to create a more stimulating and comfortable working environment; and

(3) loitering, an intentional strategy of disrupting the order imposed by the organization on the space.

As mentioned previously, Lasn himself (as well as most students of aesthetic resistance in OA, culture

studies, and critical geography) does not argue that aesthetic resistance is necessarily conscious and intentional. Moreover, even when jamming is intended as a political act, Lasn portrays it as an attempt to change political consciousness and does not relate it to struggles against identity regulation. In the case of the IMFA and the many instances of aesthetic jamming that we found there, as well as the workers' interpretations of those acts of jamming, we can see that very often the role of jamming was to raise consciousness of the organization's efforts to impose a new professional and national identity on the workers and to strive to prevent its institutionalization. In the following, we detail the kinds of jamming found at the IMFA and use the workers' own interpretations to link acts of jamming with their resistance to specific aspects of the "new" identity.

Ridiculing the Architects' Discourse— Challenging the Conceived Space

Before reviewing resistance to the various aspects of the new organizational identity, it is important to point out the use of jamming mechanisms aimed at undermining the very legitimacy of the architects' and managers' authority to shape not only the space but also the lifestyles and identities of those who act in it. Challenges to the architects' overall authority could clearly be seen in all of the interviews we carried out and in the concrete descriptions of scorn and total lack of regard for their professional abilities. For example, the architects were given insulting nicknames and were accused of having "nouveau riche taste" (by 17% of the interviewees), whereas other workers (about 11% of the interviewees) expressly refrained from reading articles about the building and its architects in the daily press. One of the tangible forms that this contempt took was the ironic and destructive use made of the books published by the organization and the architects. In this regard it is important to note that the books were virulently resisted by the workers' union, which saw them as an unjustified waste of public money at the expense of other benefits that might have been given to the workers. Twelve of our interviewees talked about the books negatively and scornfully. Two of them said they used the books to prop open a window, which, according to the original plans, was meant to have been kept shut. Another worker told us that her daughter was using the book to make collages at kindergarten. These collages were then used—again paradoxically—to decorate her office, in violation of the instructions handed down by the planners and architects.

Another example of challenging the planning discourse can be seen in the workers' frequent references to the onyx stone in the entrance hall as "the Chinese tiles," which is Israeli slang for poor-quality, inexpensive bathroom tiles. In our experience, as soon as we became aware of this denigrating description, the luxurious entrance hall immediately felt like a pretentious bathroom. Likewise, the open-space cubicles have been nicknamed "the showers," the *chushot* (an Arabic word for small, poor huts), or "the stables." The attempt to present the open space design as modern, efficient, and technologically advanced is ridiculed, and its Western and bureaucratic associations are "infected" with Oriental interpretations.

Jamming the Upstairs/Downstairs Distinction— Challenging the Perceived Space

The hierarchical messages that the building reinforced gave rise to most of the acts of jamming that we observed. A large part of these efforts was directed at what the workers saw as a lack of consideration for their needs and even their health, and as undervaluing their contribution to the organization. The most notable symbolic expression of this struggle were the windows, which could not be opened, meaning that fresh air could not get into the building. This was the site of the union's longest struggle. By the end of the period of study it had even borne some fruit, with more and more windows being replaced by windows that can be opened. The aesthetic jamming in this regard had a number of different forms.

One expression of jamming related to the windows can be seen in the concerted efforts of the workers' union to protest against them. At the organization's Purim party, one of the members of the committee dressed up as a closed window and wore disparaging stickers based on plays on words involving the word "dream," which in Hebrew sounds very similar to the word for "window" (the former is *chalom*, the latter *chalon*). These stickers displayed slogans such as "A window is broken" or "I have a window," which drew attention to the design problems and expressed an overall opposition to the efforts at creating a clear hierarchy through design artifacts (subvertising). Before we had learned about this fancy dress costume, a number of workers used these slogans themselves in interview; the play on words between "dream" and "window" had become common linguistic currency and was a constant reminder of the problematic nature of the design. Another expression of protest against the closed windows could be seen in a practice of loitering, namely, the way that nonsmokers would take long "smoking" breaks to breathe some fresh air. Walking through the building, one can clearly see gatherings of workers in places that they are not meant to be, such as in the corridors and the balconies, as they abandon their desks in the offices and in the open-space cubicles for extended periods of time. It is important to note

that a similar degree of "loitering" was not observed in the ministerial building. The workers explicitly said that they were taking long breaks as a protest against the lack of fresh air in the building, thus testifying to the conscious intentions behind their loitering. Another practice identified by the workers themselves as a protest against the closed windows was brought up by a worker who called in the air-conditioning technicians on a daily basis, regardless of whether they were needed or not.

Another expression of jamming related to hierarchy was the process of rezoning that saw the open spaces emptied of their occupants. In many departments, whenever a room became available, secretaries and other junior workers were informally moved into them, much to the chagrin of the management, and the cubicle areas very visibly became quite empty. One of the managers explained this by saying,

> When I started to manage the department, my aim was to empty out the open cubicles and to have nobody sitting there. As far as I was concerned it could become a ghost town. We closed up the cubicles and I got shouted at. Some closed offices became available because people went overseas, so I put my secretaries there. Today there's only a few people sitting there [in the cubicles] and I don't care how it looks from the outside.

Another expression of rezoning, which involved vandalism, can be seen in the practice of forcing doors open that were meant to prevent unauthorized workers from passing through certain parts of the building. The doors, which were designed to close automatically, were kept open as a result of intentional and repeated sabotage to the expensive locks that the management had installed. Workers stuck toothpicks and matches in the locks—which had been imported at a cost of thousands of dollars—forcing the management to replace them and leaving the doors unlocked for weeks until a new consignment arrived. This act of vandalism was described by the workers as a twofold protest: first, against the restrictions on the some of the workers' movement, and second, against the huge investment in organizational aesthetics at the expense of the workers' needs. As X. put it,

> People destroy locks that cost a fortune just because they want to show how stupid the management was in spending a fortune on sophisticated locks while the junior staff are thrown into tiny and run-down cubicles that no one invested a penny in.

It is important to notice that in this instance the aesthetic resistance took on a collective form that does not only express an attempt to adapt the space to the worker's needs or reflect his concern about his status within the organization. Even the managers, who are signified by the new organizational aesthetics as positioned high in the organization, joined the resistance against the new OA and the set of identities that it represented.

Reclaiming "Old Israeliness"— Challenging the Lived Space

The aesthetics of the "new Israeli" identity was primarily jammed through the reintroduction of identity markers that are closely associated with the local stereotypical image of Israel that the new building strove to reject. In an article entitled "The Return of the Dirty Israeli" (a popular idiom often used to depict the ugly behavior of Israeli tourists who violate local norms), a journalist in a popular Israeli newspaper described the deliberate vandalism of the clean and representative image that the Ministry sought to maintain. Another example of deliberate dirtying can be seen in the provisional smoking area that the workers created next to the clear fence that the organization had designated as its "display window." Even when an ashtray was placed in that area, employees still scattered their cigarette butts on the floor, an act they described in interview as a deliberate attempt to disturb the desired organizational appearance and to protest against the limitations that the new aesthetics placed upon their freedom of movement: "A lot of people smoke here on purpose, because this is the area that is meant to be the cleanest and most representative, it's completely intentional...this proves that we are Israelis after all and nothing can be done about it" (D., an employee at the administrative sector).

Another act of retrieving the old Israeliness can be found in the repeated display of personal albums of photographs taken of the old compound. Two of the workers we interviewed, a manager and an administrative worker, admitted that they show these photographs to almost all of their visitors after taking them on a guided tour of the new building. In an informal guided tour that we took as part of this study, the message conveyed by the worker who showed us around was clear: despite everything you see here, our real identity is better expressed in these old photos. She said,

> The building is not Israeli at all.... It's not from here. Israeliness is the togetherness, storytelling, laughter, openness—the building is not like that, but the older compound was.... I show this to visitors so they can better understand what Israel is, and how it used to be before.

Exposing "real" Israeliness to the occasional visitor is an attempt to "subvertise" the message that the new building attempts to construct. Although the visitor could have internalized the intended meme, the presentation of the old building as better representing real Israeliness ridicules the management's efforts to showcase a new national identity. This explicit subvertising, it is important to note, aims not only at expressing the worker's own resistance toward the imposed identity but also at transforming the visitor's interpretation of the space.

Another feature often identified with old-style Israeliness is the blurred line between private and public spaces and the loud discussion of private issues in public. As we showed earlier, the "civilizing mission" embedded in the conceived space included the internalization of European or Western work habits, such as maintaining a quiet work atmosphere, especially in the open spaces. As an act of tactical resistance, some of the employees disrupt this silence by playing loud music through telephone speakers. In interviews, some of the workers mentioned that talking loudly is a form of disrupting the management's efforts. As remarked by Z., an employee in the administrative department, "Nobody can tell me not to speak in a way I'm not used to…this isn't England." In saying this, Z. demonstrates his rejection of what he describes as an attempt to impose foreign practices and a foreign identity on workers not only when they are on duty, but also when they are "at home."

Orientalizing "Western" Aesthetics

The Western feel of the building's design, which workers from non-European backgrounds described as marginalizing, was also sabotaged through aesthetic attempts to orientalize the space. For instance, a Persian carpet was placed in the highly visible Protocol and Official Guests Bureau in contravention of a clear rule that prohibited carpeting; strong colors were added to the monochromatic color scheme, which was marked as a Western form of cleanliness; and Oriental, East Asian, or Latin sculptures, wall carpets, pictures, and vases were installed unauthorized by workers so as to break the monotonous Western/global aesthetics that the organization sought to promote. C., an administrative worker who said that he himself had not been active in the aesthetic jamming, explained its logic: "I understand where it comes from. They give you a fancy European building, an 'Ashkenazi' building, even, and people do not feel attached to it at all."

It is interesting to note here that although C. did not feel the need to sabotage the preplanned organizational design, the jamming initiated by others forced him to reconsider his own identity and the extent to which he was willing to accept the identity pushed by the organization. Moreover, whereas the intended organizational aesthetics were meant to represent Israel as an inseparable part of the Western world, the unauthorized installation of Oriental and other "exotic" ornaments ridicules this pretension and shows it to be an example of postcolonial "mimicry," an attempt to construct an identity that is "almost the same but not quite." Mimicry, Bhabha (1994) argues, is always embedded in uneven relations of power, in which the imperial power and sections of the colonized elite seek to reproduce the imperial culture in the colonized locale as part of the colonial control system. The inevitable hybrid product that is always the result of this process of mimicry is both an expression of resistance and a marker of a difference that cannot be removed.

The literature on resistance in organizations tends to downplay its force. Unlike in the general social sphere, control mechanisms in organizations are commonly seen as much more efficient, mainly because the users who try to undermine the organization's aims and assumptions usually find themselves marginalized or fired. This may be the reason that the literature on OA has not yet started to research jamming as a conscious political action aimed not only at adapting the environment to the worker's needs or as protesting against a decline in his status, but also at fundamentally changing the organization's aims and assumptions from the bottom up. Through exposing the multiplicity of instances of jamming at the IMFA and the fact that this jamming was not carried out casually, but rather consciously and often receiving retrospective political legitimacy, we call for a rethinking of spatial resistance as an act of identity politics by the workers. Although some of the workers' patterns of resistance—especially those involving trashing, sabotage, and rezoning—were met with harsh responses from the management, we found no indication that the management understood that they reflected the workers' desire to undermine the image of the ideal worker and the management's aims.

Concluding Remarks

The complex relations between control and identity in organizations have received increased theoretical attention in recent years (e.g., Alvesson and Willmott 2002, Hatch and Schultz 2004, Knights and Morgan 1991). It is by now commonly acknowledged that in the era of advanced capitalism, personal, technical, and bureaucratic mechanisms of control are losing their effectiveness because of transformations in the nature and organization of work (Kunda 1992, Rose 1989) and that managers are increasingly turning to mechanisms of identity regulation to secure workers' loyalty, dedication, and improved productivity (Casey 1995, Kunda 1992). However, although managers' successful adjustment to these transformations in the nature of work has been extensively recognized, workers' more or less intended and orchestrated attempts to develop new forms of resistance in an age of declining union power have been widely overlooked.

The assumption that the power of cultural-identity control, and especially that mediated by OA, lies in characteristics that are hidden from view has led students of organizational resistance to suppose that when opposition is expressed, it is based on an individual and not necessarily a conscious reaction to latent mechanisms of control. The notable decline in the power of workers' unions in the post-Fordist era and their ability to deploy their traditional weapons, including labor disruptions and strikes, to attain their traditional achievements in pay and benefits have diverted researchers' attention from the possibility that both individual workers and unions might develop a new

model of resistance vis-à-vis the dominant culture and the new system of control. As identity politics have become more important and as the focus of organizational control has shifted to control over identity, it has become especially critical to expose the complex and sometimes concealed ways in which, as part of the interactions between workers (whether as part of formal unionized activities or as informal activities), conscious, powerful, and meaningful patterns of behavior are created. These behaviors disrupt—at least partially—the identity that management wishes to instill among the workers and the mechanisms of control that it enacts.

Our comparative analysis of the three Lefebvrian spaces—the conceived, the perceived, and the lived spaces of the IMFA—has demonstrated the dialectic function of OA in regulating organizational identities. It has enabled us to highlight management's efforts at identity regulation and cultural control through aesthetics and spatial means (at the conceived and perceived spaces), and at the same time, it also allowed us to spot workers' intersubjective, deliberate, and sometimes systematic attempts to transgress and ridicule management's aesthetic messages using aesthetic jamming. Our analysis of the space that workers designed in a response to management's messages embodied in the perceived space and the interpretations workers offered to this bottom-up process of guerrilla architecture allow us to suggest that this process should be seen as an act of resistance and an attempt to bring about counter-identity regulation on the part of the organization's staff. Maybe because this case study involved the investigation of drastic changes in terms of both aesthetics and identity, or maybe because workers and their unions today are more alert to the latent forms of control imposed upon them through cultural means and to the potential consequences that a new organizational space may generate in terms of labor relations, the attempt to regulate identity through aesthetic and spatial means remained at the overt level and aroused ongoing hostility and resistance.

In accordance with Lasn's (1999) theory of culture jamming, we found that the aesthetic and spatial challenging of the taken-for-granted on a daily basis, together with the ongoing discussion of the new building and its faults led by the union, have led to the continuation of the struggle and to the emergence of a widely accepted interpretation of the conceived and perceived spaces in a way that has continued to unstitch the intended cohesive organizational identity. The everyday dissonance that users of the building encounter enables the workers—or at least those who either intuitively or consciously feel that the aesthetics exclude them or a group to which they belong—to carry on struggling to change the organization's definition of the ideal worker and the Israeli identity that he is meant to represent.

Our case study also suggests that extraorganizational identity politics must be taken into consideration when studying intraorganizational forms of identity regulation. There are at least two important aspects to these mutual relations between extra- and intraorganizational identity politics: they make extraorganizational identities an integral part of the organization's internal power relations, and they provide the tools for the promotion of new forms of social resistance; that is, the very tools that are accepted as part of extraorganizational identity struggles are taken up in the context of protest within the organization. In an era of identity politics, in which professional and organizational identities are understood in broader terms of nationality (organizations and workers are said to have endemic national/cultural features), gender (masculine versus feminine organizations), and ethnicity (especially in the context of diversity management), organizational participants are more likely to think about their experience within the organization in terms taken from the general identity politics they experience at the societal level and to bring into the organizational sphere practices and interpretations that are seen as legitimate forms of resistance in the public sphere. The dissemination of practices of culture jamming in the public sphere in many advanced economies, as well as of new forms of protest organization, especially through virtual and nonvirtual networks and electronic means, that have been applied and promoted by the new global social movements, such as the one led by Lasn himself, means that they are more likely to enter organizational spheres in greater numbers. In our case study, a strong union and close intraorganizational networks were found to be critical to the emergence and dissemination of a common interpretation both of the messages embodied in the new organizational aesthetics and of the jamming acts. In other cases, similar and other forms of bottom-up resistance in organizations may be initiated, promoted, and orchestrated via electronic means. Further research is needed to identify other forms of bottom-up organizational resistance and the new ways in which these acts of resistance are organized and gain their collective interpretation.

Electronic Companion
An electronic companion to this paper is available on the *Organization Science* website (http://orgsci.pubs.informs.org/ecompanion.html).

Appendix

Table A.1. Selected Citations

Representative and professionalism (94% of interviews)	• "I show them a sophisticated Israel that is at the center of things, a go-getting Israel that can see everything. There's a lot of power to that—you give people the feeling that we are not getting lost. Everything is being dealt with. We are connected to everything and everywhere. Connected to the border crossings, connected to different places. It's important to show all that." • "It is much more representative now…no doubt about that. Everything is so updated, luxurious, clean and restrained." • "After all we are diplomats…it should look more professional than the kibbutz we had…."
Western/not local (40% of interviews)	• "The building is not Israeli. Not at all. We, the Israelis, are much more open and warm. This building is opposite to the Israeli character. It is more European or American. Everything is cooler, more restrained. They dressed us with something not suitable." • "The old place was like a kibbutz: flowers, grass fields, the walk between the separated offices, occasional meetings with people. It was much more Israeli…Israeliness is about togetherness, telling things to your colleagues, lighting together, being open. The new building is not like that, the old one was." • "They ruined everything we had in the former place, though it is part of our history. They wanted so badly to be Western, that they didn't care about this place…."
Hierarchy (91% of interviews)	• "There's a division here—like Spartacus versus Nero. It's definitely a case of upstairs/downstairs…. Once we were free as larks, in the previous building, now we're like fish in an aquarium. And more than that, there's not enough water for the fish. Do you understand how those fish feel? Do you really understand?" • "And even the distant parking lot irritates me. How could they invest $5 billion without excavating another five underground floors so everyone could park there? Why are some of my friends entitled to park underground but I have to walk for 10 minutes in the rain every day, struggling with my umbrella in the wind, arriving at work drenched and miserable while they arrive neatly turned out? And in the summer I sweat, and smell the whole morning. What kind of appearance is that? And what if just then, a guest arrives? Who would want to be anywhere near me?" • "I'm not saying it's not beautiful, but the beauty is only for the senior managers…. The beauty does not pass the workers' doorstep…. Why is that? …It means that the simple workers are not entitled to share this beauty; we're not really part of the organization, certainly not a part to be proud of…it doesn't feel good for one's self-esteem, I can tell you." • "What was created in this specific building is a division by class. Perhaps there were status divisions before, but they weren't so noticeable and direct. Here, senior positions received closed rooms and underground parking, but the others didn't. The people who sit in open spaces are like this, and those who don't sit in open spaces are like that, they are different. And people find it hard to get used to it because it wasn't our previous organizational culture. As a manager I used to sit in the exact same room as my deputies and the secretaries—everyone was the same. Today there are castes, and the feeling it creates is not good at all…."

Table A.2. Examples of the Methodological Process

Example 1
Transparency and openness
	Transparency representing advanced technologies and openness as is custom in Western industries: "I thought that the building should be a display window for the world. It should be welcoming, not threatening or ugly as one would expect in a state like Israel…therefore, we have no ugly security fences like all other Ministries, but plant pots that look innocent, but that are actually security-proof."	*Architects' design*
		  Transparent fences
		  Glass roofs and floors
		  Open space with glass windows
		  Transparent onyx
		Users' design
		  Covering glass and windows with children's artwork and cloth
			"They put us in an aquarium. I feel like a fish without enough water…. You can smell what's written on the papers of your neighbor in the cubicle next to you…I can't even straighten my panties…so I covered the glass with pictures. I don't want them to see me all day."

Example 2
Westernness
	"Israel is in a process of branding…. This is a very important target in the foreign policy of Israel, because people abroad only hear about the conflict with the Palestinians. One of the contemporary targets is branding and presenting Israel as Western and progressive, as a country that a European could say to himself 'I can identify myself with it. This I can support.' Architecture, technology, and sport—these are all perfect domains that can use for branding. We are not like our neighbors and architecture can help us to prove it."	*Architects' design*
		  Straight shapes, monochromatic colors, expensive and sophisticated shapes and materials
		Users' design
		  Adding oriental ornaments, vandalizing design
			"The building is an Ashkenazi building…. There's nothing warm about it; everything looks like it's taken from journals that people who think they are sophisticated read. It makes you feel small and inferior, especially if you don't belong to that group of people…. There was quite a debate about that in an e-mail that did the rounds here, that someone said that, but everyone silenced him and said, 'What are you talking about? It's got nothing to do with ethnicity.' That's bullshit, if you ask me…. And everyone thinks it's beautiful, so who am I to say anything?"

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