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Making Coalition Under Occupation

Coalition Building and Solidarity across Divides in Social Movements Campaigns in Israel and Palestine

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A mia nonna, Dolores

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ABSTRACT

Under Israeli control, the region historically known as Palestine has experienced persistent fragmentation and the disconnection of its lands. However, this fragmentation extends beyond the geographic domain to include the division of communities. I argue that these divisions and separations are not solely the outcome of an ongoing conflict between two ethnonational groups but rather the result of the relentless colonization pursued by the Zionist movement. This thesis aims to bridge insights from both settler-colonial literature and Social Movements Studies, a unique endeavour that has not been undertaken previously and has the potential to foster interdisciplinary exchange and learning. Despite the oppressive divisions imposed, *there are instances where alliances and cooperation between Israeli Jews and Palestinians can be observed*. This dissertation will examine the circumstances and relational conditions that make such coalitions possible.

Throughout the decades, Historical Palestine has been the stage of massive mobilizations and social engagements, showing the ability of the Palestinian movement to constantly innovate and re-frame its strategies, techniques of protests, and claims. Besides, all over the years, Israeli repression has never ceased rather, it evolved, finding always new strategies and new technologies to repress dissent, from all sides. In such a rarefied social context, *how is it possible to support the creation of coalitions between Palestinians and Israelis while everything seems to push in the direction of confrontation and conflict? And when this cooperation is established, how are social movements' actors able to address the power asymmetry that derives from being the "occupiers" and the "occupied"?* Maintaining coalitions, solidarity, and cooperation across differences (such as race, gender, ethnicity, and religion) has never been so urgent. This thesis tries to fill this gap in the literature by proposing an original theoretical framework to analyse three social movement campaigns that witnessed the cooperation of ethnonational diverse groups. The three campaigns articulated into three different territorial settings in order to show the importance of context and political and legal opportunities.

The initial campaign examined occurred in the Palestinian territories and aimed to protect a village facing demolition in the South Hebron Hills, specifically in area C of the West Bank. The second case, on the other hand, took place in the heart of Jerusalem, a divided city, and focused on a predominantly Palestinian neighbourhood that frequently faced evictions by Israeli institutions. Although these two cases are regarded as positive examples, it is important to acknowledge and address the internal differences that existed within them.

Lastly, the third case explores a coalition formed within the Israeli women's movement that sought to engage Palestinian women's groups both within the borders of Israel and in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. This endeavour proved to be challenging and ultimately unsuccessful, leading to consider it as a negative case in which an alliance was attempted but ultimately failed. These three cases show how activists belonging to different ethnonational groups have been able or not to address the asymmetry of power that characterizes the colonial division. In addition to the specific strategies, this thesis also considers how the type of political regime, and the legislative setting influences this type of alliance. Finally, it develops a conceptual model that redefines how to maintain long-lasting coalitions through the rule of the three Ts: Time, Ties, and Trust.

As regards the methods used in this thesis, the research took place in two periods of fieldwork. A total of 71 interviews were conducted (face-to-face and online) together with several participant observations which led to the drafting of almost a hundred pages of field notes. In addition to interviews and participant observation, a Protest Event Analysis was carried out, to reconstruct the protest cycle through time. This allows for the inclusion of a longitudinal study of these movements' composition. For the negative case, together with the interviews, I created a questionnaire to reconstruct the network of women's organizations active in this campaign submitted online. The data analysis took place with the MaxQDA program and through a qualitative Social Network Analysis with UCINET which allows understanding descriptively the composition and characteristics of the groups that participated in the campaigns and how they changed over time. Much work has been also devoted to restitution with the communities and activists involved and dissemination within the Italian civil society sector.

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INTRODUCTION

Prologue

In the realm of qualitative research, specifically within the field of ethnography, our focus lies on engaging with individuals. This thesis has been shaped through numerous meaningful exchanges with Palestinian, Israeli, and international activists who have dedicated themselves to establishing environments of peace, co-resistance, and equality. It encompasses their collective efforts and the narratives they graciously shared with me. Within this dissertation, I will commence by sharing an interview excerpt that deeply impacted me, concluding in a moment where both the interviewee and I were moved to tears.

"After the second intifada, they offered me a job as a translator in a "peace initiative". They were good money, I needed to work, but I didn't trust these things. So, I consulted with my mom. I called her and I told her about the work. She said: "You need to be wise, and you need to be careful. There might be a price. You have to think for yourself. Do you want to pay for it? Is it something meaningful to you?" And I said " I cannot know, I've never been. I don't know." But I was afraid for my reputation. And she said: "Then you can choose to stay in your darkness and not know. But if it has to do with Amy [her daughter] I will be with her. So, you can go." And then I said, okay. And I went. I told myself: "Who the heck is going to know?" So, I went, and it was at a center close to the city area in Jericho, between the Dead Sea and Jericho. And I remember the day I entered... It was like seven Dunham of land in the middle of the desert. They had this wooden door, and I opened it and it was full of people. Foreigners, Israelis with Palestinians, Jewish women, men, and kids, it was crazy. And I thought: "Oh, my gosh, what is this place? What are they doing? So, the first day it started, and I started translating and it was...I did a course on nonviolent communication (NVC) intensive training, and it was the first one in the Middle East. So many foreigners came. Many Israelis came. Many Palestinians came. Some of the Palestinians that were there were ex-prisoners. They spent years and years in jail. So, I was upfront translating, you know, with NVC to them and people were sharing their stories and I was translating, and then this guy, a Palestinian, raised his hand and he said: "I want to talk, and I want you to translate exactly what I'm going to say. Exactly. I don't know English, so don't lie to me." And I looked at him and they looked at me and I was like: "I am translating into this bits and pieces of what everyone is saying. And I said everything, translation is like religion. "Don't be shy." And I said, okay. And then he started saying, "The occupation is like a spike in the ass". And I looked at him; "Do I have to translate?". He said yes. So, I did, but I was very shy. And then he shared his story and how he was sitting there with bullets in his body because they were still unable to remove them. And if they remove them, they could cause him other physical injuries. And why he went to jail and what he experienced in jail. And you could tell physically he had so many scars, he was hanged, tortured, and then he started saying why he came to the meeting because "We are too sick of fighting each other. We're too sick of killing each other. I don't want what happened to me to happen to no one else. And there is no way Jewish will leave this land. So, let's just fucking meet, and find a way to stop." And I started realizing the human price of such an emotional translation. In between everybody is sharing such painful stories and they were all looking at me and crying, and screaming and then suddenly, they are silent… And then this Israeli couple raised their hands, and they started sharing their story and they shared about one of their sons that committed suicide due to his military service. He couldn't handle it. What he did... I still have nightmares about it... They found him hanged in his room. Leaving a letter behind. Of how guilty he felt. And how

he couldn't sleep or eat or function well. And he could not live anymore. So, they said, “We are here because we don't want this to happen. To no one else. And we don't want kids to go to the military. We don't want our children to be destroyed.” Well, I have goosebumps. And it took me off guard. I was “wow”. It was so heavy on me. And I was like, shit, what the fuck is this? You know what? What the fuck am I doing here? I was like: "This is too much; I'm not coming back." That's it. Only today. I'm not walking back to these stories again. So, after the first break, I went to one of the people who was responsible, and I said: “I will look for someone else to become a translator. I do not wish to continue. And then she said: “But if you don't find?”. I said, if I don't find it, I'll come back. […] But I didn't call anyone. I went back the next morning and I looked at her and I couldn't lie. And I started, you know, like translating, in every moment, when they were eating, translating when they were in the kitchen, translating when they were in their empathy groups, and it became more and more personal, I know all of them. After that day, I started to mobilize in joint communities. And I have never left. Even if I have been threatened several times, and I am scared for my daughter, I won't stop. Not after what I heard and experienced “(PA 23)[1].

Introduction

Colonial domination divides the native population to better control any possible opposition following so-called ‘divide and rule’ strategies (Lewis, 2014). To create successful impacts despite these conditions, collective actions usually need to organize cohesively and rely on broad coalitions (Van Dyke & McCammon, 2010). Under Israeli domination, the territory known as Historical Palestine has been subject to a relentless fragmentation and disarticulation of its lands (Chomsky & Pappé, 2015). However, fragmentation exists not only among Palestinians but also between Palestinians and Israelis. So-called “deeply divided society” are societies in which two or more different ethnonational groups have experienced a period of intense conflict and claim to be the sole rightful owner of that land (Touquet, 2015). In these contexts, creating coalitions between the opposed ethnonational groups is even more difficult and unlikely. Such conditions on the ground may fit the definition of societies deeply divided along ethnonational lines, resulting from the unstoppable Zionist colonization project that makes Historic Palestine a clearly recognizable case of Settler Colonialism (Rodinson, 1973; Shafir, 2016; Veracini, 2006; 2015; 2016). This colonization continues nowadays, for example, with the constant expansion of illegal settlements, appropriation of Palestinian lands and properties, demolitions, and evictions (Hawari, Plonski, & Weizman, 2019; Amnesty International, 2022). The archipelago (Solombrino, 2018) of deeply divided societies we witness on the ground is the result of decades of exploitation, prevarication, and violence towards the Palestinian population by the Israeli state. These realities premise this project’s analysis of political campaigns which were able to unify groups and movements from the two different

[1] The interview was entirely conducted in English, and these are the person's verbatim statements. The person interviewed is a queer Palestinian peace activist, extensively engaged in non-violent activism. They possess exceptional proficiency in English, partly due to their activism and also because they pursued a master's degree abroad, which they are now completing. In this account, they are reminiscing about their initial involvement in a peace initiative and how they began mobilizing within the grassroots peace movement.

communities. In other words, campaigns in which Israeli groups were able to cooperate with Palestinians in an anti-colonial manner. Indeed, the considered campaigns deal with the very nature of settler colonialism, aiming to impede settlement expansions, demolitions, and evictions. This thesis also includes a negative case in which alliances between the two communities were tried but ultimately failed.

Over the decades of Israeli colonization, Palestine has been the stage of massive mobilizations and social engagements, showing the ability of the Palestinian movement to constantly innovate and re-frame their strategies, techniques of protests and claims (Darweish & Andrew, 2015). In all these years, Israeli repression has never ceased but evolved, developing new strategies and technologies to keep a tight control over the Palestinian population, including over political dissent on all sides (Clarno, 2017; Ghantous & Joronen, 2022). Hence the questions: *how is it possible to support the creation of cross-differences coalitions in a fragmented territory such as the Palestinian/Israeli one, in the context of settler colonialism*? *When and how is it possible to witness the creation of social movements' coalitions able to transcend the colonial divide*?

The introduction initially considers the challenges of proposing a social movements' perspective to the study of a case as complicated as the Israeli-Palestinian one, evaluating the main contributions this approach can bring. I then advance to clarify my positionality and the ethical and political importance of recognizing settler colonialism's role in this context. While such precursors are often deemed as an ideological or political positioning, the sensitivity towards such issues cannot get in the way of striving towards historical accuracy, academic responsibility and above all methodological rigour. Being transparent with the aspects that represent the starting point of this research is especially significant when considering potentially sensitive topics such as the Occupation, Palestinian resistance, and how the Israeli regime is tackled. The colonization of Palestine needs to address many questions, understandings and controversies, so it is necessary to spell out clearly and justify scientifically the positions adopted in this research. Subsequently, the introductory Chapter outlines the development of the research question/s and finally lays out the structure of the thesis.

This research offers empirical evidence and theoretical analysis on the connection between inter-community alliances, social movements, ethnography, and the potential for realizing shared sociabilities in Israel-Palestinian context beyond the colonial and nationalist divides. Although there have been some similar studies, referred to in the theoretical Chapter, this research is the first to take such an extensive

scale of these issues. The main question this work is trying to answer is how structurally divided activist networks can assemble and persist given the settler colonial context from which they emerge.

Lastly, I want to emphasize that I do not believe the Palestinian people need someone to speak on their behalf, but many voices standing alongside them.

Contextual notes

Both within its own borders, as a sovereign state, and within the West Bank, the control over the region is claimed by Israel as the occupying entity[2]. Israel holds a position of hegemonic domination through legislation, administration, political decisions, presence of the police, border policy or military, depending on the area, and the presence of settlers on the ground. These elements account for the widespread antagonisms which make it hard to imagine possible cooperations between communities from the two societies. This becomes even more clear if we consider that Israel is constituted around a specific construction of Jewish identities. Shafir and Peled (Shafir & Peled, 1998, p. 413) define Israel as an "ethno-nationalist citizenship that, in principle, encompassed all Jews, by virtue of their ethnic descent". Moreover, Israel has been defined as an ethnic democracy (Smooha, 2002), an ethnic state (Rouhana, 1997; Rouhana & Ghanem , 1998), or an "ethnocracy" (Ghanem, Rouhana, & Yiftachel, 1998). The last definition comprises regimes that are "neither authoritarian nor democratic" (Yiftachel, 1999, p. 364), not meeting principles specific to democratic regimes, like the protection and promotion of minority rights. However, as the presentation of legislations in Chapter 3 will show, the discriminatory axis of Israel owns clear racist elements. The overt discrimination based on nationality and ethnicity and the history of colonization of the Palestinian population requires researchers to carefully consider the appropriateness of various theoretical frameworks in this case. For example, describing the Israeli-Palestinian context merely as a manifestation of ethnic issues is widely misleading. There certainly are racial, economic, gender, ethnic and class differences within the societies encountered in this dissertation, addressed by questions like how it is possible to work together despite these differences. Indeed, divides are not merely because of different ethnic origins but because of a colonial-type of domination that instrumentalizes ethnic differences. Considering Judaism as an ethnicity would be ontologically wrong. Jewish are also divided according to their ethnic origin: Ashkenazi, Sephardic, Mizrahi and Ethiopian.

[2] This research solely focuses on the situation in the West Bank, and it is important to note that while Gaza is recognized as part of the occupied Palestinian territories, it is physically disconnected from the contiguous space of Israel and Egypt. Additionally, politically, it operates separately from the West Bank under the authority of Hamas since the 2006 elections. Furthermore, access to the Gaza Strip is heavily restricted, presenting significant challenges in conducting on-the-ground research, mainly due to safety concerns.

Additionally, “Jewish” identity is stratified along various differences, like ethnic origin. For example, Ashkenazi Jews tend to form the state elite while Mizrahi, Orthodox and Ethiopian Jews make up subordinated classes, showing just how much the idea of all but one Jewish ethnic identity can be misleading (Daniele, 2020). Being Jewish does not necessarily mean being Israeli either. Jewish people live all around the world without having the Israeli citizenship, many of them precisely because of their anti-Zionism. However, as described, differences may be institutionalized and used strategically.

Authors have described divided societies as political arenas in which ethnonational categories get institutionalised and reproduced in everyday life through political, social, cultural, and psychological processes (Milan, 2020, p. 3). In Israel, this strategic institutionalization of differences resulted in 20% of the population being composed of Palestinian citizens, usually referred to as “Israeli Arabs” (in this study referred to as 48-Palestinians[3]). This group of people have some civil rights, such as the right to vote. However, they are largely treated as de facto second-class citizens (Ghanem, Rouhana, & Yiftachel, 1998; Smooha, 2002). Moreover, Palestinian society differs according to aspects like their religion: Christian, Islam, Druze, Bedouin and Jewish. Being Palestinian includes not only an ethnic dimension but also a national one. The latter refers to a people living in Ottoman Palestine before the Jewish migration of the twentieth century and the British colonization after the First World One (Pappé, 2017, p. 32).

Departing from the fact that identification is considered “the most important component in the formation of political cleavage” (della Porta, 2015, p. 74), the most likely type of collective action in divided societies is the ethnonational one: “the process by which groups organize around some features of the ethnic identity in pursuit of collective ends” (Nagel & Olzak, 1982, p. 1). By contrast, mobilizations beyond these antagonisms appear unlikely as “competing ethnic or national identities can be activated and made salient in a short period of time” (Bosi & De Fazio, 2017, p. 17). Although this might also be true for the Israeli-Palestinian context, these reflections tend to omit that given a precise institutional setting, certain groups enjoy more rights. Hence, they depart from a position of privilege that sets them

[3] The Arab citizens of Israel constitute the most significant minority within the country. They form a unique community of individuals who are Israeli citizens while also having a Palestinian heritage, adhering to various religions (Muslim, Christian, or Druze), being fluent in Arabic and Hebrew with diverse social identities. In recent years, there has been a noticeable increase in identifying themselves as Palestinian citizens of Israel. However, other distinct identities such as Galilee and Negev Bedouin, and the Druze people also coexist. In Arabic, the commonly used term to refer to Israel's Arab population is "48-Palestinian" (48 فلسطينيو, Filastiniyyū Thamaniya Wa-Arba'in), denoting those who have remained within Israel's 1948 borders since the Nakba. In local contexts, Arab citizens are often referred to as Israeli-Arabs or simply as Arabs. In international media, the term "Arab-Israeli" is also used to distinguish them from Palestinian Arabs residing in the Palestinian territories.

apart from others. Settler colonialism provides the most adapt framework to address the content of these differences (Wolfe, 2006). The real challenge here is not so much putting into dialogue deeply-divide societies studies and social movement studies, but settler colonialism studies and social movements theories.

Ethnocracy is a "distinct regime type that facilitates the expansion of a dominant ethnic nation in a multi-ethnic territory" (Kedar, 2003, p. 402). This underlines the aim of "settler-colonial" regimes to replace the native population through dislocation, settlement and violent expulsion (Wolfe, 2006). As we can see, these two definitions do not exclude each other. Both emphasize critical parts that help to understand how the state of Israel tries to develop an ethnocracy through settler colonialism. The construction of Israel was based on strategic acquisitions of land through purchase, confiscations, modification of land status and expulsion of 700 000 Palestinians during the 1948 war. This process is remembered by Palestinians as the *Nakba,* the Arab world for *Tragedy* (Dalla Negra, 2018; Pappe, 2007; Erakat, 2019; Masalha, 2012; Sibilio, 2013; Sayigh R. , 2007). Moreover, the colonial nature of the Israeli state is still evident in its strategic construction of illegal Israeli settlements in areas of the West Bank.

The point I want to make here, and that I will explore in the following sections, is that referring to the Israeli-Palestinian context as an ethnic conflict undermines the legitimate claim to the land of the Palestinian people. On the other hand, talking about the settler colonial nature of the state of Israel does not want to undermine Jewish people right to safety. I certainly sympathize with the need for Israel / Palestine to be a homeland for Jews (alongside Christian and Muslim Palestinians) after centuries of global anti-Semitism, persecution, and horrific violence that leading to genocide against Jewish victims in Europe. Like many others, I hope Israel / Palestine to become a shared homeland for Jews and Palestinians and honours self-determination for historically oppressed Jewish communities worldwide as for Palestinians. Nevertheless, a state that pursues an ethnocracy, praising one ethnoreligious group over others and keeping 5 million people under military Occupation, it is hard to be considered a "refuge".

Weaving Together Social Movement Studies and Settler Colonialism: Research Questions

The structural separation of Palestinians and Israelis is a precise strategy put forward by the state of Israel to control both people. Divisions are introduced strategically, imposed through elements like checkpoints, separation barriers, movement restrictions, administrative limitations, educational system divisions, and ideological propositions. Given the extent of these barriers a key question is: *how coalition building is possible under multiple conditions of repression and control?* In a context where ethnonational differences are seen as the cause of the Palestinian people's deprivation and Israel's

permanent state of (in)security, we must further consider: *how can cooperation in social movement campaigns occur between the two communities?* Since the two groups would find themselves closer in Israel, it is reasonable to assume that collaboration should be easier and more frequent. However, as mentioned previously, the second-class citizen status of Palestinian citizens of Israel makes interactions in this context to be rather sporadic.

In contrast, some Israeli peace movements focus on the West Bank, particularly in Area C, where living conditions are even more dire. Therefore, it is important to ask, *under which contextual, relational, and legal requirements can cross-differences coalitions in Social Movements emerge?* In addition, the following questions arises: *how can this happen, considering the impact of the Zionist settler colonial project and the expansion of illegal settlement in the West Bank according to international law? Why did some movements, which the literature would suggest being more likely to develop inter-group alliances, such as the women's peace movement, struggle to develop this type of coalition? Around what claims and campaigns social activities developing in a violently divided context can create unity, and which topics are not considered "coalitional"?*

Scholars prioritising a settler colonial framework would halt the discussion at this stage, arguing that there cannot be genuine cooperation between two groups in such different positions of power as the occupied and occupier are. A first problem with such a position is that it risks being over-deterministic, not giving space to the agency of alternative and creative ways of coalitional expressions. Secondly, it disregards that such type of alliances of this type already occurred in Israel and Palestine, even though they are a minority of cases. The fact that they mostly were short-lived campaigns related to a specific cause or against the construction of the separation barrier in the West Bank, does not take away from their potential significance. Moreover, their impacts may ripple beyond the mere success/failure of the campaign in question, producing other type of outcomes. These occurrences do not automatically mean that such partnerships were or are symmetrical. But, as will become clear in this thesis, they have other characteristics that are worthy of investigation. Looking at this type of cooperation needs to be informed by the awareness of the two communities being in two separate positions of power. Therefore, it becomes even more interesting to evaluate which cooperation strategies coalitions apply to manage this asymmetry or at least to reduce it.

This thesis concentrates on the capacity of developing resistance and, above all, anti-colonial coalitions between different ethnonational groups in a context that is not “just” violently divided but the result of

an ongoing colonial project. While this might seem as a very particular topic, some of the mechanisms and strategies these actors develop might be replicable or similarly present across social movements in other settler colonial contexts such as South Africa, Australia, The United States, South America, or Canada. In all those contexts, movements have tried to or try to address hierarchical divides which usually prevent cooperation such as economic, racial, gender, religious differences. The current situation in Israel and Palestine is the result of various historical, political, and social factors: the imperialistic Ottoman and British presence, the law they created, the relation of Israel with foreign powers, the weight of the United States in shaping the country's policy, and the place granted to Palestinians in the international community. The complexity of these factors, and involvement of all these actors, favour a relational approach in this research. Additionally, applying a relation approach allows to disrupt the antagonistic divisions created by the settler colonial framework between settler and native, considering a broader variety of caleydoscopical relational aspects that displace contextual realities.

Alimi, Bosi and Demitrou (2015) have satisfactorily applied a relational approach to studying political violence and radicalization. They argued that social movements are part of a "complex web of socio-political relations, involving multiple parties and actors within parties such as political and social institutions, elites and pressure groups, and movement and counter-movement organizations" (p. 13). Based on their understanding, it is reasonable to assume that in settler societies, where everything pushes for separation, relational factors, mechanisms and strategies can account for the occurrence of diverse coalitions. The lack of these relational mechanisms and strategies can instead explain the absence of a coalition that crosses differences. This includes the network of relations that activists have among themselves, which tend to favour cooperation. Moreover, in a settler colonial context, the direction of these relations risks reproducing extreme inequalities.

This reflection highlights the importance of filling the current gap between theories on social movements and settler-colonial literature. In addition, framing the current political and social context in Palestine as settler colonialism unravels the specific anti-colonial characteristics that many of the occurring coalitions display. Following such an approach must balance how the attribution of resistance agency is placed, emphasizing practices of marginalized communities. However, considering the Palestinians as the only resisting actor would be misleading. Framework based on this assumption risk to reinforce existing dichotomies. The realities and relations on the ground escape the entrapment of Euro-centre binaries, like colonized and colonizers. Within Israel, for example, civil society encompasses movements and activists dedicated to opposing the colonization of the West Bank and the internal colonization of the Palestinian

minority within the country. These activists are actively engaged in an anti-colonial struggle, facing significant risks to their safety and enduring daily marginalization and exclusion from their society. By examining the interactions and experiences of these two distinct "resting agencies," we can gain insights into the potential for building coalitions that transcend differences of various kinds. Research frameworks that flow from these understandings benefit from an approach of relations which pay due attention to "*relational variance*" (Stagni, 2023).

Structure of the Research

This research relies on the in-depth analysis of three different social movement campaigns in Palestine and Israel: the "Save Susiya" campaign in the West Bank, the "Save Sheikh Jarrah" campaign in East Jerusalem, and the Israeli Women's Peace movement "Coalition of Women for Peace". Analytically, this thesis draws on in-depth empirical research with a conceptual reflection following inductive reasoning. The theoretical framework is elaborated in response to a first round of interviews. Insights from fieldwork and the interviews are central to this project, advancing a better knowledge of the situation on the ground, shedding light on the practices and narratives of activists and inhabitants. Thus, this approach allows for a better understanding of the contentious dynamics in the region. The analysis focuses on how groups and movements develop and foster their alliances, particularly how and why they decide to work or not to work together. This generates new inputs that allow for the better integration of coalitions into the study of social movements, developing a new angle to approach deeply divided societies in context of settler colonialism.

The thesis is organised broadly into two parts. The first part (Chapters 1, 2 and 3) is a literature review, the main concepts that underline this research, the methodological approach adopted and the presentation of the cases. The second part (Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7) is an analysis of the empirical data. Here, the focus is on the specific campaigns, emphasizing the factors that determine success or failures from an activist angle. This is based on the presence or absence of coalitions between the two communities.

In the first Chapter, an overview of the literature associated with settler colonialism and research on social movements is provided. This further includes studies on deeply divided societies and from Palestine studies. The review concentrates on the main concepts invoked in recent scholarship, as they are central to this thesis, too. The second part explores the main concepts and definitions utilized in this research. I conclude by outlining how contentious politics has been studied in the frame of the Israeli-Palestinian question.

The second Chapter describes the methodology, adopting a qualitative case-oriented approach utilizing various techniques such as fieldwork, participant observation, focus groups, semi-structured interviews, protest event analysis, and qualitative social network analysis. As conducting research in a conflict zone with various sites offers intrinsic issues that must be openly articulated in the research process, the Chapter will analyse the consequences of utilizing such a methodological strategy, with a focus on fieldwork.

At this early stage of the thesis, addressing potential issues around positionality is essential. One possible concern is whether this study might divert attention from the central focus of the Palestinian struggle against Zionism. Other concerns might include the researcher's perspective, particularly if it is perceived as lacking unconditional support for the Palestinian national liberation struggle and not fully acknowledging the suffering caused by the Zionist endeavour. These are legitimate concerns that must be taken seriously.

The researcher acknowledges the historical priority of the Palestinian liberation movement, as well as the Palestinian people's right to reparation and return. Furthermore, this thesis argues that the liberation struggle is embedded within a broader project of decolonizing Palestine, which involves various political forces of resistance, including Palestinian-Jewish activism. Decolonization goes beyond mere reparation and restoration; it aims to create collaborative and shared ways of life while dismantling White supremacy and existing systems of oppression (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Another point is that despite their revolutionary intentions, national movements can become exclusionary and perilous, potentially deviating into separatism and fostering discriminatory behaviours. This study advocates for a genuine decolonial struggle beyond the confines of national groups and ethnonational identities, even though such identities may hold significant meaning as part of a decolonization process or for those identifying with them. As expressed by Ilan Pappé in a speech delivered at the Università L'Orientale, there is a recognition that "Jews are as much part of the problem than part of the solution" (Pappé, 2022).

Subsequently, I concentrate on the definition of the case studies and the reasoning behind these choices. I then turn to discuss the relevance and differences regarding the cases. The third Chapter provides further background information on each case study, concentrating on historical and legal elements that are relevant for the current situation. Here, the emphasis is put on the solid relational aspects of these movements and cases, looking at the extent of contextual influences on their choices, personal relations, and strategies and mutual influences.

The first empirical Chapter, number four, addresses a successful case of cooperation across differences through the "Save Susiya" campaign. I explain what made this cooperation possible, what was the result of the camping both in the short and long term, and how this can be abstracted to other cases of coalition beyond differences. In addition, this case explains how such an unlikely coalition can be maintained over time. Chapter five is dedicated to "Save Sheikh Jarrah", a political campaign that in 2021 was able to mobilize Palestinians across the Green Line[4] to support their cause. Before being known nationally and becoming the bulwark of Palestinian liberation, this campaign showed the widespread support of Israeli activists. The sixth Chapter will look at the Coalition of Women for Peace, a coalition of organizations that have tried to develop alliances with Palestinian organizations but failed.

Finally, Chapter 7 draws conclusions departing from the similarities and differences of the three cases. Despite the specificity of the Palestinian case, this research's findings may apply to similar cases of divides in other countries and in situations of settler colonialism, further enriching studies on Palestine. Although publications on this specific topic seem to receive more attention, the situation is still not settled yet, and Palestinian human rights are constantly negated and violated. As Tuhiwai Smith emphasizes, the academic community must grapple with the widespread silence about ongoing colonial endeavours: "Decolonization is a process which engages with imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels. For researchers, one of those levels is concerned with having a more critical understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations and values which inform research practices" (Tuhiwai, 1999, p. 20). In the twenty-first century, it is critical that we use the knowledge we have as a source of power to openly denounce what Israel is doing in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) and to Palestinians.

[4] The 1949 Line of Armistice that divides Israel from the West Bank

CHAPERT ONE – A MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH: BRIDGING SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY, SETTLER COLONIALISM, DIVIDES AND THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN QUESTION

As seen in the introduction, this research generally deals with questions surrounding the development of alliances between different ethnonational groups in Israel and Palestine. This Chapter weaves together the three main disciplines informing this research: the sociology of social movements with a specific focus on what it says about coalition-building and divided societies, the literature on settler colonialism, and area studies on Israel and Palestine. These perspectives are combined through a relational approach. Accordingly, these fields of literature are bridged to build on and define a broad and innovative theoretical framework based on new concepts and definitions.

The first part of this Chapter examines the reciprocal influence between Social Movement Theory (SMT) and socio-political systems in the Middle East. The subsequent section builds on this exploration to delve further into the significance of settler colonial studies and their relevance to SMT, and challenges it poses as an alternative field of study that contributes to SMT. The third section is a meticulously analysis of critical contributions in Social Movement Studies (SMS), with specific emphasis on coalition-building, bridging differences, and sustaining coalitions. To effectively address this body of literature, existing concepts are revisited, revitalised, and supplemented with new perspectives. Here, the primary analytical framework and novel theoretical advancements are presented and discussed. The concluding part provides a brief overview of studies that have explored similar cases, both from an SMT standpoint and other approaches. While most of the research conducted for this thesis relied on inductive reasoning, extensive references were made to various literature and established theories. The entire reasoning process can be appropriately categorised as abductive theory-building, incorporating deductive and inductive elements.

1.1 Social Movement Studies and the "Orientalism" Trap

Literature on Social Movements has long studied mobilization in Western societies and, just recently, has shown interest in different contexts, including post-colonial regions (della Porta, 2016; della Porta, 2015; Wiktorowicz, 2002; Chalcraft, 2016; Bayat, Foreword, 2016; Beinin & Vairel, 2013; Berriane & Duboc, 2019). Nevertheless, a long-standing debate is still open concerning the suitability of Social Movement Theory (SMT) in explaining popular mobilizations in a context that differs from Western ones in various aspects (Bayat, 2016; Chalcraft, 2016). Social Movement Studies provide comprehensive explanations of events taking place in Western Europe and in the United States, its theoretical toolkit has

subsequently been applied first to Eastern Europe and then to non-European contexts. However, the risk of 'using' non-western contexts and movements as 'unexplored fields' to test well-established theories and concepts on 'exotic' and 'oriental' contexts certainly exists (Mohanty, 1984). Any Western scholar who tries to approach non-Western social movements faces this dilemma, and so also in Palestine (Barakat, 2018). The challenge of this work is therefore twofold: on the one hand, it wants to maintain a theory-building approach in order not to use the experience of people on the ground as an experiment to prove Western scholars' hypothesis. On the other hand, this work tries to approach the issue of Israeli/Palestinian social movements keeping in mind the peculiar context of settler colonialism and this framework's implications.

1.1.1 Insights from the Social Movement Studies

The core findings of this research are developed and analysed in the empirical part of this thesis. However, some concepts imported from Social Movement Studies and Area Studies require being set out at this earlier stage. One such concept is McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly's (2001) conceptualization of contentious politics to encompass various forms of collective political processes. While the authors acknowledge that their approach could be applied to interpreting conventional institutionalized political conflicts, their primary intent is to apply it to movements, revolutions, industrial conflicts, ethnic and religious conflicts, and democratization processes. Each of these areas has traditionally had its own distinct scholarly literature. However, the authors aim to create a more unified field of "political contention" as a core objective of their work. They recognize that political contention cannot be sufficiently grasped by solely focusing on the behaviour of individual actors, which has been the traditional approach in movement studies. Instead, they advocate for analysing contention as a relational phenomenon, recognizing that movements, revolutions, and other conflicts are shaped by interactions involving multiple parties in various episodes (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001). This is why we will start with relationality.

1.1.1.1 Relational Approach

In social movements, the process matters as much as the outcomes. Movement mechanisms and dynamics tell us much about actor choices, strategies, and their more general ways of reasoning. Entities are not interdependent; they act according to their interaction with social fields, networks, social worlds and political contexts. Social actors' identities and actions result and evolve through exchanges. They cannot be understood as if coming from a pre-relational moment (Dépelteau, 2018, p. 17). Furthermore, also Tilly's mechanisms can be seen as types of relations: brokerage refers to the "production of a new

connection between previously unconnected or weakly connected sites"; co-optation refers to the "incorporation of a previously excluded political actor into some centre of power" (Tarrow & Tilly, 2007, p. 217). Each of the processes described above stand in for relational changes.

To take a relational approach is not merely a reference to "relations" but further embraces how social movements act in a context, considering the influence of various factors and the impacts of other political actors. As pointedly articulated in Emirbayer's "Manifesto for a Relational Sociology" (1997), relational theorists reject the notion that some discrete, pre-given units, such as the individual or society, are ultimate starting points of sociological analysis. As he states: "Individual persons, whether strategic or norm following, are inseparable from the transactional contexts within which they are embedded . . . [a relational perspective] depicts social reality in dynamic, continuous and processual terms, and sees relations between social terms and units as pre-eminently dynamic in nature, as unfolding, ongoing processes rather than as static ties among inert substance" (p. 287 – 289). Thus, while ideologies or environmental factors certainly have a role in the development of social movement coalitions, they are not the sole ones. Indeed, the literature suggest that some movements and issues are more coalitional, highlighting that alliances develop only under certain circumstances (Alimi, Demetriou, & Bosi, 2015, p. 35). Given this, I agree with Alimi, Demetriou and Bosi argument on the importance "to focus on changes in patterns of relational dynamics within and among the major parties and actors involved in episodes of contentious politics" (Alimi, Demetriou, & Bosi, 2015, p. 38). Even if their work focuses mainly on political violence, this is applicable also to different types of collective actions. As they further explain, "actors, groups, or organizations within a social movement make claims that may influence the state and potentially other non-state parties, their activity triggers an interactive chain of moves and countermoves" (p. 39). Relational dynamics may change in this chain of moves and countermoves, and new modes of coordination can emerge and develop. A clear example of this is the case of non-normalization as a response to the failure of the Oslo Agreements, which significantly impacted the possibility of creating joint movements after 2006.

1.1.1.2 Relational Mechanisms

Borrowing from relational theory in sociology, the study of contentious politics places interactions at the centre of causal accounts, treating negotiations and social interface as more than derivatives of a given structural context. Instead, interactional relations are themselves causally significant (Emirbayer, 1997). Analysis of movement strategies involves identifying interactions within the movement, and exchanges between it, the state and external actors as underscoring changes in mobilization. Substantiating a

process-based account of how cooperation emerges and unfolds means capturing the heterogeneity of social movements. This adds a consideration of otherwise often-overlooked relations between social, political, and religious communities. These relations play a crucial role in shaping mobilization patterns (Norwich, 2017, p. 179). Conceptualization of mechanisms are particularly useful to understand such processes.

Tilly and Tarrow (2007) highlighted the importance of several relational mechanisms. They draw on the concept of *brokerage* as a production mechanism that impacts new connections between previously unconnected sites. *Diffusion* is understood as the spreading of forms of contention, an issue, or a way of framing it from one site to another. *Coordinated actions* occur when two or more actors engage in mutual signalling and parallel making of claims on the same object. Following della Porta's understanding, this thesis considers mechanisms as categories of actions that filter structural conditions and produce effects (2014, p. 18). Chapter 4 explores strategies and repertoires of action that deal with the management of asymmetrical relations. Those include: 1) decolonization of the language used; 2) subaltern leadership of the movement; 3) collective inaction; 4) generational transmission of activism. In Chapter 5, I introduce the *shadowing mechanism*: the ability of a section of the movement not so much to mobilize as to step aside when this is good for a particular cause or to achieve the aims of the whole movement. Finally, Chapter 6 discusses different *modes of cooperation* within the Israeli – Palestinian women movement, illustrating how the lack of certain mechanisms and strategic interactions make it harder to create cross-communal relations.

1.1.1.3 Relations as Social Capital

The reflection concerning relationality cannot be separated from the one on *social capital* and the centrality of personal and group relations. *Social capital* usually refers to those factors of social groups that include interpersonal relationships, a shared sense of identity, a shared understanding, shared norms, shared values, trust, cooperation, and reciprocity. However, this poses various issues around how these elements emerge in a context characterized by mistrust. Social capital generally refers to (a) resources and the value of these resources, both tangible (public spaces, private property) and intangible (actors, 'human capital', people), (b) the relationships among these resources, and (c) the impact that these relationships have on the resources involved in each relationship, and on larger groups. During the 1990s and 2000s, the concept has become increasingly popular in various Social Science disciplines and politics. Pierre Bourdieu's work shows the usage of social capital to produce or reproduce inequality. He demonstrated, for instance, how people gain access to powerful positions through their direct and indirect

utilization of social connections. He defined social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition." From this definition, the concept of social capital bares certain similarities with the idea of privileges. Although Bourdieu (1994) recognizes the role of certain social networks in the construction of social capital, he does not consider networks as "capital" *per se*. He considers them as constituting capital in the moment they are used to spread wealth and power. Diani (1997) explores social capital in his work on the study of the consequences of social movements, where he emphasizes their capacity to produce "social capital." By social capital, he mainly means *ties* based "on mutual trust and mutual recognition among the actors involved in the relationship, although they do not necessarily imply the presence of collective identity" (p.129). This definition also reflects the results of the coalitions scrutinized in this thesis. They were able to achieve results mainly in terms of inter-communities' relationships without necessarily implying the creation of a shared collective identity.

A relational approach means recognizing that interactions can influence all the components in a reciprocal way, even if this is not in a symmetrical relation. In confronting coalitions and their potential for social change, specific attention must be given to relational mechanisms, strategies, and modes of coordination, which work to make cooperation easier. Finally, this must be done with attention to social capital, intended in the way relations are created and maintained. An appropriate relational approach would also need to encompass the complete range of armed actors in the country, as they significantly influence the scrutinized coalitions. While I acknowledge their importance and mention some of them in the empirical Chapters, such as Hamas, their strategic interactions are not included in the theoretical framework.

1.1.2 Social Movement Theory in the Middle East

The study of social movements and contentious politics is conventionally focused on the categories of "social movements" and "collective action". Considering the case studies and the wider context in which they are inscribed – the regional conflict opposing Israel and Palestine, but also the whole Middle East, that has experienced and still experiences forms of Euro-colonialism, with its specific cultural and social-political structures – the social movement model may seem not to be the most appropriate.

Social Movement studies usually focus on organized and allegedly homogenous groups, which is an important bias in the study of contention. In the cases considered here, it is evident that protests and campaigns are carried out by multiple series of actors. Their core is made up of activists, grassroots

collectives, and NGOs, together with individuals, political parties, foreign activists, armed groups, international organizations, lobbying groups, foreign institutions, and foreign governments. Together they could be described as a galaxy of contention. Additionally, a whole world of everyday resistance engages with the immediate issues on the ground. In this regard, Bayat's definition of social non-movement is particularly salient. Bayat (2013, p. 14) describes social non-movement as : "collective actions or non-collective actors ; they embody shared practices of large numbers of ordinary people whose fragmented but similar activities trigger much social change, even though these practices are rarely guided by an ideological or recognizable leaderships and organizations. The term movement implies that social nonmovement enjoy significant, consequential elements of social movements; yet they constitute distinctive entities".

This understanding is fundamental to the study of contentious politics in the Middle East, including the idea of a "quiet encroachment of the ordinary" (Bayat, 2000, 2010). When approaching middle eastern societies, there is a need to consider both activism and everyday life in the same piece of scholarship. Additionally, this encroachment points to the importance and the revolutionary potential of ordinary actions, particularly their constant repetition. We should consider the concepts proposed by Bayat when studying Palestinian contention in all its complexity, including individual, collective, informal, and organized practices. Additionally, as will become clear in the analysis of Chapter five, repetition and rituality of actions composed the very core of the Sheikh Jarrah movement making, allowing cross-differences alliances to resist time, contention, escalation of the conflict and police violence. An Italian singer, Francesco De Gregori, sings in one of his famous titles: "always and forever you will find me on the same side"[5]. I found myself thinking about this line very often during fieldwork and participatory actions. The repetition and rituality, together with the generational change and community links that characterized this type of activities, resonate with a different conception of time, space and causality. This is certainly in contrast if not opposed to mainstream linear and historical reflections on temporality in social movements.

Chalcraft (2016) has strongly criticised the possibility of using SMT to study the Middle East. Indeed, he refuses to talk about 'Social Movements' but advocates the study of 'Popular Politics'. He argues that to challenge Orientalism by "situate[ing] protest within unequal power relations […] cultural factors are either ignored or referenced ad hoc. This is one of the reasons why definitions of social movements,

[5] Sempre e per sempre dalla stessa parte mi troverai.

contentious politics, or even ‘protest’, are missing from this historiography” (Chalcraft, 2016, p. 16). This thesis aspires to address exactly this problem he describes. By referring to the framework of settler colonialism, social movement coalitions in Israel and Palestine are approached in consideration of the implications of acting under a repressive regime with colonial aspirations. SMSs have underlined dynamics and mechanisms that have the potential to be applied to different cases. Therefore, when due attention is paid to the context and characteristic power relations, I believe SMT can provide important contributions for the study of non-Western cases, too. In this effort, a first missing element of SMT must be addressed here. Namely, that SMSs do not pay enough attention and theorizations of internal power differences between activists coming from different positionalities of privilege.

1.1.3 When Settler Colonialism enters the Framework

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in employing the settler-colonial framework to examine the ongoing Occupation of Palestine. Despite the perception that the Oslo Accords have lost their relevance, their influence on Palestinian life remains evident in various aspects. A growing body of scholars asserts that the Israeli-Palestinian peace process has solidified imbalances between the two parties and has deepened the grip of Israeli Occupation and settler colonialism (Kayali, 2021). Viewing Israel through the lens of a settler-colonial entity offers a way to challenge this fragmentation. It goes beyond the traditional Oslo discourse of conflict resolution and peacebuilding, emphasizing dialogue between two seemingly equal sides. Instead, a rigorous examination of the Zionist project's impact on Palestine is encouraged, highlighted by some of the social movement studies referenced throughout this. In recent times, the field of 'settler-colonial studies' has experienced significant growth and consolidation, evidenced by the proliferation of newly published journals, blogs, books, and conferences devoted to the topic. Work around the concept of settler colonialism has proven its worth as an analytical tool for research. Nevertheless, its formal establishment as an academic framework has only relatively recently taken more space in Western academia. However, some discussions that portray Zionism as a settler colony endeavour tend to overlook the vast body of historical scholarship on the colonization of Palestinian land (Pappé, 2017). As Ilan Pappé has retraced in his works, early Zionists from the late nineteenth century onwards explicitly referred to Palestine as settler colonial destination, considering also other alternatives such as Uganda and Madagascar, the South of America and in Azerbaijan (Pappé, 2017, p. 22) Hence, using a settler-colonial framework in Palestine studies, can historicize the colonization of Palestine as a process that began long before the creation of the state of Israel. Such historicization can account for and build upon the earlier scholarship of, for example, Maxime Rodinson

(1973), Gershon Shafir (2016), Nira Yuval-Davis (1997), Nahla Abdo (1993). While Palestinian anti-colonial writings have not necessarily used the settler-colonial analytic, they have substantially formed the foundation for contemporary research on land appropriation in colonial contexts, including authors such as Naseer Aruri (1989), Raja Shehadeh (1988), Walid Khalidi (1992) George Bisharat (1994). Moreover, such authors have also provided key insights on border controls, surveillance, political economy and displacement (Sayigh Y. , 1997; Zureik, 2001; Farsakh, 2011; Sayigh R. , 2007).

In this section, I address issues of settler colonialism to explain the power relations that elapse between Palestinians and Israelis. Differently from other divided societies, colonial rule springs from a precise ideological framework aimed at building a system based on racial discrimination and division according to ethnic or national origin (Wolfe, 2006; Stoler, 2013). Therefore, the colonial element, while it might be controversial for some, is crucial to clarify repercussions on many aspects of Palestinians and Israelis social life, for example, on redistributive and socio-economic inequalities, educational possibilities, freedom of movement and the possibility of the two groups of working together (Chomsky & Pappé, 2015; Taghdisi-Rad, 2014). Although colonialism as a historical period has ended, in most parts of the Global South, the power relations and the materiality it created are stubbornly enduring (Stoler, 2013). The Palestinian case represents a clear example of this multi-layered system of oppression. More precisely, we can define Israeli colonialism as an example of settler colonialism, seeking to replace the native population with a new society of settlers (Veracini, 2016; Salaita, 2016; Degani, 2016). In Robinson's pioneering work "Israel a Colonial-Settler Society", he clearly states that: "the State of Israel on Palestinian soil is the culmination of a process that fits perfectly into the great European-American movement of expansion in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries whose aim was to settle new inhabitants among other peoples" (Rodinson, 1973, p. 91). Another important element that allows the classification of Israel as a settler colonial state is its geographical organization and the fragmentation of the Palestinian territories (Veracini, 2016, p. 1). Today, Jewish settlements and infrastructures backing colonisation in Israel and OPTs proliferate on roughly 85% of what used to be Palestinian land (Fields, 2018, p. 18). Finally, the settler colonial effort has determined the fragmentation that characterizes the different territorial entities of Palestine. Therefore, it cannot be reduced to a far past occupation, but must be considered as an ongoing process (Veracini, 2016). After the US plan for the Middle East gave a *carte blanche* to the Israeli annexation of the West Bank, there seems to be no near end to the Israeli expansionist efforts anytime soon (Falk R. A., 2020). Therefore, this political system of oppression and control has strong implications on the possibility for Israelis and Palestinians developing coalition and

joint campaigns (Hilal, 2007, p. 3). As underlined by many Israeli scholars, the state of Israel is a Jewish state conceptualising Judaism as a Nation, not a religion or an aspect of culture (Hilal, 2007, p. 21). This makes the settler colonial endeavour as far as new settlements in the Occupied Territories are concerned, a racializing endeavour, too.

As written by Ruane and Todd (1996) in their book on Northern Ireland: "the conquest and colonisations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries left as their legacy an enduring distinction between 'settlers' and 'natives'. The settler-native distinction was interwoven with the religious and ethnic one but is not reducible to it" (p. 26). In other words, settlers and natives are real categories that can account for dispossession and elimination. However, they are also intertwined with aspects of race, religion, nationality, language, and ethnicity that can more easily be politicized. This is certainly true for the Palestinian case, too.

The settler-colonial framing allows for the articulation of a range of rich and complex discussions concerning the making and unmaking of settler-indigenous relations in Palestine-Israel, as well as the possibility for a decolonial coexistence (Todorova, 2019, p. 2). Todorova defines this type of cooperation as "decolonial solidarity", a "process which begins with an acknowledgement of solidarity protest as located in contested indigenous sovereign space where solidarity between the settler and indigenous is premised on working for, towards a vision of struggle with the colonial power" (Todorova, 2019, p. 3). This research reports such cases in which a discourse on decolonization has been initiated by activists involved in some campaigns. However, the very presence of Jewish Israelis resisting colonial land expropriation side-by-side with Palestinians, not only represents an anti-colonial cooperation that challenges exclusive ethnonational mobilization. It also directly challenges the representation of Palestinians as an existential threat to Israel, proposing a decolonial alternative to the settler-colonial state. Moreover, shared experiences of colonial violence during protest actions, such as the ones to avoid house demolition in Area C or East Jerusalem, has created previously unthinkable anti-colonial coalitions between Israeli and Palestinian activists. In a chapter for an edited volume of contested nations (Abidde, 2023), I have described this type of relations in terms of *relational variance.* I used this concept to describe those unexpected cooperations in deeply-divided societies that, under certain conditions, can deviate from excepted relational patterns: "This concept includes types of relations that diverge from the norm surrounding the predominant debate on the situation in Palestine. I thereby establish relational agency which challenges power structures and mitigates inter-personal asymmetries. This relational agency is shaped by defection from the norm. In the context of this chapter, decolonial efforts of defection

from the norm are represented by Israeli activists and international Jewish organizations that mobilize alongside Palestinian ones. *Relational variance* does not challenge the settler-colonial framework's explanatory capacity. Instead, I propose this concept as a way to stress how pre-defined contexts, where most of the relationships respond to the settler-indigenous ways of interaction, can result in unexpected cooperation*"* (Stagni, 2023, p. 123).

Contentious politics and social movement scholars that attempt to bridge their discipline with the one of decolonization need to adjust their key conceptual tools to capture new ranges of variation. However, the social movement epistemology may be enriched by such an encounter. Old questions come to have a new voice: what shapes the range of opportunities and alliances available to movement activists? How did different colonial arrangements – some of which imposed draconian restrictions of assembly or organization – influence mobilization patterns? What forms of resistance, including armed insurgency, confronted colonial regimes, and what legacies did these struggles leave? To answer, we can rely on concepts used by SMTs – repertoires of contentious, political opportunity structure, collective action frames, and mobilizing structures – in a new light. Moreover, histories of colonial domination, nationalist emergence, and ethnonational conflicts, rather than in settled political regimes, play out over years and decades, and participants in those actions often remain in the political field.

1.1.4 Social Movement Theories and a new Understanding of Differences and Divides

Scholars and activists dedicated to driving social change increasingly realize the importance of building and sustaining effective coalitions across differences (Bystydzienski & Schacht, 2001). These coalitions are crucial in the pursuit of social justice and aim to transform societal norms and structures to eliminate all forms of oppression (Collins, 1990). However, existing research and literature on coalitions offer only limited insight into the development and longevity of coalitions that are organized around differences with the goal of advancing social justice. The vision of these radical alliances (Bystydzienski & Schacht, 2001) extend beyond the familiar and established, reaching towards an unknown and unexplored horizon that holds the potential for transformative change. Collective movements' challenges to political authorities are organized on national and non-ethnonational basis, assuming different meanings when they occur in societies that experience conflict and are deeply divided (Milan, 2020). In these societies the legitimacy of the political system and the rules of the game are contested, if not openly rejected by part of the polity (Touquet, 2015). In searching for agency, social movement studies (SMS) are not delegitimizing structural explanations but consider the intricate interactions between agency and structure to better understand actors' choices and political negotiations (Bosi & De Fazio, 2017, p. 16).

SMSs have shown how actors interpret context changes through the lenses of their past interactions. This indicates the importance of reasoning less in terms of contextual conditions "than in terms of movement players' relationships with other players, and how the typical practices of each player may produce divisive pressures on movement groups" (Poletta & Kretschmer, 2015, p. 38).

A critical view on differences encourages social movement research to move beyond simple assumptions about the '*ethnic'* and *'national'* agents who mobilized or are mobilizing, Moreover, it problematizes the processes by which constituencies are formed and reproduced. The strength of social movement research comes from its detailed knowledge of cases and particular processes (Ruane & Todd, 2017, p. 236). Divisions can manifest in various forms. Scholarly research has focused on diversity within specific types of movements, with a particular emphasis on environmental movements. The multitude of organizations engaged in environmental activism provides a valuable opportunity to investigate the uncommon phenomenon of cross-class coalition building. The dynamics between socioeconomic status and race/ethnicity give rise to complex social hierarchies that hinder marginalized groups' access to societal advantages while disproportionately burdening them with societal disadvantages (Mix & Cable, 2006 p. 100). The management of membership diversity, as a meso-level dynamic, has been widely overlooked. One exception of this is Reger's (2002) work on the US women's movement. She critically underlines how the relevance of any type of diversity depends on the historical and cultural context. Class differences in the case of the Cleveland National Organization of Women, for example, blocked the construction of a cohesive and inclusive feminist movement (Reger, 2002, p. 713-14). However, most of her work focuses on the development of diverse identities and the possibility of cohabitation within the same organizations. She does not directly deal with the concrete strategies of addressing power differentials that this thesis is concerned with.

In her book "Mobilizing for Democracy", della Porta (2011) considers agency as "inherent in the development of structure, and structures as influencing action, at least to a certain extent. Social movements are both structured and structuring phenomena. They are constrained in their action by the context in which they move, but also able through their action, to change relations among and between actors (della Porta, 2014, p. 16)". The result of these interactions are mechanisms and strategies, that social movement actors put into place to reach their goals. Doing this, we can trace "intermediary steps between conditions and outcome" (della Porta, 2014, p. 18). Coalitions and decisions about alliances are the precise venues where the interplay between structure and agency becomes visible.

Social movements have historically adopted a variety of tools and strategies to build and maintain solidarity across social divisions such as race, gender, ethnicity, religion and ideology (Einwohner, Gender, class, and social movement outcomes: Identity and effectiveness in two animal rights campaigns, 1999; Raman, 2010; Greenwood, 2008). This research aims to explore the concept of political solidarity within the framework of diversity and establishes specific hypotheses regarding the influence of differences on collective political campaigns. The increasing prominence of categorical differences has become particularly significant amidst global phenomena like immigration and refugee movements, environmental and economic crises, and radicalization. Consequently, communities and progressive movements striving to confront these challenges are faced with the challenge to foster political solidarity that transcends various categories of difference (Htun & Weldon, 2012). However, the basis for that solidarity can be slippery. *How do social movements overcome challenges related to leadership and domination among their members, given the power asymmetries between them?*

Most scholars argue that greater diversity represents challenges for social movement success and political action. Hence: *how do activists overcome these challenges? And why do some fail?* Only a handful of researchers have systematically examined the different approaches activists apply to these issues. Until now, no one has examined the consequences of these different approaches for social movement outcomes like organizational persistence and political influence.[6] Diversity can mean different things to different people. In this work, diversity is considered in its most critical approach, referring to social groups that are systematically silenced and excluded by broader societal relations of domination and oppression. Most social movements experience diversity to some degree, for example, through differences in gender, sexuality, religion, or race/ethnicity. These differences are critical to understand certain structural power asymmetries between activists, exacerbating relations of dominance or distrust (Gawerc M. I., 2012; Gawerc M. I., 2021). As a result, there is a growing body of knowledge that challenges the concept of "identity politics" and explores how diverse groups can come together effectively without erasing their individual differences (Einwohner, Kelly-Thompson, Sinclair-Chapman, & et al, 2021; Collins, 1990; Harding, 1987; Yuval-Davis, 1997). However, much of this work remains theoretical in nature. Only limited efforts have documented successful alliances across different identities or practices to develop a robust theory grounded in empirical evidence. This is even though these aspects are critical to guide and

[6] Scholars have examined other types of organizational innovations (e.g., Ferree and Martin 1995; Polletta 2004) with respect to a variety of outcomes, but no one has systematized movement approaches to diversity as such and examined the outcomes of these approaches.

support coalition-building endeavours. One of the few notable exceptions is the work from Bystydzienski & Schacht's titled *Forging Radical Alliances Across Differences* (2001). In this volume, the authors draw on numerous case studies of alliances formed among diverse individuals and groups. They present a compelling argument that traditional resource mobilization theories and identity politics frameworks are insufficient for understanding the dynamics of coalitions across categories like gender, race/ethnicity, class, nationality, ideology, sexual orientation, and age. Instead, the theoretical approach that emerges from the examined cases suggests that successful radical alliances are best conceptualized as dynamic spaces of collective action. These spaces converge multiple personal identities with political activism that interacts with structural factors, shaping and re-shaping the formation of commitments, strategies, and concrete actions (Bystydzienski & Schacht, 2001). However, in this case, there remains a lack of the understanding concerning the *maintenance* of coalitions and the concrete strategies activists use to manage the asymmetries these divides cause.

The body of literature on bridging divides is expanding, with new cases being studied and theoretical frameworks advancing in this field. In this context, I address both differences and divides since they act as barriers to cooperation. While differences encompass various aspects such as religion, class, origin, gender, and more, divides refer to an additional layer beyond mere differences. Divides signify structural separation and physical distance to the extent that without intentional efforts to bridge these divisions, individuals may be barred from meeting and attempting to reconcile their differences collectively.

1.2 Looking for Coalitions: Looking for Agency-Based Explanations to Social Change

The Oxford dictionary's definition of '*coalition*' states what follows: *a group formed by people from several* ***different groups***, ***especially political ones***, *agreeing to work together for* ***a particular purpose***[7]. I believe this definition surpasses the concept of "solidarity" as it encompasses the identification and pursuit of a precise political objective by groups that, under different circumstances and due to their differences, would not typically collaborate. However, once they agree on a specific purpose, they choose to set aside these differences and employ a range of political mechanisms to work together. Notably, Oxford's definition emphasizes the diversity of participating groups, their political nature, and the fact that they exist for finite periods, often intending to achieve a specific goal. The interaction between coalitions and social movements has predominantly been studied in relation to their impact on collective

[7] Retrived from: https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/american_english/coalition#:~:text=%5Buncountable%5D%20the%20act%20of%20two,coalition%20with%20the%20Social%20Democrats

action. Coalitions are networks that can either promote or hinder collective action. The phenomenon and the role of certain political coalitions in history have been acknowledged by scholars. However, further investigation is necessary to gain a more comprehensive understanding of internal dynamics, particularly considering the influence of the operating context. There remains uncertainty regarding the ideal-typical definition of coalitions. Social movement coalitions can be viewed as mechanisms that connect multiple political organizations. In liberal political systems, coalitions frequently energize and define social movements by coordinating events, demands, and strategies to achieve social change (Van Dyke & McCammon, 2010). However, according to Diani (2004) they are just one mode of coordination among other possible ones. In this thesis, the concept of coalition-building is operationalized in a way that includes the creation of connections and cooperation between groups, individuals, communities, and organizations that would be otherwise structurally separated. In some cases, such as the Coalition of Women for Peace, a more formal type of setting is implied in comparison to others. However, the elements that are paramount and non-negotiable are the presence of differences and structural barriers to these alliances. Ranging from different ideologies, nationalities, race, religions to identities, they need to be addressed to allow groups, people and communities to form coalitions. I use the concept of coalition because it speaks to a broad literature in the Social Movement Studies epistemological realm.

1.2.1 Coalition Building in Social Movements

In the dynamics of coalitions, collective actors form dense connections with each other through alliances and explicitly identified opponents. However, these connections are not necessarily rooted in strong identity bonds. The networks among actors mobilizing towards a common goal sometimes assume a purely contingent and instrumental nature. The mobilization and campaigning efforts primarily rely on exchanging and pooling resources between various groups and organizations. However, there has been significantly less focus on their non-instrumental characteristics, including their emergence and long-term sustainability. The initial empirical Chapter of this work concentrates on precisely this aspect and introduces a new theoretical paradigm to combine factors that contribute to the formation and, most importantly, the maintenance of a coalition. As such, *the interactional maintenance paradigm* is introduced among the following sections, an important initial theoretical insight generated as part of this thesis.

Previous collaborations have been known to increase the probability of future cooperation, partly due to the cultivation of social connections. The recruitment of most coalitions occurs by leveraging and involving individuals who are already affiliated with organized groups or movements. Individuals who

have connections to multiple organizations or movements often play a vital role in the development of coalitions. Corrigall-Brown and Meyer (2010) exemplify how shared connections among key organizers within Win Without War served as a basis for coalition recruitment and fostered trust among members. This aspect has emerged as a crucial factor for all the activists interviewed in my research. Van Dyke and Amos (2017) have identified five critical factors for the formation of coalitions: social ties; conducive organizational structures; ideology, culture, and identity; institutional environment; and resources. Both internal organizational characteristics – including organizational ideologies, the presence of individuals with social ties, and commonalities and connections between organizations – as well as external social and political conditions, inspire groups to work together for a common cause. Studies indicate that coalition work is frequently motivated and facilitated by a combination of two or more of these factors. The formation of a coalition, as well as the participation of specific organizations within it, are greatly shaped by the presence of "coalition brokers" or "bridge builders" – individuals who have connections spanning multiple organizations (Bystydzienski & Schacht, 2001; Obach, 2004; Rose, 2000). Coalition formation is linked to various organizational factors, such as having broad or multi-issue goals and a more structured organizational setup. Studies indicate that social movement organizations with broad objectives or a focus on multiple issues are more inclined to engage in coalition activities (Borland, 2008; Van Dyke N. , 2003).

Heaney and Rojas (2014) shed light on the significance of multi-issue organizations and their role in fostering coalition formation. They examine hybrid antiwar movement organizations that encompass multiple identities, incorporating individuals with prior involvement in various social movements. The inclusion of these individuals allows hybrid organizations to act as connectors, bridging the gap between organizations that prioritize different specific issues. This is also the case for how the CWP was formed. Van Dyke and Amos (2017, p. 4) have demonstrated how organizations that strive for participatory democracy, characterized by a non-hierarchical structure and shared decision-making, may encounter challenges when attempting to collaborate within a coalition. This element also emerged in the study of the CWP. Van Dyke and Amos (2017) highlight the significance of cultural similarity, shared ideology, and group identity in their review of the literature on the creation of social movement coalitions.

Numerous studies show that ideological disagreements can hamper coalition building. Instead, this thesis will demonstrate the reduced role of ideology. Highlighting instead a range of common ideals that uphold human rights. Maney (2000), in his work on Northern Ireland's transnational civil rights campaign, has explicitly stressed how the diversity of the whole transnational network was one of the main deterrents

to working together, leading to the dissolution of the network. He writes, “Just as a homogeneous membership increases the durability of networks, a heterogeneous membership can render domestic coalitions highly tenuous” (Maney, 2000, p. 158). Understanding how coalitions can endure across differences and divides is crucial because it goes against most of the existing studies and examples.

Differences in collective identities can breed mistrust and dread, preventing the growth of deep interpersonal bonds. When identities are built in contrast to one or more of the identities or traits of other coalition members, fear and mistrust are especially prone to arise. Other cultural distinctions, such as linguistic obstacles and presentational methods, might obstruct efficient communication, hindering consensus, causing misunderstandings, and excluding individuals who are unfamiliar with the coalitions’ established operating procedures (Maney, 2000). By contrast, the insights of this thesis show the precise opposite. These cases presented are of groups holding very different and sometimes incompatible collective identities – cultural, national, linguistic, and religious. Against common assumptions, they were able to coalesce and work together for protracted periods of time, going beyond the fear, mistrust and suspiciousness that historically characterized their relations.

The examined cases highlight the formation of coalitions despite ideological, religious, cultural, and identity differences within a colonial context. The empirical analysis reveals the substantial amount of relational effort required to sustain this collective resistance. In this context, the insights from Audre Lorde's work (1984) prove invaluable. Lorde poses a fundamental question: How can we harness each other's differences in our shared struggle for a better future? This pivotal question serves as the underlying theme of this entire research, echoing Lorde's emphasis on the importance of coalition as the unity of self-realized individuals who are focused, committed, and resistant to fragmentation or conformity. As she argues, this signifies the fight against despair (Lorde, 1984, p. 157).

1.2.1.1 Different Views

According to Gamson (1961, p. 374) coalitions are temporary alliances among individuals or groups with differing goals, primarily focused on achieving specific means. Gamson's definition assumes that coalition membership is clear and distinct (either in or out) and that participants receive separate and identifiable benefits. Similarly, McCammon and Moon (2015, p. 327) assert that social movement coalitions form when distinct activist groups mutually agree to collaborate and work together toward a shared objective. This definition accurately characterizes the cases examined in this thesis, too. McCammon and Moon (2015, p. 327) further elaborate their understanding by outlining four sets of conditions that typically contribute to the emergence of coalitions: (1) the political environment; (2)

ideological alignment; (3) social ties; and (4) organizational structures and resources. These four elements are necessary but insufficient for forming political alliances across differences. As the empirical Chapters illustrates, these partnerships are often more fragile and challenging to sustain than in other contexts, albeit for various reasons.

In their article "*Organizations, Coalitions, and Movements*", Diani and Bison (2004) provide a clearer delineation between these frequently conflated three concepts. They argue that the distinguishing factors enabling such categorization are networks, conflict, and identity. Specifically, social movements are defined as instances of collective action that exhibit clear conflictual orientations towards specific social and political adversaries. These actions occur within a context of extensive inter-organizational networking, involving actors connected by solidarities and shared identities that exist prior to and persisting beyond a particular coalitions or campaign (Diani & Bison, 2004, p. 283). Their definition rests on two assumptions. Firstly, it assumes that when a coalition extends beyond a localized campaign, it naturally evolves into a proper social movement. Secondly, it suggests that ties that endure over time either give rise to collective identities or dissolve. While this analysis is comprehensive and relevant, it appears to overlook the dynamics that unfold when initiating activist groups of conflicting ethno-national backgrounds are involved in a specific campaign. In such cases, the two communities of origin often experience significant power asymmetries, related to inequalities in power, opportunities, and resource access. This makes it challenging to speak of shared collective identities. It is important to note that these power asymmetries also translate into structural inequalities tied to rights, opportunities, threats, and challenges. These structural aspects manifest distinct divides between such asymmetrically comprised groups of activists. Despite the actors' differing positions, the examined collaboration have persisted beyond the initial campaign. Therefore, this study does not seek to explore whether this inequality is compatible with establishing a collective identity (though this question may inspire future research). Rather, the focus is on understanding how these alliances are maintained over time amidst ongoing threats and challenges. What I would like to emphasize is that it is challenging to discuss the existence of a collective identity that emerges and endures beyond the specific campaign due to persistent inequalities. As a result, in the final part of the thesis, I will introduce the concept of "*co-resistance*" as a classification to elucidate the ongoing nature of this relationship beyond the isolated period of the campaign.

Although extensive literature exists on the factors that facilitate the formation of alliances, such as shared ideology, common goals, perceived threats, and prior cooperative experiences, there is a significant gap

in research concerning the emergence of coalitions between conflicting national groups within a colonial regime. This area has received limited attention and remains highly understudied despite its importance (Staggenborg, 2015; Van Dyke & Amos, 2017). Some examples for such work are Nagle's book (2016) on non-sectarian mobilisation in Lebanon and Northern Ireland, and Chiara Milan's work on Bosnia and Herzegovina (2020). Existing contributions that examine the Israeli-Palestinian case within this framework often fail to adequately consider the specific contextual factors in which these alliances arise. As a result, they struggle to comprehensively explain the underlying mechanisms behind the formation or absence of such cooperation. However, exploring coalitions and cooperation among antagonistic groups can offer valuable insights into the strategic dynamics of this context, as well as the positions and choices of the actors involved in relation to their broader context (Nagle, 2016). Indeed, most of the theories that investigate this issue consider Western and Latin American states as case-study (Van Dyke & McCammon, 2010). In contrast, limited research has investigated the formation of social movements' coalitions in neo-colonial or post-colonial contexts. This project aims to address this gap and contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics involved in forming social movement coalitions in a violently divided society. These contexts are ridden with popular rivalries influenced by national, ethnic and antagonistically constructed identities. This thesis seeks to enrich our knowledge of coalition-building within such challenging and complex environments.

The definition I offer is this: *Social movement coalitions are claim-making campaigns that enlist the support of social and political actors that compromise to accomplish a shared goal*. Creating alliances is a key component of social movements since it broadens the movement's support base and constituents. Such alliances can take a variety of forms, from straightforward cooperation between two parties to a sophisticated network. According to Van Dyke and McCammon (2010, p. xiv–xv) "they can be formal, with an umbrella organization; informal, limited to a single common project; or the basis for long-lasting collaboration". In the next section, I define the other working notions of this research.

1.2.2 Time, Trust and Time: The Interactional Maintenance Paradigm

The *interactional maintenance paradigm* allows the persistence of coalitions for a period that overcomes insular moments of the campaign. The *Three Ts* that constitute the paradigm are not only essential but also interconnected and related to each other. In simple words, the *interactional maintenance paradigm* means that maintaining coalitions that cross social differences is possible only by embracing a new idea of *time* that works as an ally and not as an enemy. This understanding facilitates the creation of *personal relationships* based on *trust* between activist groups that would otherwise be structurally separated. To

build a relationship and a strong tie of trust, constant and repetitive interactions need to occur. Diverse coalitions require three essential elements: Trust, Time, and Ties. What this thesis shows in the following empirical Chapters is that these three elements are pivotal and essential in allowing the creation *and* persistence of coalitions across differences that can be reactivated in times of need. Almost all interviewees, from all sides, show how much the element of *trust* is related to the one *time*. To build a relationship, and therefore a strong *tie* of trust, constant and recurring interaction is key. Previous ties are considered very important both in the coalition-building process and in the literature. The generational element will also be addressed in this dissertation.

1.2.2.1 Time

By dwelling on the aspect of time, differently from the existing literature, it emerges that time as a concept is strictly related duration and endurance. Previously, from a social movement's perspective, McAdam and Sewell (2001, p. 90) believed "that much, if not most, scholarship in the field – especially in social movement studies - betrays no temporality whatsoever". This situation has recently started to change with Gillan and Edwards (2020, p. 1) dividing current conceptualizations of time into historical times, eventfulness and sequences. Historical times "operate as both contextual influences on social movements and as the objects of movement action-oriented to either the past or the future" (Gillan & Edwards 2020). Eventfulness implies that key events can shape the direction of movements insofar as events are defined as "the relatively rare subclass of happenings, that significantly transform structure" (Sewell, 1990, p. 262). Donatella della Porta (2020, p. 559) further argued that "some eventful protests trigger critical junctures, producing abrupt changes which develop contingently and become path dependent". Needless to say, they are not as sudden as they may appear; at the end of the day, eventful protests result from long-term processes (Bosi, 2008). Therefore, approaching the political process of social movements must necessarily incorporate a temporal dimension (McAdam & Sewell 2001, 91). Nevertheless, what all these definitions have in common is a *linear* understanding of time – which is how we learn to approach time. However, I will contend in the empirical part, time is here conceptualized in a way that is anti-capitalist and different from what has been conceived so far in social movement studies. Instead, it is much closer to theorizations in Indigenous Studies.

Finally, *sequences* are considered as repeated interactions within and without social movements that can affect the characteristics of movement activism over shorter timescales (Gillan & Edwards 2020). More generally, in the social movement literature, the rise and ebbing of mobilizations are conceptualized as protest cycles (Tarrow, 1989) or protest waves with three phases of expansion, transformation, and

contradiction (Koopmans, 2007). Although the relationships between time and other political factors have been successfully investigated, connections between time, trust and personal ties is somehow less explored. This perspective is important not only at the micro and *meso* level of analysis but also for a macro dimension.

1.2.2.2 Trust

The importance of Trust, the second T, emerged from this analysis as pivotal for the beginning of a relationship and for its maintenance. The literature has addressed the issue of trust in social movements in different ways. Bystydzienski and Schacht (2001, p. 9) underlined matters related to efforts to build interpersonal trust: *"*even seemingly progressive individuals … [would] still typically view those individuals having the 'other' identity with trepidation." On the contrary, authors such as Michelle Gawerc (2016) and Chiara Milan (2020) have approached trust from the angle of collective identities. They have investigated how the building of shared identities can transcend social divides. Through my analysis, I maintain a sceptical vision of collective identity formation across differences. Given the power differential between communities, before investigating the presence or the perception of a collective identity, it is critical to ask how power asymmetries are managed. The existing literature in different strains of scholarship underlines the connection between the development of strong relations and personal trust (Arnold, 2011) and, more generally, for the creation of social capital (Diani, 1997). Research suggests that close personal ties encourage trust that leads to more easily sharing of detailed knowledge and collective problem-solving mechanisms (Arnold, 2011). In turn, these mechanisms enable coalition partners to anticipate one another's preferences and behaviours when trying to overcome conflicts as they emerge. Mutual trust sometimes exists between the coalition members, especially if they have worked together in the past. Otherwise, it may develop because of interaction within the coalition. The sense of mistrust, and difficulties in establishing personal relations with the "Other" community, is a legitimate reaction from both sides, given the predomination of previous experiences through conflict. This was repeatedly highlighted by Palestinian activists on the ground and by Palestinian academics (Hawari, Plonski and Weizman 2019).

1.2.2.3 Ties

Finally, the third T is about *Ties*. Mario Diani's work in the *Cement of Civil Society* (2015) has particularly shaped the literature on this aspect. The emphasis on ties is mainly related to their influence on the perspective of social network analysis in the study of movements' relationships. The role of previous personal relationships has proven to be essential in the study of contentious politics and

movements (Della Porta, 2006). Collective action always implies a relational exercise. Looking at ties that elapse at the micro/meso levels allows moving the focus on the agency, an agency that may take different forms. First, groups make choices about their alliances. Since Granovetter's (1973) leading work, a large body of research has stressed the importance of strong personal ties for successful inter-organizational cooperation (della Porta, 1988; Opp & Gern, 1993). These relationships are usually characterized by a high degree of familiarity, informality, and mutuality that facilitate interaction, collaboration, and planning among the individuals involved.

Another critical aspect of coalitions can be addresses through the *political mediation model*, namely the polity in which they operate and their targets (Van Dyke and McCammon 2010). These factors regard the creation of social network ties. For example, previous cooperation or personal relationships that preceded the moment of the campaign can play a significant role in the construction of the picture (Diani, 2000). This aspect is strongly reflected in the case of the #SaveSusiya campaign. Aligned with the broader body of literature on social movements, the significance of social ties in the recruitment process are reaffirmed. Furthermore, individuals who possess connections spanning multiple organizations, commonly referred to as bridge creators and brokers, play a crucial role in the facilitation of coalition formation (Bystydzienski & Schacht, 2001; Obach, 2004; Rose, 2000). Collective action networks emerge from distinct choices that political actors make concerning their partners in alliances. However, the role of personal connections seems to be pivotal in contexts where mistrust is the norm and where building cross-community ties is extremely hard. This finding resonates with Arnold's (2011, p. 133) work concerning the "quality of relationships among coalition members" as a crucial element in overcoming conflicts, particularly relevant in long-lasting coalitions. Making one step further in Arnold's direction, my analysis shows that the *interactional maintenance paradigm*, based precisely in an *interaction* between the *Three Ts*, is what allows cooperation to *survive*, maintaining distinct collective identities yet also recognizing a shared responsibility.

It has been proven that the impact of collective action is usually stronger where permanent bonds of solidarity have emerged during contention (Corrigall-Brown & Meyer, 2010; Isaac, 2010). Those bonds are weaker, where collective action has consisted mainly of ad hoc, instrumental coalitions without generating specific new linkages. In the former case, the newly created social capital is expected to have an impact on movements' capacity to mobilize resources for political action at later stage. The empirical Chapters highlight how these three components, Time, Trust & Ties, unravel their true explanatory capacity when they are considered intertwined rather than separated – encompassed in the exemplary use

of the concept of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989). This is summarized in the *interactional maintenance paradigm* which shows the critical components for the development of diverse coalitions based on strong solidarity between actors that find themselves in different power positions. These dynamics are also what generates sustenance in a cooperation across colonial boundaries, allowing for the acknowledgment of very different, if not even opposing, collective identities. Additionally, this interaction of factors, is what can account for the relational aspects of cooperation over long periods.

1.3 Israel and Palestine – The relevance of the case

Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian question, the literature is vast and encompasses a wide range of topics, offering an incredible depth of analysis. Some works focus on the conflicts between the Israeli state and various Palestinian authorities (such as the PLO, PA, Hamas, etc.), representing the two peoples involved. This literature delves into geopolitical, international relations, diplomatic issues, and human rights law, covering aspects such as negotiations, the peace process, historical events, war strategies, and the shifting balance of power. In addition to exploring the relationships among Israel, the Palestinians, neighbouring Arab states, and foreign influences, there is also a remarkably rich literature that delves into the internal dynamics of each society. This includes the Zionist colonial project, the evolution of nationalism, the development of the independence movement, the role of religion, the stances of various political parties, the impact of Palestinian diaspora communities in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan, and changes in government and their effects on the implemented policies.

Israeli-Palestinian joint activities have most prominently been studied from a peace-building/making standpoint (Bar-On, 1996; Gawerc M. I., 2012; Hallward, 2011; Emmett, 1996). Such an approach widely underestimates the large power asymmetry existing between the two groups and the settler colonial nature of the state of Israel. On the one hand, this is due to the fact that most of these initiatives known as people-to-people initiatives[8] (Maoz, 2004; Naser-Najjab, 2019; Tamari, 2005; Pundak, 2006; Golan & Zahira, 2006) assumed that equal representation in the organizational hierarchy would also have ensured equality and symmetry between Israeli-Jews and Palestinians in those meetings (Maoz, 2004, p. 569). Moreover, the inclusion of directors and moderators from each nationality was equated as actors having the same decision-making power in the project. This strongly disregarded the asymmetrical

[8] Since the signing of the Oslo peace agreements in 1993, numerous Israeli-Palestinian programs aimed at peacebuilding have been organized annually (Adwan & Bar-On, 2000; Chaitin, Obeidi, Adwan & Bar-On, 2002; Albeck, Adwan & Bar-On). These initiatives varied in nature, ranging from one-time events to long-term and continuous series of meetings. They involved diverse groups, including youth encounters and dialogues among schoolteachers, university students, professors, and other professionals (Bar-On, 1996). The fundamental idea behind these gatherings was to promote dialogue as a means to resolve the conflict (Maoz, 2004).

control of the project, like through the budgeting. To think that performing a sort of "formal equality" would have eliminated the power asymmetry prevailing in the two ethnonational groups, given the settler colonial nature of the conflict and the consequent seventy years of Occupation, is profoundly misleading. Indeed, most of these people-to-people initiatives failed after the second intifada or after the construction of the wall. The limitations of the People-to-People initiatives were not entirely related to the internal arrangements and structures. They mainly derived from an external environment created by the Oslo Agreements (Naser-Najjab, 2019). Additionally, these activities had a limited ability to engage with the wider context precisely because it assumed that participants found themselves automatically in equal positions. The main shortcoming of these initiatives was to adopt the discourse of reconciliation and peacebuilding while ignoring the colonial reality on the ground. In this way, the very same colonial asymmetry was reproduced. Moreover, the top-level danger of imposing prefabricated pace-building strategies emerged once the Israeli government started the construction of the separation wall. With that divisive practice, most of the Palestinian activists who took part in these projects felt betrayed and foolish to have joined those initiatives. With the Second Intifada, many Palestinians refused to continue to work in People-to-People partnerships. Those that continued raised demands regarding the types of activities the organization should be engaged in, the content included in the encounter workshops, and issues of equality inside the organization. The social exclusion that derives from that, although less harsh compared to what Palestinians experience because of the Occupation, is a strong inhibitor that makes collective action burdensome and challenging (Bensky, 2007).

1.3.1 Studying protest movements in Israel and Palestine

This thesis focuses on Palestinian and Israeli contentions to demonstrate the importance of considering both civil societies as part of the same complex environment. Despite the many differences that characterise them, there is constant contact between these societies. As stated in the introduction, Israel has a *de facto* control of most of the territories of the West Bank, making it impossible to consider the Palestinian Authority an independent entity. Therefore, decisions in Israel, and above all Israel's public opinion sentiments, have an impact on Palestinian protest movements, too. Additionally, the Israeli repression is a constant in the West Bank, posing the two groups in permanent opposition. This is why it is important to conceptualise movements through a relational approach and to place recognize aspects like the specific colonial conditioning of interactions. Most movements in Palestine do not promote claims to be addressed by an accountable government. Their claims are part of a more intricate system of relations that inevitably defies the separation of the state, exemplified by the crossing of Israeli barriers

and checkpoints. It is paramount to consider both sides of the equation, acknowledging that Israeli and Palestinian realities and political lives are tightly interrelated and often interdependent. Studying one side often means to studying, even if implicitly, the Other. This dynamic was pointed out by Eitan Alimi in his analysis of the 2011 "tent protest" that spread through Israel demanding social justice. This analysis showed that the "security issue" and its implications are never far from the forefront and are reactivated as soon as the "cannons roar" (Alimi E. , 2012, p. 403). This is arguably one of the biggest obstacles for cooperation in the context of this thesis. If Israeli public opinion continues to describe Palestinians as a threat to the very existence of Israel, it will be hard to convince Israeli society to commit against the Occupation. It is no surprise then, that the new waves of protests and the current turn to the extreme right of the Israeli government have increasingly undermined the relations between the two groups.

We can identify the first Intifada, which started in 1987, as an initial turning point for the analysis of social movements in the region. The Intifada allowed a look at Palestinian mobilizations though the repertoires adopted, the challenge that represented to Israeli policy and to the PLO, as well as the response it brought to the Israeli public. Marwan Khawaja (1993), for example, studied the question of collective action in the West Bank with a focus on resource mobilization and the impact of coercion on mobilization. Eitan Alimi (2007) also studied the first Intifada through the lens of the political opportunity structures (POS), concentrating the impact of Israeli political landscapes on the changes they cause for Palestinian framing and mobilization (Alimi, 2001, 2007). The studies about the Intifada also concentrated on topics as diverse as violence escalation (Jean-Klein, 2001) and the construction of meanings through graffiti (Peteet, 1996), as well as the impact it had on the status and role of Palestinian women (Hammami, 1990).

Israel uses four major strategies to rid itself of Palestinians or to achieve their total subordination: settlement building appropriates the land, expulsions remove Palestinians from the land, pacification renders the remaining Palestinians mute, and containment creates conditions of life that make it more likely that Palestinians will leave their land voluntarily. By these means, Israel seeks to achieve its vision of an exclusively Jewish state area (Spangler, 2015, p. 29). Consequently, the resistance of the movements included in this study are strongly focused on these aspects.

The peace negotiations of the Oslo process and the assassination of Y. Rabin gave birth to a strong movement from within Israel that supported peace and criticised Israeli policies. This mobilisation led to the development of a strand of literature focused on the Israeli protest repertoires and their internal frames

and impact on political life, for example, Hall-Cathala and his *Peace Movement in Israel, 1967-87* (1990), M. Bar-On's *In Pursuit of Peace: A History of the Israeli Peace Movement* (1996) and Reuven Kaminer focus on the emergence of the Israeli peace movement in relation to the first Intifada in Palestine (1996). All these books point at the internal diversity of the Israeli peace camp, considering also the role played by women, such as *Women in Black and Machsom Watch* (Bensky, 2007). The Chapter I present later goes into further detail on the history of the peace movement the organizations and groups that compose it in the following empirical Chapters.

The study of contention in the region also examines, more specifically, the Palestinian protests beyond the first intifada. The second uprising, the "Al-Aqsa Intifada", which started gradually in 2000, was also thoroughly scrutinised: namely, for its general dynamics, the strategies employed with a focus on political violence (Moghadam, 2003) and non-violent resistance (Hallward & Norman, 2012), the distinctive role of men and women in the uprising, and the construction of gendered identities through contention (Johnson & Kuttab, 2001). However, a minority of authors focused their attention on mobilisations that involved groups and movements from the two sides. A notable exception is the work of Giulia Daniele. In her book *Women, reconciliation and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: the road not yet taken* (2014), she underlines trends very similar to those emerged in my last analytical Chapter, pointing at the good intentions that characterised joint women's movement. However, at this point, people's support for these initiatives is currently in a phase of total disappearance. Similarly, Michele Gawerc (2012, 2019, 2021) extensively studied campaigns that are similar in this respect – they in fact, involved many organizations and groups of activists I also have interviewed for this research. However, since she has mainly done online interviews, many of the relational dynamics and in particular, the reflections on asymmetry tend to be preliminary. Most of the insights here developed have been harmonised through several months in the field.

1.3.2 Where did all the women go?

The history of women's movements in Palestine and Israel is undeniably bound to the history of the conflicts that have shaken the Middle East for more than seventy years. Women's mobilization first developed as a result of nationalist movements, whether when it comes to socialist Zionism that gave birth to the state of Israel in 1948, and Palestinian nationalism in the early twentieth century. Women have played a major part in these movements, as participants but also as symbols of national identity (Marteu, 2012, p. 1). Thus, Palestinian and Israeli feminisms are the result of intersecting, hybrid social trajectories where gender dimensions have never been disassociated from national, ethnic, confessional

and identity issues. Indeed, a crossover study of these two movements may reveal areas of interlocking opposition, influence and sometimes cooperation (Marteu, 2012, p. 2).

Israeli feminists outlined religion and the militarisation of Israeli society in the seventies as the main causes of disparity between men and women in Israel (Daniele, 2014). However, they did not criticise Israeli policy of Occupation in the Palestinian territories. They were mainly critical of the militarisation and virilisation of Israeli society without considering the intersectional character of every oppression. Women cooperation was most prominent during the first Intifada (1987-1991), a period that saw the proliferation of groups within the peace movement, and growing cooperation of Palestinian and Jewish activists in Israel. *Peace Now*, the largest peace organisation in Israel founded in 1978, invited for the first time a Palestinian citizen to speak in a rally it organised in response the first Intifada, in 1988 (Payes, 2005, p. 195). Women decided to take a distance from the dominant male-politics and decided to build new spaces in which feminism and pacifism could co-exist. This is precisely what led to the creation of *Women in Black*. Daniele underlines the limitations of these mobilisations, pointing at the internal racial and ethnic differences of the Israeli women's movement (2020).

Mobilisations that condemned both patriarchy and Occupation came with the first intifada in Palestine. Indeed, *Women in Black,* for instance, was stablished in January 1988 in Jerusalem. One year after the outbreak of the first Intifada it was spreading to locations all over the country. At the peak of its mobilisation, WIB counted approximately 30 vigils all around Israel. Following the Oslo Peace Accord, most of the vigils stopped in 1994, but restored their activity in 1998 when it became clear that the peace process was collapsing (Bensky, 2007, p. 60; Helman & Tamar, 1997). *Women in Black* counted '48-Palestinians within its ranks, but they have always represented a scars minority. An alliance between Palestinian groups – also in Israel – and Israeli feminist groups was and remains rare. One of the few cases seem to be *Haifa Women's Coalition* which is discussed in Chapter 6.

Further investigations on these movements and campaigns may shed some light on other dynamics taking place within Israeli civil societies and the position of the Palestinian minority inside it. Chapter 6 further explores the different modes of cooperation that these women were able to develop. However, it is also important to recognise that stereotypes of the Middle Eastern woman have affected depictions of the region and its culture(s). A good deal of the most interesting feminist theorising inside and outside the Middle East studies has been about the importance of positionality (the social location from which one analyses the world) related to the insights of Orientalism. Feminists from the Middle East, especially

those who write in English or French, are inevitably caught between the sometimes-incompatible projects of representing Middle East Women as complex agents. This response contrasts with the often passivising or victimising ascription of “traditional" culture, mostly reproduced in the West. As such these authors also reaffirm their rights at home, which usually involves a critique of local patriarchal strictures (Abu-Lughod, 2001). However, patriarchal violence must be theorised and interpreted within specific societies, both to understand it better, as well as in order to effectively organise to change it. Sisterhood cannot be assumed based on gender; it must be forged in concrete, historical and political practice, and analysis (Mohanty, 1984, p. 338). The problem with the analytic strategy that homogenises women is that it assumes men and women are already constituted as sexual-political subjects prior to their entry into the arena of social relations (Mohanty, 1984, p. 340).

Sexism as a system of domination is institutionalised, but it has never determined in an absolute way the fate of all women in all societies. The condition of women, as explored in Chapter 6, can vary greatly. This is also true for a context as complex as the Palestinian-Israeli one. Palestinian women and Israeli women are hugely different: ’48-Palestinians live very different lives from Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza and in the diaspora. Thus, the discursively consensual homogeneity of "women" as a group is mistaken for the historically specific material reality of groups of women (Mohanty, 1984, p. 338). None of the women who participated in this research will be presented as a victim. They are all actors of change who have tried out different modes of cooperation. Sometimes these efforts have failed precisely assuming that the very experience of “womanhood” could be enough to work together. This was the mistake of much of White feminism in the West, too.

1.4 Conclusion

While many groups publicly adopt labels implying shared identities, this thesis challenges the belief that common social characteristics and experiences are the sole meaningful factors in establishing enduring coalitions. Instead, it explores innovative approaches to bringing together individuals who may initially appear dissimilar. Diverse coalitions offer the advantage of uniting people from varied backgrounds based on shared beliefs, values, and principles. Audre Lorde (1983, p.99) astutely observes that our human differences can serve as a powerful and genuine bond forging personal empowerment. By recognising and leveraging our differences, we can form resilient alliances to pursue social justice, fostering inclusive and diverse political communities. The case studies presented in this dissertation illustrate how groups with distinct identities can become effective allies in challenging various forms of oppression. Moreover, this thesis goes a step further, demonstrating how groups that are not simply

'different' in their identities but are considered 'opponents' within the mainstream narrative can still maintain such coalitions.

The consideration of difference has political significance in itself. A shift in our attention towards lived experiences is a good first step. However, these processes become problematic if they gloss over the power inequalities and privileges behind differences. Instead of a political project with distributive consequences, difference is turned into a cosmetic adoption that assumes the attention economy could be equalised to the material economy. Rather than pursuing the intermediary goal of celebrating difference, as we can see in multi-cultural liberalism, the cases I emphasise here teach us strategic ways of mobilising resources to constructively reduce social injustices. As such, the involved actors do not naively claim that they are able to avoid "complicity" in injustices but emphasise the practices to undermine specific institutions and strategies of redistribution of social privileges, material resources, and power. In other words, they are concerned with how "we build the kinds of rooms in which we can sit together, rather than merely seek to navigate more gracefully the rooms history has built for us (Táíwò, 2022, p. 84). As it will be shown in the empirical Chapters, the cases that are more 'successful' are those that obtain the support of the whole community. As Lorde (1984, p. 105) states: "Without community there is no liberation…But community must not mean a shedding of our differences, nor the pathetic pretence that these differences do not exist."

The goal of this Chapter has been to review the existing literature from the fields combined in this research, namely area studies, settler colonialism, and social movements studies. Furthermore, it scrutinised the conceptual and theoretical tools taken from these fields and into the following analytical Chapters. Indeed, I will not apply a model, or a theory taken from either of these disciplines, as mentioned at the beginning. This study does not want to be a theory-testing work. By contrast, I rather rely on a conceptual tool constituted abductively, according to the findings of the fieldwork. References to the literature will still be made in order to speak to a broader epistemic community.

After exposing how social movements have been studied in the region, I have considered the most viable approach to the cases discussed in my thesis. Following the debate on the applicability of SMTs to the study of the Middle East, I pointed out the importance of avoiding falling into the "orientalist tramp". A greater awareness of such different power relations made me realise the necessity of new theoretical concepts to grasp all the elements at play, particularly the importance of the settler-colonial framework.

The most interesting result at this point, derives from the combination of the study of social movements with the rich production of area studies for the benefit of both fields, creating new forms of interaction. The empirical Chapters employ and apply this conceptual puzzle to analyse the observed realities on the ground. They delve further into questions such as how contentious actors have successfully collaborated with their adversaries, what factors have facilitated or hindered cooperation over time, and what variations can be observed in older movements. Prior to providing a more detailed exploration of the three selected case studies and justifying their selection (as discussed in Chapter 3), the research will first examine the methods that were employed to conduct this thesis.

CHAPTER 2 – METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

The first part of this Chapter entails a discussion of the rationale that underpins the delimitation and choice of the cases. Indeed, in line with the argument made in the first Chapter as to the drawbacks of a classic social movement approach in the context of the Middle East contentious movements, the cases that are examined are defined not only according to the existence of a group or the type of activism deployed but according to the presence or absence of connections and alliances between different ethnonational groups, as well as the objects of their claims.

In the second part of this Chapter, we shall first consider the journey that led to the elaboration and definition of the topic and specifically of the research questions, to move on to tackle the general methodology used for this research, concentrating mainly on the limitations to the ethnographic approach I encountered during the period of the Covid-19 Pandemic. I will therefore detail the organization of the research on the field and beyond, in particular, after the Covid-19 crisis, and how my methodological approach has changed afterward and again when the borders reopened in January 2022. As every piece of research and every field entails its challenges it is necessary to scrutinize the methods employed and the problems that have arisen throughout the research process.

The third part of this Chapter thus concentrates specifically on the field experience and the impact that the conditions encountered had on the undertaking of the research and the methodology adopted. The particularities of the Israeli-Palestinian context, as well as those of the places chosen as case studies, and the problems faced accordingly, finally, the emerging of a world pandemic has had an impact on the conduct of the research; these dimensions must therefore be acknowledged and examined to situate the information gathered. I will first position the fieldwork realized for this research in the broader reflection about "difficult" or "dangerous" fields and will expose five points that have proved in the way or another problematic or challenging for the research, and which have necessitated an adaptation or a particular reflection. These reflections come from the field notes I have collected through my first experience on the field as a volunteer in 2016, and in my second experience in October-November 2019, my first time as a researcher, and during a second long fieldwork in March-May 2022. These five considerations include the psychological pressure, the suspicion when "entering" the field, the gender dimension, the question of language and translation, and finally, the interrogation as to ethics and objectivity to which this kind of study gives rise.

2.1 Research Design

This Chapter will begin by first exposing the approach I have adopted to delimitate the cases by cutting across both geographical and coalitional dimensions to identify "coalitional cases", and I will then list what changes I have considered seen the emergency we have faced with the pandemic crisis. This will then be applied to the three case studies chosen for this research. Defining the case studies will then allow us to consider the methodology used during the fieldwork and the changes implemented to overcome the difficulties posed by the Covid-19 crisis.

Before going into detail with that, some previous considerations need to be accomplished. Protests and movements in Israel and Palestine are very diverse. Looking at the existing Israeli and Palestinian social movements, especially at the local level, it is noticeable that they are quite fragmented. Protests may vary a lot in terms of the number of participants, type of groups, police repression, duration of protest cycles and repertoires of action. They can be based on activists' participation, informal social networks, or extended families. In addition, Palestinian resistance is mainly a private matter that relies on individual practices, as Bayat (2013) describes it. Moreover, the analysis herein examines collective actions in a context where control and restrictions are omnipresent and pervade everyday life, fragmenting and weakening the Palestinian civil society. This must be considered while approaching the methodology.

2.1.1 Building the Research Question(s)

This study adhered to a traditional qualitative research model, intending to primarily employ an ethnographic approach. However, due to the constraints imposed by the pandemic, I had to modify the methodology. The research questions were primarily formulated during and after the preliminary fieldwork conducted in October-November 2019. Nonetheless, a "foreshadowed problem" ((Malinowski, 1992, p. 8) was also developed during the pre-fieldwork phase, drawing insights from existing literature.

At first instance, three areas of academic literature were considered: (1) the literature exploring the link between coalition building and social movements; (2) settler colonialism literature, specializing in Israel and Palestine, with a focus on the topic of protest movements developed since 1948 war; (3) literature on cooperation and solidarity beyond differences, and the link with social movements and non-sectarian mobilizations. The question of research considered was thus elaborated on the basis of my interest in social movements in Palestine and the possibility of creating alliances between differences. However, a related question emerged through an accurate study of Palestinian history, its mobilizations, and recent advancement in the field of settler colonial reflections. *How do groups that depart from very different*

positions of power find a way to work together that does not reproduce the same racial supremacy present within their societies of origin? Although this is a quite controversial question that social movements' actors are sometimes reticent to address, I believe this is an exceptionally pressing one. In fact, it is an increasingly common question that many other identity movements have faced. For instance, how can Black people's movements integrate White people into their ranks? Can men be included in feminist movements and spaces? I believe that singling out specific strategies and mechanism these activists put into place to manage power asymmetry might prove to be extremely useful also for other activists' groups and social movements.

An initial trip to Israel and Palestine was undertaken in order to improve my knowledge of the region and to elaborate on the "foreshadowed problem". It allowed me to survey possible cases, gather more relevant and actualized information, and first-hand data to select the cases; moreover, it allowed establish initial contacts, identify critical informants, and create a primary network. This initial instance of fieldwork carried out in Autumn 2019 was a trip across different realities: Bethlem, Hebron and its Southern Hills, Jerusalem, Ramallah, and Tel Aviv. In this first explorative fieldwork, I identified Israeli NGOs and movements with a history of cooperation with Palestinians in the West Bank. The reality of the movements and the situation imposed several choices regarding the research; in particular, it confirmed that finding cooperation cases outside the framework of the peace and humanitarian discourse would have been highly challenging. Additionally, the initial fieldwork that allowed me to get closer to some key activists and make me known as a researcher was vital for continuing my research after the Covid outbreak. Without this first contact with actors, which allowed gaining a minimum level of trust in the field, I would have never been able to conduct online interviews.

This exploratory fieldwork led to the selection of two out of three cases, namely, a campaign within the West Bank connected to the issue of eviction and house demolitions and the Coalition of Women for Peace campaign. Historically, Israeli NGOs and peace activists have been committed to preventing Palestinian eviction from East Jerusalem and demolishing houses or entire villages in Area C. This is part of the broader Zionist colonial project that aims at occupying as much historic Palestine's land as possible. The other case I singled out during this preliminary fieldwork was a coalition of several Israeli organizations that involved some Palestinian organizations or joint originations. This was supposed to be a negative case study in which alliances were tried but failed. However, since the Coalition of Women for Peace has recently split, and most organizations that took part are now in a 'rearrangement phase,' activists were unwilling to talk about what 'went wrong' in the campaign. Therefore, it has been tough

to find activists to interview; this is why, only for this case, a questionnaire with the main organizations involved in the coalition was carried out. The questionnaire was distributed online to 30 organizations, and 15 of them responded. In addition to activists directly involved in the coalition, I had the chance to talk with others who knew about it and purposely decided not to be involved in it. Being able to listen to the other side of the story was priceless. It gave me an incomparable knowledge of the history of the Israeli women's peace movement. Another case that was singled out during my preliminary fieldwork but that I did not consider at the time, was the one of the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood. Activists indicated this neighbourhood as a hotspot of join resistance already in 2019. Then, with the intensification of the conflict and the violent repression of protests in the neighbourhood in 2021 spring, the #savesheikhjarrah campaign reached international media and press agencies. This made me include this case in the selection. This case has different vantage points: 1) looking at a case in East Jerusalem, where both media coverage and Israeli control and repression are higher, would provide a compelling means of comparison with the case of Susiya (a remote village in the South Hebron Hills, were bringing media attention is much more complicated); 2) the topic around which we have this cooperation is very similar (namely, eviction and house dispossession); 3) it allows to evaluate the challenges these coalition face when the conflict escalates.

Studying processes of resistance can easily determine the role of the settlers as the primary actor in anti-colonial and decolonizing actions. With these considerations in mind, which I will discuss further in the paragraph that concerns ethics, I have tried to follow the five principles set out by Fortier (2017) in his paper titled 'Unsettling Methodologies/Decolonizing Movements'. These principles include: "(1) drawing on multiple ontological realities and worldviews; (2) situating contemporary political struggles within the structures of settler colonialism, white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and capitalism; (3) engaging in critical self-reflexivity; (4) seeking to embody practices of decolonization not only in the research but as a life praxis; and (5) creating long-term and sustained relationships across and between the participants of the study (Fortier, 2017, p. 21).

1) The primary and essential goal was to acquire good knowledge about the political, social, and cultural context of the Israeli and Palestinian society beyond the stakes of the conflict. However, this curiosity has roots in my adolescence when I first became interested in the Palestinian question. This interest made me complete a degree in political science and international relations. The capacity to resist of the Palestinian people has also nourished my interest in social movements and popular protests. I have always been fascinated by the strength of ordinary people in front of

a much stronger enemy. Then, I realized that not only Palestinians were resisting, but also a small portion of the Israeli left that is opposing its government and its policy of occupation and colonialism. My personal and academic interests and a deep study of the literature on Israel and Palestine and Social Movement Theory made me single out the research questions that drive this work: *I ask how in general, coalition-building is possible under multiple conditions of repression and control of Palestinian life and citizenship*.

a) The Palestinian context is characterized by domestic extremely limited self-rule in the Palestinian Occupied Territories (POTs) by the PA, a relentless settler-colonial effort by Israel and the numerous Israeli illegal settlements in the West Bank. Given this context: *how are alliances between different ethnonational groups born, developed and sustained through time?*

2) *How do activists involved in these campaigns manage the starting asymmetry of power between the two national groups?* As explained in the theoretical framework, asymmetry of power within movements is often overlooked in the study of social movements. Activists, according to their society of origin, have different resources, access to information, power and privileges. Hence, which strategies and tools do they apply to tackle such a decisive differential of power? What happens when they do not tackle this issue?
3) How do coalitions and cooperation between the two groups change in different contexts – such as Israel, Jerusalem and the West Bank?

2.1.2 Case Selection: Looking for Coalitions and Their Absence

"The essence of a case study is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result (Schramm, 1971)". The case study strategy can be defined as a logic of design to be preferred when circumstances and research problems are appropriate rather than an ideological commitment to be followed whatever the circumstances (Platt, 1992). Similarly, to Dynamics of Contention, the idea is to use a most-similar strategy design to pair cases, not to look for a correlation between variables, but to identify common and different mechanisms (della Porta, 2008).

In order to understand the differences in these alliances and the relevance they can have for other studies on settler-colonial societies and social movements that try to transcend their internal differences and divisions, I selected three cases that can be related to three different territorial areas, but which are similar in their content and claims. The case that exemplifies diverse cooperations is the one in the West Bank,

with the #SaveSusiya campaign, which saw the cooperation of both Israeli activists and Palestinians in the broader movement against house demotion and eviction in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. However, most groups who took part in this campaign orbited around the wider world of peace movements, humanitarian NGOs, and international solidarity groups.

Hence, I then selected a negative case in which cooperation has not developed as hoped despite the presence of a common goal. The case in question is one of the Coalition of Women for Peace, an Israeli feminist movement that was launched in 2000 to fight the Occupation from a feminist perspective. The coalition separated in 2019 and has never been able to effectively include the Palestinian counterpart, despite its intention to do so.

Finally, as explained above, I have also included the #savesheikhjarrah campaign. This case is, in many respects, similar to the one of Susiya, but it is located in a "*deeply divided*" city, Jerusalem, in which tensions have been historically higher and more frequent. Additionally, in the middle of my fieldwork, this campaign experienced a peak of protests in 2021, which led to a reactivation of confrontations and much higher Israeli repression.

2.1.3 Changing Plan: From the Field to the Desk

The first period of fieldwork was conducted according to an ethnographic approach, which implies the researcher's participation in people's daily life. The research observers, interview, listens, and speak informally with people, "gathering whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of inquiry" (Montgomery & Bailey, 2007, p. 67). Despite being shorter than expected, the fieldwork was characterised by a total immersion period. Before this period, I conducted several expert interviews in Italy or online. Once on the field, I conducted several activist interviews and relied on participant observation and extensive field notes, writing down everyday experiences and sensations not to miss a single element of the work on the ground. However, after this preliminary fieldwork, I planned to go back to Palestine for a longer period of three months – the maximum allowed for foreigners – from March until May 2020, but this was no longer possible because of the Covid-19 outbreak. This drastic change in the reality around me imposed to evaluate and consider new data-gathering methods and analysis methods. It forced me to move online a work that was supposed to be entirely offline. Considering the extremely challenging context, this was everything but easy.

At first, I was highly discouraged, and I struggled enormously to contact activists. Then, after an adjustment period, I systematized the methodologies I relied on to collect my data, as I will explain in

the following section. As such, I believe that unsettling the research process has the potential to build trust through engaged and reaffirmed consent at multiple stages of a particular project and, more broadly, over one's academic career. This is why I have attempted to explore some of the core decisions and mistakes that I made during the research and the barriers, tensions, and contradictions that continue to shape my academic process in the hope that these experiences will help to improve our collective practices of scholar-activist research.

Fortunately, when the borders reopened in January 2022, I could carry out another three-month fieldwork period. March, April and May 2022 were exceptional in the quality of fieldwork I could reach. The absence of most of the international presence due to the sudden reopening of the borders allowed me to build more in-depth relationships with most of the people I interviewed. I spent days and nights in the village of Susiya and nearby villages, joining activists in their activities and more confrontational actions. The same was true for the Sheikh Jarrah case, where I participated in all the demonstrations and protests, leaving the neighbourhood only when the situation was becoming too dangerous; however, I have also experienced the neighbourhood in its calmer moments, having lunch with the families and meeting between activists to decide how to proceed with the campaign. The level of immersion was total, and I found myself to be part of these movements, and in moments of break, I could do interviews or just talk with some of the activists.

2.1.4 Data Collection

2.1.4.1 Protest Event Analysis

Over the last decades, PEA has become an important method of SMSs (Hutter, 2014). The method gained momentum in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and differently from other SMS' methods, the PEA is a methodological tool born within the social movements field. In a subsequent moment, it has been adapted and refined to study other topics. PEA can be described as a type of content analysis that assesses the number of protests and their features across various geographical areas (from the local to international level). As for this research, I focused my attention on the three campaigns I have followed, searching for coherent words with the campaigns in question. It can be considered a very confined area; however, being interested in localised campaigns, this was the most reasonable way to have the entire sample of events reported in those locations. In addition, PEA allows for mapping the occurrences and characteristics of protests across time, which has proven to be essential to reconstruct the history of activism in the area. However, as we know, there are some risky biases in data collection through PEA. First of all, newspapers selectively report on protest events and do not provide a representative sample

of all events taking place. I have tried to overcome these limitations, considering the higher number of possible newspapers, all the national and international newspapers on Nexis Lexis (in English and Arabic). Mass media content, specifically newspapers, is still the primary source for PEA. Scholars have pointed out the fact that the number and type of sources may change depending on the research purpose (Lorenzini, Kriesi, Makarov, & Wüest, 2021). The variables that need to be considered are the geographical level, period, political context, and the issue covered by a study. Cases were limited to (a) on the local level; (b) on an extended period from 1982 to 2021; (c) on a politically volatile context; and (d) on an extremely specific issue (the three campaigns). This is why I relied on a very high number of sources and, in particular national ones (Israeli and Palestinian Journals were considered). However, the conflict has been under international attention and coverage since its emergence; hence, international sources are also valuable for Israel-Palestine. Additionally, my previous one-year work experience at ACLED gave me all the necessary tools to create accurate data sets.

The results varied a lot according to the cases. For the case of Susiya[9], I obtained around 4000 articles. For Sheikh Jarrah[10] was more than 300.000, and for the Coalition of Women for Peace[11] just above 1000. The first challenge was identifying and eliminating irrelevant documents and false-positive[12] – just to make an example, there was an important judicial case in Brazil in which one of the defendant's surnames was Susyia. I removed all the doubled documents and then went through them all to not double code the same events. It was time-consuming, but I believe it gave me very in-depth knowledge of the cases and, during interviews, made me look prepared and competent, something that most of the activists appreciated, to the point they made me run "informative tours" of the area to international delegations and activists.

[9] Query string: Susyia OR Susiya OR Sussyia OR Sussia OR سوسيا AND initiative OR petition OR signature OR campaign OR protest! OR demonstrat! OR manifest! OR march! OR parade OR rall! OR riot! OR festival OR ceremony OR vigil OR boycott! OR block! OR sit-in OR squat! OR bomb! OR firebomb! OR molotov OR assault OR attack OR bomb OR curfew OR stone OR teargas OR strike OR boycott OR riot OR High Court OR

[10] Query string: Sheikh Jarrah ORالشيخ جراح AND initiative OR petition OR signature OR campaign OR protest! OR demo! OR manifest! OR march! OR parade OR rall! OR riot! OR festival OR ceremony OR vigil OR boycott! OR block! OR sit-in OR squat! OR bomb! OR firebomb! OR molotov OR assault OR attack OR bomb OR curfew OR stone OR teargas OR strike OR boycott OR riot OR High Court OR activis* OR organiz* OR احتجاج OR ناشط OR
مظاهرة OR مارسOR
منظمة

[11] Query string: Coalition of Women for Peace OR CWP AND initiative OR petition OR signature OR campaign OR protest! OR demonstrat! OR manifest! OR march! OR parade OR rall! OR riot! OR festival OR ceremony OR vigil OR boycott! OR block! OR sit-in OR squat! OR bomb! OR firebomb! OR molotov OR assault OR attack OR bomb OR curfew OR stone OR teargas OR strike OR boycott OR riot OR High Court OR activis* OR organiz*

[12] Nexis Lexis has a function that does that and consistently reduces the final number of articles emerged.

Although it is a methodology on which I fell back, unable to access the field, the PEA has been an essential passage in understanding which actors were involved in the campaigns, since when, and how their involvement changed over time. After this passage, I proceeded with the interviews of the groups and organizations that emerged. Interviews were largely unstructured; usually lasting for about an hour, sometimes even two, they were recorded and then transcribed just in a minority of cases, I was asked to merely take notes. Although I had several guiding questions regarding the work of the group and their involvement, I usually encouraged my respondents to start talking about their activism and then asked follow-up or clarifying questions based on their narration. Doing that, it emerged that all the activists from both sides were interested in covey the importance of these campaigns as successful. They were very reluctant to admit what went wrong. Most interviews were conducted at activists' homes, shared spaces, or in cafés and online in the Covid's phase of my research. In the third phase, when I was able to go back to the field, they were mainly performed in shared activists' spaces, villages, and houses.

If we acknowledge the environment of the protest movement is a complex and challenging one, through the PEA, it is possible to obtain a much wider and complete vision of the context of contention. Hence, space becomes central. This is why the keywords of the PEA considered mainly focused on the locations. The PEA has also underlined how these sites can be considered both sites of mobilization but, above all, "sites of contention" in which an anti-colonial struggle was put into place, taking different resisting forms. Susiya and Sheikh Jarrah are *places* where the issue is at stake, and the opposition of forces crystalized over time. Additionally, people live in these places, and activism intersects with their daily lives.

In the codebook, I singled out all the types of events I have considered while coding: "While certain common practices have emerged to ensure methodological rigor, the method has been operationalized differently in practically every case of its use. Standardization of categories, definitions, and approaches across objects of analysis has remained elusive, and for good reason. The advantage of the method has precisely been its adaptability to a wide variety of circumstances, depending on the researcher's purposes […] Researchers must ultimately make decisions about which forms of action deserve to be analyzed, what features of those actions are worthy of attention, what sources should be used to gain information about these events, and how one should organize the process of recording this information. In a well-formulate study, both theory and context must interact to inform these choices" (Beissinger, 2002, p. 460)

The list usually covers activities from the signature of petitions to public rallies, mass demonstrations, more confrontational activities (e.g., blockades and occupations), and violent ones (e.g., physical attacks and arson). The list reflects the modern "repertoire of contention," whose development in the eighteenth and nineteenth-century Tilly (1976, 1995, 2008) traced in his ground-breaking studies. By contrast, what is known as the fourth PEA generation either extends the type of coding units to cover a broader set of activities or attempts to disentangle single activities covered by the traditional approach. I coded all of these types of actions. However, I added those that I considered relevant to my cases, such as international actions (diplomats' visits, US Congress declarations, international politicians' statements on the campaign, etc.), settler activities, demolitions and Court Rulings.

2.1.4.2 Semi-Structured Interviews and Ethnographic Participatory Observation

I have then conducted 71 semi-structured interviews, which can be found in Annex II, and are broken down by location, nationality, position, and gender. Methodologically, each interview is different and requires researchers to take a series of steps, including creating meaningful relationships at the beginning, using active questioning, careful listening and preparing for closure as you are near the end. Numerous practical and ethical challenges arose with interviews at different moments of this research (Gerson & Damaske, 2020, p. 100). As I detail in the paragraph concerning the field's access, it was not very easy to enter the field at first, but after gaining trust, activists started answering more frequently. After introducing myself and describing the purpose of my research, most of the people were genuinely interested in the theoretical framework of my study and asked me many questions about my background and why I decided to focus on Palestine. This helped me get closer to my interviewees and their networks. After the first round of interviews, I have undertaken a reframe of my questions and theoretical framework given the Covid-19 circumstances.

As mentioned, the final part of the data collection, which included more active participation in the field and the actions carried out by activists, was the most meaningful. I lived in the village and Susiya for several weeks, moving from one site to another. Some Israeli activists I established relationships with were involved in both campaigns and moving with them was easy. Actions in the South Hebron Hills region ranged from long days in the fields with the shepherds to prevent settlers' attacks to other long days of *collective inaction* in different houses and activist-shared places. This allowed me to participate in their meetings and decision-making process. Everything was scrupulously reported every day, as Fig. 1 shows.

Figure 1 Writing Field-Note in Susiya on April 13, 2022

Finding time to document everything was frequently a challenge, and I often had to write while the rest of the community was either engaged in prayer or sleeping. However, this was a necessary commitment. In the case of Sheikh Jarrah, my involvement in various political activities was similar. Comparing the fieldwork experiences, it is difficult to determine which was more intense. Each presented unique contentious environments with different types of threats and risks. However, Sheikh Jarrah, being situated within a city, provided a distinct advantage in navigating the conflicts and disagreements between the diverse groups of activists, which were more varied in nature.

Finally, the ethnographic encounter was not possible for the Coalition of Women for Peace case since the movement disengaged in 2019. Hence, for that case, most of the data were collected through a questionnaire submitted to the organizations involved in the campaign and through followed-up semi-structured interviews online during the covid-pandemic and face-to-face while in Israel and Palestine

2.1.5 Data Analysis

I coded and analysed data using MaxQDA and developed a codebook that underlines factors that fostered or hampered the birth of this coalition and the mechanisms activists utilised to manage power asymmetry. While the coding was predominantly inductive, I also coded, where relevant, theoretical constructs and concepts deriving from the literature. In particular, since not much has been said about the factors that can favour cooperation across differences, that part was mainly inductive; other more common issues, such as factors that foster general coalition building, type of outcomes, the structure of the political

opportunities, came instead from the literature. The inductive generation of codes was important as it allowed me to highlight unforeseen patterns and themes in the data. For example, the salience of recognising asymmetry as a departing point. The deductive-generated codes were similarly valuable. Given that some of these literature-derived categories were highlighted in my interview questions, I could make cross-interview comparisons on these particular categories. Similar work was done with the fieldnotes.

All the news gathered with the PEA was analysed through process tracing by coding all the events in three different datasets that traced the chronological unfolding of events. Those data not only described the main protest picks and moments, but through a closer analysis of the news, it was also possible to understand what other episodes were relevant – such as court decisions, mass bombing on Gaza, parties' declarations, US administration's positions and interrogations. Additionally, they allowed me to single out different repertoires and activities carried out, the activist's claims and, more importantly, the groups that participated in the campaigns, which, in turn, allowed me to build Social Networks that were only qualitatively interpretated.

The importance of the Social Network Approach is widely recognised in different strands of scholarship (Scott & Carrington, 2011). As far as the field of collective action is concerned, the network has been rather studied in relation to processes of recruitment and affiliation (Della Porta, 2013; Diani & McAdam, 2003). The network theory relies on the assumption that actors' position in a network partially determines the constraints and opportunities that the actors will encounter, and therefore, identifying their position might help to predict some collective action's outcomes. However, political actors move and operate in social and political spaces; therefore, it is reasonable to argue that the two elements are mutually influencing each other (Mische, 2011). According to the conventional view, a network can be defined as a set of nodes, linked by some forms of relationship, and delimited by some specific criteria (Diani, 2002). Although those close to the empiricist tradition rather than to the cultural one most frequently adopt this framework, many qualitative analyses are embracing this approach to evaluate and look at the social structure that may determine social actions (Scott & Carrington, 2011).

This project aligns with the suggestion put forth by Diani (2011, p. 228) and other scholars, which emphasizes the importance of considering the specific socio-political and geographic contexts in which political and social networks emerge and evolve. Recognizing that networks do not exist in isolation, this study aims to delve deeper into the links between context – encompassing structural, cultural, and

political factors – and network structure. It acknowledges that further theoretical development and research are needed to explore and understand this relationship fully. It is worth noting that this aspect has only recently begun to receive attention in the broader field of Social Network Analysis (SNA) (Diani, 2011).

In practical terms, data was collected through the Protest Event Analysis (PEA) to gather information. This data was then utilized to construct a two-mode matrix, which was subsequently transformed into a weighted matrix of interactions. The weighting was based on the frequency with which groups reported participating together in the same actions. Networks were established for both the initial time period (T1) and the subsequent time period (T2) for each case, allowing for an examination of how the networks evolved over time and, specifically, how the involvement of actors changed across different movements. Longitudinal analyses are infrequent in Social Network Analysis due to the challenges associated with collecting data that can account for extended time periods. However, the use of PEA data enables such analyses. Nonetheless, a limitation of this approach is the inability to incorporate connections that emerged solely from interviews into the analysis.

2.2 The Challenges of Fieldwork: Scrutinizing the Field Experience

Beyond the methodologies used for this research, several aspects need to be considered and discussed concerning the fieldwork in both its dimensions (online and offline). The researcher's reflexivity is needed in such deteriorated contexts, becoming a fully-fledged part of the methodology. It represents a "methodological instrument" that offers criteria for evaluating research reliability.

Here I will focus on five aspects I have found problematic and made me reflect on my positionality. First, I will briefly focus on the literature on difficult fields in order to build a reflection on the experience I had during the fieldwork. Then, I will address the sense of powerlessness and the psychological pressure I have experienced because of my research questions. Looking at cases in which Israeli leftist activists worked with Palestinians made some people I wished to interview refuse to talk with me and accuse me of “normalising” Palestinian-Israeli relations. This caused me a deep sense of guilt in reference to the research I was conducting, making me think to stop working on this project and even abandon my Ph.D. research. The moving of most of my interviews online aggravated this. I felt to be a real impostor by interviewing activists who were struggling against Occupation, the increasingly repressive Israeli government and the additional hardship caused by the Covid-19 outbreak while I was secure with a salary in my house. This was slightly alleviated during the third phase of my fieldwork. I knew it would not have been easy, but I have always thought that my “Whiteness” – which, nevertheless, as an Italian, is

not always self-evident – my European passport and my position within a Western university would have protected me from most of these perils. Very soon, I realised that I was wrong. On October 20, 2022, settlers from Ma'ale Amos next to the Palestinian village of Kisan lynched an Israeli Jewish activist. She was hospitalized with broken ribs and a punctured lung. I have passed by that settlement many times during my stay in the South, and I have been in those fields with Palestinian farmers countless times. The news was shocking. I have never seriously considered that level of violence could target a white woman. They were, in fact, targeting a Palestinian woman when she got in their way.

I have followed Israeli and Palestinian activists on the ground because my research investigates the management of asymmetries of power within social movements. Hence, I was aware that for a full understanding, I should have experienced their relationships *in action* and in decision-making processes. I evaluated the risks, and I thought that the minimum I could do, given my position of privilege within academia, was to join as an integral part of their actions (Muhammad et al, 2015). I have always tried to maintain a side position during most of the actions and meetings to avoid interfering; however, I knew that the "other side" perceived me as an activist, not a researcher. I, therefore, decided that I could use that privilege to do something meaningful both for me and for the communities I was staying in. I was physically assaulted but never hurt. The moment a settler grabbed my arm to move me away from an olive tree I was trying to protect, I said (in English because I wanted him to know I was international), "If you touched me, I would report you for sexual assault" (Field note, 14th April 2022). He did not expect that; he backwards and insulted me in Hebrew (something that my Israeli partner on the ground promptly translated). However, that one was not the scariest or the most challenging moment of my fieldwork experience. The recurrent nightmares that continue to haunt me are all related to the military, the checkpoints, and being interrogated for hours. I have thought a lot about that and the reason behind it. I believe it is because, according to my expectations, the Israeli "Defence" Force was supposed to defend me. If, on the one hand, I excepted the settlers to be violent and irrational, I did not expect the police to treat me as a criminal since I was not doing anything that was considered illegal according to any national or international law. The arbitrary use of force is scary, and at that moment, I realized that what was most at risk was my psychological health.

2.2.1 A "Risky" Fieldwork?

All the sites I have visited are part of an area of conflict, which has implied the need to deal with occupation, violent clashes, military controls, and the passing of checkpoints. The first time I was in the Occupied Territories in 2016, the number of weapons and the general level of militarization of society

shocked me. Before that, I had never seen a Kalashnikov, and anybody had ever asked me to show my documents while pointing a weapon against me. I could not stop looking at those arms and thinking that the person in front of me had my same age, was used to it, and knew how to handle it, and many Palestinians have been dying because of that, perhaps because of that very gun.

The literature abounds on the notion of "difficult fields" (Nilan, 2002; Boumaza & Campana, 2007) but what should actually be scrutinized is how we define a difficult fieldwork. Kovats-Bernat (2002) defines them as: "those sites where social relationship and cultural realities are critically modified by the pervasion of fear, threat of force, or irregular application of violence and where the customary approaches, methods, and ethnics of anthropological fieldwork are at times insufficient, irrelevant and inapplicable, imprudent or simply naïve" (ibid., 2008). This definition certainly fits the Israeli Palestinian case; however, there are indeed fields that are much more difficult and dangerous than the Palestinian one, and it certainly needs to understand that dangerousness, like threats, can have different degrees.

Indeed, when reflecting on the fieldwork, it is first necessary to be aware of the risks of romanticizing Palestine and its struggle. If, on the one hand, it is tempting to downplay the risks and challenges met, the other problem is also true: namely, we must avoid exaggerating the problems and challenges encountered. The dangers for the researcher can be of two types: personal (physical and psychological) and legal. The first type of risk is the most discussed; it includes the risk to the safety and well-being of the researcher. The legal danger also represents a very real risk, which comes from the authority and not from the population studied. However, this is also true in illiberal settings, such as Israel, where human rights and individual freedoms are under certain conditions and, for some ethnic and racial groups, suspended. Numerous researchers have recounted being followed, interrogated, having their phone tapped, being expelled from the country, etc. This aspect is linked to the dimension of informants and interviewees: sometimes, answering questions or mentioning participants in some actions (snowballing) might be very risky. There is thus a question of responsibility on the part of the researcher, and the need to adapt the methods according to the context, the risk she or he runs, and the danger the researcher might represent to others.

The first time (2015) I was in the OPTs, the tension was not particularly high. Last Ramadan (2022) was everything but calm. There were continuous demonstrations that ended up in a confrontation with the Police and the Military, and the gathering at Damascus Gate was often tense; Israeli Civilians were murdered in Tel Aviv and Ber Sheva, the IDF sieged the city of Jenin for different weeks, and the violence

in that area has been escalating since then. I found myself stuck with the closure of checkpoints on the wrong side of the wall several times. I have endured the military getting increasingly aggressive at the checkpoint while violence was escalating. I was not able to cross checkpoints because they were looking for some stone-throwers, and I have seen the IDF coming to take Palestinians from their homes in the middle of the night, covering their faces so that they could not know where they were taken. I have been threatened by settlers and by the military and run away from situations when I was told it was unsafe to remain because there was a risk of escalation. I have experienced catcalling both in Israel and Palestine. I had to cancel an interview when I found out that the person in question was known to be sexually explicit with international women.

As the events of the 2021 spring have shown, the Israeli-Palestinian political situation is characterized by constant tension that can escalate at any moment. It is not an ongoing open war, but it is nevertheless a protracted low-intensity conflict punctuated by events that regularly heighten the level of tension and lead to direct and violent confrontations. I believe that the periods I spent there for my research were very different. I have experienced intimidation, interrogation, the issue of shorter visas, checkpoints controls, and an explicit invitation to "not to come back". During that period, I witnessed some demonstrations and protest events violently repressed by the police, and I usually left before the situation became dangerous. I was long interrogated twice (five hours each), and these were both quite intensive experiences. However, the period of maximum tension was reached in 2021 with the Sheikh Jarrah demonstration and the consequent bombing of Gaza in the "Guardian of the Wall operation". This operation conducted by the IDF against the Gaza Strip in May-June 2021 caused 13 Israeli fatalities, including two children, one Indian woman and two Thai men living and working in Israel, and 260 Palestinians. Most of them were civilians, including 66 children and 40 women. As we can see, the disruption of Palestinians' daily life was much harsher.

The persistence of the conflict created constant psychological pressure. For example, I never declared that I was a researcher at the airport when applying for a visa. It was clear that everything linked to the OPTs or Palestinians would constitute a ground of suspicion and provoke long-lasting interrogations – that I have experienced anyway, once at the airport and once at a checkpoint. An Israeli citizen, strangely speaking a perfect Italian, offered to guide me on a tour of the Dead Sea and followed me on several occasions. However, tension and pressure were aspects that had to be dealt with to never put the researcher and the participants at risk. I will report part of the interrogation I have undertaken in order to give an idea of the type of questions other researchers may encounter.

*"*They make me wait in a room with other people who all need to be questioned. The waiting room opens onto three doors to three different interrogation rooms. The first two white doors have a sign with the same writing in Arabic, Hebrew and English that says: "Do not enter". The third door, the one on the right, has a single sign with what I believe to be Cyrillic. I'm very nervous. I'm afraid they won't let me into the country and won't give me a visa. A boy comes out the door with Cyrillic writing, and a girl demands what they asked him during the interrogation. He looks shocked at her and replies, "I just can't tell you". An hour passes. A man sits next to me. He has an Israeli passport. He starts talking to me in Italian, saying he is of "Arab origins". Other activists have warned me that this often happens. If they suspect you are an activist, they know you will not reveal anything during interrogations and then try to get spies to approach you to see if, by establishing a relationship of trust, you reveal anything that allows them to send you home. He tells me a lot about the part of his family who apparently lives in Bergamo and about the discrimination that Arabs suffer in Israel. Finally, he asked me about the reason for my trip. I give evasive answers; I say that I came to meet some friends and take an Arabic course in Jerusalem. I never expressed my will to go to the Occupied Territories. He asks me if I've ever been to the OPTs, and I say no; he then offers to accompany me for a visit to the desert and the Dead Sea. I tell him that I hope to do those laps with my friends, and I change the subject by going back to his family in Italy. After another hour, they finally called me.

Officer: Spell out your name.

I do that.

Officer: What do you do for living?

Me: I work at the university.

Officer: What do you do at university?

Me: I work on a research project on women's equality

Officer: So why are you here?

Me: I want to improve my Arabic because many migrant women I work with in Italy speak Arabic, and I have friends in Jerusalem I met during my Erasmus, and they told me to come here and study.

Officer: Who pays for your trip?

Me: The university.

Officer: How come? Why should they?

Me: Because they have funds for learning foreign languages.

Officer: Do you plan to go to the Territories?

Me: To Bethlehem because it is a Christian religious site.

Officer: Do you plan to go to Gaza to take pictures of the soldiers shooting at the people on the

border?

Me: (with a shocked voice) What?!? Centrally not!

Officer: Do you have a husband?

Me: No

Officer: Do you plan to marry a Palestinian?

Me: I have a partner in Italy, and I am Catholic.

Officer: Do you support the BDS?

Me: B…D what?

Officer: The Boycott Disinvestment and Sanction of Israel.

Me: Never heard of that.

Officer: I don't believe you. Why are you actually here, and who is paying for your trip?" (Field note, 17 July 2018).

It continued in that manner for an additional hour; occasionally, he requested the spelling of my parents' names and posed other random inquiries. He instructed me to leave and then called me back inside. He proceeded to obtain my fingerprints and eye scans, explaining that in the event of my demise in an explosion, they would be able to identify my body through my eyes. On the fourth occasion, he summoned me, he informed me that he was aware of my intentions to travel to the Occupied Territories, yet they lacked concrete evidence. Consequently, they issued me a two-week visa. He warned me that I would be denied re-entry if I engaged in any political activities. I hastily gathered my belongings and hurried out of the airport. To this day, I still suffer from nightmares associated with that interrogation. During that time, I refrained from participating in any political actions. I met up with my activist friends, and we collectively agreed that it was wiser to prioritize caution. That was the approach I adopted, allowing me to return on subsequent occasions.

2.2.1.1 The real difficulty: psychological pressure and sense of guilt

A different thing was the rejections and blame I experienced when I was accused of normalizing the Occupation by researching joint activism between Israelis and Palestinians. Interestingly, these accusations have never come from Palestinians or Israelis but only from internationals or other academics. I do not want to underestimate the problem behind this allegation. Normalization has represented a real threat to Palestinian independence and self-determination, and many peace activists and researchers who have studied cooperation between the two ethnic groups have reinforced and reiterated the asymmetry of power and inequality existing. This is the reason why the BDS movement has established, among other things, a call to non-normalization.

Nevertheless, these statements strongly affected how I developed my research questions and how I approached this research. I believe that increasing my knowledge of the context and the historical conditions that led to the Zionist colonization of Palestine certainly helped to understand why some movements have decided to adopt this approach. The power differences between the two groups (or three if we want to also include internationals who are also in a higher power position compared to Palestinians) are real and have repercussions on people's real life. This is something noticeable just by walking in a Palestinian and Israeli city or, within Israel, in a Palestinian or Jewish neighbourhood, or in the West Bank, in a Palestinian village or a Jewish settlement. The class difference is striking, and the Palestinian 'underdevelopment' (Taghdisi-Rad, 2014) is direct result of occupation. These are all important considerations that made me ask how such an important power asymmetry can be managed when groups find themselves cooperating. The results go very much in an anti-colonial direction.

As for the ethical considerations, I have found myself questioning several times my role of power as an international researcher and the effect that this would have had on my interviewees. I have not found a satisfactory answer yet.

2.2.2 Language Challenge

The issue of language is often considered a technicality but needs to be mentioned in the discussion of the methodology. Language and translations are an integral part of the making of knowledge and identities; they are not natural processes and imply power relations (Temple & Young, 2004). The languages spoken in the field are Hebrew, Arabic and English. When I went there the first time, as an activist, I did not speak either of them. English is widely spoken among activists (in both groups) because of its highly international component. By contrast, the second time, I went as a researcher with basic knowledge of standard Arabic; however, in the field, the main language was the Palestinian dialect. Learning Arabic became an integral part of my research, a time-consuming but necessary activity. However, my Arabic has not yet reached a level that allows me to do interviews with native speakers, but it was enough for everyday basic conversations. I relied on a translator for a few key interviews with native Palestinian speakers.

I have never studied Hebrew, but I wish I did; however, studying already a completely new alphabet was challenging enough. Hebrew was less pressing because of three reasons: 1) most Israeli activists are Ashkenazi, and they come from Western countries; therefore, their English language proficiency is excellent; 2) Israel constantly receives new Jewish citizens from all around the world who rarely speak Hebrew but who usually speak Yiddish, English or the language of their country of origin. Because of

that, most of Israel's newspaper has both a Hebrew and an English version that is very easy to consult; 3) Hebrew is very limited spoken; hence, engaging in the study of a complicated language spoken in only one country of the world was not very strategic. However, since language tells a lot about identity and knowledge production, I would have been very interested in exploring this Semitic language too.

2.2.3 Gaining Access to the Field: Suspicious, Credibility and the Seatbacks caused by the Pandemic

Under such conditions, a crucial stage of the research was gaining access to the field, managing the development of the initial contacts and first interviews. As Boumaza and Campana (2007) underlined, "entering" into a difficult field implies being accepted by the people who are part of the research and are often suspicious of the researcher; the researcher is then placed under examination, and thus, they have to give a proof of their good intentions, and in particular sharing his/her political position. I believe that my previous experience as an activist in 2016 helped me a lot in entering the field and being accepted by activists. Most of the time, they were curious about my political interest in Palestine, but they never questioned the validity of my research as long as I recognized the legitimacy of the Palestinians' claim to self-determination. As I mentioned, the only ones who refused to be interviewed were internationals. Similarly, the preliminary fieldwork I conducted in October-November 2019 allowed me to establish contact with activists, which was essential when I had to move the interview online. At first, activists were all very glum by the outbreak of the pandemic, and they were not willing to talk via Zoom or Meet (understandably). Covid-19 restrictions imposed an even tighter control of dissent, and most Israeli activists, who used to travel to the West Bank, were no longer allowed to go because of the lockdown. Additionally, they were also worried about the general epidemiological situation in such a dire context as the Occupied Territories: without resources and with limited health services, the situation risked being very dangerous. Once the borders re-opened, after two years of partial or total closure, access to the field was easier, I first relied on my previous contacts, and I established new ones with the communities that hosted me for my fieldwork. The access to the field was easy because of my previous encounters, there were no internationals, and I managed to experience Palestinian-Israeli activists' relationships without the mediation/presence of international activists as it happened on my previous visit.

> "Today, I joined one of the actions of X, a group of Israeli activists who every Saturday go to the South Hebron Hills to accompany Palestinian farmers and shepherds to their fields and land constantly threatened by the settlers. Unfortunately, today was a horrible day in terms of weather, and for this reason, we were unable to accompany the shepherds to their fields, but we visited various families in the Yatta area, bringing blankets and clothes for the winter. We are about fifteen, all Ashkenazi Israelis, an Argentine journalist, an Israeli citizen of Palestinian origin, and I, the Italian." (Field notes of March 12, 2022).

I collected roughly one hundred pages of field notes in March/April 2022. The access to the field was connected to the necessary need for flexibility and sometimes acceptance of lack of control over the field experience. Flexibility and powerlessness are articulated in two different ways: on the one hand, flexibility meant interviews and meetings postponement, endless trips in shared taxis, hitchhiking roads, and checkpoint closures. On the other hand, it meant realizing the methods I learned during my education in Western universities were inappropriate or fell short of speaking to the targeted groups of my fieldwork. I will provide two examples for both cases.

2.2.4 Gender, Whiteness and Positionality

If, as suggested by Reinharz (1993), feminist research aims to represent the diversity of people, I would dare to say that this research has uncovered a much larger set of aspects compared to what I would have potentially envisaged when I first entered the field. Fine (1994), while describing the process of 'othering' underlines the presence of a recurrent 'colonizing discourse': "researchers probe how we are in relation with the contexts we study and with our informants, understanding that we are all multiple in those relations." (p. 72) The reflectivity of how we are in relation to the field and the people who inhabit it inevitably leads us to consider cautiously the gender dimension.

England (1994) warns that "fieldwork might actually expose the researched to greater risk and might be more intrusive and potentially more exploitative than more traditional methods" additionally "exploitation and possibly betrayal are endemic to fieldwork" (p. 85). The question that arises is therefore: is it appropriate for privileged Western researchers to do research outside of their cultures of origin? If on the one hand, many researchers are aware of the need to involve women because their agency have been historically ignored and misrepresented, however, on the other hand, there is always a risk of evaluating and interpreting their experiences through Western categories (Mohanty, 1984). Additionally, sometimes it might be difficult for researchers to meet with women in safer spaces, particularly in extremely gender-segregated or dangerous settings. Similar dilemmas arise from the present fieldwork experience too. In the following paragraphs, I will illustrate some of the episodes that bring me to reflect more intensely on the gender dimension. The day I speak of in these field notes, I was staying in the village of Al-Bab[13] together with Jim, my Israeli activist partner; we followed our usual routine in the morning of accompanying shepherds to their grazing fields, but in the afternoon, we hear

[13] Fiction name

of a settler attack to a shepherd of another village. Therefore, other people out of the usual activist circle reach us and talked to Jim and Yousif, the Al-Bab community leader.

*"*We return to Al-Bab, where we accompany Yousif with his sheep, but no settler comes to harass us today. We prepare lunch with Yousif. The preparation is very pleasant, Yousif is very kind to me, and his wife does practically nothing: he is the chef. This feminist honeymoon ends at lunchtime. The women eat at a different table, but they make me sit with the men next to Jim (also visibly embarrassed). I don't say a word. Although I am guaranteed a privileged seat at the patriarchal table, it is only because of my European origins. The sense of exclusion and discrimination is even stronger because I am aware of being both an oppressor and an oppressed. I am made to understand that surely, my ethnicity and passport make me "superior", but in any case, my gender does not put me on the same level as the men at the table. I did not react fast enough; otherwise, I would have gone to the women's table. I blame myself for the whole meal. Jim tries to include me in the conversation, but everyone else does not; it is clear that this is not my place. Fortunately, lunch ends quickly. And we go to Al-Noor, a small village nearby. The settlers beat a Palestinian boy while he was out with his flock at leg height. We go see how he is and document what happened. The boy is bruised in bed and shows his bleeding leg in pain, there are only men in the room, and I honestly don't want to look further. The whole situation is very disturbing, I realize that entering the room would break some clear gender norms, so I don't enter; I stay outside and wait.

The boy's sisters come to my aid. Apparently, they've been aiming for me since we arrived because they immediately opened the front door for me and asked me a lot of questions. I answer with my improvised Arabic. They straightaway kidnapped me inside the house. We are only women. They ask if they can take pictures of me. I say yes, and I ask why. "We have never met an Italian girl! We want to tell all our friends!" We take selfies together, and they offer me tea and coffee. First, they bless me in all possible ways to be in Palestine and to be there with the X organization to tell their stories abroad. Then they ask me what I do. I answer research that I am exploring the region of the South Hebron Hills. Another set of blessings follows. They demand about my family, and I ask about theirs; they are 12 brothers and sisters. It's a very strange moment; me and Huda, the eldest, look into each other's eyes as we talk. The younger sisters push each other to get closer to me on the sofa: I realize there is a lot of physical contact. I ask Huda what she does. She tells me that she stays at home and never goes out. She has studied, but she has not yet married, she is 25, and therefore she takes care of her house with her mother. We talk about what happened to their brother. She tells me there were three settlers. First, they beat him with a stick, and then they ran away. She is worried because she doesn't know if he will be able to walk again, and she knows the settlers will go unpunished. I tell her that I am very sorry and that we are there for that: we take pictures, we collect the testimony and see what can be done with the lawyers. She asks me what I think of Palestinian women and if I find them sweet (I checked after we spoke, and she just used the word sweet). I tell her that she and her sisters are very sweet and that they were very nice to let me in; for me, it is a great honour because I think that Palestinian women are very strong to resist and live under occupation. I believe they are the bravest women I know. I do not add that, in addition to the occupation, they are prisoners of a misogynist culture. It is not my place to judge, and I do believe that they are strong and courageous; I just struggle to find myself in a society that is so segregated based – among other things – on gender. Unfortunately, it is time to go; Jim hasn't forgotten me and comes to pick me up. We accompany Yousef, who greets us and tells me that Jim is like a brother to him. Seeing them together really gave me the idea of how the relationships of trust and resistance I speak of in my work are true. They are made up of whole days spent together, both in action and inaction. The only problem is that they are extremely heteronormative relationships. They are two men, and although they come from two different communities, they both are male. This certainly plays a big part in the matter, and I do not know how to rationalize that." (Field note, 17th March 2022).

As these sections from my field notes underline, the element of gender intertwines with the one of race and knowledge production. This element was probably harder to scrutinize and come to terms with because it opens the debate of how much we want to reproduce from activist struggles that we experience and support. I believe that in terms of racial power asymmetry, the activists I worked with have certainly been doing an incredible job; on the level of gender equality, much still needs to be addressed; however, this is true everywhere in the world. On the other hand, it is not up to researchers and White people to lead these feminist struggles. The Palestinian society is still extremely gender-segregated, but there has been a Palestinian feminist movement that starting from Black feminist insights, is trying to fight sexism within their societies; we can just follow their lead and express our solidarity.

"After a day in the fields with the shepherds confronting settlers, I can finally relax in Jim's over-warm pick-up. He drives like crazy, but I fell asleep anyway. We arrived in Jerusalem, and he smiled at me and thanked me for going with them. He probably does not even understand how much this means to me. His friendship allowed me such privileged access to the field. He confesses that they have very few female activists and that, for him, it would be crucial to reach a larger women's involvement in the movement. He understands, however, that being in a context where most interactions occur only among men (Palestinian activists and Israeli settlers) might be a deterrent for joining. Once in Jerusalem, we say goodbye under an incessant rain." (14th November 2019).

This last quote leads to a further reflection that connects the gender and the fieldwork dimension (Sharp & Kremer, 2006). On the one hand, it underlines a general hardship for women to participate in activism in difficult contexts: there are many more barriers and risks to accessing these fields. First, a security dimension makes such a field physically riskier for females than male activists. Second, this type of activism and its confrontations often occur between activists and the settlers accompanied by the military. For this reason, they are often characterized by blatant exposure to toxic masculinity. The result is that the available space for female activists in these contentious fields shrinks. Hence, a further dimension certainly comes from the additional difficulty related to barriers present to engaging and entering these spaces from an equal standpoint. Women are usually socialized oppositely, namely, to be condescending and calm and to follow what has been said to them. Men are more likely to challenge authority and hierarchies (Hooks, 2015). A third element concerns race. For Palestinian women is disproportionately hard to join a movement that does not overtly advocate for the Palestinian/national cause. For Israeli women, it might be slightly easier. However, it is also not immediate to participate in activism in contexts such as those of the South Hebron Hills, where most of the women perform very segregated gender roles. Hence, as international activists, they may find themselves divided between their support for the Palestinian cause and the value they attribute to gender equality and respect for women's rights that have

long informed their behaviour and life in their society of origin. On the other hand, the presence of women in whatever movement acts as a further legitimation of the movement itself.

2.2.5 Ethics, Emotions and Commitment

This section deals with different aspects of ethics: discussion concerns the ethic of research, in this case, in particular, is linked to the role of power that the researcher has and her position in the context of conflict loaded with opposing ideologies.

Certainly, the fact of doing fieldwork in an area of conflict, even from abroad and by working remotely, gives rise to serious ethics questions. This is because the researcher "modifies the field of action through her or his participation in it "through the way he or she interprets the data and the type of affective links they develop with the participant to the research" (Routledge, 2002, p. 486). The researcher has a responsibility towards her informants, the people she interviews and meets, ensuring they will not be threatened because of their participation in the research, either during the fieldwork or afterwards. Protecting their identity is a researcher's responsibility. I was asked not to name certain Jewish activists (for example, a Jewish American activist who was waiting to receive Israeli citizenship and did not want his participation in the research to undermine his possibility of obtaining it). The Palestinians, instead, usually declare they did not have anything to hide or even that they wanted their opinion to be spread and heard.

The responsibility of the researcher goes beyond the time of fieldwork; once analyses are produced and published, one must wonder how the data collected can be used (Nash, 2007, p. 223), especially by the authorities. Even if this research presents a considerable amount of empirical data, I do not think this is a particularly sensitive body. The networks I have obtained through the SNA come for the news; therefore, they are potentially replicable by any authorities. I believe that the IDF data on protest events and group participation are much more accurate than the datasets I have created. Additionally, most of the activists I interviewed had already been arrested or held through administrative detention, being known by the authorities. Therefore, people voicing their disagreement with the Israeli authorities are all figures involved in the public scene. However, even if the material collected were not highly sensitive, having it confiscated or directly taken by the authorities would certainly have posed a moral and ethical problem. Before taking the plane, everything was thus sent to someone else in Italy and deleted from my computer; the same was true for photos, documents, and fieldwork notes. These strategies aimed at protecting the people to the same extent that they tried to protect me from invasive control when leaving. All the names and identities were here changed in order to maintain anonymity.

The field chosen for this research is deeply political and emotionally very intense, loaded with difficult situations, injustice, violence, and moral dilemmas. A certain involvement was inevitable and represented a human position more than a political one. There is, however, a political stance in my work that I do not refute, and this has transpired through the introduction to the research. It is a political stance, not an emotional one; it has been constructed following observations, information, and analyses, and it is consistent with much other similar research in that context. It is a simple one: Israel is a colonial power that is still trying to colonize and occupy as much land as possible through illegal settlements. The occupation is a racist, discriminatory regime, and Palestinians have basic civil and human rights that Israel often denies. Moreover, in these conditions, the ethical position might be the one taking a precise stance and do not ignore the issues at hand. Additionally, it might also be noted that a strong tradition of political engagement exists in social science since the Marxist agenda of radical geography in the 60s and 70s or feminist anthropology and geography, which call for social scientists to put together scholarship and politics, taking positions against an oppressive force, seeking not only to expose but also overcome power injustices. Not to mention Gramscian studies and Gramsci's biography itself. This is why I will here consider some further important ethical dimensions.

2.2.6 Imposed Flexibility

Differently from other field experiences, what characterizes research in the OPTs is the constant sense of unpredictability and the impossibility of making fixed plans. To give a couple of examples, after a violent attack in Tel Aviv towards civilians, I could no longer enter Jerusalem from the Occupied Territories where I was staying the day before.

I was supposed to reach Jerusalem to meet with other activists for an assembly, but I had never reached the agreed meeting place. I could have never anticipated a violent armed attack in Tel Aviv and that the consequence would have been the general closure of the West Bank. Here is what happened:

> "Israel closed the checkpoints, and it became impossible for me to move and go back to Jerusalem in time for the meeting. They reopened at 4 when it was too late. But at least I can go back to the place I am staying. I waited for the reopening for six hours." (Field note, April 8th, 2022).

Something similar happened another time. I was staying in the South at one of the sites of research. An Israeli activist friend of mine invited me to spend Pass Over with her family in a small town between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

> "Rachel invites me to spend the Jewish Passover, Friday evening, with her family who lives in Y, a village founded in the 70s by a community to allow life in common between Arabs and Jews. The problem is getting to

this place because Israel has forbidden entry to all Palestinians, even with permits, to allow Israeli citizens to celebrate "their Easter safely". The result is that there are no transports from where I am staying to get to Jerusalem. I wait an hour, and I'm about to give up, but then Rachel calls me. She is an anti-settlers activist, and she knows that I don't want to evaluate this option, but she suggests I get to the closest settlement, show my passport and take a settler bus. I am scared and confused. These same people attacked us in the field when we accompanied the community we work with. I start walking towards the settlement. I realize that settler buses pass indeed quietly. I am very frightened to enter the settlement, but I take out my passport and take courage. The guard, a boy younger than me, is watching some apparently very funny videos; he lets me in and doesn't even look at my passport; he continues to giggle for God knows what video. I get to the bus stop, and not only do many buses pass for the whole West Bank and Israel, and not only do they go to Jerusalem, but they take me right to the bus station where I have to take the bus to Y. The settler bus does not stop at the checkpoint. A very young settler (15 years old?) has a tattoo on his arm of what for me is historic Palestine: from the river to the sea, but which I fear for him represents Eretz Israel. This thing worries me a lot because it shows that settlers want everything except the Palestinians who live on that land. It is really difficult to change this place, the settlers in particular." (Field note, 15th April 2022).

I still recall this episode as one of the hardest moments in my fieldwork because it certainly underlines an important ethical dilemma I faced. I have friends that live on both sides, and I wanted to spend the Jewish holiday with my Israeli friend. However, to get there, I had to do something that both my friend and I believe to be unethical: use settlers' facilities and hence use our White privileges. I guess I will never know if that was the right choice. I spent a wonderful night with my friend's family, everyone made me feel extraordinarily welcome, and I learned many things I did not know about Pass Over and the history of this tradition. The day after, my friend and I went together back to the South to our Palestinian friends. The settlers attacked us, and the IDF searched our car. I was sure they would have deported me that day, but just 24h before, I was on a settler bus.

2.2.6.1 Methodological Flexibility

Following Sandra Harding's distinction between methods and methodology, we can define the former as 'techniques for gathering evidence', while the latter is more related to epistemology and ontology as a theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed' (Harding 1987, 2-3). Here, if we have to be strict and align ourselves to existing methodological categories in social science, I would say that in terms of methods, most of my data come from participatory observation, interviews, fieldwork, and Protest Event Analysis. While in terms of methodology, I have – mainly unconsciously and through my ethical compass – followed the insights from militant ethnography that involved taking an active role in most collective action movements. This is why, even when I planned to use one method instead of another, I ended up following the leadership of my participants. I will report another example from my field notes that goes in this direction.

"In the afternoon, I am supposed to interview Aisha, Yousef's sister, who runs a women's organization in the South Hebron Hills – an extremely gender-segregated area. I'm not surprised. She has incredible strength. She tells me about the Occupation, and she takes me under her wing. Her daughter combs my hair while we do the interview. While we're talking, other women enter the house to greet Aisha. They ask her what we are doing, and when they understand what is going on, they want to join the conversation. Aisha's sister brings us some vegetables to clean. I join the women in this work. The interview becomes a focus group. There are Palestinian women, some kids, and me. They all take off their veils. It is a very hot day. They all have different memories from the 2015 campaign, but they all recall the intensity of marching together with activists from all over the West Bank and Israel to save their village. Aisha went to talk to the American Congress to save the village. The other women are very proud of her, it's evident". (Field note, 1st of April, 2022).

I did not plan to do focus groups; I am not even sure this can be properly considered as such because I did not define strict criteria for the participants of the focus group in advance as it should be done. However, this is certainly more spontaneous and, therefore, authentic than most focus groups are. Additionally, this is something unpredictable that I could not completely plan. I would have never been able to set up a meeting with all those women of the community by organizing it and sending them an invitation with an email. However, they were all there on a Friday, relaxed and happy to talk in an all-women's space. I found myself flexible enough to embrace this moment and not let methodological strictness, which is very different from methodological rigour, dictate the direction of my research. I investigate relations, specifically relations of trust in activist circles, and this type of episode makes these relations manifest. Additionally, it made clear the role of broker and opinion leader that Aisha centrally plays in her community. This "field serendipity" shows that the field does not always necessarily fit with the methodological textbook we rely on when we write the methodological Chapter of our dissertation.

2.3 Final Considerations

In this Chapter on methods and methodology, I have exposed some of the main choices, reflections, and setbacks that characterised the methods and methodology of this research. After detailing the approach adopted to select "resisting diverse alliance", both theoretically and empirically, I have laid out the main methodological lines that were applied; a qualitative approach comparative design that relied on a PEA as a source of data collection to identify the main actors on the field, followed by semi-structured interviews with activists, participatory observation and focus groups. The data were then analysed through a qualitative social network analysis enriched by a qualitative interpretation of interviews. Such fieldwork inevitably changes the researcher, sometimes painfully, sometimes in exciting, lasting ways. The self-reflexivity on such changes comes from a feminist understanding of knowledge. Muhammad *et. al* (2015, p. 1046) believe that researchers should keep into account the unequal power relations that

characterize fieldwork. They underline the importance of understanding power and privilege while approaching communities from an academic standpoint.

In this regard, as for the ethical considerations, I have found myself questioning several times my role of power as an international researcher and the effect that this would have had on the communities I was working with. While doing research in marginalized communities, researchers encounter the potential for the reproduction of gender, racial/ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities. "Academic researchers represent centers of power, privilege, and status within their formal institutions, as well as within the production of scientific knowledge itself. Researchers also may have power and privilege from their class, education, racial/ethnic backgrounds, or other identity positions." (Muhammad *et. al*, 2015, p. 1047). However, on the other hand, Patricia H. Collins (1990) reminds us that new knowledge is important for both individuals' change of consciousness and the social transformation of economic institutions (p. 221).

The researcher has a responsibility towards her informants, and they have to ensure that the people they interview will not be threatened because they participated in the research, either during the fieldwork or afterwards. Protecting their identity is a researcher's responsibility. In the same vein, the new strain of literature that aims at "decolonizing methodology" goes toward a fairer production and diffusion of knowledge. These reflections go in the direction of applying methods while being continually *"*self-reflexive about one's position as a non-Indigenous researcher connected to colonizing institutions like the university" (Fortier, 2017, p. 22). The idea behind it is not to "just" confess Western researcher privilege, which is commonplace in many activists and academic circles but to empower research participants helping in dismantling structures of domination that ensure White privilege.

The discourse on privileges is probably the most salient one when it comes to considering ethical dilemmas and ethical challenges. We need to reconsider the politics of knowledge production by problematizing how ideas are developed and possessed in a way that Western academia usually tends to invisibilize those who are the real "producer" of knowledge. In this way, non-academic research partners are not viewed as passive, ignorant subjects but as people with experiential knowledge and expertise that is as valuable as academic knowledge. On the other hand, as underlined by Guishard (2009) "Action research methods are commodified when they are romanticized and touted as panaceas to institutional racism and structural injustice and when members of disempowered groups are superficially included in research. The recreation of existing knowledge hierarchies like erudite researcher—and unwitting

passive participant is an especially delicate and subtle appropriation of participatory methods" (p. 88). This is precisely the reason why in this Chapter, I insisted on emphasising the doubts, the problems, and the difficulties I have encountered while conducting this research rather than presenting this experience as an idyllic Orientalist experience. To give the necessary time and space to emphasise hardship, it is necessary to deromanticise methodology and consider it more as a *praxis* – in the Gramscian sense of the term – that goes in the direction of knowledge sharing rather than knowledge-making. Gramsci recognises that knowledge is a human product intimately connected to the historical and social context in which it arises. To say that a theory is connected to the social context in which it arises means to affirm that it is linked to the relationships that human beings weave among each other. In other words, it is related to the activities that men carry out to survive. This does not mean that practice verifies theory and demonstrates its correspondence to reality. Practice is the key to getting out of the impasse represented by correspondence because it forces us to recognise that knowing means modifying and modifying it brings with it the root of knowledge (it is a condition of material and not just formal possibility) (Gramsci, 1975, p. 882). What emerges from this reflection is that knowledge is unavoidably situated, but we can try to decolonize the way in which we gather and reproduce it.

Indeed, most of the dilemmas exposed here have not been pacified yet. How do we evaluate how much risk a researcher can take to meaningfully participate in a field? What is the level of flexibility that maintains a methodology "scientific"? How is it possible to balance our identity values within gendered-segregated societies? And finally, at the end of the day, we will remain in the palaces of knowledge and as much as our research can be participatory and horizontal, it will always be an asymmetrical relation. How can we compromise with this? These questions will orientate future methodological reflections and inquiries.

CHAPTER 3 – PRESENTATION OF THE CASES: A POLITICS OF CONTROL AND SEPARATION

Most Israelis and Palestinians hold the conviction that they are the legitimate owners of the land. Both view this territory as their national homeland, deeply tied to their sense of nationalism, ethnicity, and religion. The ongoing conflict between these two groups, which began in the first half of the 20th century, escalated significantly following the establishment of Israel in 1948. However, there is widespread recognition of the colonial characteristics associated with the Zionist movement (Butler, 2012; Pappé, 2017; Sayegh, 1965; Shafir, 2016). Recalling the historical process that led to the creation of the Jewish state goes far beyond the scope of this work: the emergence of the Zionist project, the Ottoman rule over the region and the increasing tensions between Jewish and Palestinian communities under the British Mandate, the several wars that involved the newly created Jewish state with the neighbouring Arab countries as well as the resistance of the Palestinian population – which experience different peaks of tensions, notably with the two Intifadas (1987-1992 and 2000-2005) – and the Gaza operations and blockade (2008-2009, 2012, 2014, 2018), have all been studied and documented by ample literature that encompasses numerous disciplines (Campani, 2017; Emiliani, 2008; Chomsky & Pappé, 2015; Dalla Negra, 2018; Hilal, 2007; Pappe, 2007). The position of Israel in the West Bank is identified by international law as a situation of military occupation (Erakat, 2019). In the aftermath of the 1967 "Six Days War", Israeli forces did not withdraw from the newly conquered territories[14] (East Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza, the Golan Heights and the Sinai) and imposed military rule on them, hence, this complies with the definition provided art. 42 of the Hague Convention ("A territory is considered occupied when it is actually placed under the authority of the hostile army").

The laws regulating military occupation are part of international humanitarian law and of the laws of war in general as defined in the Forth 1907 Hague Convention (*Laws and Customs of War on Land*), the Fourth Geneva Convention (*Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War*), the 1954 Hague Cultural Property Convention (*Contention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict*) and the 1977 Additional Geneva Protocol (*relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts*). The first two treaties bind Israel since they represent customary international law; then, in 1957, it ratified the 1954 Hague Convention but did not sign the 1977 Geneva Protocol. Therefore, Israel is committing human rights violations in the territories where it is supposed to defend human rights. The

[14] In 1979, Egypt regained control of the Sinai, and after the 1973 Yom Kippur War, a portion of the Golan Heights was returned to Syria. However, the majority of the Golan Heights remains under occupation. In 2005, Israel carried out a "disengagement" plan and evacuated the settlements in Gaza.

continuous occupation of the Palestinian Land after more than fifty years, the "Deal of the Century" proposed by Trump, and the increasing number of Israeli settlers suggest a real intention on the part of Israel to annex the territories of the West Bank[15].

The Oslo Accords, signed September 13, 1993, refers to the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (DOP or Oslo I) and subsequent implementing agreements, notably the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Israel-PLO (Oslo II) signed September 28, 1995, formalized the birth of the Palestinian National Authority (PA hereinafter) and established a five-year transition during which the transfer of control from the Israeli Defence Force (IDF hereinafter) to the PA was supposed to happen (Butenschøn, 2007, p. 85). The agreement also divided the West Bank into three zones: areas A, B, and C. The area "A" contains the main Palestinian cities: Ramallah, Nablus, Jenin, Bethlem, Hebron, Tulkarem, and Qalquiliya, in which the PA oversees both civil and security control. Area B is a mixed system under which civilian issues are tackled by the PA and security issues by Israel. Finally, zone C is under the Civil Administration "in matters relating to zoning, construction, and infrastructure" (COGAT website[16]). Understanding the different regimes applied in the different parts of the Occupied Territories is highly complex for those who have never approached the matter. What is important to know here is that Palestinian living in Area C, as one of the cases presented in this research will show, are under almost complete Israeli control. The PA only provides education and "formal" political representation. The reality on the ground is very different. As the object of intense Jewish settlements construction, Palestinians in Area C are constantly threatened by violence from settlers, who are both armed and protected by the IDF. Additionally, any construction plan must be approved by the Israeli Civil Administration, providing energy, water and power. As it will be illustrated in detail, this causes frequent confrontations between natives and settlers but also provides a potential for an alliance with those Jews who oppose the expansionistic ambitions of the Israeli state.

Although, at the time, the Oslo Agreements were considered a paramount step for the peace process, they are now widely contested for having de facto strengthened the occupation. Zone A is divided into several

[15] For more on this, I strongly suggest reading "10 Myths about Israel" by Ilan Pappé and "The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine" by the same author, who historically describes the Zionist aspirations over the land of Palestine and why the territory of the West Bank (considered by religious Jews the biblical territory of Judea and Samaria) is so essential to complete the Zionist project. Additionally, the Israeli High Court declared in 1964—in what became known as the Yerdor case— 'the Jewishness of Israel is a constitutional given. In 1985, revisions to the Basic Law on the Knesset added that no party would be allowed to run if it rejected Israel's definition as a state of the Jewish people. The combination of these laws created a structure nearly immune to democratic attempts to change its Zionist character.

[16] https://www.gov.il/en/departments/coordination-of-government-activities-in-the-territories.

enclaves, effectively separated from one another. These enclaves are surrounded by areas B and C, giving Israel total control over the whole territory. Additionally, the Oslo Accords left the PA with no control over the borders, natural resources, currency, or power over determining fiscal, monetary or foreign policy. It also prevents the PA from determining citizenship and forces it to be highly dependent on and restricted and regulated by the government of Israel (Alissa, 2007, p. 131). Some authors have also condemned the fact that, although the PA is officially in charge of determinate areas of the WB is often accused of being a subcontractor of the Israeli army and maintaining peace in exchange for money (Alissa, 2007; Hilal, 2007; Clarno, 2017; Dana, 2015; Dana, 2020). All of this made Amnesty International (2022) describe the geographical system (Annex I) imposed on the OPTs as "bantustanization" with a direct reference to South Africa's Apartheid, whose objective is to create enclaves that are not viable, denying any freedom of movement to the Palestinian people and reserving the most fertile and most productive lands for the occupier.

This Chapter attempts to clarify the selection of cases and describes the unfolding events of each campaign. Their historical reconstruction takes place through the articles collected for the PEA and the documents provided by the NGOs active in the campaign. Interviews' sections also appear as crucial events for activists are recalled. Before developing the empirical analysis in the following Chapters, it is necessary to dwell on the cases chosen and explain the contextual and relational environments in which these contentious campaigns developed. In this Chapter, some preliminary analytical considerations will be provided. Knowledge of the historical background of each movement, activists' perspectives and the tracing of the process that led to certain coalitions through the scrutiny of the news with the data collected with the PEA will be merged in this Chapter. Document issued during the campaigns and newspaper articles were analysed and coded through content analysis to identify recurrent claims and crucial processual and relational information able to account for the development of the cases.

3.1 #SaveSusiya – Area C and the Constant Risk of Demolition

The Palestinian village of Khirbet Susiya has existed for at least a century. It appeared on maps as early as 1917, decades before Israel began its West Bank Occupation policy. Aerial photographs from the 1980s show farmland and livestock in the corrals, indicating the presence of a thriving and active community in that territory[17]. In his book *Expansion and Desertion: The Arab Village and Its Offshoots*

[17] In 1982, Att. Plia Albeck, head of the Civil Division in the State Attorney's Office at the time, composed an internal opinion that officially recognized the Palestinian village of Susiya and affirmed the land ownership of its residents. According to the opinion, "The synagogue is situated in an area known as the lands of Khirbet Susiya, and it is encompassed by an Arab village

in Ottoman Palestine [in Hebrew], geographer David Grossman reported that at least 25 Palestinian families lived in the village caves in 1986[18]. The first time the village of Susiya appeared in the Protest Event Analysis (hereafter PEA) conducted was in a BBC article dated 29th of April 1982. The BBC Summary of World Broadcasts reported the government's approval in 1982 to start the construction of the settlement of Susia (the name is spelt differently from the Palestinian village, but they pronounced the same). The project was approved by the Likud government led by Prime Minister Begin (Summary, 1982). The article lists several new settlements approved by the Israeli government, among which the Susia סוּסְיָא settlement is explicitly mentioned. One year later, the construction work for the settlement started. However, as mentioned before, settlements were considered illegal under international law; therefore, the Israeli government needed a good expedient. As reported by Emek Shaveh, the Israel organization that fights the use of cultural heritage as a political tool in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to dispossess disenfranchised communities, the settlement was established following the discovery of a synagogue and the antiquities site[19]. However, more than 200 people were living in those caves, and in 1986, the community was altogether expelled from the site, and they moved into encampments and caves outside the vicinity of the ruin. Archaeological excavations and extensive conservation projects were carried out around the ruins and in caves that were until very recently, inhabited by Palestinian residents. The site's management was handed to the South Hebron Hills Regional Council, which had a visitors' centre built there. Signs have been placed around the site, which today is presented as an ancient Jewish settlement, and an entrance fee has been introduced. A few families lived at the site alongside the archaeological excavations until 1986. The residents were forbidden to enter the vicinity of the excavation, and later a fence was built around the ruin with an entrance and an exit into and out of the site. They were not given any information about the excavations and were constantly warned against causing damage to the site. Repeated threats from the archaeological enterprise disrupted their daily lives.

The expropriation order by the IDF applied to 277 dunams[20] around the ancient site. Different studies estimate the site area to be somewhere between 75-80 dunam; of those, less than 20 have been excavated.

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nestled amidst ancient ruins. The land of Khirbet Susiya, totalling approximately 3,000 dunams [300 hectares], is registered in the Land Registry as privately owned by numerous Arab owners."

[18] https://www.btselem.org/south_hebron_hills/masafer_yatta

[19] https://emekshaveh.org/en/susiya-2016/

[20] A dunam (Arabic: دونم; Turkish: dönüm; Hebrew: דונם), also known as a donum or dunum, was the Ottoman unit of area equivalent to the English acre, representing the amount of land that could be ploughed by a team of oxen in a day. The legal definition was "forty standard paces in length and breadth", but its actual area varied considerably from place to place, from a little more than 900 square metres (9,700 sq ft) in Ottoman Palestine to around 2,500 square metres (27,000 sq ft) in Iraq. The unit is still in use in many areas previously ruled by the Ottomans, although the new or metric dunam has been redefined

These data demonstrate that the expropriation order was arbitrary and was intended for more than just regulating the archaeological excavation. Most of the excavations took place before the order was issued, while the excavations that took place after were conducted in small areas within the site. It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that the order was issued to expel the Palestinians from their land and remove them from the eyes of visitors who come to see a site featuring an ancient Jewish synagogue. Additionally, people who lived there have never been repaired for the loss of their land and properties.

Once expelled from their village, the Palestinians moved to caves or tents on their privately owned farmland, in an adjacent area next to the Susia settlement and the original village site. In 1991, the Israeli military expelled them from this area as well. The military had no official warrant for this action, nor did it provide the residents with any explanation as to why they were being uprooted a second time.

Figure 2 Detail from an aerial photo of Khirbet Susiya in 1999 (Archival Material)

In 2001, during the second intifada - a short time after Palestinians killed an Israeli from the neighbouring Susia settlement, the Israeli military again expelled former inhabitants from this area. The military had no official mandate for this action, nor did they provide the residents with an explanation for this second expulsion. In 2013, the residents submitted a master plan for the village to the Sub-Committee for Planning and Licensing of the Civil Administration's Supreme Planning Council. However, their request was denied because it failed to meet planning criteria – the same criteria that many settlements supported by the Israeli authorities throughout the West Bank do not meet. Citing planning considerations to reject the master plan is a clear attempt to use expert arguments to mask the political objective of expelling Susiya's residents. The twisted use of ostensibly valid planning considerations is another example of

as exactly one decare (1,000 square metres (11,000 sq ft)), which is 1/10 hectare (1/10 × 10,000 square metres (110,000 sq ft).

Israel's extensive citing of planning considerations as a means for taking over lands as part of its policy in Area C of the West Bank. The Civil Administration uses its authority over all planning in Area C almost exclusively to prevent Palestinian construction, blatantly ignoring its duty to ensure planning, development, and construction for the local Palestinian population. To date, the Civil Administration has allowed Palestinian construction only in about 0.5% of the area while allocating hundreds of thousands of dunams to Israeli settlements. This planning stranglehold leaves Palestinians no choice but to build without permits. When they do so, the Civil Administration cites planning laws to declare the structures illegal and issue demolition permits for them. Israel appears to have an unofficial policy designed to reduce the number of Palestinian residents in Area C and to expand settlements there, thereby extending Israeli control over the area and its resources and annexing it de facto to Israel proper.

Figure 3 The village of Susiya is located just below Hebron in the region known as "South Hebron Hills" in the grey area, which is Area C

In February 2014, Susiya's residents petitioned the High Court of Justice with the help of an Israeli human rights NGO, and although the Israeli court accepted the villagers' ownership of the land, it ruled that they did not have permission to build there. The village has no outline plan, so it is difficult to receive

building permits based on plan RJ5[21]. All attempts to obtain building permits, appeals, and requests for amnesty were rejected. Today the village has 100 structures that serve about 340 residents[22].

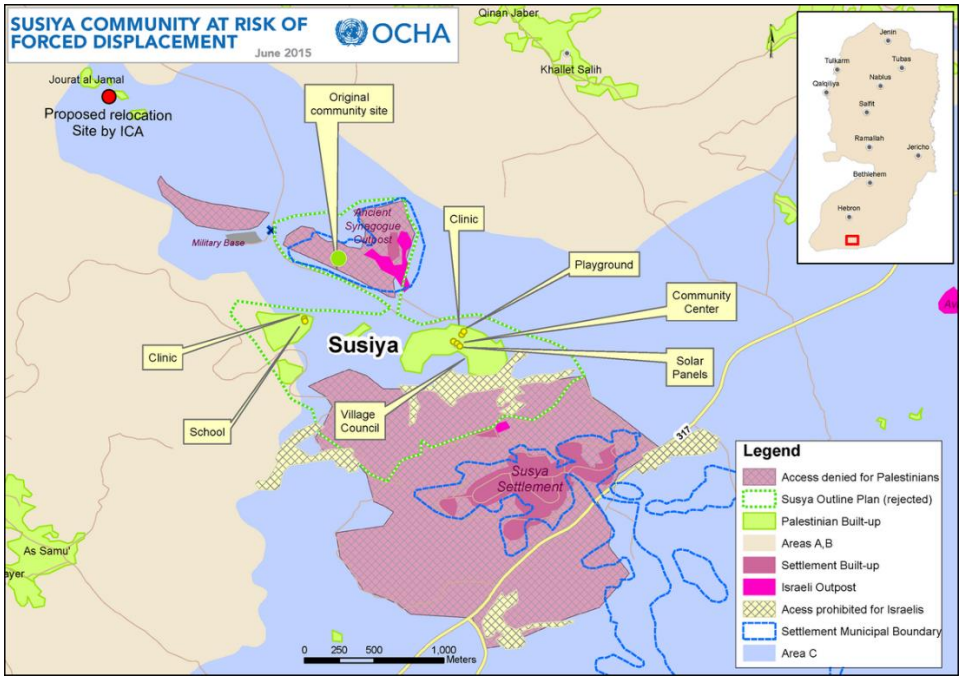


Figure 4 OCHA Susiya Community at Risk

Figure 4 from OCHA clearly illustrates why the Israeli government opposes the continued existence of the Palestinian village of Susiya in its current location. The village is strategically positioned between an Israeli settlement and an ancient synagogue archaeological site. Despite this, the Palestinian residents are determined to remain on their agricultural land for two main reasons. Firstly, they have experienced past expulsions without receiving compensation or alternative housing, and they are adamant about avoiding the trauma of forced displacement and dispossession once again. Secondly, the Israeli High Court and international law support their unequivocal right to self-determination on that specific land.

[21] Israel's 'Civil Administration,' an entity responsible for handling zoning and planning regulations in Area C, which constitutes 73% of the West Bank, is often located alongside the municipal borders of Palestinian villages and cities. Inhabitants residing in neighbourhoods that have expanded beyond the strict Israeli municipal boundaries often find themselves within Area C. Israel applies zoning laws based on the RJ/5 (the regional plan for Jerusalem and the south of the West Bank) and S/15 (the regional plan for the northern area of the West Bank), both established during the British Mandate in 1942. These areas are designated as agricultural zones, and constructing residential buildings is prohibited unless authorized by the Israeli civil administration through a change in the zone's nature. As a result, thousands of Palestinians live in homes that are technically unlicensed, leaving them vulnerable to potential demolition at any given time.

[22] https://rhr.org.il/eng/save-susya/

3.1.1 The First Encounter

How did certain Israeli activists become involved in the fate of an unfamiliar Palestinian village? Moreover, what led a group of Palestinian residents to choose them as partners in their activism? Hamed, who was just 18 years old during their initial meeting, eventually became the campaign's leader and the head of the Susiya popular committee, reflecting on these events:

> "We were used to seeing only settlers and IDF (soldiers), then once these Israelis came and told us 'We want to help you rebuild your houses'. We did not know what to say. We did not trust them. We thought they were spies. It took time, but when you see them come to the same demonstrations, get arrested, and be beaten up with you, you eventually trust them. A different thing, a harder thing, was to convince the rest of the community.*"* (P4).

Hamed remains a key figure in the entire region, highly regarded by many activists for his efforts in persuading even the most hesitant community members to cooperate with Israeli activists. According to Hamed, the initial Israeli group to approach them was Ta'ayush, represented by Ezra Nawi[23] who sadly disappeared in January 2021. Back then, Ta'ayush had not yet formalized as a political movement. However, Ezra Nawi, along with other Israeli activists, played a pioneering role in supporting direct actions and acts of civil disobedience in the OPTs.

Following that, Ta'ayush facilitated the involvement of other activist groups, including Rabbis for Human Rights (RHR), who played a crucial role in managing all the legal aspects of the campaign and assigned a lawyer to continue supporting the court case. The head of RHR shared that they first learned about Susiya from an article in Haaretz, and upon discovering the potentially "illegal" nature of the case (due to the presence of an archaeological site and a settlement nearby), they decided to visit the village and investigate further:

> *"*In 1999, it started with a tiny little article by Gideon Levy in Haaretz and all the story of the expulsion of 300 men, women, and children. There was this little, tiny article, which wasn't one of his big articles, but one of the members of the Israeli Committee Against Home Demolition (ICAHD) saw that. And we went down to establish contact." (IS3)

Now, we come to another significant participant in this network: ICHAD, a highly important organization of Israeli activists with a longstanding history of activism in both Israel and the occupied territories.

> "We haven't really worked with Palestinians at the beginning […] for most of the time Israeli peace organizations did their own actions in the West Bank. They did not coordinate with the Palestinians. […] I do not think we really understood all its political dimensions. We knew nothing about who does house demolitions, who orders it, why and how. In other words, Israeli peace activists had worked for many, many years on the peace issue without really knowing how the occupation worked. And without being in contact with Palestinians. Then we

[23] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ezra_Nawi

realized that to go in and stand in a room of a house and protest doesn't make any sense. We understood that we had to work on the legal side, on prevention. Avoid that houses were demolished in the first place. Our first partner was a group of Palestinian Land Defense Committees that deal with Palestinian land issues. And then through them, we began to get into communities like Susiya*"* (IS8)

The Palestinian Land Defence Committee (PLDC) mentioned here was a central Palestinian actor at the time that has now fragmented into many local committees in the entirety of the South Hebron Hills. The PLDC was an umbrella organization that coordinated and organized mobilizations in different parts of the West Bank. They eventually fell apart, but most of its members remained active at the local level.

What emerged from the various accounts is that before to this moment, Palestinians living in the South Hebron Hills had minimal contact with Israelis, and those interactions mainly were with settlers and IDF soldiers. Given this background, the decision of Hamed and the other villagers to place their trust in these Israeli activists was anything but foreseeable. Not all villages and residents reacted in the same way, making Susiya's response unique. However, this initial act of trust set in motion a different trajectory for Susiya compared to other places in the West Bank. From then on, numerous instances of solidarity, encounters, and joint co-resistance (a term commonly used by activists in the area) became regular occurrences. Central to this network was the grassroots movement known as Ta'ayush[24], a grassroots organisation established in the fall of 2000 by a joint network of Palestinians and Israelis to counter the nationalist reactions triggered by the Al-Aqsa Intifada. Ta'ayush was pivotal as the bridge connecting many Israeli activists to the Susiya campaign. Numerous others learned about the Susiya campaign through their association with Ta'ayush:

"Well, I think I came to Susiya for the first time, in 2001 or 2002 with Ta'ayush." (IS10).

"I very soon found myself as a Ta'ayush activist. So, my first visit to Susiya was in September 2001 and this was two months after the expulsion of the people in Susiya in the area and the demolition of Susiya". (IS9)

"Ta'ayush activists would be going to South Hebron Hill, the broader Region every Saturday. Already been almost 15 years. This is very difficult to maintain but once they had to do the campaign, they were ready." (IS15)

In general, Ta'ayush has a long history of activism in the region of South Yatta/ South Hebron Hills, which makes their involvement and participation very reliable and trustworthy in the eyes of Palestinians. As a Palestinian activist stated:

*"*We are partner in struggle, the Ta'ayush are different from other Israelis" (P17).

[24] Hebrew: תעאיוש, Arabic: تعايش; means "coexistence" or "life in common".

Finally, there is one last element which is worth focusing attention on. The people who live in the villages southern of Hebron are mainly herders and farmers. They live off the land. Being displaced from their lands implies an existential threat in the sense that it would end their way of life and the way they sustain themselves. Hence, while we can see these coalitions as strategic and utilitarian, it is essential to remember that the people who first pledged to cooperate with the Israelis had a real responsibility to their community. Reducing these considerations to an element of class and mere strategic and utilitarian considerations is misleading. In any case, the question of social background will be explored more in the Chapter relating to Sheikh Jarrah.

3.1.2 Co-Resistance

After these first encounters in the mid-90s, which set the basis for future cooperation, in 2001, these joint activities became more frequent when settlers from the surrounding area started preventing residents from accessing their land around the settlement, using threats or physical violence. Most police files were opened because Palestinian complaints and then quickly closed and disregarded. At the same time, the land of the residents taken by the state was used to expand the neighbouring settlement. That was generally a very intense period of confrontations due to the outbreak of the second intifada and the lone-wolf attacks on Israeli civilians. The response of the Israeli government towards Palestinian communities was very harsh as well, and most of the time consisted of property destruction, night raids, and random punishments. In that period, the confrontation between activists and soldiers increased, as reported by several newspapers I have coded through the PEA: "Some 80 activists from the Jewish-Arab movement Ta'ayush have been working for the last two days to frustrate the IDF's efforts by physically separating soldiers from Palestinians. About 20 activists even slept in Susiya on Monday night to do the same should the IDF try a night-time eviction" (Hass, Harel, & Reinfeld, 2001). The early 2000s, although characterized by a higher level of contentious, however, also saw the end of many Israeli-Palestinian collaborations. A large part of the Palestinians at that time felt their aspirations for national independence were betrayed by the failure of the peace process, which had given rise to a semi-agreement that greatly worsened the concrete living conditions of the Palestinians. Many, therefore, found themselves with less incentive to participate in initiatives with their Israeli counterparts.

> "During the second intifada, the tension and the general situation were very bad, and people felt they had to do something about that. So, while there were some people who stopped mobilizing because they were scared, others instead started to unite and become more interested in Palestine because they saw the injustice." (IS5)

Apart from demonstrations and other types of collective action, Israeli groups also provided legal aid, bringing the case to the Israeli High Court. In 2010, the residents, with the support of some Israeli

humanitarian organizations, petitioned the High Court of Justice to grant them access to their agricultural land. In June 2012, demolition orders for structures and houses in Susiya were issued, threatening the village's existence. On Friday, June 15th, 2012, the Palestinian communities of the South Hebron Hills, joined by Israeli and international activists, organized a massive demonstration in Susiya (as appears also from Figure 5). On this specific occasion: “Six buses of Israeli activists who oppose the military occupation of the West Bank participated in the demonstration. Several dressed in clown suits and mocked the soldiers. The buses were organized by NGOs such as Rabbis for Human Rights, Combatants for Peace, and Solidarity Sheikh Jarrah” (2012). Demonstrations continued throughout June and July of that year, and they succeeded in preventing the demolitions for the first time.

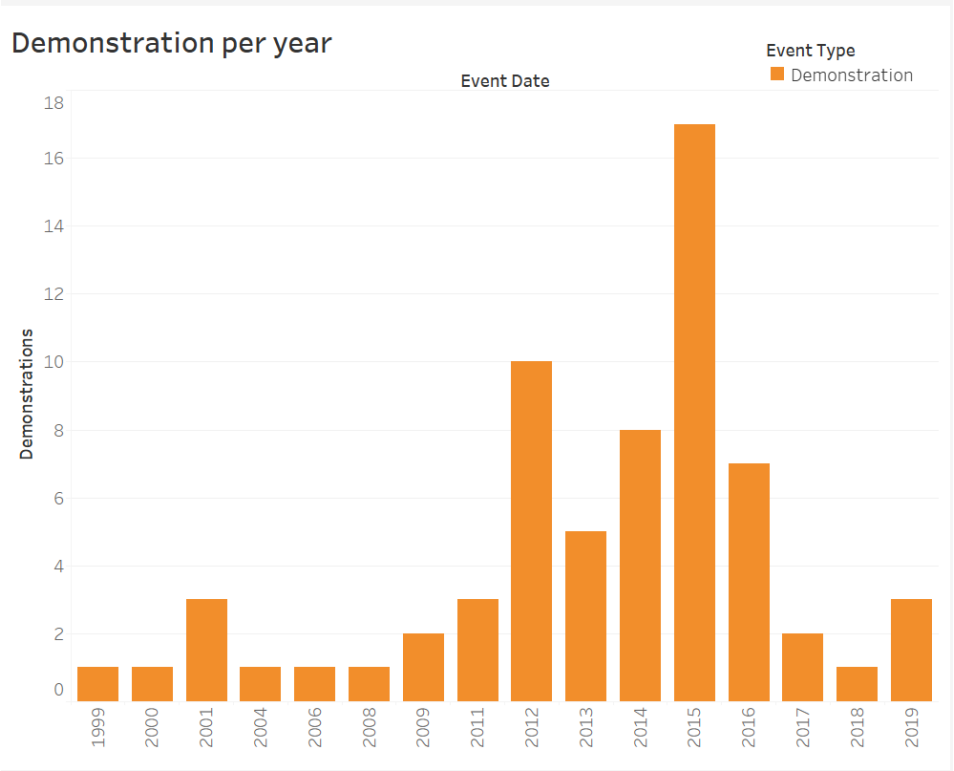


Figure 5 Demonstrations in Susiya from 1999 to 2019

The villagers’ application was denied a year later as it did not meet the planning criteria. The Civil Administration Planning Committee rejected the plan on unreasonable grounds, such as the small number of residents in the village; their connection with the town of Yatta; the feasibility of the plan in terms of construction and infrastructure costs; the quality of the services presently provided to the village; and the need for infrastructures that would allow the female residents to advance in the labour market, etc. (Amnesty International, 2022). “Indulgently,” the residents were offered to move to Yatta. Using planning reasons is a widely used ploy to hide the political goal of expelling Susiya residents. In February

2014, Susiya residents petitioned the Israeli High Court of Justice (HCJ). According to a Palestinian activist in the village, the pretext of advancing women's well-being is commonly used by the Israeli Court in their constant pinkwashing attempt, as she noted:

> "Women in the countryside are free. They graze the sheep and goats, occasionally work in the fields, they produce dairy products, *zatar* and oil. All things that in Yatta or Are B they would be forced to buy. Here men marry more than one woman, but each one has her own tent, her autonomy, and her children. What do they do if they are all moved all together to a house in Yatta where maybe seven have to stay in a room? Women don't work in the city because in the city, you don't know each other, and their husbands and fathers don't let them leave the house. Here they live in the community; everyone trusts each other, and they can go out and even stay without their veil. I take my veil off when I am in Susiya, but I do not in Yatta. Moving these women to the city does not mean improving their labour conditions; it means putting them in jail. Do you know what I mean?" (PA20)

In May 2015, the court rejected the motion, giving *de facto* permission for the State to issue the demolition orders in the village. It also legalizes the forced transfer of protected persons in an occupied territory – a forbidden act under international law, which is defined as a war crime. The hearing on the main petition was scheduled for August 3, 2015, and this is when the formal #savesusiya campaign was launched.

3.1.3 The Counter Movement

The Settler movement in Israel as well explained by Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler and Cass Mudde's last book on the issue (2020), is one of the strongest and most influential in the world. Moreover, as they argue, it also represents a long history of success. An organization prominent in this movement is undoubtedly *Regavim*. In 2012, in an act of revenge against the residents' petition, the Susiya settlers, along with the right-wing organization Regavim, petitioned the court to expedite the demolition orders in the village of Susiya. Ghantous and Joronen (2022) focused on the settler NGO Regavim showing how they constantly "develop new techniques that challenge the slow and creeping eliminatory pace of state's administrative, legal and security bodies with an intensifying eliminatory speed" (p. 393); they called this phenomenon: 'dromoelimination'. They specifically focused on Susiya, and they showed how after the settler NGO of Regavim, together with the Susya settlement council, filed a petition demanding the High Court of Justice (HCJ) to order the state of Israel to destroy the 'unrecognized' Susiya (HCJ, 2012), the HCJ authorized the demolition of most of the structures in the village. This authorization had been postponed multiple times by the state due to growing international pressure.

According to Neve Gordon and Nicola Perugini (2015), settler rights NGOs like Regavim turn the relationship between oppressed and oppressor on its head, transforming dispossession as a human right.

For example, *Ad Kan*[25] is an organisation known for infiltrating Israeli left-wing organizations and other forms of protest against organizations that it perceives as "anti-Israel". Their infiltration of the Ta'ayush movement, for example led to the arrest and indictment of Ezra Nawi, who was charged to work for the PA. Also, during fieldwork in the spring of 2022, an Israeli activist who has been involved in protest movements supporting the Palestinian cause for 25 years told me a similar story. One day a stranger knocked on his door with a bundle of very voluminous papers in his hand. It was his file. He told him he had worked for years as a spy for an Israeli far-right organization that mapped all leftist activists. This man then *converted* when, during one of these espionage actions, he met a Palestinian woman in Ramallah with whom he fell in love and married. From that moment, he tried to clear his conscience by apologizing to the most prominent activists. Opening the file, there was everything about him, including photos of his children, their schools, and friends (Fieldnote, 19 April 2022).

As it appears from these examples, the Israeli right-wing civil society is extremely organized. They receive a combination of private and public funds and represent the opinion of most Israeli Jewish (Perugini & Neve, 2015). When deciding to participate in the joined campaign, the type of threats Israeli activists constantly face is real. Settlers' NGOs are better funded, better organized and with a larger staff. Israeli leftist activists find themselves against the Israeli Government, the IDF, and the settler movements together with its strong organizational infrastructures. Despite all of these, they were able to join their strengths and mobilize to save a tiny little village in the desert of the South Hebron Hills in South Yatta.

3.1.4 The Campaign

Protests intensified in May (on May 4th, 2015, the Israeli Civil Administration issued the demolition orders), climaxing in July 2015. Thanks to a tremendous outpouring of international support, and joint actions of many different groups and organizations, including significant media coverage, Susiya was not demolished on August 3rd, and the demolition order was frozen. Now, Susiya is still standing and is considered a successful campaign for activists from several points of view. Although this case may be analysed under different perspectives– outcomes, the cycle of protests, campaign phases, relational approach, coalition building, POS, etc. –, I will mainly focus on the relational and network elements, looking at how they influence genuine cooperation and processes of coalition-building between the Palestinian population and Israeli and International Jews.

[25] Kan (Hebrew: עד כאן, lit. Up to here)

As mentioned by one of the Israeli activists, when they received the news that the Israeli government had eventually decided to demolish the whole village, most of the activists were together in another Palestinian village nearby, and they started a meeting to decide how to proceed after the failure of the masterplan and the legal action.

"During the meeting, I was very pessimistic because this is my nature. We have been working there for 15 years. What can we do more? I did not believe that we could help more. What I said in that meeting was: 'We will try. We will do our best but don't have high expectations.' We saw that the Civil Administration would have demolished Susiya in a few weeks. That was very much the atmosphere for me, a very gloomy atmosphere. So, I contacted Eva (a member of the same organization), and she said, 'We should appeal immediately to Emy and ask her' She [Eva] contacted Emy in America. She said: 'I can do lobbying work in the Congress'. So, she sent a letter" (I22).

The data from the PEA indicates that both Israeli and Palestinian groups have been actively mobilizing civil society through protests and protective actions on the ground. However, alongside these efforts, a significant amount of advocacy work has also been directed towards engaging international actors and institutions.

Figure 6 Protest against demolition in Susiya: hundreds of Palestinians, Israelis, and internationals 2015

Some Susiya residents, through the help of the international organization Rebuilding Alliances, were able to go to the US Congress and present their cases[26]. The president of the only Palestinian women association in the South Hebron Hills took part in the visit. According to her description:

[26] https://www.timesofisrael.com/palestinians-bring-plight-of-threatened-village-to-us/ and https://www.haaretz.com/senator-feinstein-urges-netanyahu-not-to-demolish-palestinian-village-1.5380462

"At that time, we were really feeling stressed and scared. Several Israeli Organizations came, and they put us in contact with Rebuilding Alliance. Rebuilding Alliance was a very important organization in this regard. They were focusing on stopping demolishing Palestinian villages. They lobbied Congress to stop demolitions, stop the violence. Dianne Feinstein took particular interest in our case. She wrote a letter to Netanyahu to ask him not to demolish Susiya. It was in 2015. This trip changed everything. It changed so much the destiny of the village. Because this time, it was not other people talking about our case; it was us talking about our case, our kids, and our experience of what we are facing from the Occupation. They organized the whole trip, the visa, and they were responsible for paying for everything ticket and everything to get out, to go to America, to talk about our case and our community. We were talking at a conference in Congress." (P20).

DIANNE FEINSTEIN
CALIFORNIA

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE - VICE CHAIRMAN
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0504
http://feinstein.senate.gov

July 28, 2015

His Excellency
Benjamin Netanyahu
Prime Minister of Israel

Dear Prime Minister Netanyahu:

I write today to urge your government to halt its efforts to demolish the Palestinian West Bank village of Susiya. Demolishing Palestinian homes, displacing residents, and seizing additional Palestinian territory in the West Bank is a step away from peace. To preserve land for a future Palestinian state, your government must not destroy Susiya.

Figure 7 Senator Dianne Feinstein's Letter to Benjamin Netanyahu

On this occasion, Senator Dianne Feinstein made a public statement in which she declared to support the activists' claims and the Palestinian right to their land[27]. This was something none of the activists had ever thought possible. After this very important step, demolitions were suspended. A Palestinian activist from the South Hebron Hills Popular Committee recalls:

"We are talking about the early stages of the campaign. So, in this case, you need a very strong agency that can raise your voice. The Israeli activists and the human rights organizations, in addition to some Palestinian organizations, played this agency role by spreading the message of the people, which in return brought more solidarity to the people of South Hebron Hill so, Susiya had this voice since the beginning" (P22).

[27] Here the Senator's tweet with a picture together with Nasser Nawaja'a: https://twitter.com/senfeinstein/status/927942821096624128 and an archival document in which she is with the children of Susiya in her office http://hosted-p0.vresp.com/327262/38be994ecf/ARCHIVE#.VgRMLCshcuc.twitter

These first large demonstrations, the reaching of the US Congress, and a wide variety of international actions and declarations from diplomats and government representatives halted the village demolition for a while. Demolition orders were reissued in 2016, and another cycle of protests took place. During that year, we can see a higher involvement of International Jewish organizations, who came from abroad to support the village's struggle. The network of organizations had already been greatly modified just one year later. However, the core network of groups and activists remained the same. The situation remained unsettled until November 2017, when the Israeli government promised to demolish the village in 15 days. Another US response to the threat came to stop the demolition of Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Bernard Sanders (I-Vt.) joined with eight of their Democratic colleagues to call on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to stop the demolition of the Palestinian village of Susiya and the Bedouin community of Khan al-Ahmar in the West Bank.

"We have long championed a two-state solution as a just resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," the senators wrote. "Yet, your government's efforts to forcibly evict entire Palestinian communities and expand settlements throughout the West Bank not only directly imperil a two-state solution, but we believe also endanger Israel's future as a Jewish democracy. We urge you to change course so that you do not foreclose the possibility of establishing two states for two peoples[28]."

Interestingly, most of the international actors and politicians who took a stand during the campaign have done in the name of the "two-state solution" while, by contrast, most of the activists on the ground, after this experience of real cooperation and coexistence are more and more convinced of the unfeasibility of the two-state solution and advocate for one-democratic-state (Stagni, 2023).

The same story happened again in 2018 when Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Illinois), issued a statement following the Israeli High Court of Justice's approval of the planned demolition of the West Bank Palestinian village of Susiya:

"76 members of the House of Representatives, led by myself and Congressman John Yarmuth, sent a letter to Prime Minister Netanyahu urging him not to demolish Palestinian villages like Khan al-Ahmar and Susya. In the letter, we stated that 'the destruction and displacement of such communities would run counter to shared US and Israeli values, while further undermining long-term Israeli security, Palestinian dignity, and the prospects for peacefully achieving two states for two people.' This remains true - these demolitions must be halted."

They directly appealed to the Israeli Prime Minister, leaving him with little choice but to comply with the US decision and influence. Following 2018, there were additional collective actions and protests.

[28] https://www.feinstein.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2017/11/senators-to-netanyahu-stop-israeli-demolition-of-west-bank-villages

However, as of now, the village has managed to avoid demolition, even though demolition orders are still in place and could be enforced at any given moment.

3.1.5 The Covid-19 Outbreak

With covid-19, many people have regularly continued their lives in rural areas like the South Hebron Hills. The real difference was made by the fact that international activists, including Jews living abroad, could no longer enter the country because of Israel's very restrictive confinement measures that resulted in the total closure of its borders for almost two years – with short interruptions. This has meant that certain international organizations, such as the Italian Operation Dove, were forced to interrupt their long-lasting presence in the area. Interestingly, the result what that they were replaced by new groups of Israeli activists who could cross checkpoints and borders more easily. As reported by some activists:

> "My daughter started to be active two years ago; she and her boyfriend went with a small group of people, replacing the Italians who left South Hebron because of Covid." (IS18).

> "So, these young Israelis realized that no Italians were coming, and they organized to come here. And they went down to Massafer Yatta, and they started to work with local people. They developed this connection with us, with the local community and the local leadership. It worked tremendously." (P17).

It is quite intriguing to observe how the absence of an external 'mediator', such as an international actor, has had a contrary effect to what might have been expected. Instead of further dividing the two ethnonational groups, it has brought them closer together. The COVID-19 pandemic has also contributed to this closeness as Israeli activists, to avoid checks by the army, have been compelled to limit their travel, resulting in them spending extended periods living alongside Palestinian communities under the constant threat of demolition. I delve into this coalition and explore other aspects in the coming empirical Chapter. It is important to emphasize that despite the passing of the emergency phase and the current lack of an imminent demolition threat (although neighbouring areas to Susiya remain targeted), Israeli activists continue to actively engage and co-resistance alongside Palestinian activists.

3.2 #SaveSheikhJarrah – East Jerusalem

This section will be devoted to describing the history of Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood and its related campaign. Through a zoom-in process, I will start from the story of one of the most divided cities in the world, to then move on to recount the discrimination experienced by the Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem. From here, we will zoom in again to address the specific case and the history of the neighbourhood, the frequent settler attacks and the specific policies of the municipality of Jerusalem targeting that side of the city, to finally focus on the movement that developed in the neighbourhood, its features, and composition. From here, I will also try to expose the complexity of the large-scale protests

and mobilizations that involved the entire territory of Historic Palestine in 2021, leading to the firefight between Hamas and Israel.

3.2.1 Introduction: The Legal Status of Jerusalem

Since Israel was established in 1948, Jerusalem's diplomatic and international status has been controversial and contested. Neither violence nor proposed solutions – of which there were many throughout Jerusalem's long history – have brought peace to this divided city. On November 29, 1947, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 181 (11), known as "The Partition Plan." The resolution partitioned the British Mandate of Palestine into two states, one Arab and the other Jewish, with Jerusalem defined as a *corpus separatum* – a separate body under UN protection. The plan was never implemented. The Israeli War of Independence led to the city's division. When a cease-fire was reached, Israel controlled the western part of the city. In contrast, Jordan controlled the east side and Article 8 of UN Resolution 194 of 1948 established the demilitarization of Jerusalem and placed the city under United Nations control. In 1949 Israel's first Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion established Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, and the Jordanians annexed East Jerusalem, including the Old City.

During the Six-Day War in 1967, Israel occupied the West Bank and East Jerusalem – together with the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights. After the war, Israel redrew the boundaries of Jerusalem and applied Israeli law within the new boundaries. The new borders made East Jerusalem ten times bigger than the old Jordanian East Jerusalem. They included 28 Palestinian villages that were previously not part of the city and two refugee camps that became Jerusalem neighborhoods. The expansion of the city's boundaries and application of Israeli law was a *de facto* annexation, even though annexation was not declared out of fear of an international reaction. In November 1967, the UN passed Security Council Resolution 242 calling for an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, but Israel never accepted its validity for Jerusalem. At the same time, despite being annexed, the Palestinians who found themselves under Israeli rule did not receive full citizenship but only the status of permanent residents (Falk & Tilley, 2017, p. 12). This status gives them the same responsibilities as citizens but allows them to vote only in local elections and not in national ones, prevents them from holding Israeli passports and can be revoked if the resident stays out of town for a certain amount of time (Amnesty International, 2022). As it is evident, this system does not allow real citizenship and forces people to live constantly in the fear of having their status withdrawn. Therefore, deportations to the West Bank represent a clear racial discrimination on an ethnonational basis.

To establish Israeli rule over the Palestinian population that was resisting it, Israel used the colonial *divide et impera* strategy. On the one hand, it granted the Palestinians of Jerusalem more welfare services and rights than it did to the Palestinians under military occupation in the OPTs, but, on the other hand, any expression of Palestinian nationality was suppressed. The Israeli hold on the land was strengthened by the massive construction of neighbourhoods for Jewish residents in East Jerusalem. In 1980, the Knesset passed the Basic Law on Jerusalem, providing that "Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel" and "the seat of the President of the State, the Knesset, the Government and the Supreme Court." UN Security Council Resolution 478 completely rejected and denounced the 'Jerusalem law'. Subsequently, the first intifada that broke out in December 1987, as well as more recent events that are discussed subsequently, made clear that the Palestinian national and religious connections to Jerusalem are a fact that cannot be ignored (King, 2007).

3.2.1.1 Negotiations over Jerusalem until and after the Oslo accords

Israel refused direct negotiations with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) until 1993. Many reports said that the US State Department treated Jerusalem as "the J word," a subject whose very mention could foil negotiations and set the region on fire. The complexity of Jerusalem, in its municipal, religious, and governmental aspects, led the parties' representatives to believe that finding a model that would match the interests of all sides was doomed to fail (Brown, 2003). In 1993, the 'Oslo channel', which had been operating under a cloak of secrecy for several years, became public and the Israeli government officially joined the process. In September of that year, the discussions led to a joint declaration of principles by Israel and the PLO. They constituted an essential change in Israeli policies. For the first time, Israel showed a willingness to negotiate over Jerusalem as a political and national issue and not only as a religious issue. Nevertheless, even the Oslo Accords, a series of temporary interim agreements, stated that the question of Jerusalem would be postponed for further discussions over a final decision and only after an agreement was reached on the other subjects and trust was built between the sides. To break out of the cycle of futile discussions, in July 2000, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and PA Chairman Yasser Arafat met US President Bill Clinton at the Camp David state (Giacaman & Johnson, 1994). The question of Jerusalem, and especially the issue of Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif, became the focus of the summit meeting and the one of main reasons for its failure. The deadlock of the Camp David summit left a clear impression of an unbridgeable gap between Israel's most far-reaching offers and the Palestinians' minimal demands. The failure of the talks, along with the mistrust over the diplomatic stalemate during which construction of settlements accelerated, and opposition leader Ariel Sharon's provocative ascent of Temple Mount, set off the second Intifada, called the al-Aqsa Intifada, which

quickly escalated from popular protests that met strong Israeli repression to a second wave of terror aimed at Israeli civilians, in which one-third of casualties on the Israeli side were in Jerusalem (Hallward, 2011).

3.2.2 The Story of the Neighbourhood

Sheikh Jarrah is a Palestinian neighbourhood North of the Old City of Jerusalem. In the western portion of Sheikh Jarrah, close to the 1949 Armistice Line or Green Line, lies an 18-dunam (4.5-acre) area (and a settlement) known as Shimon HaTzadik (Simon the Just), after the Second Temple high priest believed to be buried there. This area has become a focal point of settler development plans in the city. Under contention are approximately 28 residential structures, currently housing descendants of 27 Palestinian families who arrived in 1956 (about 500 people) and 5-6 settler groups (about 30 people). Since 1972, Israeli settlers have been working to establish Jewish land claims and a Jewish presence in the area. Palestinian residents have faced legal challenges regarding land ownership and residency rights (Kedar, 2003). These legal battles have focused on three intertwined issues: 1) Legal recognition of land and building ownership; 2) Tenancy rights of the Palestinian residents; 3) Differential enforcement of the law regarding settlers and Palestinians living in the structures without legal recognition.

On August 28, 2008, Nahalat Shimon International, a settler-related real estate company, filed Town Plan Scheme (TPS) 12705 in the Jerusalem Local Planning Commission that involved the eviction of 500 Palestinians and the construction of a 200-unit settlement in its place: Shimon HaTzadik. On May 17, two Palestinian families from the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem received court orders to vacate their homes by July 19, 2009.

Figure 8 Sheikh Jarrah position in Jerusalem

Pre-1967, a small Jewish community established in the late 19th century around the site of the tomb was gradually abandoned starting from the period of the Arab revolts of the 1920s and '30s through the 1948 War of Independence. In the period of Jordanian rule from 1948 to 1967, the Jordanian government took control of these plots under the Enemy Property Law. In 1956, 28 Palestinian families who had been receiving refugee aid and assistance from UNRWA[29] were selected to benefit from a relief project in conjunction with the Jordanian Ministry of Development. According to the agreement, the families would forfeit their baskets of refugee assistance and pay token rent for three years until the ownership of the houses would transfer to their names. The houses, according to the agreement, would be built on "formerly Jewish property leased by the Custodian of Enemy Property to the Ministry of Development, for this project."[30] Three years passed, and ownership was not formally transferred to the families. This lack of evidence is precisely the ground on which Nahalat Shimon International has built the case against the Palestinian families living there.

In 1972, 27 families (one family had left of its own accord) received notice that rent was due to the Sephardic Community Committee and the Knesset Israel Committee—landlords they had not known they had. That year, the Committees initiated a process with the Israel Lands Administration (ILA) to register the lands in their names, based on 19th-century, Ottoman-era documents. Ten years later, in 1982, the two committees brought a legal case against 23 families for rent delinquency. Itzhak Toussia-Cohen, the lawyer representing the Palestinian families, did not contest the legitimacy of the Committees' ownership claims and instead arrived at a court-sanctioned agreement—a binding agreement that can be appealed only if proven to be based on false grounds—that secured "protected tenancy" status for residents[31]. Families claim Toussia-Cohen did not have their authorization to make such an agreement. The decision would serve as the legal precedent for rulings on subsequent appeals, including the present-day cases. Not wanting to authorize the Committees' ownership claims, most families refused to pay the rent. In 1997, following years of lawsuits filed for rent payment and eviction, a Palestinian Jerusalemite,

[29] The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is a UN agency dedicated to supporting the relief and human development of Palestinian refugees. Its mandate encompasses not only those displaced by the 1948 Palestine War and subsequent conflicts but also their descendants, including legally adopted children. As of 2019, UNRWA has registered over 5.6 million Palestinians as refugees. Established in 1949 by the UN General Assembly (UNGA), UNRWA was tasked with providing relief to all refugees resulting from the 1948 conflict. It also offered assistance to Jewish and Arab Palestine refugees within the State of Israel after the 1948 conflict until the Israeli government assumed responsibility for them in 1952. Being a subsidiary body of the UNGA, UNRWA's mandate undergoes periodic renewal every three years. Since its inception, it has consistently received extensions, most recently until 30 June 2023.

[30] Agreement Between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East for An Urban Housing Project at Sheikh Jarrah Quarter, Jerusalem," July 3, 1956.

[31] Under this classification, tenants and their cohabiting kin are guaranteed the security of living in their units so long as they pay rent and abide by rigid restrictions regarding maintenance and renovation.

Suleiman Al-Hijazi, filed a lawsuit that challenged the ownership claims of the Committees and asserted his ownership of the disputed territory. His case was rejected in 2002, as was its Supreme Court appeal four years later, and a Magistrate Court appeal was rejected on March 31, 2008. Though the Committees' ownership was not corroborated in a 2006 court decision, its official registration was never revoked, and subsequent rulings have reinforced the 1982 precedent[32].

In 1999, settler activity in the neighbourhood began in earnest; and has continued. The first group of settlers acquired one family's tenancy rights and subdivided the structure, to make room for additional families. Today a small playground stands on a formerly empty lot with a booth for an armed guard who provides settlers with 24-hour-a-day protection and reportedly prevents Palestinian children from playing on the playground. A second guard's booth stands above an adjacent structure. In 1999, following charges of rent delinquency and illegal renovation/construction, a part of the Al- Kurd family was forcefully evicted from the section they added to their home, and the section was sealed. Two years later, settlers illegally broke into the additional section and established their residence there[33].

On March 28, 2004, Mohammed and Fawzia Al-Kurd were ordered to evict the settlers from the added section of the house, demolish it, and seal any remaining openings[34]. The sentence was reiterated on February 25, 2007[35]. Being unable to demolish the house with the settlers inside it, the Al-Kurds repeatedly sought police assistance and filed requests and complaints with the district police. In November 2008, following the loss of a protracted appeals process, Fawzia and Mohammed Al-Kurd were forcefully evicted from their home.

[32] In November 2006, following a Magistrate Court decision, the Israel Lands Registry (ILR) received an order from the Lands Settlement Officer of the Court to cancel the Committees' ownership. The ILR failed to execute the officer's order and referred the case back to the court.
[33] The Al-Kurd's unit is adjacent a small bloc of settler residences, and settlers there marked the sixth group to move into the neighborhood. The event launched the Al-Kurds' story into the Palestinian media, which frames the story as symbolic of the Palestinian situation in Jerusalem. Here is the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KNqozQ8uaV8
[34] Criminal Case 2353/03.
[35] Civil Court of Local Affairs 2353/03.

Figure 9 Settlers' house in Sheikh Jarrah

One year later, in 2009, a whole series of protests began to try to avoid the eviction of these Palestinian families. Protests are characterized by a large participation of Israeli and international activists. Although repertoire and composition changed over time, from that moment on, *every Friday afternoon at 3 pm in winter and at 4 pm in summer*, regardless of the weather, political situations, or the re-activation of the conflict, a group of Palestinian and Israeli activists always meets to march in the neighbourhood streets. All of this refers to a buried and almost forgotten story of mobilizations that preceded the wave of protests that gave birth to the famous slogan #savesheikhjarrah and the resumption of the firefight between Hamas and Israel in May 2021.

3.2.3 Evolution of the protests

The news on Sheikh Jarrah's mobilizations, unlike the other two cases and campaigns, is very vibrant. First, because Sheikh Jarrah, being in East Jerusalem, has historically been a place of confrontation, even violence, both by some Palestinian armed groups and by organized settler gangs. Furthermore, following the expulsions of 2009, a protest movement was born, which has made its distinctive feature the recurring meeting in the streets of the neighbourhood to show solidarity with the families under eviction and ask the municipality to block this forced displacement. Differently from the results of the PEA for the Susiya case, more violent types of events were coded in this analysis, such as explosions, violent attacks against

Israeli and Palestinian civilians, and what I defined as " mob violence", i.e., attacks by groups of settlers against defenceless Palestinian residents.

Figure 10 Type of Event in Sheikh Jarrah

Although demolitions, Israeli High Court decisions, and settlement activities are events that refer to the same colonial matrix, they come from different actors, hence it is essential to recognize them as distinct. The Jerusalem government, the judiciary, and the settler organizations are all different bodies of the same matrix of oppression. Despite the high level of violence in the neighbourhood throughout the years, the most recurring type of event is peaceful protests, though often violently repressed by the Jerusalem police. Jerusalem police is sadly known to be one of the most violent in the world. For example, during the 2021 protests they used sewage water against demonstrators, residents and even houses as a new repressive technique. Interviewees reported that:

> "The smell did not go away for days, and my father and brother suffered severe infections after getting in contact with sewage water." (PA21)

I also coded 'explosion' as a different category because it seemed necessary to report separately those violent acts that clearly refer to a specific type of political violence that was much more frequent during the 80s and 90s than now. Instead, I coded Violence against Civilians to comprise actions by paramilitary groups organized against civilians (Israelis or Palestinians) in the neighbourhoods. I tend not to use the term 'terrorism' because of its Western connotation. As shown in Figure 11, most of the protests occur in conjunction with episodes of eviction and court decisions, attacks by settlers or actual demolitions. This is crystal clear in the period between 2008 and 2011.

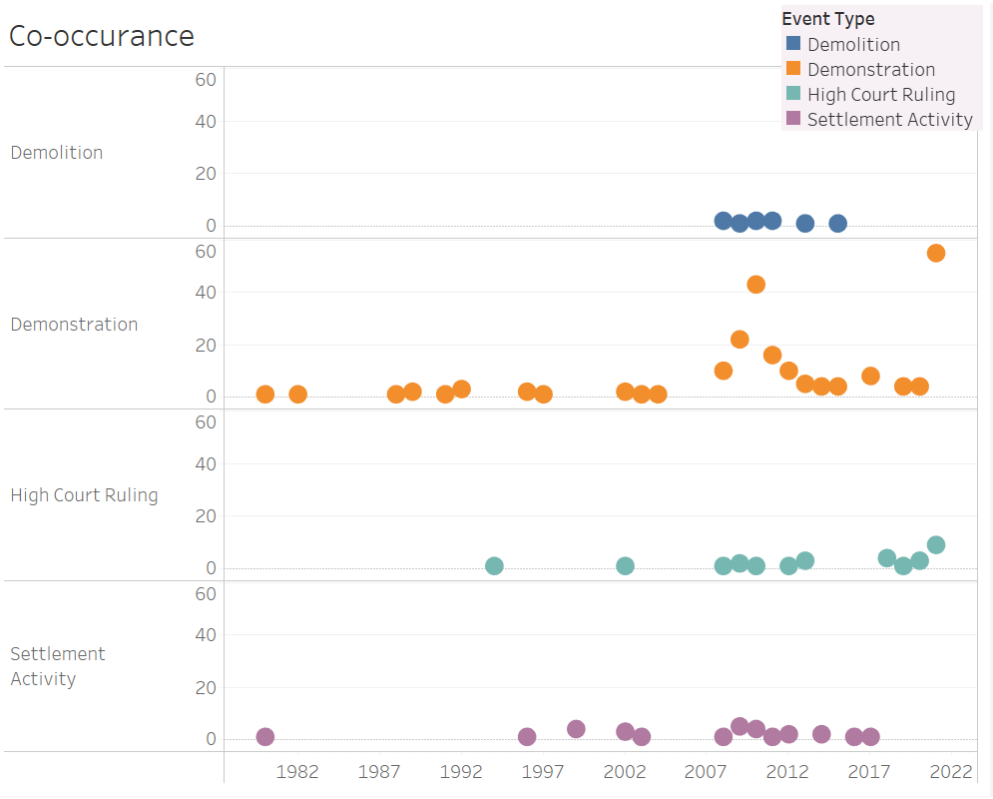


Figure 11 Co-occurrence of different events per year

Protests involving cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians in this neighbourhood are extremely frequent. In the empirical Chapter that will follow (Chapter 5), the dynamics and cycle of protests and how they have changed over time will also be explored. Going on with the content analysis on the news, we find out that following the eviction of the Al-Kurd family and other families in the eastern part of the neighbourhood, Mohammed Al-Khurd, who was chronically ill, died a few days later. As a form of protest, Mrs. Khurd, 63, his wife, started living in a tent on waste ground close to her former home. Israeli police tore down the tent several times, and she faced a series of fines from the Jerusalem municipality. The tent, built in 2009 and then called "solidarity tent", and then "*sumud*[36] tent", has become an emblematic site of protest where various activists met and slept to show solidarity with the families who had received the eviction order. The tent was put up repeatedly after every dismantlement until 2011 when the intensity of the protests gradually diminished. It is interesting to see how the "tool" of the tent, also preponderant in the mobilizations that followed, such as the Arab Uprising, for instance, with the occupation of Tahrir Square, or the Indignados at the Puerta del Sol, has taken up this re-appropriation

[36] Sumud (Arabic: صمود), meaning "steadfastness" is a Palestinian cultural value, ideological theme and political strategy that first emerged among the Palestinian people through the experience of resisting occupation in the wake of the 1967 Six-Day War.

of spaces (della Porta, 2014). However, it is evident that in this context, it mainly refers to a clear example of *sumud* trying, as will also be seen in the case of Susiya, to maintain native people roots in a land from which, starting from the Nakba and continuing nowadays, Palestinians have constantly been expelled (Johansson & Vinthagen, 2015).

The movement in question was therefore made up of Palestinian residents who then organized their resistance committee, Israeli leftist activists, who united under the name of "Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity" and the International Solidarity Movement, made up of internationals and Palestinians. Finally, several predominantly mixed civic organizations in Jerusalem joined in a more or less formal way and participated in this first campaign.

The protests of 2021 are, instead a substantially different type of collective action. The evictions of Sheikh Jarrah represented a pretext for a "crisis", understood in the Gramscian sense, and a critical juncture to relaunch the Palestinian movement in a stronger and more resonant way. It will be seen in the analytical part, with the support of the PEA data corroborated by the interviews, how, after 2011/2012, the protests started to reduce in size. However, a core group of activists remained to mobilize every Friday and continued to do so until today. Instead, all of this was “shadowed” in the protests of 2021 when, with the rekindling of the conflict, the struggle for Sheikh Jarrah again became a national struggle, defined as the Unity Intifada (Tatour, 2021).

3.2.4 The First Encounter

Jabril, resident of Sheikh Jarrah, recalls how the first encounter with Israeli activists:

> "They came to my house, I remember it perfectly, they were a girl and a boy, young, wearing jeans, she was curly with blond hair, and they said to me: ‘we want to help you, what can we do?’ At first, I was sceptical, rumours began to circulate about the importance of non-normalization. But was this normalization? They were just a boy and a girl. And I told them: ‘let's have some tea and see what we can do together’. (PA27)

He went on to say that, since then, the movement and support from both Israeli and international activists has expanded and proved crucial. Unfortunately, however, the increased involvement of NGOs has led to the creation of resentment, especially against some Israeli peace organizations that have been accused of "appropriating" Sheikh Jarrah's cause as a standard-bearer of left-wing Liberal Zionism. In 2008-2011, Sheikh Jarrah was identified as a bulwark of the Israeli left to safeguard Israeli democracy. Then, only ten years later, the same neighbourhood became the emblem of the Palestinian national struggle. A campaign can be filled with very different symbolic meanings depending on who is leading it. However, I refer the reader to the analytical Chapter for further consideration. As mentioned by an Israeli activist:

"In November/December 2009, Israelis started to get more involved in Sheikh Jarrah, and they were there literally every night for protective presence. I came back at the end of February, the beginning of March 2010. I left Israel and went for a period in India because I was very disappointed by the political scene in Israel. Everything was crumbling, Netanyahu was elected again, and I started to have doubts. And three days after arriving in Israel, I went to the first demonstration in Sheikh Jarrah just to check it, to look, to see what was going on. And I was quite impressed. The first impression was that, yes, something quite big was going on. And after some years in which the Israeli left was under the ground, the first impression when you arrived there was that you could really see what cooperation between the Palestinians and the Israelis really is. And so that's how it started. At the same time, I didn't want to get too much involved. I could not imagine that it would have remained such a big part of my life". (IS21)

Erik is one of those persons who started working with the resident of Sheikh Jarrah at the beginning of the campaign and remained involved until now. His testimony, as well as the one of Jibril, was essential in reconstructing the beginning of the campaign. Most other Palestinian activists have always preferred to keep vague about the initiation of this cooperation as if it was something they were not proud to discuss. This was due to the fact, as it will be explored in Chapter 5, that a certain segment of the new generation of Palestinian activists considers the coalition of the residents and certain Israeli activist groups and NGOs as a type of normalization of relations with the occupier.

3.2.5 The perfect Storm

Much has been written about how the outbreak of protests to avoid the eviction of Sheikh Jarrah's Palestinian families led to the escalation of violence between Hamas and Israel between May and June 2021. However, most of the news outlets omitted that even before the Israeli High Court's decision to issue the eviction order for Sheikh Jarrah residents, protests had already started at the Damascus Gate. Damascus Gate is a symbolic site for the Palestinian residents living in Jerusalem, representing the key to a real understanding of the events. There is a deep relationship between the Palestinian inhabitants of the Old City and the public space that surrounds their homes: a relationship that even Palestinians living outside the walls often underestimate. Beyond the evident religious and national sentiments that the inhabitants of the Old City feel towards their hometown, they consider its public spaces as their own courtyards, where they meet among terraces and balconies until late at night during summer and Ramadan. These traditions, and the way of living in the Old City, also refer to a culture and memory that predates the Israeli Occupation of the city. Several historians recall how, before the foundation of the state of Israel, artists from all over the Arab world came to the streets of Jerusalem to perform in theatres but, above all, in front of the Damascus Gate (Nasser, 2006). The Damascus Gate - or Bab Al-Amoud, as Palestinians call it - has become a place of gathering and social life. Young people gather there, eat sweets and smoke. Over the years, the amphitheatre-shaped square has re-become the stage for cultural

performances, musical events, street art demonstrations and traditional dances, even for parkour[37]. All of that changed on the first day of Ramadan in April 2021, when Israeli authorities prevented people from gathering around the grand stairways (which Old Jerusalemites simply call “the chairs”) by putting up some metal barriers and allowing access only on foot via small steps. Palestinian youth regarded this measure as a provocation and started staging nightly demonstrations to reclaim their space (Fabian, 2021).

Figure 12 Bab Al-Amoud during a Ramadan night taken from a local bus that took one hour to pass through the festive crowd. Taken the 1st of April 2022

After a few days, the Palestinian community gathered around the cause of the young people, and the desire and commitment to organize a form of peaceful protest increased. The requests were clear: removing the barriers around the stairs and reopening the "chairs" area. The Israeli police have tried several times to convince the young people to accept the closure of the stairs. However, this turned out to be in vain. The breaking point came when groups of ultra-nationalist Israelis got together and marched into the city to the cry of "Death to the Arabs", before clashes broke out in the streets of Jerusalem with the Israeli army (Farrell & Ayyub, 2021). On April 22, the situation escalated. About 120 Palestinians were injured overnight. The demonstrations multiplied and intensified. Two days later, on Sunday evening, the police decided to withdraw the barriers and open the steps of the Damascus Gate (Monitor, 2021). Jerusalemites of all ages and origins flocked to the square to celebrate the event for an exceptional night of celebration. It was only a small victory, but 13 nights of continuous demonstrations had finally brought about a result, and the city's most important social space for Palestinians had finally reopened.

[37] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9f43JQTvE5w

This small conquest meant that large masses of people were already at Damascus Gate to celebrate the end of the fast and Ramadan every evening. Damascus Gate is a ten-minute walk from the Sheikh Jarrah district. In this way, it was possible to mobilize a mass of people that was already partially mobilized for circumstantial reasons. However, this also meant that the Jerusalem police, already deployed in the streets of the city to repress the protests against the closure of the Damascus gate were ready to take action on other fronts. Hence, the front of the confrontation, a few days later, moved to Sheikh Jarrah: on the 6 May 2021 (WAFA, 2021), the first eviction order for some families was issued; on May 7, in order to clear the place, the army entered Temple Mount – a sacred place of Muslims – and clashes began (Holmes & Beaumont, 2021).

Here, Palestinian residents were subjected to military violence by the army and by armed settlers, who attacked civilians gathered at large outdoor tables to celebrate the breaking of the fast (iftar) together as a sign of solidarity with the threatened families. On May 6, the Israeli army deployed in force to protect Knesset member Itamar Ben Gvir, a far-right politician who, in a provocative and extremely offensive move, decided to move his office to a house under settler occupation. By now, he is a member of the government (Sauvage, 2021). Once again, the Army served to defend the group of settlers. After this event, Israeli and Palestinian activists gathered in a joint protest. Quite a few come from Tel Aviv. Some wear *kufieh* around their necks. Others beat drums rhythmically, still others hold up placards against the Israeli occupation. Five Knesset MPs also participated, three Palestinians: Sami Abu Shehadeh, Ahmed Tibi and Osama Saadi, and two Jews: Ofer Cassif and Mossi Raz (whom I also had the opportunity to interview during my fieldwork). Cassif, a communist deputy, was beaten by policemen in Sheikh Jarrah some weeks before. His denunciation garnered scant empathy in a right-dominated Knesset that sympathises with the settlers' ambitions (Gharabli, 2021).

Figure 13 Ben Gvir "office" in Sheikh Jarrah. Taken the 2nd of May 2022

Tensions finally degenerated into a real armed conflict which saw Hamas open fire on May 10 against Israel, which, in turn, immediately responded with the "Guardian of the Walls" operation, conducting massive air attacks in the Strip of Gaza. On May 21, 2021, on the eleventh day of bombings that caused thousands of civilian injuries and hundreds of deaths, especially in the Gaza Strip, Israel and Hamas reached a ceasefire agreement. However, the respite from the bombings does not allay a conflict that sees the Palestinian population latently daily as the victim of conduct contrary to international humanitarian law (Al-Jazeera, 2021).

What is important to keep in mind reading the empirical Chapter and which differs from what is reported by the mainstream media is that: 1) the raid into Temple Mount was the pretext that moved Hamas to act and not the evictions in Jerusalem - nevertheless, Jerusalem is a political cause deeply felt by the Palestinians on which it is easy to leverage; 2) many of those who participated in the protests were already part of the movement against the fences from Damascus Gate; 3) the Israeli left both through its representatives in the Knesset and with the movement that has always mobilized in support of Sheikh Jarrah has participated – even if often omitted by most of the newspaper and social media. These three facts, presumably overlooked by the mainstream reconstruction. are what allows us to introduce the concept of *shadowing* as a mechanism used in this campaign in Chapter 5.

3.3 The Coalition of Women for Peace: A Civic Alternative in the Israeli Society

Recently, mainstream publications in International Relations and Conflict Resolution have emphasized the importance of recognition and reconciliation in achieving peaceful resolutions for ethnonational conflicts. To ensure the effectiveness of these efforts, two crucial elements have been highlighted. Firstly, there is a need to prioritize acknowledging historical truth and responsibility concerning the past. Secondly, persistent power imbalances between the conflicting parties must be overcome.

In the context of the Israeli-Palestinian issue, proponents of the 'peace camp' have anticipated a suitable approach known as 'sustained dialogue.' This approach aims to foster encounters between Israeli Jews and Palestinians, to promote understanding and familiarity with each other. However, the involvement of both sides in the political processes associated with the 'institutional peace work' has not been equally balanced. This background highlights the complexity of linking theoretical concepts with real-world empirical evidence (Daniele, 2014). This attempt includes the Israeli Women's Peace movement and the Coalition of Women for Peace. As the empirical Chapters show, the effort to create shared spaces where women of different ethnonational backgrounds could work, and converse together has sometimes succeeded and sometimes failed. Unlike the campaigns described in the other empirical Chapters, the Women's Pacifist Movements have important qualitative differences that have made the alliance-making effort more difficult at certain times. The Chapter is based on sixteen interviews with former coalition activists from different organizations and four interviews with people who did not take part directly in the coalition but have mobilized in the Peace Movement from different sides and perspectives. Most of the activists participated together at different times as they joined and then drifted apart depending on the directions the Coalition took.

Before the interviews, a questionnaire was submitted to Israeli women's organizations that took part in different moments of its life or coordinated with the Coalition at a certain point of their work. Hence, data was collected on the activities, the repertoires of the organizations, and their coalitional strategies but above all, network data was gathered concerning their collaborations and cooperation. This data will be analysed as a first step to understanding the general women's peace movement in Israel, and then I will zoom in on the coalition and its participants. However, the data that refer to the network analysis is not presented here due to space constraints. Furthermore, a triangulation occurred through the analysis of documents produced by the coalition, articles relating to the coalition and its work and a Protest Event Analysis (PEA) that have underlined the coalition's work and activities through the years.

3.3.1 Palestinian and Israeli Feminisms

The first women's mobilisations orbited in the realm of the national Zionist movement. Though women's organizations of the first wave, like the Women International Zionist Organization (WIZO), Emunah and NA'AMAT have been operating since the 1920s, the public image formed of them at the time was generally that of philanthropic organizations dealing mostly with the operation of clubs for women, day-care and kindergartens, and less one of feminist organizations striving for social change (Abramovitch, 2008, p. 21). The women's movement developing in Israel was earlier inspired by the 60s waves of Western feminist movements. One of the key novelties of that period was the formation of outside-the-establishment and new women's organizations (NGOs) influenced by new radical feminist stances. Women in Tel Aviv and Haifa formed the Feminist Movement in Israel, which, despite attempting to work in a national framework, concentrated in the main cities. In the same period, the Peace Movement, the Mizrahi Protest Movement and the Feminist Movement all started operating (Stagni, 2022). In 1977, following prolonged action, the Knesset adopted the recognition of the right to free abortion by law, and for many women, it was the first experience of the impact of their own activity on the public and the political system (Abramovitch, 2008, p. 23). Since the mid-nineties, a clearer stance against Eurocentrism and Orientalism (the stereotypical image of the "black" Oriental as was fixated in Western cultures in general and in Zionism in particular) was taken. Following the endeavour of Mizrahi, Palestinian and lesbian feminists in Israel, the "Quarters System" was introduced in order to ensure appropriate representation to the different sectors: Mizrahi, Palestinian citizens of Israel, Lesbian and Ashkenazi women (Abramovitch, 2008, p. 26).

As for the Palestinian feminist movement, first, we need to address the non-neutral character that the term *feminism* carries: many women, in Palestine and more generally in the Arab world, while putting in place practices that could be defined as feminists, reject this definition considering it an expression of western processes. It is, therefore, convenient to pay more attention to the practices implemented, considering the complex issue of self-definition.

The struggle of Palestinian women and their organization in a vast array of groups and associations began between the end of the 19th century and the early 20th century, fitting into a regional framework characterized by the formation of nationalist movements in most of the Middle Eastern areas, which claim the independence of their countries from the colonial powers. In the 1920s, the first structured organizations saw the light and in 1921the Union of Palestinian Arab Women was established. In 1929, the first Conference of Arab Women in Palestine, which saw the participation of over 300 female

activists, and the structuring of the Women's Committee, which would join the nascent revolts against Jewish immigration, took place (Fleischmann, 2003). To see the first armed women's groups constituted, we had to wait for the 1930s, when the "Great Revolt" (1936-1939) erupted. Organized and conducted in the countryside, the uprising immediately sees active female participation. While women take up arms in the countryside, in the main cities they give life to over 200 women's organizations. However, it was 1948, the year of the Nakba, that redefined their role in the public and private spheres.

On the one hand, the diasporic condition lays the foundations for greater female involvement in the job market: thousands of families forced to find shelter in refugee camps with no more sources of livelihood will see in women the possibility of carrying out menial tasks necessary for survival (Sayigh R. , 2007). However, a turning point in political and theoretical elaboration certainly was the 1960s and 1970s, when a new generation of activists - through an intersectional approach that takes into account class differences, and which moves from the cities towards rural environments to involve women - understands the need to intertwine action plans. The activists, who set up the Women's Work Committees, adopted the reading according to which colonial and patriarchal oppression are interconnected part of the same system (Jad, 1999). During the first Intifada, women's committees were born within the framework of the People's Committees that lead the resistance, as well as women's cooperatives that manage the production cycle of basic necessities, with the dual purpose of boycotting the economy of the occupying power and making the female workers, in a perspective of conflictual mutualism and emancipation. Parties, trade unions, structured organizations see the birth of women's groups that clamour for their right to speak (Abdo, 1994). It will, in fact, be the gradual process of institutionalization of the resistance and the passage from the anti-colonial dimension to that of state-building, which will reconfigure the Palestinian national liberation struggle in its entirety, and within it, that of women's and feminist movements. Women's political de-politicization has followed the Oslo Process, and women have increasingly retrieved from the public space since then (Hawari, The Political Marginalization of Palestinian Women in the West Bank, 2019). However, in 2019 Tal'at has brought feminism back to the core of Palestinian Liberation (Stagni, 2023).

3.3.2 Jewish Palestinian Partnership

Women in both Palestine and Israel tend to be more active in NGOs and extra-parliamentary politics than in formal party politics. One reason for this is the same for both societies. Despite the different histories and circumstances, male domination and sexism created a "blocked opportunities" for women to join the formal political arena. There are, of course, other reasons, like women tending to outnumber men in

formalized NGOs. However, as it will be shown later, certain kind of grassroots activism tend to exclude women equally. One broad generalization that can be made is that, whether by choice or imposition, most women peace activists may be found in all-women's groups or encounters. Women's joint activities began in the Mid-1980s.

However, examples of cooperation pre-date 1948. In the early 1900s, Muslim and Christian women started to launch joint associations such as the League for Arab-Jewish Friendship founded in 1921 (Daniele, Women, reconciliation and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: the road not yet taken, 2014, p. 96). Other academics have investigated other similar cases, but research on the issue remains scarce. In addition, in 1948, there was the first joint political organization still standing nowadays: TANDI, the Movement of Democratic Women for Israel. As some branches of the Israeli Communist Party, in which Jewish and Palestinian advocated for a bi-national, democratic and secular state, TANDI also introduced internal discussions on equal standing between Palestinians and Israelis. In the 80s 90s, more initiatives of this kind were developed, although most of them did not address the root of inequality directly. Daniele (2014) perfectly underlines their limits in her book. The study of the Coalition of Women for Peace will add a further piece to better understand these alliances.

3.3.3 The Coalition of Women for Peace

The Coalition of Women for Peace (CWP) was a campaign based in Israel that challenged a fundamental principle of Israeli society known as the "Nation-in-Arms" concept. Activists recognized that the military had become a central institution in Israeli society, playing a constructive role in the nation-building process. The CWP identified this model, characterized by a militaristic culture, and developed strategies to demilitarize Israeli society and contribute to its progress. The emphasis on the military and security concerns inherent in this model influenced the national collective identity, where all public issues were framed in terms of "national security." This model also significantly impacted the construction of gender roles, as the duties of fighting versus nurturing were intertwined with notions of masculinity and femininity in societies mobilizing for war.

According to Bercovitch (1999), being a good citizen was evaluated based on one's contribution to national security, highlighting the consequences of this military culture. In this context, a good male citizen was perceived as a brave soldier, while a good female citizen was expected to be a beloved mother confined to the margins of the public sphere. The CWP, along with other feminist and anti-occupation movements, transformed the women's peace movement into a distinct phenomenon within the Israeli Left. Women's peace movements emerged in response to the Lebanon War in June 1982, with two

distinct cycles of activism. The first cycle started after the outbreak of the first Palestinian Intifada in January 1988 and ended with the signing of the Oslo Agreement in 1994. The second cycle responded to the Second Intifada al-Aqsa in October 2000 and remains active, albeit past its peak.

Established in 2000, the CWP, like many other New Social Movements (NSMs) in the West, resulted from various personal networks that brought together individual women and women from ten different peace organizations, allowing for multiple and overlapping memberships. The Coalition engaged in demonstrations and campaigns primarily within Israel but also participated in mobilizations and actions in the Occupied Territories. The Coalition's main repertoire of actions can be observed in a graph resulting from the PEA (Political Event Analysis). Figure 14 depicts the main types of actions reported in the news, although the questionnaire presented in the empirical Chapter revealed other prominent forms of action. Demonstrations were the most frequently reported, followed by various campaign activities, petitions, and conferences. Additionally, the Coalition was involved in a legal case due to their support for the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) movement and organized workshops and activities to engage Israeli civil society.

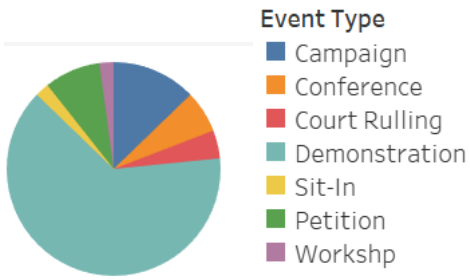


Figure 14 CWP Repertoire of Action

The main result of the coalition was the launch of a new independent project that, differently from the coalition, still exists. As mentioned by one of the Palestinian funders involved in the Coalition the process of institutionalization that the Coalition has undertaken in a second phase allowed for the creation of more stable projects and to have a paid staff. However, it also changed the very nature of the Coalition:

"So, there was a need for more political discourse, for more feminist political discourse in the surrounding and we realized, we concluded that we need to coordinate all the work and there was also a lot of women's organizations working on the subject and on the issue of ending the occupation. But each one is in its own area or on its own agenda. That is why there was a need for bringing all these voices together. And in fact, this is why we began the Coalition of Women for Peace. First, there was a reaction that that field of activism exists, and second that there was the need for a feminist voice to answer what was happening with the Second Intifada. And when we saw that there was something big happening within the Occupied Territories and we had something to say

about it and to the Israeli public opinion. This was the main reason why we came together. Then, unfortunately, the process of NGO-ization of the Coalition started and it shifted the work of the Coalition from pure activism to activism that is more organized by an organization with a director and a staff and with fundraisers and this is a very different type of work. It is good because we also had our own organizations and it meant liberating some of us from taking responsibility for every demonstration, for every action, for every activity, for every petition, but on the other hand, you lose something, I do not know how to explain it. It is a dynamic that happened very often." (PA 20)

In the analytical Chapter concerning this case, the creation of the Coalition and the initial conflicts and discussions on the nature of the Coalition are reported and scrutinised much more thoroughly. The Coalition was able to have a far-reaching extension in geographical terms. Although most of their activities took place in Tel Aviv, they also organised demonstrations at checkpoints in Ramallah and other parts of Israel and the West Bank. What emerged from the news is that they mobilised with a variety of groups that do not relate to the feminist movement. The following image (Figure 15) shows that Tel Aviv is certainly the most recurrent location. However, activities have taken part also in other Israeli cities (such as Haifa, Jaffa, Yad Mordechai), Palestinian cities (Hebron, Jericho, Bil'in, Ramallah and Qalandiya) and Jerusalem. New York also emerged because they organized several conferences and workshops in the US, where the Jewish community is comparatively large.

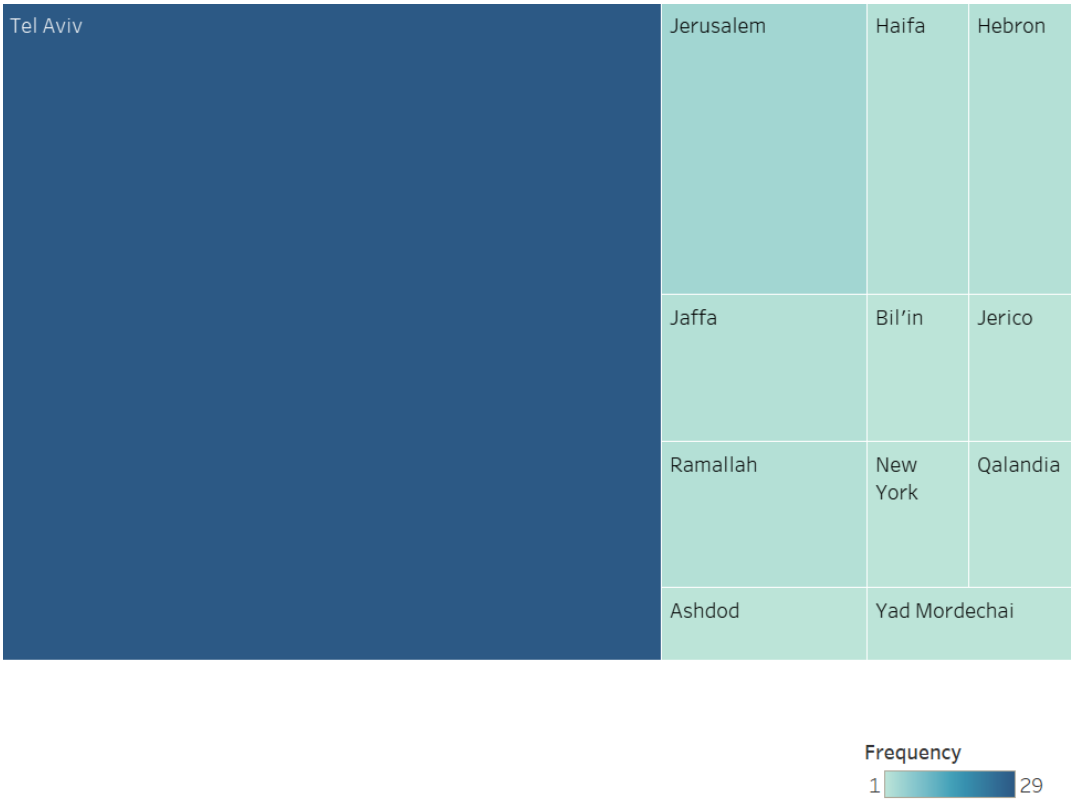


Figure 15 Location of CWP Activities

3.3.4 Who Profits: the Child of the CWP and the BDS

Who Profits was established in 2007 as a research project affiliated with the Coalition of Women for Peace (CWP), a feminist, Palestinian-Jewish organization dedicated to opposing the occupation. The project responded to the Palestinian call for the boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel. While they officially joined the BDS campaign in 2010, it was not until 2013 that Who Profits, due to its growth and professionalization as a research centre, as well as the loss of some donors for CWP due to BDS activities, separated from CWP and became an independent organization. However, Who Profits and CWP maintained a collaborative relationship as sister organizations.

Who Profits does not publicly disclose its staff members on its website or in its communications. Their primary objective is to expose the involvement of Israeli and international companies in the ongoing Israeli control over Palestinian and Syrian land. They focus on three main areas of corporate complicity in the occupation: the settlement industry, economic exploitation, and population control. Who Profits initiated several boycott campaigns against Israeli and foreign banks, security companies, and private corporations. They support BDS campaigns worldwide by identifying target companies. These groups utilize social media to promote the BDS campaign and are frequently referenced in reports calling for boycotts or divestment from Israel. Their status as a registered Israeli non-governmental organization (NGO) grants them a unique position among BDS supporters. However, this has led to various legal challenges and a loss of widespread support and funding for CWP.

The analysis reveals the legal issues faced by the Coalition. In 2013, the Israeli government passed a law prohibiting support for BDS. A parliamentary commission approved a bill imposing heavy fines on Israeli citizens who "initiate or incite" boycotts against Israel due to its illegal occupation of Palestinian territories. The Knesset approved the bill, initiated by Likud, National Union, and Kadima MPs. Any group could sue for damages of up to 30,000 shekels (£5,150) from individuals or organizations involved in boycott activities without having to prove actual damage. The Coalition appealed this decision but failed. The BDS ended up being deemed illegal within Israel as a result. Consequently, they had to pay fines to the companies they accused of profiting from the Occupation. These fines, combined with the overall decline in funding and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, led to the dissolution of the Coalition in 2020.

The analysis will delve into different aspects of the Coalition, specifically examining its shortcomings in engaging Palestinians living in the occupied Palestinian territories (OPTs) and Israel. Additionally, it will explore the role of gender in activism more broadly.

3.3.5 The Overall Landscape of the Israeli Women's Movement: Findings from the Preliminary Questionnaire

"The Women Peace Movement in Israel is a complicated thing. It is not one thing because there are new groups now, that they say are for "peace", but they are not talking about the Occupation. This does not make any sense: you cannot be in the Peace Movement and ignore the Occupation. There is no peace BECAUSE there is the Occupation" (IS6)

The primary focus of the questionnaire centred on exploring the themes of alliances and strategies that promote the initiation of collaborations within the Israeli Women's Movement. Existing literature suggests that women from diverse sides of ethnonational conflicts have found it comparatively easier to engage in peace efforts through a feminist/female lens. This is exemplified by cases such as Northern Ireland (Sharoni, 1997; Cowell-Meyers, 2014; Deiana, 2016) and ex-Yugoslavia (Touquet, 2015; Deiana, 2016) as well as Uganda (Nabukeera-Musoke, 2009; Wijeyaratne, 2009), Congo (Wijeyaratne, 2009) and Lebanon (Nagle, 2016). Notably, the groups facing significant challenges in working together are precisely those in which racial and class divisions intersect with gender solidarity, resembling the landscape of American feminism (Greenwood, 2008; Reger, 2002) more than movements in ethnonational conflicts. In the context of the U.S. feminist movement, new forms of identity politics began to surface in response to the concerns raised by certain women, particularly lesbians and women of colour, who felt marginalized and underrepresented within existing notions of feminism (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 2022). The contemporary challenge faced by feminist movements in North America and Western societies revolves around the issue of multiple identities as they grapple with the question of how to acknowledge and embrace diversity while also fostering unity among women, often excluding men (Musil, 1990; Schacht & Ewing, 1998).

The questionnaire aimed to explore the dynamics of cooperation and alliance-building among women's organizations in Israel. It sought to understand how and when organizations come together for shared causes or campaigns and how they engage different women's groups to form cross-community alliances. The overarching goal was to understand how Women's organizations within Israeli borders collaborate and organize themselves to achieve their objectives. By taking gender seriously, we delve into a range of behaviours, social norms, value systems, thought patterns, and relationships that shape our experiences, understanding, and self-identification as men and women. Examining the evolving notions of femininity, masculinity, and gender relations can provide valuable insights into the complex processes

of constructing and transforming identities. These processes are crucial for understanding both the potential and challenges in peace-building efforts.

The survey revealed an intriguing finding: a significant number of organizations emerged during the Second Intifada. While caution is necessary for generalizing from these results, the literature suggests that this pattern reflects broader trends and dynamics within the Israeli context (Hallward, 2011; Hermann, 2009; Maoz, 2004) agrees on the relevance and importance of this period on many joint and peace organizations. Gawerc (2019) clearly underlines that it was precisely with the second Intifada that most of movement and NGOs members started to discuss power asymmetry between the two ethnonational groups.

"It is important to say that when the second Intifada broke out in 2000 there was a lot of tension between Jewish and non-Jewish people inside Israel. And a lot of collaboration broke down during this period. Especially at the beginning of the Second Intifada. Because of a lot of reasons of course. There is never one reason for things. So, for instance we did not break down, I mean the second Intifada did not break us, but it led to a very hard and painful discussion between us. Like which side do we take who do you trust, who you do not trust." (IS14)

Furthermore, the Second Intifada exacerbated divisions and territorial barriers, making it increasingly challenging to maintain cooperation. Movement restrictions and legal constraints on working with individuals in the Occupied Territories effectively brought many collaborations to an end.

"After the second intifada, in 2000, meeting with Palestinians in the Occupied Territories became illegal because it became illegal to go there, it became illegal to come from there to here, so, for instance, a lot of collaboration that was taking place before the Second Intifada, and there were a lot of collaborations between Palestinian women and Israel women, they almost completely disappeared after the Second Intifada. Partially because of what happened during the Second Intifada but also partially because of what happened after the Intifada. I think there was a very active role that the Israeli government played in separating the women in this regard. Not just the women but also peace activists in general. You can even look for instance to the new generation of peace movement and the older activists have many more Palestinian friends, friends who live in the Territories, than the younger ones. Because they could meet, simply because of that. We could not meet anymore after the Second Intifada. It was no longer allowed, it was forbidden. Then I think there was much more radicalization maybe, also on the Palestinian side, with what they call anti-normalization. So also, many Palestinians stop collaborating with Israelis because they started to think it was not useful." (IS13).

This testimony encompasses various factors contributing to the termination of cooperations, including the disruptive impact of the Second Intifada as a critical juncture, the Israeli government's implementation of the Separation Wall to physically segregate the Occupied Territories, the resulting travel restrictions imposed on Palestinians, and the Palestinian anti-normalization stance. However, it

fails to acknowledge other factors that specifically affected women's mobilization. During that period, several organizations recognized the deteriorating democratic and human rights situation in Israel, leading them to view it as an opportunity to mobilize around women-peace activism. They understood the growing threat to mobility and civil rights in general. Unfortunately, the space for these initiatives became even more limited with establishing the Separation Wall in 2006 and launching the international BDS campaign. As observed in this initial analysis, perceived and real threats played a pivotal role in initiating new women-peace initiatives and coalitions. However, the increasingly complex political landscape and the narrowing of political opportunities, driven by the rise of right-wing sentiments in Israel, hindered the possibility of forming cross-difference alliances within the women-peace movement.

Most of the organizations surveyed expressed that their primary focus is on women. Six of the fifteen organizations stated that they target both Israeli and Arab-Palestinian women residing in Israel. It is worth noting that collaboration with women's organizations in the Territories is currently extremely uncommon. All the organizations identified themselves as part of the Feminist movement. Except for three organizations, all of them also mentioned their affiliation with the Peace Movement. Two organizations highlighted their commitment to queer rights, while one organization mentioned its association with Zionism and nationalism. Interestingly, none of the organizations identified as part of the environmental movement.

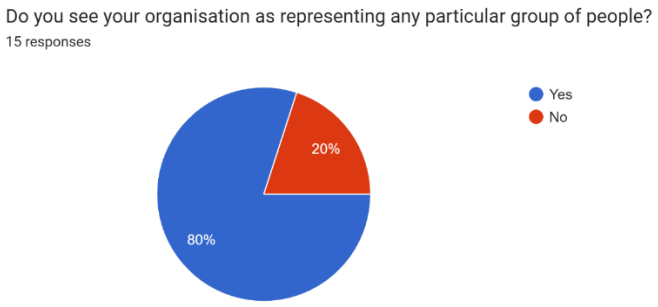


Figure 16 Question 8 of the Questionnaire

Of all the organizations surveyed, only two identified themselves as having a close association with a religious group. Similarly, just one organization felt aligned with a specific political party, namely Meretz. It is noteworthy to mention that one of the founders of the Coalition had previously been involved with the Meretz party, indicating the continued significance of Meretz and Hadash as political references within the movement. Meretz emerged as a prominent actor also in the campaign of Sheikh Jarrah.

One of the key aspects addressed in the questionnaire pertains to the topics and issues that could potentially facilitate the formation of inter-communal coalitions and collaborations. This aspect holds particular importance and will be further explored in the final part of this dissertation. While certain matters are non-negotiable and intrinsically linked to the conflict, there are also areas where different ethnonational groups may be more inclined to cooperate. In terms of common ground, women's groups widely agree on two major issues: 1) combating violence against women, and 2) promoting women's empowerment in the workplace. However, the acceptance of homosexual rights is subject to negotiation, and not all organizations are willing to actively work on this matter. The same holds true for topics like abortion and the environment. A significant majority of organizations emphasize the importance of safeguarding minority rights, and they express support for initiatives aimed at empowering Palestinian women in the West Bank. However, there is a red line when it comes to engaging with women living in settlements. This stance is primarily rooted in the belief that illegal settlements pose a hindrance to peace talks. Notably, some organizations within the Coalition comprise members who are both Israelis and Palestinians from the 1948 territories. In light of this, a Palestinian activist who has participated in numerous joint initiatives and also took part in the questionnaire made it explicitly clear that working with women from settlements has always been a red line for her.

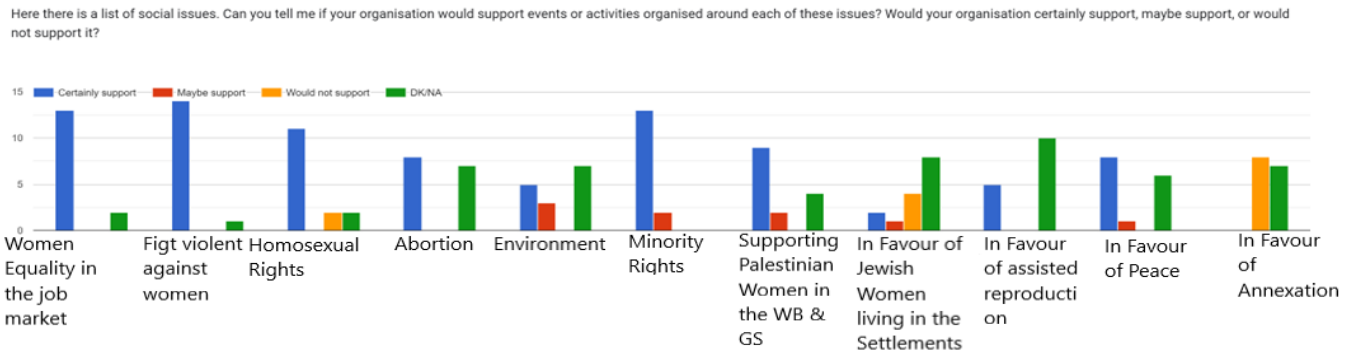


Figure 17 Question 15 of the Questionnaire

"Once we had to present a very important document for a campaign concerning empowering women in politics to the Israeli government, and to be able to do so, some Israeli-Jewish women invited many women's organizations, all activists, including women from the settlements, from the Occupied Territories, the illegal settlements that are built in the Occupied Territories. And this, for us ['48 Palestinians] was a red line that we could no longer stay in that campaign. Some of us tried to continue with the project, because it was a good project, I am not saying it was not good. But there was no discussion around Occupation it was not even existing. I mean the women from the settlements did not want to speak about that, because is not Occupation for them, it is liberation and Eretz Israel.

So even from the very beginning, we could not be equal partners of these women. In such a campaign they negated our identity as Palestinians, and those who remained did that by extension. Some of us who even tried to be there, and stay with goodwill or were naive enough, I do not know, with the hope that this would enable them to bring the discourse and the issue of occupation on the table eventually, mostly realized that it was impossible. And this is why they went out of that is also why we found the need to have an alternative campaign and not only among Palestinian women who left and went out of the campaign, I mean, also Israeli progressive organizations. I was part of the Coalition of Women for Peace, but I was there as a representative of my organization, but also the CWP left, and also Isha Lisha, which also was part of the Coalition. At first the CWP remained, actually, but sadly, as I anticipated they found themselves on the margin of the discussion and they realized they could not influence the discussion in any way, so they decided to leave as well (PA10)".

Based on this testimony, it becomes evident why cooperation with organizations that fail to recognize the violence and injustice inherent in the Occupation becomes impossible and, I would argue, even contradictory to feminist principles.

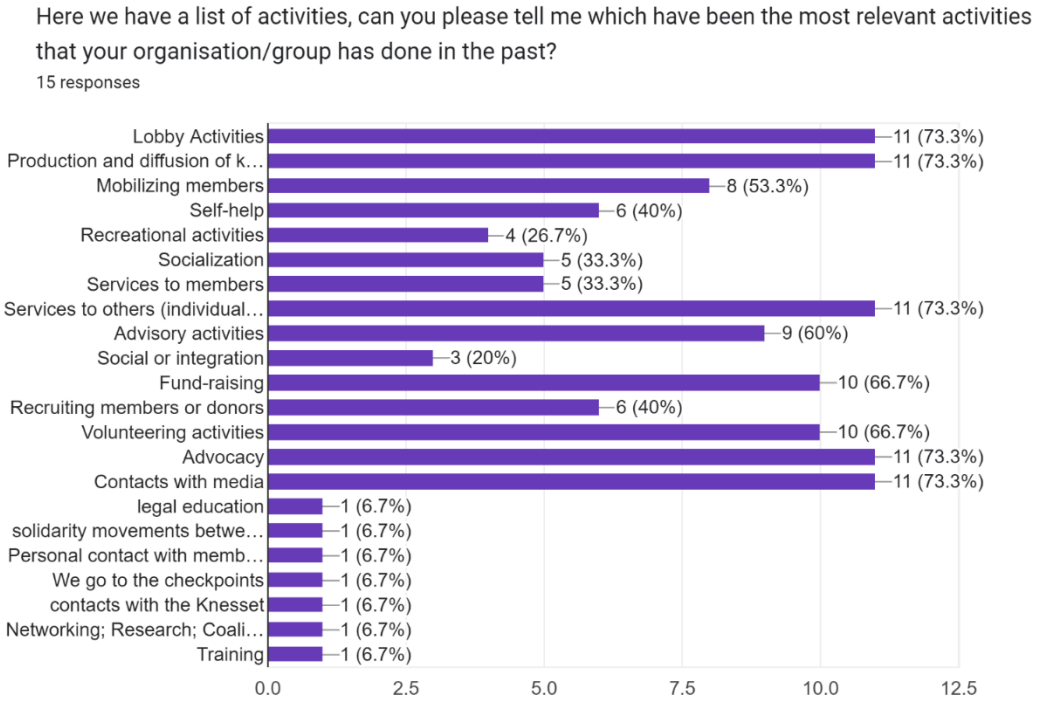


Figure 18 Question 16 of the Questionnaire

Regarding the activities carried out by the organizations, the most favoured ones include lobbying, knowledge production, education, providing various services, engaging in voluntary work, fundraising, advocacy, and media outreach. While mobilizing members for protest events is mentioned, it does not

appear to be a top priority. Similarly, socialization and recreational activities, which have proven crucial in other cases – as it will become clear in the next Chapters – for building a sense of collective action and fostering trust, are not highlighted as significant. This finding is perhaps the most significant outcome of the entire questionnaire and is further supported by the interviews. *The lack of sustained periods of shared life and a strong collective dimension has hindered the maintenance of enduring political alliances*.

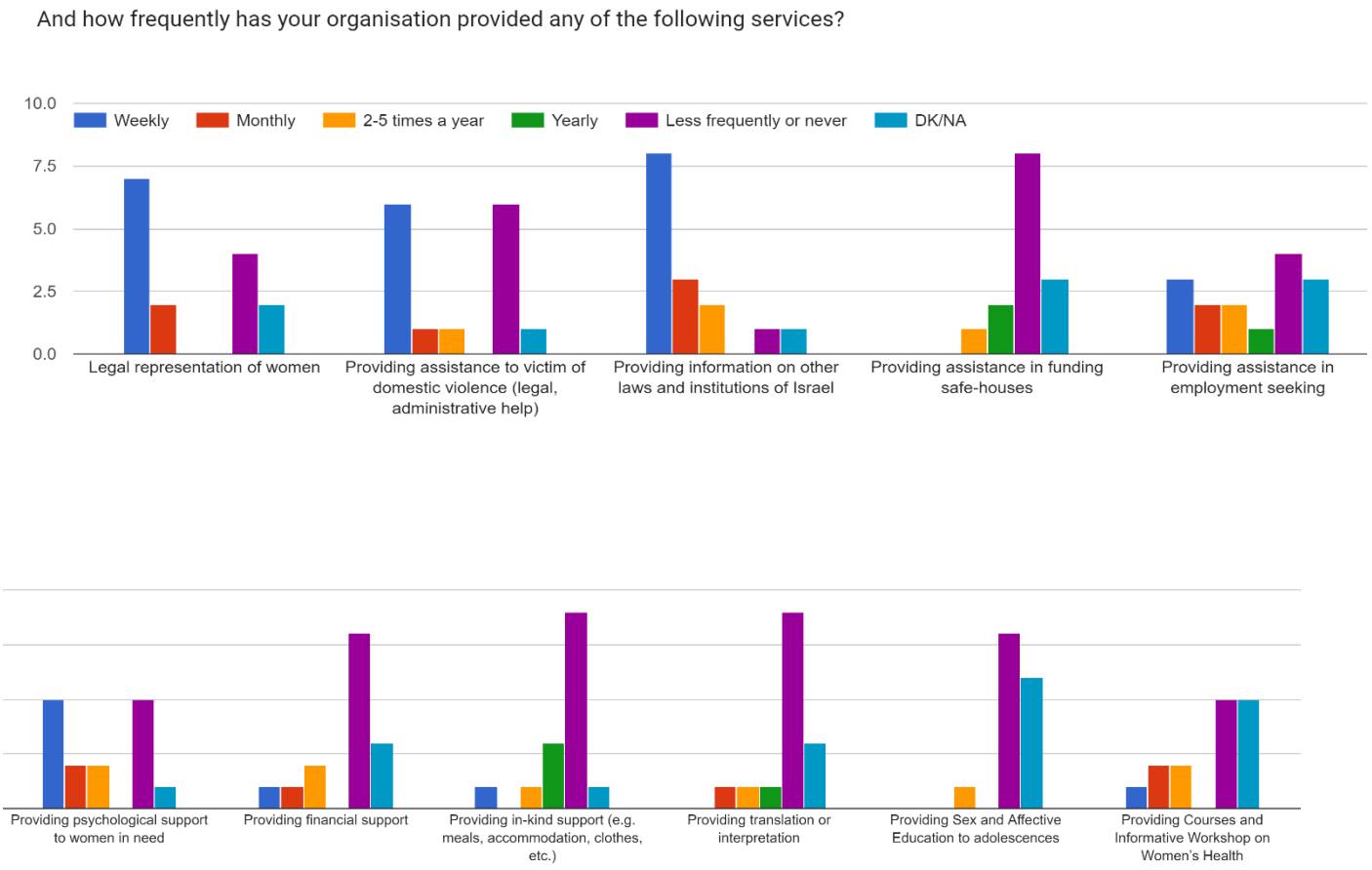


Figure 19 Question 18 of the Questionnaire

Typically, organizations within the Women's Movement primarily focus on providing legal representation for women, assisting victims of domestic violence, and offering information about legal and judicial institutions. However, it is quite surprising that none of the organizations dedicate time to sex and affective education for adolescents.

When asked about the essential activities in their work, organisations provided a range of responses, including filing petitions to courts, preparing position papers, engaging in direct action, representing

Bedouin women in the Naqab region, developing plans for gender equality, providing consultations, advocating for law amendments, building coalitions and capacity, conducting leadership training, organizing and community organizing, training activists on safe and legal protesting, hosting roundtable discussions and conferences, and actively opposing the occupation by going to checkpoints. The activities of the organizations are highly diverse and vary based on their areas of expertise. However, it is notable that many Israeli organizations place a strong emphasis on upholding the rule of law, filing petitions, and defending individual rights. These activities often revolve around institutional tasks and legal advocacy.

When it comes to the reasons that would prompt organizations to participate in protest movements and demonstrations, the most commonly cited issue is "women's rights." This is followed by concerns about racial harassment and discrimination, citizens' rights, housing, unemployment, and poverty. While a minority of organizations prioritize achieving lasting peace between Israel and Palestine, only one organization expresses a willingness to mobilize in support of LGBTQ+ rights. Interestingly, there is one organization that does not view demonstrations as an effective tool. The questionnaire highlights a significant disconnection between the focus on women's rights and LGBTQ+ rights. Most organizations indicate a willingness to join demonstrations addressing socio-economic issues that affect the broader community rather than specific minority or marginalized groups. It is worth mentioning that this discrepancy may be attributed to the frequency of police repression during peaceful demonstrations in Israel.

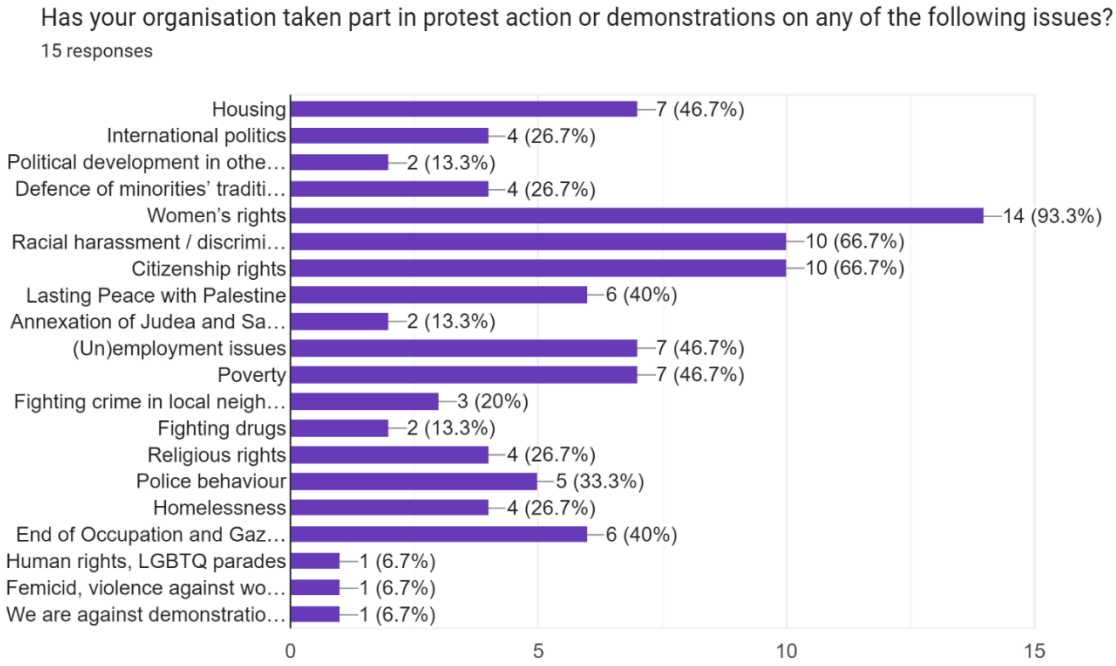


Figure 20 Question 20 of the Questionnaire

Regarding the target groups of these organizations, it is evident that they are diverse. However, there is a notable absence of organizations specifically targeting youth. In fact, many of the interviewees acknowledge this as a challenge, as they struggle to engage and involve younger generations in their activities. The age range of the organization's members is predominantly between 30 and over 65 years old. In terms of ethnicity, the majority of members are Ashkenazi Jews. This demographic composition may contribute to the tensions and conflicts that have arisen around issues of race and Black feminism within these organizations. As expressed by one of the veteran activists I had the privilege of interviewing:

"In most specific terms, we started mainly by standing at the checkpoints, but we varied our activities in different directions. Everything that is related to the Occupation, to the Palestinians' life, and to the human rights that are violated. It's a women's organization but we have some men in the periphery of our activities. These women are usually relatively educated, old, and most of them are Ashkenazi who were born in Israel. Very few are Mizrahi, Sephardic women, and we have only one Palestinian woman. We do not manage to recruit Palestinians to the group. It is not that there was a selection, but they do not volunteer with us." (IS19)

Figure 21Question 23 of the Questionnaire

This interviewee highlighted a common and significant question that is explored in the empirical Chapter: *Why don't Palestinian women, who are Israeli citizens, participate and collaborate with Israeli women?* As we will delve into further in the subsequent Chapters, there are various reasons for this. These reasons include power asymmetry, a lack of recognition of the violence of the Nakba, a limited understanding of the Arabic language, and, I would argue, a lack of willingness to spend time together in ways that do not solely revolve around activism and campaigns. Additionally, the institutionalization of these movements

and campaigns has led them to become somewhat disconnected from grassroots movements and the everyday lives of people. It is worth noting that only four of the organizations that temporarily joined the coalition have staff or members who are primarily '48 Palestinians.

As demonstrated by several social movement studies and research, what facilitates the beginning of relationships between different social movement organizations are the presence of personal ties, co-membership, ideological alignment and co-participation in campaigns (Van Dyke & McCammon, 2010). What, instead was not relevant was physical proximity.

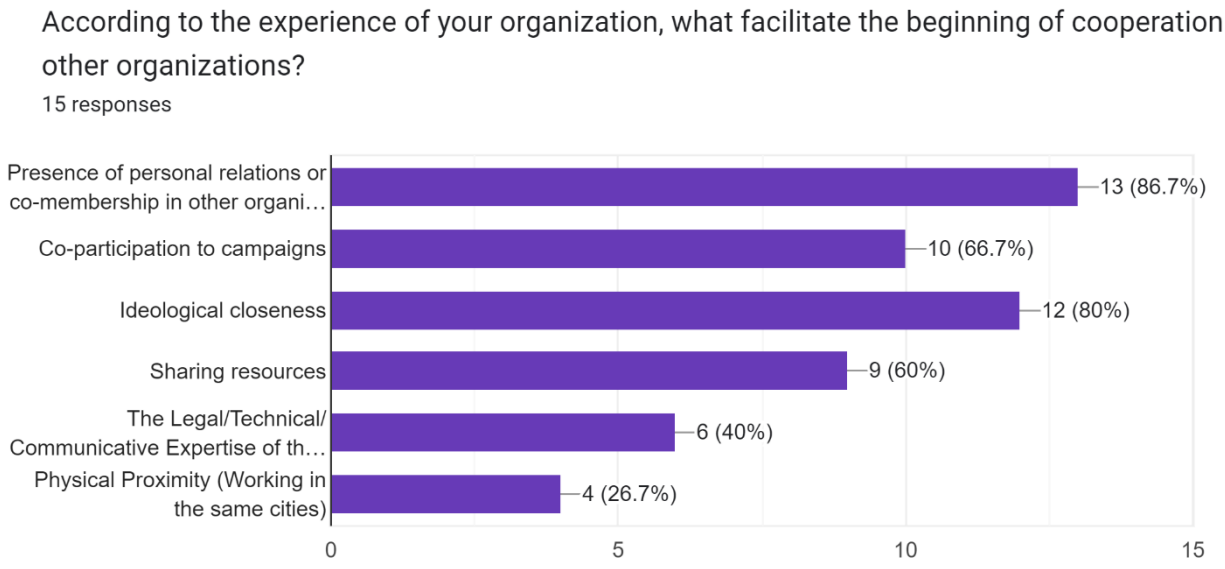


Figure 22 Question 24 of the Questionnaire

Here is one of the numerous examples from an interview where both the ideological aspect related to feminism and the personal aspect related to friendship come to the forefront.

"We started working together for the simplest of reasons: we were friends. They were friends of us or friends of a friend. Other women were activists, feminists mainly, there are a lot of Israeli Palestinians who are friends and colleagues. (IS12)"

As I discuss in the empirical Chapter, friendship and previous cooperation – in particular, in Women in Black – is what motivated the beginning of the CWP.

Moving on to the survey, an important question arises regarding why certain issues are more conducive to collaboration, even if they may not be the most frequently addressed by the organizations. The top priority identified is combating violence against women. This is followed by advocating for equal representation in politics and the workplace, improving women's access to employment opportunities, and promoting minority rights. On the other hand, it seems more challenging to form coalitions and coordinate initiatives related to addressing the Occupation. This observation was further substantiated through the interviews conducted.

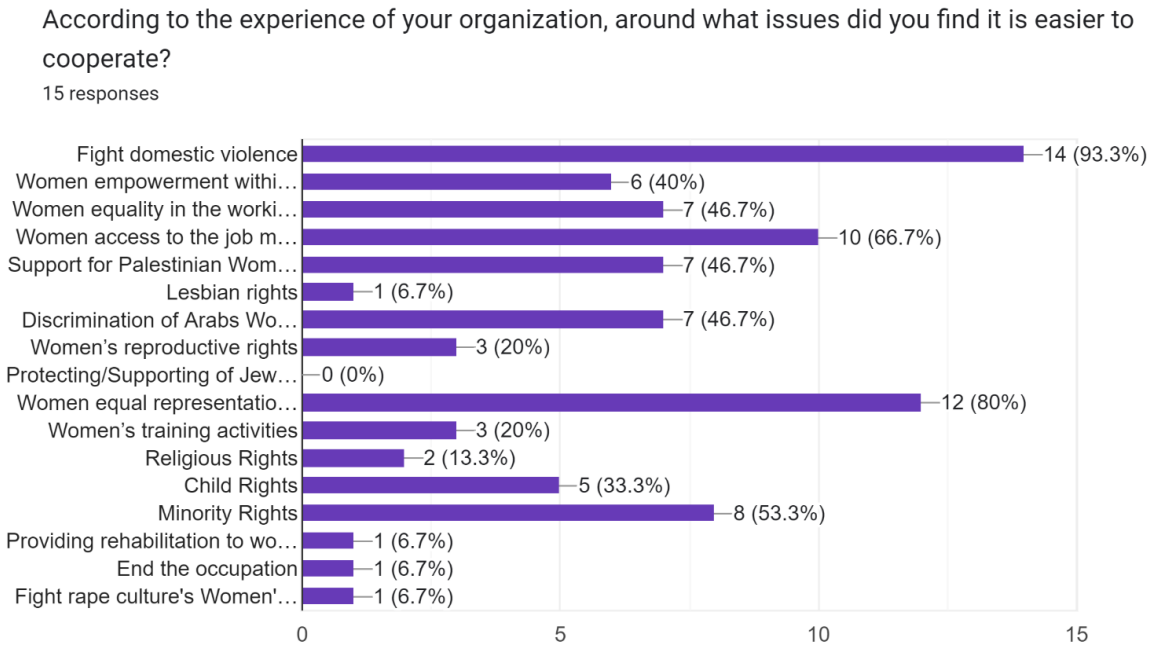


Figure 23 Question 25 of the questionnaire

"When you narrow your discourse around violence against women only as a domestic issue, then there is less conflict about that. But when you look at it holistically and you look at the role of the police and the role of the state and the role of the government and the role of the context that we are living in and the continuation of the conflict. And, above all the continuation of the Occupation, you lose some of the parts, some of your partners so that is why I normally say you can do some activities with so many people, *but when it comes to coalitions and building strategic partnerships you have less and fewer possibilities because the political context inside Israel and the political discourse is very limited and racist* I would dare to say, they have tried to silence all the critical voices within the Israeli Society, '48 Palestinians and Israeli Leftists equally (PA10)."

However, this critical reflection was also what motived the beginning of the CWP experience. Here the words of one of the funders:

"Women in Black already existed for almost ten, more than ten years, when we decided to unite in the Coalition, and it was the same for other women's peace organizations. And at the table, we said: 'We must raise the volume on women's peace efforts, not just ending violence, but shaping a future of justice and peace for both nations. And we can raise that volume by joining together as a coalition, not by acting separately in all the different organizations.' And so, we agreed to work together as a coalition. And we said: 'We will have our first meeting in Nazareth because we wanted the Arab women to play a prominent role'. And we set the meeting. And at that first meeting, we laid out the principles upon which we agreed, and we were able to move forward. The reason, again, was to raise the voice of the feminist peace movement, when all we were hearing now was the mixed-gender peace movement that was not reflecting our hopes for the future (IS26).

The questionnaire shed light on various aspects of the work carried out by the individual organizations that participated, even if their involvement in the Coalition was brief or for short-term projects. Following the questionnaire, interviews were conducted, both online and in person, with individual members of the Coalition, representatives from participating organizations, as well as Palestinian women activists who chose not to join the Coalition or collaborate with Israeli Women Peace activists under any circumstances. While the questionnaire included a separate section on the formation of links and organizational connections, due to constraints of length, this data will not be presented in the dissertation. Nonetheless, from this initial preliminary analysis, it becomes evident that the Women Peace front in Israel encompasses significant diversity and a wide range of perspectives (Stagni, 2022). However, the possibilities of making alliances that cross the ethnonational differences are limited both by relational dynamics and contingent and external conditions. In the empirical Chapter, I explore the results other interviews I conducted for this case also referencing field-notes particularly relevant to further clarify the gender dimension of this thesis.

CHAPTER 4 – WE STAND TOGETHER ALL THE WAY: CROSS-COMMUNAL ANTI-DEMOLITION STRUGGLE IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter will focus on one of the three campaigns considered in this study. The case here scrutinized is the most successful one both on the level of outcome and of sustained cooperation over time. The alliance between Palestinian and Israeli activists was present before the creation of the formal campaign, during and after it was concluded when the village was no longer under the threat of demolition. This type of cooperation, or as it is preferable to call it, *co-resistance*, continues today. Hence, this case, more than other in the field of coalitions across divides, gives us precious insights into how certain alliances can be maintained through time.

This Chapter addresses four main issues related to the case: 1) How activists from different ethnonational groups come together to work in Palestinian-led struggles; 2) What are the strategies that allow managing the differences in power deriving from the very asymmetrical nature of the conflict; 3) How co-resistance across divides can be maintained for a period that goes over a formal social movement campaign; 4) How the generational change has allowed to give new life to this movement by extending its scope to other villages in the region.

As described in the previous Chapter, the formal campaign was launched in 2015, when, after years of legal struggle to save the village from the threat of demolition, the Israeli Civil Administration issued a final order of eviction for the families residing there. The international pressure forced the Israeli government not to implement its eviction order. However, the cooperation between activists and the relationship that allowed such a result date back to the nineties and differently from other places in the West Bank, this alliance was able to last for decades and overcome some painful critical junctures such as the Oslo Accords, the second Intifada, and the several deadly Israeli attacks on Gaza.

Before proceeding with the empirical analysis of this Chapter, it is necessary to dwell a moment on the contextual and relational environments in which this contentious campaign developed. Knowledge of the historical background of Palestinian-Israeli past cooperation is also needed. Indeed, even if all the cases are in historical Palestine (pre-1948), today separated between Palestine and Israel, each "people" have experienced different processes of political, social, economic, and legal developments. I, therefore, remand to the previous Chapter to have a clearer understanding of the historical past of colonization and dispossession of the Palestinian land on the part of Israel. Equally, as regards a detailed description of

the case and the legal proceedings that characterized it, I refer to Chapter 3, where it is possible to find the necessary historical references. Likewise, as regards the method and all the details on interviews and fieldwork, please refer to the methodological Chapter (2).

In this section, I go more in-depth with the analytical tools I relied on in this research, exposing the main results of this case study. First of all, I have singled out three elements that are essential in allowing the maintenance of a coalition that crosses the national identity divide, which I believe can be applied in other cases of strong power asymmetry between groups. Then, there are some specific tools and concrete strategies that can again be useful in the study of social movement's cooperation vis-à-vis power differences. Finally, there are some aspects, such as the recognition of a past of colonization, that are more case-specific but can probably be translated to other cases too. Tracing the beginning of this alliance was not easy because it takes us back to the early 2000s, and few witnesses remained of this first encounter when a group of Israeli activists decided to engage in the South Hebron Hills region where Palestinian communities always lived under the constant threat of ethnic cleansing. The case description in Chapter 3 explains why this region is so strategic and constantly targeted by Israeli settlers. What is important to note here is that: 1) The settlers living in this region are highly ideological and consequently often violent; 2) This makes the level of contentious different from other areas of the Occupied Territories or Israel.

The analysis of this Chapter focuses on 24 interviews, and with activists and two focus groups with community members and activists: Israeli, Palestinian, and three internationals. Some interviews were done during the first fieldwork period in the fall of 2019, online during the pandemic, and in a second fieldwork period in the spring of 2022. During this second period, I had the opportunity to reassess my involvement and the methodology I used. I lived in close contact with the community for weeks following Palestinian and Israeli activists in many actions and, as I will describe later, "inactions". It was not an easy field experience; I encountered a whole series of situations that had never occurred to me before, roadblocks, searches, night raids by the military, attacks with stones, and attempted physical attacks by the settlers. However, all this has allowed me to have an unparalleled look and understanding of the phenomenon. A relational approach also means studying and following how relationships unfold in times of danger and crisis. This Chapter will therefore start with a description of the type of events collected through the protest-event analysis, also mentioning what happened during the covid period, for obvious reasons usually neglected by the news broadcasters. I then describe the relational elements and strategies

that allow the maintenance of these cooperations over time, concluding with a reflection on how it is possible to reduce the asymmetries present in social movements.

4.1.1 Protest Event Analysis

The details concerning the protest event analysis are described in the methodological Chapter, where I have gone through all the passages, the criteria, the period, and the sources I have used to perform this data collection. I here show a graph in which I have selected some of the most prominent events considered in the analysis. I have considered a wider type of action, not only demonstrations, to have a more complex and accurate understanding of the whole campaign and history of struggle in the region. In the methodological Chapter, I have discussed the advantage of such a combination of methods. Some preliminary considerations must therefore be made. The types of events codified can be considered both typical events of protest campaigns and events specifically related to the context and case study. As we can see from Figure 24, the demonstration was the type of activity coded the most. It was also the type of action on which I built the network sample and proceeded with interviews. The second most frequent type of action was the international one. With this, I mean, such as diplomats' visits, advocacy work through or at international organizations, international journalists' visits, and international petitions. Then, I coded settlers' activities, such as physical attacking of Palestinian residents, burning Palestinians' properties, and throwing stones or verbal threats because they were often reported in the news and provided a clear picture of the Palestinians' way of life in Area C. All these experiences have also occurred during my presence in the field.

The news reported by the newspapers is certainly useful in retracing events and situations of conflict and contentiousness that activists obviously cannot remember. Furthermore, from a historical point of view, this type of work is essential and allows researchers to know in detail all the events that have characterized the history of this village, especially everything concerning the decisions of the various courts of appeal regarding the demolition of the village. It may seem a boring aspect and not necessarily inherent in research interested in the relational aspects, but most of the peaks of the protests coincide with unfavourable decisions by the Israeli courts. This also opens another point: the type of political arena in the occupied territories varies greatly according to the areas and therefore has different political targets. It is essential to remember that Susiya and the South Hebron Hills region are in Area C, which implies military and administrative control by Israel even though it is Palestinian territory according to the Oslo Accords. This inevitably creates a political vacuum from a Palestinian leadership that lacks the strength and capabilities to reach these areas. The main political interlocutor is, therefore, the Israeli

government which however has no interest in protecting the well-being of the Palestinian populations who live here, considered at best a burden and an impediment to the economic development of the region and, at worst, an existential threat to the state of Israel and therefore to be eliminated. Talking to a settler boy who was stripping olive branches from Palestinian property in the village of Susiya and trying to stop him, he told me that his father told him every night about how all Palestinians in the area should be eliminated. When I asked him how it could happen concretely, he said: "one by one with a switchblade"[38]. This type of political arena of interaction means not being able to count either on the support of the Palestinian Authority or on the Israeli government, which, among other things, continues to move more and more towards positions of the extreme right. Consequently, a large part of the campaign and its actions targeted international actors. I coded this element as *International Action* in the PEA.

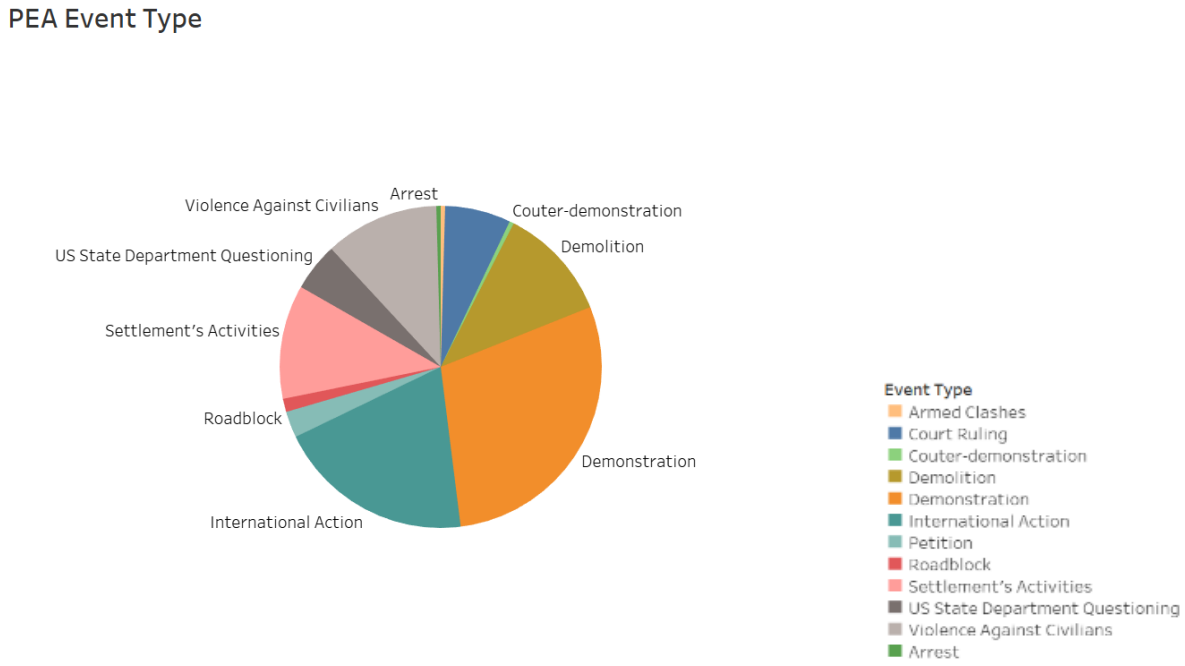


Figure 24 Event Type Susiya Campaing

In addition, it is important to highlight two other fundamental aspects that emerged from the PEA. The PEA of this case made it possible to highlight the Structure of Political Opportunities and the relative possible interactions between the various actors involved. Without the PEA, it would not have been possible for me to realize the total absence of the Palestinian Authority in the area, which has certainly

[38] Fieldnote 26 March 2022.

favoured the emergence of cross-community alliances. Equally, the PEA found that most of the movements' actions were mostly non-violent, unlike other areas in the region. Equally, it is undoubtedly interesting to note how through a scrupulously executed PEA, it is possible to see how events at an international level that are not necessarily linked to each other have disruptive effects that cannot perhaps be conceptualized in terms of causality but at least of influence. As argued by Alimi (Alimi E. , 2007; Alimi & Leitz, 2019) the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which began in 1967, placed Palestinians in a "blocked opportunity situation" given the fact that they are not allowed to participate in the Israeli political system but they totally depend on it. Additionally, the changes in political geography, as a result of the Oslo Accords and the second Intifada, have further reduced Palestinian political space (Gawerc M. , 2019, p. 61). Then, Palestinians can no longer take advantage of divisions with the Israeli public (Alimi E. , 2007) and they constantly face a political atmosphere that depicts Palestinians as security threats, largely because of the militarized character of the second Intifada (Gawerc M. , 2019, p. 41). It is certainly no coincidence that in 2014, during the extremely violent attacks on Gaza[39], which caused the death of 2,200 people, American and international politicians expressed themselves more vocally in favour of the survival of several villages in area C, including the village of Susiya. Although all the different international organizations have expressed constant concern about the disproportionate use of force by the state of Israel against Gaza for other states engaged in the fight against terrorism, such as the United States, it is very difficult to speak vocally against this type of attack (Hass, 2014). On the other hand, it is easier to declare the support of resistance actions of groups that try to give the possibility to Palestinian communities to remain where their ancestors lived peacefully and who are constantly threatened by settlers who inhabit illegal settlements (according to international law). Unable to intervene in Gaza, the great powers have tried to clear their conscience through Susiya (Prusher, 2015).

However, what does not appear from the news and the PEA is a whole dimension of what I will call in this Chapter "collective inaction", in which Palestinian and Israeli activists find themselves experiencing moments of everyday life together. A dimension where another type of dialogue takes place cannot be detected through remote approaches because it lies beneath the surface. Nevertheless, it is precisely that

[39] "Operation "Protective Edge." According to the main estimates, between 2,125 and 2,310 Gazans were killed (1,492 civilians, including 551 children and 299 women), and between 10,626 and 10,895 were wounded (including 3,374 children, of whom over 1,000 were left permanently disabled). Sixty-six Israeli soldiers, five Israeli civilians (including one child), and one Thai civilian were killed, and 469 IDF soldiers and 261 Israeli civilians were injured. Israel destroyed about 17,000 homes and partially destroyed 30,000" (Pappé, 2017, p. 152-153).

strategy that allows the maintenance of long-term relationships while working on those asymmetries of power existing between the two groups. I could get to know and participate in this type of collective inaction only by living and spending more time with the communities in that region, therefore, during my second fieldwork period.

4.1.2 Temporal Social Network Analysis: How did the Network Change over Time?

SNA allows us to look at actors' actions as interdependent rather than autonomous and insert them in a relational context characterised by a social capital that has the shape of reciprocity rather than belonging. Although Borgatti's theory of social ties does not directly speak to the literature on coalitions, the SNA allows us to provide a picture and mainly visualize the shape of the campaign networks in two different moments. However, even these results will be interpreted qualitatively. Indeed, it would be misguided to pretend a computational understanding of these relations would be enough. As demonstrated in the previous Chapter and in the sections that follow, the SNA wants to corroborate results that emerged from the interviews and provide an easier understanding of the main actors involved and their ethnonational characterization.

To study how the network of relationships has changed over time, I divided the PEA data into two different groups of protests and subsequent cooperation: the first includes protests that occurred before the start of the formal campaign and the other those that occurred after the formal initiation of the campaign. This allowed me to create a T1 network (Figure 25) in which we can visualize what groups have historically worked together with the Susiya Popular Committee and a second T2 Network that shows cooperation that was born because of the campaign. I have also featured organizations according to their attributes, namely if the organizations were Israeli (blue); Palestinian (red); or international (yellow). Therefore, the first network exposes the connections that were present until the end of 2014 and the second until 2019, when I stopped collecting data due to Covid-19. In this way, it is possible to evaluate how the alliances and their composition have changed over time.

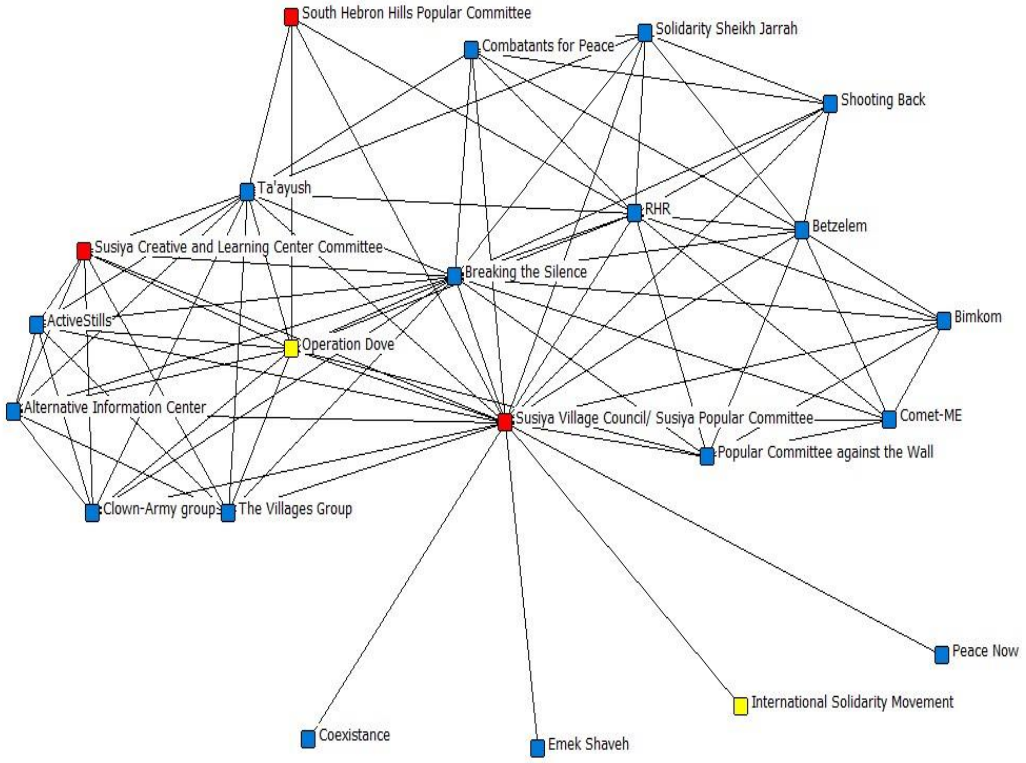


Figure 25 Network T1: mobilization prior the formal campaign

Table 1 Netwtork T1

Number of Nodes	22
Number of Ties	168
Density	0.632

	Level of Formality	***Ethnonational Composition***	***Political Ideology***	***Repertoires of Action***	***Degree***	***In-Degree***
ActiveStills	NGO	Joint	Photographers	Documentation/Information	8.000	0.035
Alternative Information Center	NGO	Joint	Civic Organization	Advocacy/ Education/ Peaceful Coexistence	8.000	0.035
Betzelem	NGO	Israeli	Radical Left	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns / Protest	15.000	0.065
Bimkom	NGO	Israeli	Environmental Organization	Engineering/Architectural projects	6.000	0.026
Breaking the Silence	Political Organization	Israeli	Liberal Left Zionist	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns / Protest	28.000	0.121
Clown-Army Group	Collective	Israeli	Radical Left	Protest/Entertainment	8.000	0.035
Coexistence	NGO	Joint	Liberal Left Zionist	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns / Protest	1.000	0.004
Combatants for Peace	NGO	Joint	Leftist	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns / Protest	14.000	0.061
Comet-ME	NGO	Israeli	Environmental Organization	Engineering/Architectural projects	8.000	0.035
Emek Shaveh	NGO	Israeli	Liberal Left Zionist	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns / Protest	1.000	0.004
International Solidarity Movement	International Movement	International	Radical Left	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns / Protest	1.000	0.004
Operation Dove	INGO	International	Human Rights	Protective Presence/ Documentation	21.000	0.091
Peace Now	NGO	Israeli	Liberal Left Zionist	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns/ Legal Assistance	1.000	0.004
Popular Committee Against the Wall	Collective	Palestinian	Anti-Occupation	Demonstration/Coordination	13.000	0.056

Rabbis for Human Rights	NGO	Israeli	Liberal Left Zionist	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns/ Legal Assistance/ Protest/ Direct Action	36.000	0.156
Shooting Back	Collective	Israeli	Anarchist	Demonstration	6.000	0.026
Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity Movement	Collective	Joint	Radical Left	Protest/ Riot	13.000	0.056
South Hebron Hills Popular Committee	Collective	Palestinian	Anti-Occupation	Demonstration/Coordination	4.000	0.017
Susiya Creative and Learning Collective	Collective	Palestinian	Anti-Occupation	Demonstration/Education/ Documentation	8.000	0.035
Susiya Village Council	Collective	Palestinian	Village Decisional Body	Demonstration/Coordination	62.000	0.268
Ta'ayush	Collective	Israeli	Anarchist	Protest/ Riot/ Direct Action/ Documentation/ Legal Assistance	3.000	0.016
The Village Group	NGO	Israeli	Liberal Left Zionist	Demonstration/Lobby/Advocacy/Documentation	9.000	0.039

Table 2 SNA NodesT1

By looking at the degree, it is possible to notice that groups that have been repeatedly mentioned as influential by activists, such as Ta'ayush or ICAHD, do not necessarily have higher degrees. By contrast, Rabbis for Human Rights (RHR), a very important broker of this network, has a high degree of centrality that probably relates to their legal work. The lawyers who followed the judicial case were appointed by RHR, which consequently worked more publicly, talking more often to information agencies and reporting more frequently in the news. A difference easily retraceable between the two graphs is that with the formal launch of the campaign, the number of international organizations (yellow) involved have increased. In fact, in the first graph (Figure 25), there are only two international organizations, while in the second, there are many more. The two international organizations mentioned are the Italian Operation Dove, whose testimony proved to be fundamental in the reconstruction of the steps that led to the creation of the coalition, and the International Solidarity Movement, that in the same period, was generally more active and involved in the Sheikh Jarrah Mobilization.

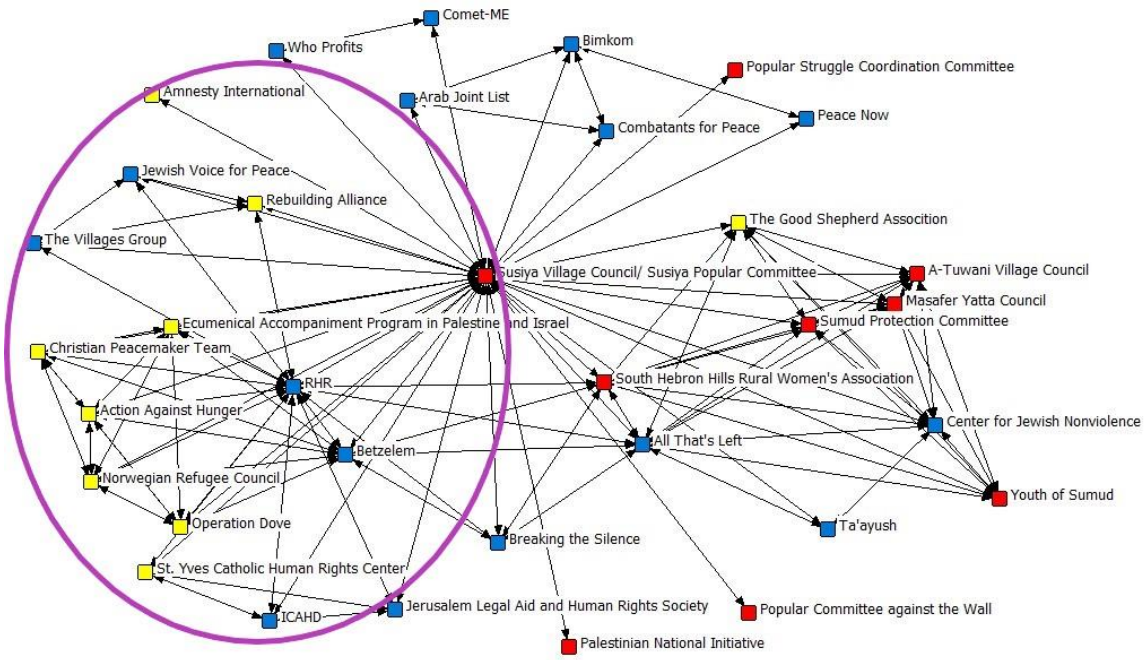


Figure 26 Network T2: mobilization after the formal campaign, cluster of International NGOs

Table 3 SNA T2

Number of Nodes	35
Number of Ties	213
Density	0.281

	Level of Formality	***Ethnonational Composition***	***Political Ideology***	***Repertoires of Action***	***Degree***	***In-Degree***
Action Against Hunger	INGO	International	Human Rights	Documentation/Advocacy	7.000	0.013
All That's Left	Collective	Israeli	Anarchism/Communism	Direct Action/Campaign/ Protest	23.000	0.044
Amnesty International	INGO	International	Human Rights	Documentation/ Advocacy/ Lobby/ Campaign	1.000	0.002
Arab Joint List	Political Party (Israel)	Joint	Leftist	Political Competition	3.000	0.006
A-Tuwani Village Council	Collective	Palestinian	Anti-Occupation	Demonstration/Coordination	10.000	0.019
Betzelem	NGO	Israeli	Radical Left	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns / Protest	16.000	0.030
Bimkom	NGO	Israeli	Environmental Organization	Engineering/Architectural projects	5.000	0.009
Breaking the Silence	Political Organization	Israeli	Liberal Left Zionist	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns / Protest	8.000	0.015
Center for Jewish Nonviolence	NGO	Israeli	Radical Left	Protest/Lobby/Advocacy/ Protective Presence/ Direct Action/Documentation	1.000	0.030
Christian Peacemaker Team	NGO	Palestinian	Religious	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Direct Action/ Protective Presence	7.000	0.013
Combatants for Peace	NGO	Joint	Leftist	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns / Protest	3.000	0.006
Comet-ME	NGO	Israeli	Environmental Organization	Engineering/Architectural projects	2.000	0.004
Ecumenical Accompaniment	INGO	International	Religious	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Direct Action/ Protective Presence	7.000	0.013
ICAHD	NGO	Israeli	Radical Left	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns / Protest	4.000	0.008
Jerusalem Legal Aid	NGO	Israeli	Leftist	Legal Assistance	4.000	0.008
Jewish Voice For Peace	NGO	Israeli	Leftist	Campaign/ Lobby/ Advocacy/ Protest	4.000	0.008

Masafer Yatta Council	Collective	Palestinian	Anti-Occupation	Protest/ Advocacy/ Coordination	7.000	0.013
Norwegian Refugee Council	INGO	International	Human Rights	Advocacy/Lobby/ documentation	7.000	0.013
Operation Dove	INGO	International	Human Rights	Protective Presence/ Documentation	21.000	0.091
Palestinian National Initiative	Political Party	Palestinian	Leftist	Electoral Competition	1.000	0.002
Peace Now	NGO	Israeli	Liberal Left Zionist	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns/ Legal Assistance	3.000	0.006
Popular Committee Against the Wall	Collective	Palestinian	Anti-Occupation	Demonstration/Coordination	2.000	0.004
Popular Struggle Coordination Committee	Collective	Palestinian	Anti-Occupation	Demonstration/Coordination	3.000	0.006
Rebuilding Alliance	INGO	International	Human Rights	Advocacy/ Lobby	7.000	0.013
Rabbis for Human Rights	NGO	Israeli	Liberal Left Zionist	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns/ Legal Assistance/ Protest/ Direct Action	36.000	0.068
South Hebron Hills Rural Women Association	NGO	Palestinian	Women Empowerment	Training/Education	13.000	0.015
Susiya Creative and Learning Collective	Collective	Palestinian	Anti-Occupation	Demonstration/Education/ Documentation	8.000	0.035
St. Yves Catholic Human Right	INGO	International	Religious	Advocacy	4.000	0.008
Sumud Protection Committe	NGO	Palestinian	Anti-Occupation	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Protest/ Campaign	7.000	0.015
Susiya Village Council	Collective	Palestinian	Village Decisional Body	Demonstration/Coordination	73.000	0.138
Ta'ayush	Collective	Israeli	Anarchist	Protest/ Riot/ Direct Action/ Documentation/ Legal Assistance	5.000	0.009
The Good Shepherd Association	INGO	International	Socialist	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Protest/ Campaign	7.000	0.015
The Village Group	NGO	Israeli	Liberal Left Zionist	Demonstration/Lobby/Advocacy/Documentation	4.000	0.008
Who Profits	NGO	Israeli	Radical Left	Campaing/Lobby/Advocacy/Documentation	2.000	0.004
Youth of Sumud	NGO	Palestinian	Radical Left	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Protest/ Campaign	7.000	0.015

Table 4 T2 Network Organizations

This phenomenon is not new, and the role of international NGOs and their connections with Israeli NGOs has been widely studied in different sectors. Gawerc (2019) highlighted how Israeli NGOs, thanks to the wider resources and greater social capital, are more likely to obtain funds and support from international organizations. This means that their resources, both material and in terms of links and connections with foreign organisations, are essential to disseminate information about the campaign considered (Diani, 1997).

Another interesting fact that emerges from the second graph (Figure 27) is also the increase in the presence of Palestinian organizations. However, it is important to underline that except for an organisation that has a slightly more institutional standing (The Palestinian National Initiative), all the other Palestinian organizations and collectives were born more recently around another very active village in the area called At-Twuani and a new mode of activism called “popular resistance”. With the term, Palestinian activists want to indicate a type of activism that is widely spread and accepted by the community and non-violent in its repertoires. Figure 26 shows a very interesting political trajectory: after Susiya, other Palestinian activist groups active in area C have tried to unite and around this struggle, also

accepting to work with Israeli organizations. The cluster is circled in red. This result is in contrast with most of Palestinian activism which is instead closer to the demands of non-normalization. In the South Hebron Hills, where Israel has total control over most of everyday life issues, the PA is completely irrelevant and local Palestinians are living serious situations of marginalization and poverty. Coalizing together and with Israeli activist groups has emerged as the most feasible option. In addition to that, long-lasting cooperation between the two ethnonational groups have certainly opened new coalition paths that generally enlarged the network in terms of nodes (actors) and ties (relations) that increased in number.

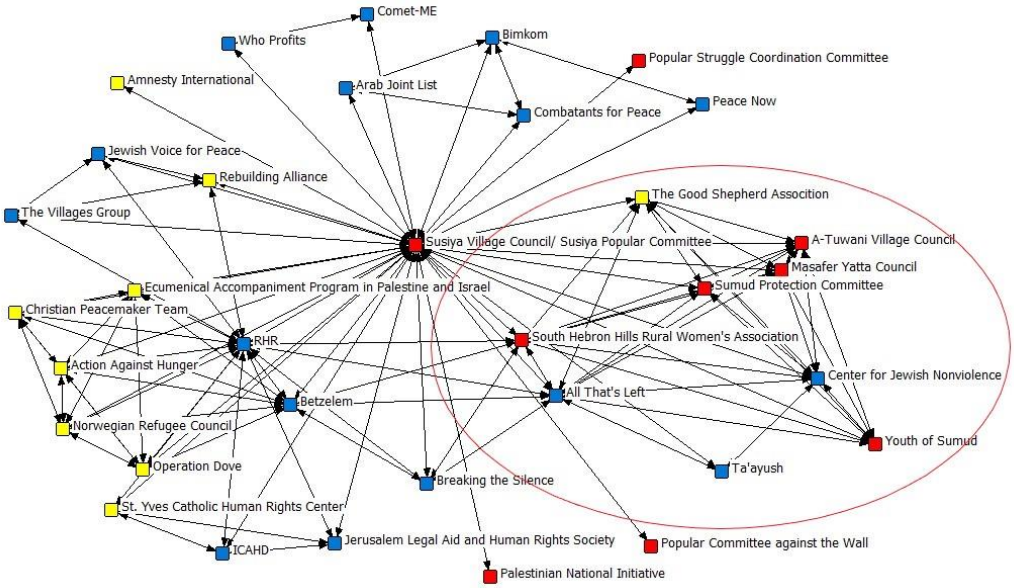


Figure 27 Network T2: mobilization after the formal campaign

The other interesting observation that can be made from the network is that apart from the Susiya coordination committee, which is the organization that handles the protests on the ground with which all the organizations continue to work, most of the new international organizations prefer to work with the Israeli NGOs and not with the Palestinian ones (Figure 27). This consideration completely dismantles the general assumption that in situations of conflict, international NGOs can act as bridges. Here, the opposite seems true: Israeli Organizations are the ones that mediate with Palestinians whom they trust the most – because of long-lasting interactions, as is explained in the next section. This was also confirmed by the interview with Operation Dove which confirmed they started to be active in the area after meeting with Ta'ayush. This finding aligns with Maney's (2001) work on Indigenous people. He demonstrated the detrimental role of INGOs in campaigns that aimed at protecting Indigenous land tenure, political recognition, and cultural autonomy. Many of these Palestinian anti-eviction and anti-demolition campaigns have, in fact, much in common with Indigenous peoples' struggles over land rights

all around the world. Finally, through the network is also possible to see that some organizations have stopped mobilizing, but new ones have joined. However, important gatekeepers such as the Ta'ayush, Rabbis for Human Rights, Breaking the Silence, and All That's Left maintain a constant and assiduous commitment in the territory, integrating with other more recently created Palestinian organizations.

In this analysis, I concentrated only on some measures of centrality. To be precise, those measures can indicate the shape of the network and evaluate how it changed before and after the beginning of the campaign. Centralization is a property of a network as a whole. The first measure I have considered is the geodesic distance between two nodes which is the shortest path between two actors. In the first graph (Figure 25), the average geodesic distance is 1.636, which means that, on average, one actor can reach another by passing through one node and a half. While in the second graph, the geodesic distance is 1.810, almost two. The increase is probably due to the higher number of organizations; however, this already tells us that before the start of the campaign the movement was slighter more cohesive. Considering the real physical and geographical distances that see Israeli and Palestinian activists living in different territories, these results may appear meaningful. Indeed, it indicates that there is a very good level of coordination among different groups, and this is something that remained constant throughout time. Given the level of threats and repression all these organizations constantly suffer it is reasonable to assume that constant and frequent coordination are essential to mitigate the effects of such an unfavourable context where nothing can be left to chance.

Looking at the density of the first graph, which is the number of edges in a network expressed in relation to the possible ties (Borgatti, Everett, & Johnson, 2013) – a very good indicator to describe the cohesion of a group – we have a value of 0.632. It means that the probability that two actors participate in the same protest event is almost 63%. Different aspects of the network can explain this result. Usually, a high number of actors reduce the density of a group. Here the network is certainly reduced. Before the campaign, it counted a smaller group of activists that were very cohesive and used to work together also in other campaigns – as the presence of the International Solidarity Movement proves. However, the result is impressive and shows a very high level of cohesion around the Susiya Popular Council. The second network density is 0.281, meaning two actors still have a 28% probability of working together. Both networks are very cohesive, but with the opening of the campaign and the recruitment of new actors, this cohesion could not be maintained over time.

To summarize, the qualitative SNA can photograph two different moments of the campaign: before and after its formalization. Before the launch of the formal campaign, a reduced number of very cohesive actors participated, and a minority of organizations were either Palestinian or Israeli. The actors indicated as prominent from the interviews appeared to be central nodes also in the network. Those who had more formal roles, such as RHR, were also reported more often in the news and ended up having higher degrees. On the hand, actors that are central at the relation level, such as Ta'ayush, but tend to work more on the ground, were also less recurrent in the information reported by the news. With the launch of the campaign, more international NGOs were contacted and brought to the field by Israeli activists and new Palestinian organizations were born, given the increased attention that was brought to the region. This also meant an opening in the usually rather closed opportunity structures that allowed to bring the spotlight also on other villages in similar situations in the area. These two tendencies meant an enlargement of the network that became bigger and, as it was shown in the reconstruction of the case in the previous Chapter, allowed some residents, with the help of the international organizations Rebuilding Alliance – contacted by an Israeli activist group – to reach the Congress of the United States that put pressure on the Netanyahu government.

4.2 A Theory of Relation: The Interactional Maintenance Paradigm

The following analysis emerged from extensive participation in decision-making assemblies of various groups, informal meetings, semi-structured interviews with several community organizers and two non-formalized focus groups. Nevertheless, I do not believe that the factors singled out as crucial to coalition building for this empirical case are limited to bridge-building across ethno-national divides. Indeed, I argue that they are crucial for every social movement that has to address its internal differences and inequalities. Divisions of race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender (Reger, 2002), class (Rose, 2000; Mix & Cable, 2006), and religion are present in any social movement; scholarship on social movements has just not paid enough attention to that (Einwohner, Kelly-Thompson, Sinclair-Chapman, & et al, 2021).

The *interactional maintenance paradigm* is what allows the persistence of coalitions for a period that overcomes the insular moment of the campaign. The *Three Ts* that constitute the paradigm are not only essential but also interconnected and related to each other. In simple words, the *interactional maintenance paradigm* means that maintaining coalitions that cross social divides is possible only by embracing a new idea of *time*, that works as an ally and not as an enemy, which enables the creation of *personal relationships* based on *trust* between activist groups would otherwise structurally be separated. To build a relationship and a strong tie of trust, constant and repetitive interactions need to occur.

Additionally, as the SNA has shown, some central actors played a crucial role in bringing other actors to the campaign. In the literature, previous ties are considered very important in the coalition-building process, too. Differently from previous studies, this work suggests that the *interaction* of these three elements makes protracted cooperation possible in a context characterized by divisions on different levels. We might be led to think that since "trust" is the element that usually deteriorates the most in a divided context, it is hard to consider it crucial or a dimension that can even exist. However, as the table of cross-codes shows (Table 5), the three elements were often mentioned together, indicating they make sense and have an effect only when activated simultaneously. It appears that Time and Trust are the codes that intersect more frequently. This is true for *Ties*/Personal relationships together with *Time* and *Trust* respectively. Interestingly, the actor's mentioning of Time was never related to the length of the actions or their involvement in the region. Instead, it was always explicitly mentioned as one of the most crucial factors in building inter-community relations of *trust* to make the very existence of cooperation between the two communities possible. A Palestinian activist described it like this:

> "It was for a long period of time […] they (the Israelis) were good supporters but still, it was weird. A "true" relationship developed after years and years once there was some kind of trust built. And so, you can see now Ta'ayush moving and going on with their activities until today here with us" (PA17).

From an analysis of the very first encounter between the two communities, it would seem to emerge clearly that if there is undoubtedly a "strategic" element on the part of the Palestinian component which can benefit from the presence of Israeli activists, as demonstrated by Gawerc (2019), strategy and convenience is not what allows alliances to continue over time. Something that will not be mentioned and studied in depth in this Chapter is the issue of anti-normalization. Several Palestinian political actors when they allay with Israeli organizations are accused of normalizing relations with Israel. The problem of normalization is a concrete one, especially as regards the economic field. However, as mentioned in the analysis of the data coming from the PEA, the absence of the PA in these areas meant that the issue of normalization was not a vital issue for the activists as it is for the activists of Sheikh Jarrah. This campaign is discussed in the next Chapter. Palestinian activists involved in this campaign have also experienced intense pressure due to the accusations of normalization. However, they have never allowed themselves to be influenced by these accusations in their political actions, and have always claimed their cooperation with Israeli activists as genuine partners in the struggle.

It is crucial to highlight this point as I have frequently discussed my thesis with Palestinian individuals who may not be involved in activism. A significant number of them were unaware of the location of

Susiya, primarily due to the general lack of interest in that area. This lack of interest is particularly prevalent among Palestinians residing in Area A, who are often part of the upper classes compared to those living in Area C. These individuals consider it a lost cause, as it is predominantly under Israeli control. Consequently, they sometimes express scepticism regarding the resilience of the communities in these areas. I recall a conversation at a friend's house where a Palestinian man expressed:

"There are too many Israelis in Susiya, and this surely helped and the village was not destroyed. However, I can't believe they are real friends of the Palestinians. They are not, they are friends only in front of the cameras, but I don't think they're friends." (Fieldnote, 1st of May 2022).

During my fieldwork periods, I experienced the opposite: intense interpersonal relationships that have been going on for years and that allow for real cooperation that transcends ethnonational divisions.

4.2.1 The three Ts: Time – Trust – Ties

To develop diverse coalitions, three essential elements must be present: *Trust*, *Time*, and *Ties*. These three elements are pivotal and essential in allowing the creation and, above all, the *persistence* of coalitions across divides that can be reactivated in times of need. These elements, however are not only essential, but they are also strongly interconnected and related to each other. Virtually all interviewees, from both sides, show how much the element of *trust* is related to the one *time*. To build a relationship, and therefore a strong *tie of trust*, constant and repetitive interactions have to occur. Previous *ties* are considered very important both in the coalition-building process and in the literature. However, what is different from what has been said so far about pre-existing ties is a real generational continuation. If, on the one hand, it is natural to expect this continuity from the Palestinian activists present in those communities who live in these villages every day, on the other hand, it was very interesting to find out how the daughters and sons of the Israeli activists involved in the region have continued to work with the daughters and sons of their Palestinian partners, giving life to cooperative relationships that not only continue across divisions over time, but also across generations.

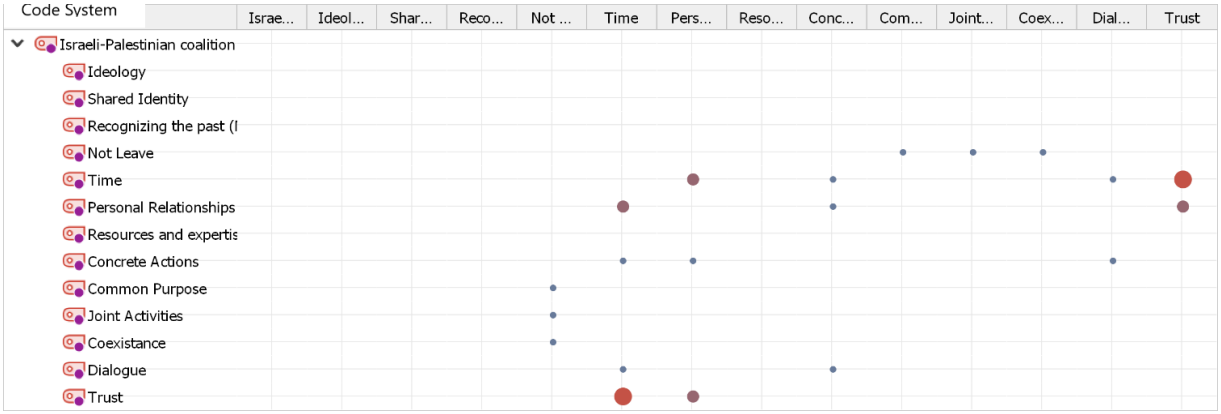
*"*So, the trust we built here is mainly because Rachel, our friend, is the daughter of Tom who is a Ta'ayush. I came to the first meeting with the communities with the two of them. I felt that people trust them. Then, Rachel and I spoke in Arabic with Yousif's mother and other women. They were very surprised and happy to see that. This is not very common for Israelis. Quite the opposite. So, I spoke to her, and I think that was a bit different, not only because I came with known people but because I think it was maybe the first time that Israeli activists talked directly to her without her son translating. That was the beginning for us, the first time I came. Relationships changed and grown since then. I would say it was very much built on personal connections to Ta'ayush some of us had, with our families, and on the fact that we spoke Arabic." (IS29)

This excerpt highlights how the relational element is connected to the generational one (the Israeli father with the Israeli daughter and the Palestinian woman with the Palestinian son) and how they are all linked together in a single cross-communal network. On the other hand, it is precisely this interweaving that allows this cooperation to be maintained and renewed over time.

Interestingly, in contexts characterized by deep divides, the elements of time and trust are seen as preventing factors to coalitions. Indeed, we might be led to think that since "trust" is the element that is usually lacking in deeply divided societies and colonized contexts, groups would be led to cooperate more because of other shared identities. For example, in the case of the Sarajevo protests of 2008, Touquet (2015) shows how much the non-ethnic mobilization was linked to the shared identities related to the city of Sarajevo and a general distrust of the political class. In most cross-cleavage mobilizations in societies that have experienced long-lasting conflicts, the element of trust appears to be the most difficult to rebuild, which is why it is then often possible to find points of contact on issues not necessarily related to the conflict and that can lead people to work together regardless of trust. This is not the case. Trust is an essential element that can only be built through a common recognition of what causes inequalities.

Differently from previous studies, this work suggests that it is through the *interaction* of these three elements that protracted cooperation preserving the precedence of very different collective identities are possible. Indeed, we might be led to think that since "trust" is the element that usually deteriorates the most in colonial contexts and conflict areas, it is hard to consider it as a crucial element or a dimension that can even exist. Nevertheless, the cross-coded table (Table 5) reveals that these three elements were frequently referenced in conjunction, implying that their significance and impact are only realized when simultaneously activated.

Table 5 Codes Co-Occorrence



Because trust and personal relations between the groups have so much deteriorated, under the conflict, it is necessary to find strategies that allow to make up for the lack of trust. The same is true for the element of time. Time is usually considered a factor of disengagement of mobilizations. Usually, after an intense cycle of mobilization, movements naturally de-mobilize (Snow and Benford, 1992). However, as we can see from the case presented here, time is essential to create a network of relationships that allows future cooperation – reactivable and reliable when needed. The *interactional maintenance paradigm* works through strong *ties* of *trust* developed over *time*. When the whole relationship between communities is characterized by dominance and abuse of power, and both societies' discourses portray the "Other" as an existential threat, it is hard to build cross-communal trust. This case shows further that when social movements need to build coalitions that cross power divides, they need these *Three Ts* to address fundamental structural inequalities, especially to avoid a spontaneous reproduction of these asymmetries at the level of movement organizations.

4.2.1.1 TIME

Charles Tilly (2004) is the scholar who pioneered the study of long-term change processes of collective actions in social movement studies and contentious politics. The general idea is that the "*roots of political contention*" are to be found in long-term change processes such as industrialization, colonization, or state formation since they simultaneously shake up power relations and provide a new basis for mobilization (McAdam & Sewell, 2001, p. 90). Tilly's conceptualization of time manifests itself in the influential definition of social movements as historically specific social formations (Tilly, 2004). This can be summarized in the simple idea that social movements "*vary and evolve historically*" (Tilly, 2004, p. 14).

However, the conception of time that emerges from social movements acting in the South Hebron Hills is dramatically different. The relation between the movements and the element of time is anti-capitalist in nature. The understanding of social change proposed by activists in the region requires constant engagement in contentious fields over the years, if not even over different generations. This is precisely what happened in the South Hebron Hills area. At the beginning of this section, it was reported the quote of a young Israeli activist who started to mobilize in the region because of the brokerage of the daughter of an older activist. Similarly, another younger Israeli activist recalls how he gets to know this particular struggle:

> "It was through older activists who passed down the relationships, as well as the wisdom and the knowledge. They introduced me to Yousef and Ibrahim and many other activists from the community. Similarly, they introduced us to the younger generation of Palestinian activists. There is how I started. Mainly through family and from an older generation that did most of the work*".* (IS15)

This understanding of time is certainly indicative of the type of struggle and continuity that activists in the region want to give to these battles. A conflict is an injustice that has roots as distant and deep as the Palestinian cause and cannot be resolved within a generation. Intergenerational trauma cannot ill through a cycle of protests. That is why activism and reconciliation must also be passed down from generation to generation, and it is through the improvement of previous generations' struggles and conceptualization of resistance that co-resistance can continue to advance. As will be shown in the next section, where the generational element is further explored, the new generations have a wider array of relational and epistemological tools that allow for the creation of cooperation and collaborations which, although based on previously established connections and ties, take new shapes, and have a new ability to change.

To summarize, the element of time is twofold. On the one hand, cross-communities cooperation is maintained through the work of older activist groups that are still active in the region and intermediate with the new generation:

> "It was only because so many activists had been in a deep relationship with Susiya since 2001, 2002, that the trust existed, and that trust was extended to us and All That's Left." (IS3).

On the other hand, what is transmitted over time is not only the relationship but also the knowledge and strategies implemented by the activists.

However, there is another necessary consideration in relation to the aspect of time. Most new generations of Israeli activists have spent or do spend long periods living in Palestinian villages in the South Hebron Hills area, Susiya included. They are very long periods that can go from a minimum of three months to two years (some people were still living there during my visit in spring 2022) and represent a direct line with a type of activism already implemented by Israeli and international activists involved in Palestinian campaigns. Several activists have pointed out that during the campaigns to save Susiya a critical and emblematic moment was represented by the possibility of sleeping together with the community in the village.

> "During the 2015 campaign, it was some 90 people slept in Susiya and I had never been part of something like that. But there was something truly different and transformative about sleeping over. I have this distinct feeling of waking up on Saturday and feeling the act of watching the sunset with Palestinians, in their community. Being welcome felt like the first step towards a much deeper form of relationship. Just for one night, we had this indication that we [Israeli activists] are ready if they [Palestinians] choose to be with us in a new way, a different way, a deeper way." (IS8)

The "sleepover tool" does not only involve a different idea of time, but contextually, it also implies a different understanding of activism (della Porta, 2020). In the analysis, I have considered this aspect as

a specific tool of collective action; in fact, the other side of the coin is that it also represents one of the concrete methods to reduce the asymmetries that exist between the two groups. However, I will explore this element more thoroughly in the section on handling asymmetries in the second part of this Chapter.

The following generation of Israeli activists remained in the region for a prolonged period of two years.

> "We started to be active in the area when the Italians left because of covid. And the beginning, of 2020, we didn't know any limits. Until our physical limits broke and people started to get sick, and we experienced burnout[40]. And we understood that if we wanted to maintain it through time, we needed to be also cautious. So, we decided that all activists had to do therapy[41] once a week (in Bethlehem) and have at least three free days every two weeks (in Jerusalem) to relax. Here is dangerous and burnout is a real risk. All of this helped in allowing us and the other to stay for two years." (IS29)

> "I think there was a lot of pressure all the time because we did not really know what to prioritize. We learned it by doing. But at the beginning, we couldn't imagine a minute that there will be no one here. We could not imagine leaving the area. Because Palestinians do not leave. They cannot. They always stay here. We have a privilege that they do not have" (IS30).

This allowed the establishment of personal ties and nourished the existing trust in the form of increased social capital (Diani, 1997) as bequeathed by previous radical Israeli activists such as from Ta'ayush. This is a type of militancy rarer and rarer to encounter, but this is also a type of militancy that refuses the capitalist understanding of time as necessarily coupled with production and reproduction. Differently from other social movement studies' conceptualizations of time, it sees the temporal dimension as something that does not automatically weigh on activists as an external imposition but can benefit the coalition itself. Several activists highlighted that they have started to be more active in the region due to the prolonged absence – due to the Covid-19 outbreak – of Italian activists from Operation Dove, active in the area since 2009. Operation Dove activists, although international, have always maintained a presence in this region and in Susiya, mainly in the role of documentation and advocacy and prevention of settler incursions or military violence. Their work is widely appreciated and known by both Israeli activists and local communities. However, even when interviewed, Operation Dove confirmed that they

[40] Many activists involved in these areas burnout. I have had moments during my fieldwork where I felt really close. Here is a fieldwork note:
"I feel exhausted and without energy. It is not just the fact of changing planes but the constant uncertainty about what to do and how to do it. I think I pulled the rope a little too far and reached a point dangerously close to burnout. I dream of just going to bed and often find myself daydreaming about islands and summer vacation. I have a physical need for sun, sea, and air on bare skin." (Filed note, April 11th, 2022).

[41] In reference to the fact that the new generations have more tools than the previous ones, it seems to me essential to recognize the importance they attach to mental health, something never mentioned or considered by activists of other generations.

became aware of the needs of the communities and the type of activism in the area thanks to the Israeli Ta'ayush activists involved in this region since the early 2000s.

"Relations with Israeli activists are excellent. They know the area better than we do, help us when we have legal problems or expulsions of our international activists and have long-lasting relationships with the communities in the area. There are no other NGOs, or organizations of whom we trust the most. Indeed, to be honest, without them not even Operation Dove would have started working with the communities in Area C in the South. It was with them that we began to get to know the communities to work with. We got on well and we stayed here." (IN5).

This is reciprocal in many ways. A Palestinian community organizer of Susiya added:

*"*There are Israeli activists who have grown up with some of the children in Susiya, they've seen the devastation of demolitions and settler violence. This is the reason we trust them. Once you see something like that, and you have a soul, you cannot remain indifferent*"* (PA7).

Spending a lot of time with the community and demonstrating to be trustable had a unique benefit that made the development of these personal relations possible. As a result, confrontation and discussion are more frequent, open, and genuine.

*"*I feel like everything can be discussed at this point, but that's after years and years with the community" (IS11).

What appears from all these testimonies - Palestinian, Israeli and international - is that spending sustained time building these relationships is critical to restoring the trust that the conflict has eroded. This also happens through the sharing of the newspaper and the "collective inaction" which I describe in one of the next sections.

4.2.1.2 TRUST

In the case of Susiya, what allowed the two communities to encounter was a renewed act of trust by the Palestinian counterpart. Ahmed, who at the time of this first encounter was only 18 and then became the leader of the campaign and head of the Susiya popular committee, said:

"We were used to see only settlers and IDF (soldiers), then, unexpectedly, one days these Israelis came and told us 'We want to help you rebuilding your houses' and we didn't know what to say. We didn't trust them. We thought they were spies. It took a lot of time and joint actions. But when you see them to the same demonstrations, get arrested with you, being beaten up by the military with you, you trust them. A different thing, an harder thing was to convince the rest of the community, those who were not non-violent activists" (PA4).

This quote shows how the impact of historical asymmetric relations between the two communities produced an inherent mistrust. The West Bank was occupied by the Israeli military, imposing a military rule on the OPTs fifty-five years ago. This drastically changed the balance of power in favour of the Israeli government, which had imposed violent and discriminatory control on the land, defined last year

by Amnesty International as Apartheid (Amnesty International, 2022). Almost three generations of Palestinians living in the West Bank have experienced Israeli presence exclusively through the role of soldiers (with the disproportionate power that comes from this role) or settlers (most of the time extremely ideological, conservative, and racist political actors). In March and April 2022, I witnessed first-hand settlers attacking the village[42], military roadblocks, and house and car searches. On different occasions, I was personally harassed both by the military and by settlers. I am not Palestinian, but it seems I was sometimes perceived as such nevertheless. Upon the realization that I am an international, I was "palestinized". I will not enter this discussion because I believe it requires an in-depth ethnographic reflection beyond the scope of this Chapter. My intention with this brief testimony is to show that it is not an exaggeration to say that the perpetuation of differentials of power over a long time has drastically, and sometimes irreparably, deteriorated the relationship between the communities. However, this is also the reason why the work of these activists is as sound as is necessary.

In the same interview, Ahmed described how the first Israeli group that reached out to them was Ta'ayush, through Ezra Nawi, who sadly disappeared in January 2021:

> "I clearly remember Ezra arriving in the car. And my father, the village leader, approached to understand who he was. There were other Israelis with him, including women. All the other community members stood around trying to figure out what was going on. When he died my father was devastated. He told me that he had never met someone with a heart like that." (PA4).

As far as the Israeli testimony is concerned, having not had the good fortune to interview Ezra, however, we need to rely on second-hand testimonies:

> "The early connection with the village, I think was in the mid-90s, a long before I joined Ta'ayush or activism. But I can tell you from second hearing from Ezra told us. I know that after a few weeks of demolitions and evictions the Ta'ayush managed to connect with an Israeli lawyer and other organizations […] and they started to work legally against demolition and against expulsion. Locals were also personally attacked by settlers so from time to time they needed activists to go there and sleep there. This is how the protective presence strategy has started and since then, it's a continuous relationship" (IS10).

While on the one hand, there has certainly been an assessment of the costs and benefits by the community of Susiya and in particular by the figure of Hamed's father concerning accepting the involvement of Israeli activists in the coalition work, this assessment has nevertheless been followed by a whole nothing but an obvious act of trust in an ethnonational group that has been trying to colonize Palestinian lands

[42] Fieldnotes of March 2022

for almost a century. Undoubtedly, there was also a strategic intention at the beginning of this cooperation. However, the *Three Ts* were what made the encounter continue and last throughout time:

"Because Susiya said 'come', because Susiya decided that they were going to invest in relationships and trust and solidarity from their oppressors, which is, of course, not a given not to be taken for granted or assumed." (IS15).

In conclusion, I would like to take a moment to further explore the concept of trust. Trust is not only crucial for sustaining cooperative relationships but also plays a vital role in executing collective actions that these emerging movements often undertake. To illustrate the transformative power of trusting one's fellow activists, I will now recount a significant passage from my field experience.

"We eat something quick because then we are urgently called back to Susiya. The settlers have been harassing Palestinian residents since this morning. My group is the first to arrive and we are faced with 4 settler boys who are intentionally dispersing water from the only water tank and therefore, source of water, accessible to the Palestinians who live in Susiya. They are just wasting their water. Water is one of the most inaccessible resources in the desert as everyone can imagine and in Palestine, is completely controlled by Israel. Palestinian living in area C cannot connect to the Israeli pipes that serve the settlements. This tank guarantees the survival of the inhabitants of Susiya. Hamed and the other inhabitants of Susiya stay behind and keep us going[43]. Israeli activists try to create a cordon around the tank and thus keep away the young settlers. As more activists reach us, we actually manage to drive them away. Angry at being interrupted, they begin stripping branches from Susiya olive trees. Likewise, our task is to try to stop them. All these interactions take place in a peaceful way by Israeli and Palestinian activists who try not to respond to provocations. The settler boys, on the other hand, start throwing stones. After a while the soldiers arrive and declare the area a closed military zone. Jim looks at me, Hamed and the other Palestinians and tells us to leave. The military could check our documents, arrest the Palestinians, and deport me as the only international person - and also the only woman but that is another matter. Hamed does not flinch and walks away, he knows Jim will handle the matter with the military in the best possible way. The younger Palestinians resent this decision: they want to join the action. Hamed raises his voice and convinces them to step aside. All this is possible thanks to the deep bond of trust that exists between Jim and Hamed." (Fieldnote March 26, 2022).

[43] It is not convenient for Palestinians to confront settlers directly, especially if they are minors. This is why they usually wait for Israeli activists to intervene.

Figure 28 Moment in which Israeli activists try to mediate with the military and convince them to remove the settlers and in which I and the other Palestinian activists were made to leave.

I believe there is little else to supplement this fieldnote. The entire sequence of events highlights the activists' skill in leveraging their privilege and position to minimize the potential dangers faced by Palestinians. Moreover, it emphasizes the consensual nature of these actions, facilitated strong bonds of trust among the various groups of activists.

4.2.1.3 TIES

"On the one hand, let's be clear, we need to sustain solidarity. Like I said, I believe in relationship-centred coalitions, which means you have to invest for years and years to develop the trust, to take risks together to escalate your tactics" (IS16).

This quotation highlights the interplay of the *Three Ts* within the *interactional maintenance paradigm*. Further:

"Those relationships have grown and grown and grown over the years. In fact, Susiya is tremendously rich and deep relationships with and just naming a few organizations. Not only because we build a successful campaign together, but because we worked and still work together and get to know each other" (PA13).

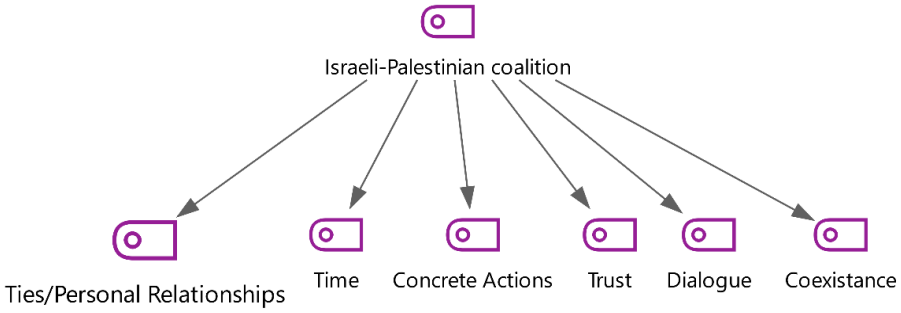


Figure 29 Factors that favour the maintenance of Palestinian-Israeli Coalitions

As we can see from this graph (Figure 29), which shows the sub-codes and their relevance, Ties were considered the most important element in the making of this coalition.

"Especially in places like Susiya, we reached a point in which we know everyone, there are some children that I knew when they were so young, and now they are in their twenties. Some of them, are married now, and have children of their own, it means that we know them for more than a generation, so our relationship with some of the families and the activists is so long and deep that the question of asymmetry, it's not a major one for us now, it was of course at the beginning when we were not aware of what was going on here in the South [Hebron Hills] and we thought this was a "conflict" but here in the West Bank there is no conflict. There is just the Occupation" (IS24).

Believing that this relational element may reduce the asymmetry between the occupied and the occupier is misleading. Nevertheless, relationships are multifaceted and, although the asymmetry that surrounds their interaction is still in place, the *interactional maintenance paradigm* allows for the creation of a space in-between. Relationships take different forms and are managed by the actors who shape them, making sure they are consensual. Here we can find another maybe surprising insight of this case:

"On the other side, when we are under the threat of rockets from Gaza, our friends in Southern Hebron and in Susiya, tell us come: 'Come and stay with us. Here is safer than in the kibbutz were you live, come at stay at our place, here Hamas rockets do not reach'" (IS9).

The fact that these relationships are not necessarily symmetric is given, as some activists have described, this is “the rule of the game”: a structural element hard to change. However, actors have agency, and they can intervene in some ways to manage this asymmetry or at least play within it.

4.3 Recognizing Asymmetry

Divides have constantly been part of social realities; we learn to look at the world through the lenses of differences rather than similarities. Far from assuming a normative standpoint in the study of social divides, my work follows an approach to social movements that accounts for the power asymmetry generated by the abovementioned disparities. In political sociology, several authors looked at the interplay of power dynamics within social realities; however, in the field of social movement studies, this aspect has been relatively overshadowed and downplayed. This might be because most divides (gender, sex, race, class) are considered only relevant from a social constructivist perspective (Alimi & Leitz, 2019). However, their effects and consequences are everything but fleeting. They have very material implications. The scholarship of contentious movements, collective action, and social change requires a clearer understanding of the causes of divides, their effects, and empirical attempts to bridge them.

Few studies have considered how Social Movement Organizations (SMOs), and different groups inside, approach and mitigate the effects of divides on collective actions (Beamish & Luebbers 2009; Alimi & Leitz 2019; Teixeira & Motta 2022). One of the most notable exceptions comes from the work of Michelle Gawerc (2020, 2019, 2016), who also specialized in Israeli-Palestinian joint campaigns. In her work, she specifically addresses differences – more than divides – showing how they can represent a benefit for collective action (Gawerc M. I., 2021). However, she believes a careful negotiation of differences can actually foster the creation of a collective identity. If, on the one hand, Gawerc's analysis is correct in highlighting the attributes that different ethnonational groups can bring to a join-struggle, on the other hand, certain asymmetries relating to being "occupier" and "occupied" are harder to overcome, allowing the creation of a common collective identity.

Drawing on the interviews conducted with activists active in the South Hebron Hills region, it is possible to summarize some of the practical strategies put into place to tackle this power asymmetry. The first step, as also underlined by Todorova (2019), has to do with the recognition of asymmetry by the colonizer group. Being aware of their privileges is the first necessary step to implement any relationship that keeps into account the concrete risk of prevarication. Israelis are free to move and go wherever they wish to. Palestinians are denied the right to mobility; the Israeli Military that rules over the Occupied Palestinian

Territories developed a complex system of permits, checkpoints, and inspections to make Palestinian mobility very costly in terms of both money and time. Israelis provide humanitarian aid, while Palestinians need it. Israelis have easy, direct contact with the outside world, while for Palestinians, this is complicated at best. Israelis – whether they like it or not – are part of the colonizing society, while Palestinians have been colonized. In this interview, an Israeli activist refers specifically to the issue of asymmetries. My question was how it is possible to foster this kind of cooperation*:*

"[We need to develop] a praxis that is based on connection. Which is not a connection like "everybody's friends", and we hold hands and sing. It's a connection that's built on mutual recognition of asymmetry and mutual appreciation of what that asymmetry can also allow, and what it enables (IS18)."

Every white activist faces this dilemma at a certain point, and internationals too. Palestinians do not usually like to talk about it, and they prefer to tell me, why they do not consider these relationships normalization. I will discuss more in-depth the issue of anti-normalization in the next empirical Chapter because this is something all Palestinian activists have to face at a certain point, and the discussion was more prominent in the case of Sheikh Jarrah. Going back to the asymmetry issue, Israeli activists are aware of that, and they have developed some strategies to exploit the privileges this asymmetry enables:

"I believe that because we are privileged, we should use our privilege. There is a duty for us to use our privilege. We should not hide it. It is there [the privilege]. We are white. We have Israeli documents; Israeli passports that allow much more and we do not risk everything if we go to jail. We should use it, and it is the only way to change the system*."* (IS22).

Another activist describes exactly the conditions and situations they usually face.

"We are not going to get punished by the Israeli army. At least not as hard as the Palestinians would. When we go in front of a bulldozer the maximum, they will do is throw us in the bushes or arrest us. If Palestinians did what I did, standing in front of a bulldozer they (the IDF) would shoot without thinking twice. Second, we had no fear of our government. We can keep on doing what we do because Israel is a democracy for Jews. So as long as you are Jewish everything is fine […] Not all activists realize they are more powerful, but when they do, they notice some behaviour and attitudes of their partners" (IS15).

The issue of asymmetries is not new. Male privilege makes the White heterosexual man more secure and generally more likely to own up space in collective discussions, reproducing spaces of racial inequalities.

"This asymmetry has two levels. When we sit down with Palestinians to decide how to perform an action or how to structure a campaign it is always the Israelis that start to talk first, and something else I noticed is that Israelis always talk with a louder voice." (IS17).

This other activist explains perfectly what is meant by privilege and how deconstruction must start from the recognition that all minds are colonized: both that of the dominating society and of the subaltern.

"We as Israelis have our dominance built into our ideas; we are so accustomed to it. Sometimes Israelis tend to dictate to the Palestinians the political directions of the coalitions. This is wrong, because it is their struggle, and we should learn to work as junior partners because we are in Palestine. This is Palestinian historical land (IS3)".

Most of the activists from both sides have underlined the importance of trying to manage the asymmetry of power that elapses between the two groups. This is essential for any social movement dealing with discriminated minorities. Gender, racial and economic divides create an asymmetry of power. This is why the more strategies are identified to deal with this asymmetry, the more likely cooperation across divides will be. I have singled out several concrete strategies and mechanisms. The first step is the very recognition of this asymmetry, as underlined in this section. However, recognition by itself is meaningless. Concrete tools need to be developed to be able to then actually work together on the ground.

4.3.1 Subaltern-Led Struggles and Co-Resistance

Many Israeli activists have underlined the need to listen and follow the Palestinian leadership in the action. This is pivotal as far as re-balancing the initial differences of power. Since they are not equal because of a historical condition, it is necessary to equilibrate relationships, and one way is through accepting, on the part of Israeli being "junior partners":

"We learned to always ask first what they want from us, how they want to manage our partnership" (IS18).

Being aware of the inequalities that exist allows activists to exploit differences to reach the aims of the coalition. Another activist perfectly describes it:

"For me, the fabric is that the movement must be built from like the Jewish-Palestinian relationships and Jewish solidarity with the Palestinian leadership. That's the fabric for me." (IS11).

In concrete terms, it means also accepting to do something that you, as an Israeli, would not have thought about but is meaningful to your Palestinian partners. This is exactly what happened during the #savesusiya campaign in 2016 when, as a form of collective action, Israeli and Palestinian activists visited the ancient synagogue from where the community was evicted, paying the entrance ticket and remembering the past of dispossession and ethnic cleansing. A Palestinian activist recalls how the idea and implementation of this action came about.

"It was in the middle of a meeting, and we said 'We want to go home. We want the whole village to walk across the highway and to go to our original village of Susiya where many of us were born in the caves, many of us lived and died in those caves that are now an Israeli archaeological site.' Before that action, I think maybe three or four people from the community had ever gone back since they were forced off that land. I said: 'I was born there. I want to see where I was born, even though it is literally across the road, literally across the road. This would be the most meaningful thing for the grandparents and the children to go back and visit. We will not stay.

We cannot stay.' Our Israeli friends helped us to go back, they paid the entrance ticket and they talked with the guards, and we stayed there until we were forced out." (PA4).

This case was very emblematic because Israeli activists were ready for more confrontational actions, such as demonstrations, confrontation with the soldiers or the settlers. However, the Palestinians decided to pay a ticket to visit the site from where they had been expelled in 1986. Interestingly, this event was also told to me by an Israeli activist who precisely remembers this moment and says:

"I went down to the South on Friday evening to discuss the next day's action. Every Saturday we had been making a demonstration from Susiya marching through the archaeological site and ended at the illegal settlement where the soldiers then dispersed the crowd. Instead, that evening, Hamed proposed something different. Something we would never have thought of. Because we are not Palestinians and we do not know the symbolic meaning of certain places. Going to visit that place with them was mind-blowing for me. The elders of Susiya showed us where they slept, lit the fire and the women did the laundry. All of this has been erased by the Israeli colonization of the place." (IS11)

This episode, in addition to being extremely significant because told from both points of view, perfectly demonstrates what it means to accept the leadership of those who have suffered the violence of colonization. It is also emblematic of how this archaeological site has become contentious sites. It refers to a historical past in which the real possibilities of controlling the land are at stake. Here is also where the settler colonial framework reveals its explanatory capacity showing the possible decolonization of the "settler" mind.

Israeli activists offer themselves as human shelves, defenders, and advocators for human rights in Israel and abroad, but once they do join activities, how to carry these collective actions out and how to perform them is up to the Palestinians to decide. However, this is possible only when there are also voices able to carry out this leadership role. Hamed, the Palestinian community organizer often quoted in this Chapter, is certainly one of them. Indeed, most of the activists recognize the crucial role he had both during the campaign but also in mediating with other parts of the community who were not keen on working with Israeli activists.

"I met Hamed when he was 18. And when we came to Susiya with Ta'ayush, Hamed was already a natural leader. So already when he was there at 18, and he is not the elder son of Abu Jihad, he was the one who became more friendly with us" (IS15).

I personally had the fortune of knowing Hamed during my time at Susiya. Living with his family in the community, I was able to experience what it means to be a person who organizes but also takes care of one's community - an entity that, although often united by family ties, goes beyond the latter.

"During Ramadan Rachel and Mary and I all spend a night together at Hamed's. We were invited to celebrate Iftar. I am baffled by the friendship between Hamed and the Israeli activists. The festive air of Ramadan is light, and the warmer weather makes social interactions easier. In this regard, one thing I noticed today is how there is very frequent physical contact between relatives in Palestine. Hamed's two sons often kiss each other on the cheek. And today for the first time Hamed hugged me to greet me when we arrived. Within the family physical contact is permitted which is otherwise socially unacceptable.

Seeing how integrated the two girls are with Hamed's family is impressive. The children love them and greet them and it is clear that they are fond of them. It is an encounter that strikes me a lot. They in turn are part of the family. They talk to everyone even their grandfather who will find himself sleeping in the same room with the three of us tonight. Who knows how it must be strange for Hamed's father: sleeping in the same room with two Israeli girls and an Italian. Who was supposed to tell him about it twenty years ago when this movement started on his initiative?" (Field note, 4th of April 2022).

As useful as these strategies are to give a clear political direction to the movement, it is important to remember that this, too, is possible only when there are interpersonal relationships based on trust. This testimony reminds this once again. The creation of these spaces is essential not only for activism but also for demonstrating that spaces for sharing and living together are possible.

4.3.2 Time for Action and for Inaction

An additional element that emerged from the interviews as facilitating cooperation between the two communities is working together on very concrete things such as building a house, cultivating the fields escorting children to school, different from the moment of the collective action. Daily acts of solidarity and cooperation make these coalitions stronger and strengthen inter-communal relations.

An activist described this situation:

"At the olive groves real dialogue occurs. Rather than professional dialogues that will get flown off every twice a week to another foreign capital to sit around a table and talk, at the olive groves more ordinary Palestinians and Israelis get together because we are just harvesting their olives, and tomorrow will be the same (IS5)".

This response also proves to be highly critical of the peace and dialogue initiatives that have characterized some failed peacebuilding attempts. As the literature on people-to-people initiatives shows, many of these programs of "dialogue" were at best inefficient, at worst even harmful. Dialogue initiatives that have characterised the late 90s have probably drained much of the peace movement energy. Concrete collective actions that demonstrate a real commitment to address the root of the conflict seem to work better than many declarations of intent. A Palestinian activist meaningfully called this "constructive resistance".

*"*I think the constructive resistance is what works better. With that, I mean building tents, fences, and plating trees. Everyday resistance means being in contact to the land, farming and grazing sheep, and other forms of resistance." (PA7).

Another Palestinian describes the importance of these actions.

"Ta'ayush are Israeli but they are against the occupation. American Jewish are from outside and are against the occupation, they fund activities and organize activities in the South Hebron Hills with the people against the occupation. So, we did several different activities here because they come usually in big groups. They came to fix the road that led to that village and usually we go all together to demonstrations we all get beaten, and all get arrested, but it is all very helpful because this shows we are together in this, it is a strong message to everyone in the world when Jews are participating with Palestinians against the occupation, against the Apartheid, against injustice." (P13).

However, another very important theme that emerged from the interviews and from the long period of fieldwork is the importance of the time always spent together in everyday life not necessarily linked to *activism per se*. I called these collective moments '*collective inaction*'. This sharing of everyday life among activists does not necessarily imply political actions but is exactly what allows the creation of interpersonal community relationships. Something that was recurring both in the PEA and in the interviews, particularly during the peak of the campaign, was the sleepover at the community threatened with demolition. This aspect has already been explored in the passage on time, and how activists have gone from spending 48h shifts in communities to living there for years during the Covid-19 emergency. Beyond the hours spent living in these communities, what emerges is that by force of circumstances, there will not only be moments of collective and political action but also moments of rest, meals, waking up, and watching the sunset with those people. These moments of *collective inaction* are, in my view, what allows for the creation of inter-communal ties that go beyond ethnonational origins allow for a real foreshadowing of what an all-embracing society can be.

As it emerges from the PEA and several interviews, these sleepover actions were a common tool to prevent unexpected demolitions overnight. In particular, the presence of Israeli activists is a strong deterrent to the IDF's violation of human rights. As mentioned before, there is also the risk of inviting some unknown people in your intimacy, which most Palestinian communities would rather not do. All the activists who took part in the campaign mentioned this issue in different manners.

"I think that some 90 people slept in Susya and I had never been part of something like that […] there was something truly different and transformative about sleeping over." (IS18)

"Well, we were sleeping during the campaign, sleeping in Susiya, this also encouraged people to stay and to maintain the campaign." (PA11).

On the one hand, it is quite uncommon to find communities willing to host Israeli Jewish activists, and on the other hand, such a strong commitment is very hard to be maintained over time. Additionally, this relational strategy, such as the *collective inaction* in general, works also in mitigating asymmetries. One of the recurring elements for many Israeli activists is the one of "having to leave" these contentious spaces once the actions are over. However, contentious spaces remain, and Palestinian communities continue to live there. That is why finding ways to make the reality of Israeli activists closer to that of Palestinian activists certainly helps in dealing with power asymmetries.

Activists pointed to the concrete challenge posed by the fact of leaving Susyia once the action was concluded. Differently from many similar campaigns in the West Bank, one of the actions of the #savesusiya campaign consisted of spending the whole weekend there. This sleepover and the "not-to-leave-and-come-back-to-your-privilege" was considered by all the activists as a turning point. An activist described it like that:

> "What was "radical", something I had never done before, and almost nobody of the over 100 people had done that before, was being in a community once the sun had gone down versus being there when the sun was up. Being around the fire in a community that doesn't have an electric grid and is not connected to water, being welcome. It felt like the first step towards a much deeper form of relationship as opposed to like 'to come to visit us, seeing our suffering bear witness', even maybe planting a few trees, and then going home back to your place of immense protection and privilege offered by the state at our expense. That is a very sad formula for relationships. You show up in the morning. Maybe you even stay six whole hours, eight whole hours, and then you go home to your side of the police state or the apartheid regime or whatever. But the limits of your solidarity are what you can do after you leave." (IS4)

In this quotation, all the elements recur throughout the entire Chapter. Staying when the sun sets necessarily implies sharing moments of collective inaction. Moments that allow for an open and personal conversation create relationships of trust. At the same time, this can only happen by taking more time than is devoted to collective action. On the other hand, this slight criticism that the Israeli activist makes of most collective actions that are carried out in the West Bank indicates the importance of taking time to focus only on *being* together. Eventually, this is what makes the difference from other types of activism but above all. It allows to prefigure an idea of a shared society where the two communities are effectively able to live together even in moments not necessarily related to (co)-resistance. This passage represents a clear description of what has been and is described in the literature as *prefigurative politics*.

The act of staying was very much felt also by Palestinian activists who described it like this:

> "Susiya was an example of Israeli-Palestinian cooperation? Yes. Because they stayed those nights. They didn't leave" (PA13)

Another International Jewish activist said:

> "And, you wake up with the sunrise and it just feel like a tremendous shift had occurred. There was this huge door open to interacting with each other in no way, shape or form as equals, as peers. Nothing equalizing had occurred […] It was an active "not leave", we stayed." (IS11).

This is something I got to experience extensively during my field research. Not only were there many moments devoted to inaction, but, when a planned collective action could not be carried out for various reasons, time was still devoted to joint inaction.

> "We then go to Khyber Shif, an agglomeration of very few houses where we enter Assaf's house where we are offered more tea. Here we stop and just talk with the family for an hour. They are a woman and a man living alone in the middle of nowhere, easy targets for settlers. They have a flock that they take to graze every day and from which they get milk and cheese that they sell at Yatta market, olive groves from which they get their oil, and a small vegetable garden that sustain themselves. The tea is exquisite. It has a minty aftertaste and is drowned in sugar. Maybe the best of my life: I take two cups. Assaf tells us that many sheep, new-borns, are dying because of cold. Then he tells us that every time he goes out with his flock on his land, the settlers come to harass him. They push him, pull him, and insult him but he tries to resist. Aisha, his wife, tells us that she would love to go to Tel Aviv to see the sea. Neither of them has ever seen the sea, they are not allowed to. They could die without ever seeing it. It is still raining, and it is not possible to accompany Assaf and his flock to the pasture. We stay a little longer and enjoy the warmth of the gas stove. It is a freezing winter in Palestine the likes of which have not been seen in a long time." (Field note, March 9, 2022).

Spending these moments of slowness together allows for strengthening the ties that emerged during the confrontation with the military and the settlers and during activism and co-resistance. Inaction is what cements action.

4.3.3 Decolonizing the Language

If, in the interviews, something that can be traced back to ideology does not emerge as preponderant, it seems clear instead that a universe of values, albeit not univocal, brings many of the activists together. Many activists have repeatedly stressed the need to decolonize the language. During the field experience in spring 2022, I was very impressed by how most of the Israeli activists present in Susyia spoke perfect Arabic. Arabic, which for those who are not experts on the subject, is *Ammiya* (Colloquial Arabic) and typical dialect of the region, not even *Fusha*, the standard Arabic that is usually taught in official language courses. This is to say that there has been a clear will on the part of the activists active in the South Hebron Hills area to get as close as possible to their Palestinian counterparts to demarcate the difference between the colonizers of the land, those who speak Hebrew - military and settlers - and those who speak a language that has been spoken in the region for centuries. This first step is undoubtedly fundamental, especially since most of the institutional peace attempts have instead proposed alternatives in which the

languages were represented equally or English was used, which inevitably cut off those who were not educated, favouring the middle class - Israeli and Palestinian - and excluding those most affected by the occupation, i.e. Palestinian farmers in rural areas. Interestingly, learning Arabic is now like a basic requirement for younger activists organizing in the area.

> "So, we started the Arabic course for Hebrew speakers. There is a group of women from South Hebron Hills that were trained to be Arabic teachers. It was an idea that came the moment we realized that most Israeli do not speak the language. We did it because we both come from mixed towns in Israel, but all the others did not. So, we decided that it was compulsory that when the activists stayed here to do protecting presence, they would have also done an intensive Arabic course." (IS29)

> "It's very easy to learn Arabic in a way that is disconnected, which is absurd. Even in Jerusalem if you live in West Jerusalem, you can learn Arabic in a very isolated environment. So, I think after starting the project a few months after, actually, I had dreams about it. But I didn't imagine it would happen. And uh, yeah, I think covid was probably the thing that made us start." (IS30)

These two testimonies come from a focus group with five activists (3 Israelis and 2 Palestinians) in a village near Susiya. The activists were also all active in Susiya and are part of the new generation of activists who started mobilising in the area with the emergence of Covid. It is indeed very interesting to see how their project to include a language course within the activism moment for those who speak Hebrew has had two important results. On the one hand, it has allowed the women of these rural areas who can hardly earn an independent salary to specialize as Arabic teachers for Hebrew speakers. On the other hand, the knowledge of Arabic has allowed the two groups to build bonds in which at least the asymmetry from speaking Hebrew or English was finally reduced.

4.3.4 Refusing Violence

Equally, a crucial point for many of the Palestinian activists is the fact that Israeli activists have not served in the military. The Israeli army carrying out the military occupation of the West Bank since 1967 is seen as the quintessential oppression. To serve in the military is to reiterate this oppression, and Palestinians who are constantly stopped at checkpoints and attacked by the military in a completely arbitrary way know this. The fact that they are not part of this oppressive institution makes cooperation easier. On the other hand, Israel has compulsory military service (three years for men and two for women), and who do not respond are forced to spend up to a year and a half in prison. Furthermore, these people are then completely ostracized from the rest of Israeli society (Stagni, 2022). It is no coincidence that all the prime ministers and politicians of the state of Israel are people who have held important positions in the army. This also demonstrates how the militarization of Israeli society is a central issue that is still very far from being eradicated. Most of the activists involved in the area have not done military

service. Anyone who refuses to serve in the army is called a Refusenik[44]. Some of them leave the State of Israel to avoid prison. Others find tricks, such as health or mental problems, that allow them to escape compulsory military service. Still, others drop out because they are unable to bear the experience.

"Jim tells me that the day before he was asked to guide a tour of the South Hebron Hills with Breaking the Silence but that he was not happy about that. It is a project involving teachers who visit the occupied territories and especially the illegal settlements. He says that many of them were not fully aware of the situation and that from that point of view, it was useful, but when they got to talk about politics, he got nervous. They asked him if he was a Zionist and he said no. These teachers are part of the Zionist left. They then asked him what he thought of the Zionists' left, and Jim replied that it was better not to answer. We reach a point of confidence in which I now feel safe in asking about his military service. He did not want to do it and as soon as it started, he got depressed. He said that before each exercise he vomited and had strong physical reactions. They sent him home after 3 months due to health problems. He believes the military is Israel's worst problem. It is not Israel that has an army, but the army that has Israel. The rank that people attain during military service has an incredible influence on the type of job and status one can reach. The higher the rank you obtain, the more likely you are to continue in the army, where wages are very high, and retirement is at 45. To think that 99% of the people I meet on the street have done their military service and know how to use a weapon with ease is something that scares me terribly. Just the opposite of the sense of security." (Field note, March 19).

This fieldnote touches on several points, such as the crucial difference between being an anti-Zionist and a leftist Zionist. Unfortunately, it is not possible to discuss it here. What is important, however, is to recognize that for many Israelis, there is not only a political reason for not wanting to do military service but often just a refusal of violence. It is no coincidence that Israeli activists in the South Hebron Hills respond non-violently to settler attacks on even the worst ones. It is a political strategy guided by the desire to create a line of demarcation with the institutional violence of the state of Israel.

4.3.5 Questioning of Zionism

"For Israelis to go to the West Bank is extremely, extremely strange, weird sometimes even unsafe. We really need to remind ourselves to explain these people what it means to be here as "colonizers". That they are part of the oppressive system. And this is essential because this is the only way we keep the trust that we have. And it is done through a lot of teaching [to Israelis] and not take anything for granted." (IS29).

The discussions on the Nakba, mainly by Palestinian academics, are quite recent. Although oral transmission has occurred consistently since 1948, more structured research has been done in recent years (Dalla Negra, 2018; Masalha, 2012; Sa'di & Abu-Lughod, 2007; Sayigh R. , 2007). What has been amply demonstrated is the willingness of the Zionist leadership to colonize Palestine regardless of whether there were people thriving with their own culture and tradition (Pappé, 2017). The famous phrase 'The bride is beautiful, but she is married to another man', from the telegram written by two rabbis sent to Palestine

[44] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Refusenik

by the Zionist movement of Vienna after the Basel congress in 1897, precisely tells this story. Furthermore, it was also suggested to evaluate alternatives for a location to establish the state of Israel (Pappe, 2007). The new generations are increasingly aware that the state of Israel was born from an act of force and consequent appropriation of Palestinian lands.

This was followed by ethnic cleansing, which forced 700,000 people from their homes. This data was reconstructed when Israel declassified its state archives in the 1980s. This does not deny the horror of the holocaust. However, it is precisely for this reason that the new generations attach so much importance to the recognition of what actually happened in Palestine on the eve of the independence of the State of Israel. The birth of the state of Israel is, for the Palestinians, the beginning of the catastrophe, the Nakba[45].

The activists re-interpreted in these terms the action that saw the Susiya community return to the archaeological site from which they had been expropriated.

> "Because what are we doing? We were trying to undo the Nakba, the Nakba that pushed the families of Susyia out of their village." (IS11)

The act of visiting the archaeological site was described as a way to go through, even though momentarily, a generational trauma. The additional element is the recognition of that geographical site, as a place of expropriation and violation of Palestinians' human rights. Such recognition leads to acceptance of that event, from both sides, as colonial brutality, a colonial violent appropriation of land, in line with the Nakba and the rest of the colonial violence perpetrated by Israel. As a Ta'ayush activist asked me the first time, we met wile visiting a refugee camp near Bethlehem:

> "It's Apartheid, it is oppression, it's a war crime that is going on and, it's the ongoing Nakba. You know the Nakba?" "Yes, I know the Nakba, is the 1948 Palestinian catastrophe" "Correct, the ongoing Nakba that Israel is doing. And of course, the Zionist movement is a colonial project." (IS13)

If on a political level right-wing extremism seems to have more and more foothold within Israeli society, some parts of the Israeli left are instead increasingly open to recognizing the colonial crimes of the state of Israel. This certainly makes any collaboration easier and shows how much settler colonialism is not only a theoretical framework, but a concrete reality that shapes both colonial and anti-colonial relations.

[45] Literally, the Palestinian catastrophe of 1948, known mainly in the Arab world, and among Palestinians in particular, as Nakba (Arabic: النكبة, al-Nakba, literally "disaster", "catastrophe", or "cataclysm"), is the exodus of the Palestinian Arab population during the civil war of 1947-48, at the end of the British Mandate, and during the Arab-Israeli war of 1948, after the founding of the State of Israel. Nakba is the name assigned to this event by historiography, not only in Arabic. During this conflict, more than 700,000 Palestinians were expelled from towns and villages and were subsequently denied any right to return to their lands, both during and after the conflict.

4.4 Conclusions

Alliance building across social movement groups is a crucial dimension of collective action dynamics that helps social movements to succeed and promote their capacity to create social change (Van Dyke & McCammon, 2010). Sociological scholarship has extensively documented collaborative efforts where groups and organizations are unified on a common cause. Fewer emphases have been offered to cross-movement coalitions. Even less attention was given to coalitions that cross social, cultural, gender, sexual, class, race, and ethnicity divides. In this Chapter, I have shown how the #savesusiya campaign, and the wider solidarity network built in the area of the South Hebron Hills, worked to create and maintain mobilization and cooperation against Israeli government eviction orders targeting Palestinian properties and houses. Many of the strategies I was able to observe or hear about in interviews can be summarized in what I have called the *Three Ts rule.* The present Chapter has strived to highlight how these three components, *Time, Trust* & (personal) *Ties*, unravel their true explanatory capacity when they are considered intertwined rather than separated. This is summarized in the *interactional maintenance paradigm* that, through this contribution, has shown that these components are critical for the development of diverse coalitions based on strong solidarity between actors that find themselves in different power positions. They are also what generates sustenance in cooperation that crosses conflict boundaries, allowing for the acknowledgement of very different, if not even opposing, collective identities.

Dense relationships can either precede a coalition's formation or emerge from it. In the case described throughout this Chapter, there was a combination of both. Longlisting personal relationships were created between the different national groups, while "old" personal ties also allowed for the creation of new interpersonal relationships that were possible only because of the trust that these actors were able to generate among each other. In other words, previous ties from some activist groups served as a passe-partout for new activist groups. Additionally, what this paper is proposing is a new conceptualization of time as it pertains to our understanding of coalition building. Time should be intended differently from what previous studies suggest, mostly in conjunction with temporality as a predetermined condition that heavily weighs on an actor's capacity to perform prolonged collective actions. Time can then be conceived as a tool, an instrument, a dimension that activists can use and bend according to their needs. Time allows the development of personal ties based on deep trust that enables activists to move from a dimension of militancy to one of shared humanity.

The bridging process I have identified involved very different activist groups that were unexpectedly able to build trust. The *interactional maintenance paradigm* allowed for the explanation of the existence of relationship that mutually accompany one another through a period of intense repression. Coming together, looking beyond the ongoing closure of political opportunities for progressive social movements that have seen their political space, at the level of representative politics, increasingly shrank due to the radicalization of the right-wing political spectrum, is a constant challenge. Political differences are present throughout the context, but interpersonal relationships created through the numerous joint actions and inactions opened for an easier dialogue, too. Nevertheless, as for any relationship, it is a communication that occasionally may take time. Time to share a *shy* (tea) with a lot of sugar and mint, when, beyond all expectations, it starts raining in the desert.

Finally, this Chapter focused on defining the asymmetries between the two ethnonational groups and the strategies activists implement to reduce or make them more manageable. I found impressive the effort they put into studying the language and, consequently, decolonize it. Most of the Israeli activists I have had the pleasure of meeting are fluent in Arabic. The other interesting aspect is the rejection of violence by all activists, regardless of group, and the refusal to serve in the military by Israeli activists. Both issues open to broader themes, such as the militarization of the state of Israel and the rejection of violence as a movement strategy.

CHAPTER 5 – MOBILIZING IN THE SHADOW

5.1 Introduction

This Chapter analyses the second campaign researched in this thesis. The Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood made headlines during the Spring of 2021 with the resumption of the armed conflict between Hamas and the Israeli army in May 2021. Many international observers have attributed this new outbreak of violence precisely to the decision of the Israeli High Court to evict four Palestinian families from their homes in the Eastern Jerusalem neighbourhood (WAFA, 2021). However, as anticipated in the case description, protests are not new to this neighbourhood. Quite the opposite: first evictions date back to 2008-2009 when Palestinian residents and Israeli activists started a solidarity movement that continues today. Since then, however, many things have changed. A protest that, over the years, has always been seen as a joint movement able to unite Israelis and Palestinians now epitomized the national Palestinian struggle for liberation, coming to be considered the spark that ignited the Intifada of Unity (Tatour, 2021).

What has changed in the coalition, and how has the involvement of the Israeli left in these protests modified through time? For what reasons have Israeli activists withdrawn from this struggle, and what are instead the reasons that prompted others to stay and continue to be interested in the campaign and its joint coalition? In what way *can diverse coalitions* face *moments of crisis*? What are the consequences of resurgent violence on co-resistance? This chapter will try to answer these questions by presenting the *shadowing mechanism*, i.e., the ability of a section of a movement not so much to mobilize as to step aside in order to increase the chances of achieving the movement's outcomes. It will also show the importance of the *ritual element*, something widely discussed in the SMs literature, which has made Sheikh Jarrah a *symbol* of struggle and community in the heart of one of the most contested cities in the world. The analysis, as for the previous Chapter, is based on a total of 20 interviews with activists of residents of Sheikh Jarrah, carried out between 2019 and 2022, and more expert interviews that also touched on the campaign here considered. In addition to the interviews, participatory observation was conducted, joining Friday demonstrations and other collective meetings and moments of collective inaction with the residents and the activists. The PEA was also carried out to retrace the campaign history and build the two different networks.

Though distinct, this Chapter continues the previous one on the Susiya Campaign in area C. This Chapter will focus on the novelty elements of this case, comparing some aspects of the previous case without making a proper comparison that would be pointless at this point of the analysis. Activists involved in Sheikh Jarrah's campaign recognized the presence of a strategic element in the coalitional moment.

However, they all agreed that the persistence of relationships of trust protracted over time is what has allowed them to mobilize uninterruptedly until today. Hence, the *interactionist maintenance paradigm* is also respected as a functional paradigm for maintaining coalitions between divided groups over time. Therefore, the Chapter will not repeat how the three Ts intersect with the paradigm confirming its validity for this case. Here we find ourselves in a median area between the other two cases. One could almost speak of a semi-positive case in which the alliance continues to exist and is maintained over time (from 2009 to nowadays) but has been put to the test several times and recently hidden from the eyes of national and international observers. This case also tells us about the role of *normalization* and anti-normalization strategies more than any other case. Being a crucial geographical, political, cultural, and religious site, all the conflicts, problems and confrontations are exacerbated here, impacting the coalition considered. This is why, at first, I will underline and spend some time presenting the importance of the location: *Jerusalem*.

5.1.1 Jerusalem

Jerusalem, like Belfast, Nicosia, Sarajevo, or Beirut, can be considered among the most conflicted ridden cities on the planet. Jerusalem is a city divided along ethnic, religious, national, racial, socio-economic, cultural, linguistic, and psychological lines. Due to the difficulty in finding any type of agreement and unity, some authors, such as Meir Margalit, academic and representative of the Meretz party in the municipality of Jerusalem, have defined it as a "non–city" (2018, p. 17): 60% of Jerusalem residents are Israelis, and 40% are Palestinians. The 31 members of Jerusalem's municipal council are all Jews, while the Palestinian population is conspicuous by its absence. Over a third of the Jerusalemite population is outside the "circuits reserved for power" and does not participate in decision-making processes. The city is a labyrinth of urban segregation: not only is the education system in different languages and with a different school curriculum, but also the public transport system is separated; the Israeli bus company covers only a part of the city, while in the eastern part, there are a couple of private Palestinian companies (Chiodelli, 2016). This is one of the reasons why, unlike other divided cities, it is very difficult to build civic-based coalitions. Chiara Milan (2020) demonstrated how in the case of Sarajevo, the violence of the police and the corruption of the élite then led the population to unite in the perspective of citizens of the city, creating a collective identity showing how "ethnic diversity does not necessarily constitute as stumbling block for social mobilization block for social mobilization in civic movements and parties" (Milan, 2020, p. 2). Added to this, it is essential to remember that Palestinian inhabitants of Jerusalem are not even considered citizens but permanent residents of the city. In June 1967, Israel annexed the

Jordanian part of Jerusalem and a score of neighbouring villages and declared this conglomerate an "*integral, indivisible, and eternal*" part of the capital of the State of Israel (Yiftachel, 2006). However, in an unprecedented way, despite the geographical annexation, the 60,000 inhabitants of these lands did not acquire the condition of citizens but the status of "*permanent residents*". From a legal point of view, this status places them in a highly vulnerable position since, differently from *citizenship* which by definition is irrevocable, *residency* depends on the benevolence of the Minister of the Interior, who has full powers to revoke it based on administrative reasons. Furthermore, in a discriminatory manner, Palestinians must prove that East Jerusalem is the "*centre of their lives*" annually, i.e. by providing receipts for utility bills, school enrolment and employment contracts in the city (Falk & Tilley, 2017, p. 14). In addition, they cannot be absent for more than six months from their residence. These restrictions on the freedom of the citizens of East Jerusalem are also among the reasons that led Amnesty International (2022) to define Israel as an apartheid state:

> "Systematic restrictions on the freedom of movement of Palestinians in East Jerusalem, including the fence/wall and the presence of Israeli settlements that segregate and isolate East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank (and Gaza Strip) are also a key obstacle to East Jerusalemites' ability to access livelihood opportunities, and drastically hinder their political, economic, cultural and social lives." (Amnesty International, 2022, p. 176)

The asymmetry between the Israeli and Palestinian communities makes it difficult to consider it a multicultural city. In Jerusalem, Palestinians are discriminated against *de iure* and *de facto* in daily practice (Margalit, 2018, p. 39). In summary, the Jerusalem model is the local version of the long history of dominators and dominated, colonizers and colonized, which has impoverished humanity since time immemorial (Romann & Weingrod, 2014). This goes hand in hand with Israeli political ambitions over Jerusalem of implementing a double process of 'Judaisation' (i.e. promotion of both Jewish urban and demographic expansion in the eastern part of the city) and 'de-Arabisation' (i.e. containment of Arab expansion) of Jerusalem (Yiftachel, 2006; Chiodelli, 2016). In June 1967, Israel annexed the Jordanian part of Jerusalem and a score of neighbouring villages. It declared this conglomerate an "integral, indivisible, and eternal" part of the capital of the state of Israel. However, for the Palestinians, Jerusalem, hosting the Al-Aqsa Mosque, one of the most important places of Islam, is considered the eternal capital of the Palestinian state. In theory, it would have been internationalized and under the interim control of the United Nations; in reality, it is completely controlled by Israel. In the words of a Palestinian activist resident in Shiekh Jarrah:

"This is what Israel is doing. It makes our life impossible to be here; they want us to leave Jerusalem and not live in Jerusalem. It is horrible. I am sure this is my homeland. This has always been my homeland. This is also what I say about Palestine. Jerusalem is East Jerusalem also, which is the capital of Palestine." (PA25).

Jerusalem has a strong *symbolic value* that recurs in all protests and mobilizations. However, despite the substantial inequalities and divisions, it remains one of the few places where Israelis and Palestinians, albeit in a limited manner, can meet. While attempts to create civic coalitions are doomed to fail since Palestinians are not even considered citizens of the city, movements rallying in support of Palestinian residents of Jerusalem are far more common. A longtime Israeli activist who initially mobilized with more radical groups going to support campaigns like Susiya's in the OPTs said, talking about why his group "*Seek Peace in Jerusalem*" decided to support #savesheikhjarrah:

"They're Jerusalem residents, and they're not involved directly in the conflict. I can say, even though I don't share this position, that in our group, a lot of people are in favour of the annexation of East Jerusalem. They believe that it should be Israel's capital. But they also think Palestinians should have equal rights and be citizens. So, they're not against the occupation of East Jerusalem; they are against the family evictions because they say to themselves, well, this is Israel, this is Jerusalem, this is our capital city, so, why are we evicting these legal residents??" (IS33).

A crucial point of Sheikh Jarrah's campaign emerges from this interview: many groups of the so-called liberal left joined the campaign, especially in the first phase of mobilizations of 2009/10. Although considered problematic by some Israeli activists, this has come up frequently in the interviews. The same activist stressed this point further:

"First of all, unlike going to the West Bank, it's not terrifying. In other words, you get beat up there, going to the West Bank and facing the settler scares people. It means going to places where you are afraid both of Palestinians and the settlers. So, most Israelis are not going to do that kind of thing, Sheikh Jarrah, I think it is a combination of being relatively easy to get there and not too scary to be there. Also, people are sensitive to family evictions. You do not have to be "leftist" to be against family eviction, in other words, it's blatantly immoral and brutal. The victims are so clearly not our enemies, it's not clear to the counterdemonstrators, but clear to an average mainstream Israeli" (IS33).

Here it is necessary to clarify one thing. Having researched campaigns in the West Bank and having taken part in demonstrations and actions with activists in both areas, I believe the level of risk varies greatly depending on the citizenship of the person in question. It is undoubtedly easier for an Israeli Jew to participate in demonstrations in Jerusalem or within the borders of the state. In the Occupied Territories, there are more risks, both because of the aggressiveness of certain groups of settlers and because of the suspicion of the Palestinians who live in these areas. Conversely, because the military and police in Jerusalem are blatantly racist, Palestinians are at greater risk of mobilizing either way. In East

Jerusalem, they risk being arrested or beaten by what is known to be the most violent police in the world. In the Occupied Territories, they are subjected to the violence of the settlers but also to that of the military. As an international, I have experienced similar situations to those of the Palestinians. If I had been asked for the document when I was in the occupied territories, I would probably have been expelled from the country; in Jerusalem, being inside the separation wall, I feared more roundups and police charges. On two occasions, I risked document checks in the OPTs. Once during a night raid on Susiya, the military entered to check all the houses. I was sleeping in the room with the children, and nothing was asked of me. They assumed I was a harmless Palestinian woman; probably a relative came for a visit. On another occasion, I was in the car with three Israeli activists returning from action. The military had targeted us before and set up a roadblock to control our car, as can be seen in Figure 30. Being the only woman in the car, they did not check my ID: even then, I was probably perceived as just a harmless Israeli woman.

Figure 30 Roadblock and car check after an action

Going back to the issue of Jerusalem, it is interesting to see how Israeli activists approached the matter of Sheikh Jarrah. As mentioned by Mossi Raz, a member of parliament interviewed right in his Knesset office in April 2022:

> "As a matter of fact, the whole peace movement in Israel has failed. There is no peace, and inequality persists. Our success in places like Shiekh Jarrah is to be closer to each other. However, the peace process has failed. This is why places like Sheikh Jarrah are playing the fight for the democracy of the state of Israel, or what is left of this democracy. "(IS27)

The Israeli left has taken particularly to heart the case of Sheikh Jarrah because even in this case, the violence and aggression of the settlers have shown their worst side. Both in Sheikh Jarrah and in Silwan district, another neighbourhood under continuous eviction threats where international Zionist

companies[46] constantly pursue their Judaization mission, the intention of de-Arabizing Jerusalem to make it an ethnically uniform city is blatant in the eyes of most. This project is evidently opposed by anyone who places themselves in a centre-left political spectrum. However, if for Israelis, Sheikh Jarrah is a bulwark of democracy in which the fate of the Israeli left is at stake, what does it represent for the Palestinians?

5.2 Shadowing Mechanism

This paragraph, which is the heart of this second empirical Chapter – and which positions this case in a middle ground between the other two where, for Susiya, continuous cooperation over time has been effectively maintained, while for the coalition of feminist groups attempts at cooperation have not necessarily always succeed – starts with reference to the field note of the first demonstration in Sheikh Jarrah I have attended.

"Friday is the day of protests in Sheikh Jarrah. I heard so much about police violence against civilians that I am very nervous since this morning. Before the protest, I met my contact based in Sheikh Jarrah, Khaled Barakat (Palestinian), who gave me a recap of the news and told me that they meet every Friday. After the interview, he accompanies me to the protests and explains the geography of Sheikh Jarrah. The meeting point is in front of the house from which the Salem family risks being evicted. There is only the mother today; she is very outspoken against the police and one of the souls of the protest. Sheikh Jarrah spreads over a road that has a west and an east side, divided by Hebron Road, one of the main arteries of the city. Khaled introduces me to a lot of people, and they are all very nice to me. It's raining madly, it's also very cold, there is a table that distributes tea and pastries, they offer me tea and sweets. Across the road, there are two police vans behind a roadblock of concrete pillars. Khaled explains to me that settlers from Sheikh Jarrah live there, divided, as always from the rest of the world, by concrete slabs. A few people are starting to gather. We will be a hundred. There are many Palestinian flags and one of the ICJ. There are many, many banners written in Hebrew. There is also Mossi Raz, the politician I interviewed the other day. There are definitely members of Ta'ayush, CFJNV, and Combat for Peace. Very interesting to see the high number of Israelis. To be honest, I am quite shocked. How could the presence of Israeli activists be erased like that by the news? It will be half and half. These protests have been organized every Friday since 2009. The perseverance of these struggles over time is incredible.

The march is now moving towards the East side from where people have been evicted recently. We stay there for a while, and then we go back. When we are again in front of the roadblock of the settlers' house, two provocateurs arrive with a megaphone and an Israeli flag. They begin to shout insults at the demonstrators, especially racist chants or calling out "Germans" to the Israelis present at the demonstration. It really is a horrible sight. These two are obviously standing behind the police, who do nothing to stop their taunts. In fact, the two police guards looked pleased. After a while, they also take it out on Mossi, telling him that he shouldn't be in the Knesset since he is more interested in the Palestinians than in Israelis. There is a small skirmish between a Palestinian and one of these provocateurs, but the crowd quickly separates them. There are no arrests, and the

[46] Nahalat Shimon an international organization of settlers' involved in Sheikh Jarrah

police simply monitor what is going on. The rain increases. I greet all the people I meet and leave. The police have taken pictures of me. I tried to keep my mask on." (Fieldnote, March 18, 2022).

All the activists interviewed mentioned how, in recent times and with the rekindling of the conflict in the spring of 2021, relations and collaborations with the inhabitants of Sheikh Jarrah have become more tense. This is certainly due to several factors. On the one hand, there is a fundamental element concerning the question of past cooperation and how the collective that had united several groups of the Israeli left has disappointed and therefore compromised relations with the residents – explained further on. On the other hand, there is also the question of anti-normalization, much more felt in Jerusalem due to a generational change. Many of the young people who participated in the protests in April 2021 were people who, without being part of organized groups, found themselves dealing with Israeli activists and NGOs for the first time, and it was easy to advocate for anti-normalization, having no long-lasting interpersonal relationships with these activists. Finally, Hamas and other Palestinian groups have framed the Sheikh Jarrah protests as a purely Palestinian struggle. As remembered by a Palestinian resident of Sheikh Jarrah:

> "What happened last year was different because, for once all Palestinians united for Sheikh Jarrah. I guess for Jerusalem. So, there was Al-Aqsa, there was Gaza, and all these elements gave this momentum to the uprising. It gave momentum to Sheikh Jarrah and became very well known. Did you know that according to people who work with this social media, the hashtag #savesheikhjarrah was shared by 40 million globally? They knew about Sheikh Jarrah in one way or another because of all of that. And the young activists who use these social media manage to reach some well-known celebrities, each of whom has 1 million, 2 million followers. I think Sheikh Jarrah became more known than the Palestinian cause. Sheikh Jarrah put Palestine and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on top of the agenda again after it was very quiet for a long time" (PA26).

Authors such as Lana Tatour (2021) have defined this mass popular mobilization as the Unity Intifada. These reflections underline the ability of these protests to have mobilized Palestinians everywhere in historic Palestine: both the Palestinians who live inside Israel, the so-called '48 Palestinians, together with those who live under occupation in the West Bank and Gaza. The capacity of this cause to mobilize all Palestinians living in historic Palestine was indeed quite remarkable. This also opened an interesting reflection on the status and political capacity of '48 Palestinians. Although they are often considered under a framework that sees them as part of Israeli politics and Israeli political interactions, they have nevertheless shown that they have a collective identity that binds them, albeit in an abstract way, living in very different material conditions, with the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza (Tatour, 2021).

All this meant that, although there was a large component of Israeli activists who had been very active in this campaign before the neighbourhood became famous all over the world, they suddenly disappeared

from the stage and, therefore, also from the news. Once Sheikh Jarrah headlined across the international newspaper as "the Palestinian cause", the Israeli activists found themselves in a difficult position, and they decided to step aside. As problematic as this may seem to some readers, on the contrary, the Israeli activists, in this case, have really demonstrated what it means to leave the leadership of the movement to the Palestinians, to the group that lives under occupation and not to the one that enjoys greater resources and international support. As mentioned in the previous Chapter, this is one of those strategies that are essential in the process of reducing asymmetries between groups that are different and that have different privileges. Here I will quote some examples to clarify what I mean with this label and what the *shadowing mechanism* entails. Here, an Israeli activist described a moment of tension with Palestinian Activists in the neighbourhood last year:

"So, for example, I remember one evening at the beginning of Ramadan, Ibrahim was inviting some Israeli activists to have an Iftar dinner at his house. Then, some young activists of East Jerusalem started to come, and they were sitting on the street chanting and hanging out. At a certain point, some told us, that they heard there were Israelis there, they did not like it very much, and Ibrahim was very upset. He looked at them and said, "Some of these people are part of the Palestinian struggle before you were born. They have been here with us for 12 years now, so, if you have any problem with them, you have to chick me off too. "(IS32).

Ibrahim himself remember this episode very well:

"I really wanted the young activists there. They are very important, they are the future generation of the Palestinian struggle, but they cannot question my choices. They cannot question my partners". (PA19).

Although very deep moments of crisis and hardship arose when the presence of the Israeli activists was often questioned, they continued to participate in the weekly protests.

"During a Friday demonstration, young people, mostly from East Jerusalem, but not only some came also from the north, joined. An only-Palestinians group was doing another demonstration at the same time and the Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah did not know what to do. Therefore, they somewhat like came through; we were in the garden, our meeting point while they came from the neighborhood East side. They saw us and they turned around and went back to the neighborhood. Something like this. I was looking and I told the other Israelis this is not up to us; this is for the people of the neighborhood to decide how they want to do it. So, I saw some people from the committee from the eastern side, and I saw them going to these young people and I didn't understand what happened there. I saw the reaction, but I could not hear what they were saying. I asked afterward and I have been told that the residents told, "Listen, those are our partners, if you like, you can join, and we will be more than happy to have the demonstration together but if not feel free to go." This was very very very strong. I was like, whoa. I was impressed but on the other hand I also told myself: are you sure that's the right thing to do?*"* (IS28).

As can be seen from all these testimonies, cooperation between the various groups is never easy or natural, especially in protests, expansive moments where new groups and new energies join with their,

sometimes different, ideas on what the tactics of the movement should be. On the other hand, however, those alliances that are based on the *rule of the three Ts* and the *interactionalist maintenance paradigm* remain stable and are able to use precisely the presence of strong, long-lasting interpersonal relationships as legitimacy in front of more separatist groups. Of course, that is not always easy mediation. This section introduces what the shadowing mechanism is and how it works. It also shows, in part, how activists from both sides manage the movement of crisis and re-enlightenment of the conflict. Spring 2021 was exemplary of this dimension. Sheikh Jarrah risked a massive eviction of 28 houses in the very heart of Jerusalem, the police brutalized prayers in Al-Aqsa, progressive members of the Knesset were beaten in the street while demonstrating against these evictions and the police violence, and in the meantime, Hamas started launching rockets from Gaza, that was horribly attacked by the Israeli military for a few days in a row causing the death of hundreds of Palestinians and injuring many more. Still, some Palestinians and Israeli activists continued to cooperate and maintain a coalition that overcame these moments. Apart from being extraordinary in itself, it really shows the level of relational commitment certain groups have in this campaign. In the following table (6) it is possible to see the co-presence of activists in the Sheikh Jarrah protest campaign. I reported Palestinian activists as Actor One when it was the first group mentioned by the news. If they did not explicitly note the presence of either Israeli or international groups, I did not code their presence. Hence, there are 58 instances in which only Palestinians were reported as participants. Interestingly, in most cases (126) demonstrations, the articles expressly nominated the presence of Palestinian and Israeli Activists. Israelis and internationals appeared just twice, while only Palestinians and internationals four times. The news has certainly omitted countless times the presence of Israeli or international activists. Coming from the PEA, these data do not want to provide an exact count of these collaborations. However, even if we considered the data coming from the PEA as an approximation of the real protest events of this campaign, they certainly show two important things. First, Israeli activists participated more than internationals. There are more episodes in which Israelis were together with Palestinians than Palestinians by themselves. Hence, it is definitely possible to talk about a joint struggle that saw the participation of different ethnonational groups. However, in more recent times, this presence has started to be slightly omitted.

Table 6 Co-Participation to Events

Associated Actor to Palestinian Demonstrators in Sheikh Jarrah

Count from the data-set
1 126

Actor1	Associated Actor1	
Palestinian Activists	None	58
	International Activists	4
	Israeli Activists	126
	Israeli Activists; international Activists	2
	UNRWA	1

The other side of this story is that presenting #savesheikhjarrah as a purely Palestinian struggle is allegedly what brought so many people, especially Palestinians inside Israel, to mobilize. This mass movement likely pushed the Israeli High Court to freeze the eviction order. The political outcome was achieved both because of the huge mobilizations and thanks to the international pressure that followed (because of the widespread protests). In the following graph (Figure 31), it is possible to see the peak of the protests for the year 2021. On the other hand, however, Israeli authorities fear the mass mobilizations of the Palestinian population within its borders; therefore, presenting it as a purely Palestinian struggle has played a fundamental role in achieving the desired result: the freezing of the eviction order. As epitomized by an Israeli activist involved in Sheikh Jarrah for five years:

> "I think the strategy is to keep in contact always. You don't just stick with people when you need something, but there's like continuous communication. This also means leaving some space. Sometimes, because of our involvement, they may have problems, naturally, because our discourse is not the same as the Palestinian discourse. So, it is fair that the Palestinian struggle is represented by them. We are not neutral. We are the occupier. And even if I am against Israeli policy and so on, I know I am the oppressor." (IS28).

In this testimony, not only emerges the need to stay and maintain a relationship even when there is no need for "action", but it also stresses the need to step aside when necessary. This distancing is not only related to a strategic dimension essential for achieving certain objectives but it is also related to the dimension of power and asymmetry. Israeli activists who realize their role as oppressors are the ones who value the *shadowing mechanism* most.

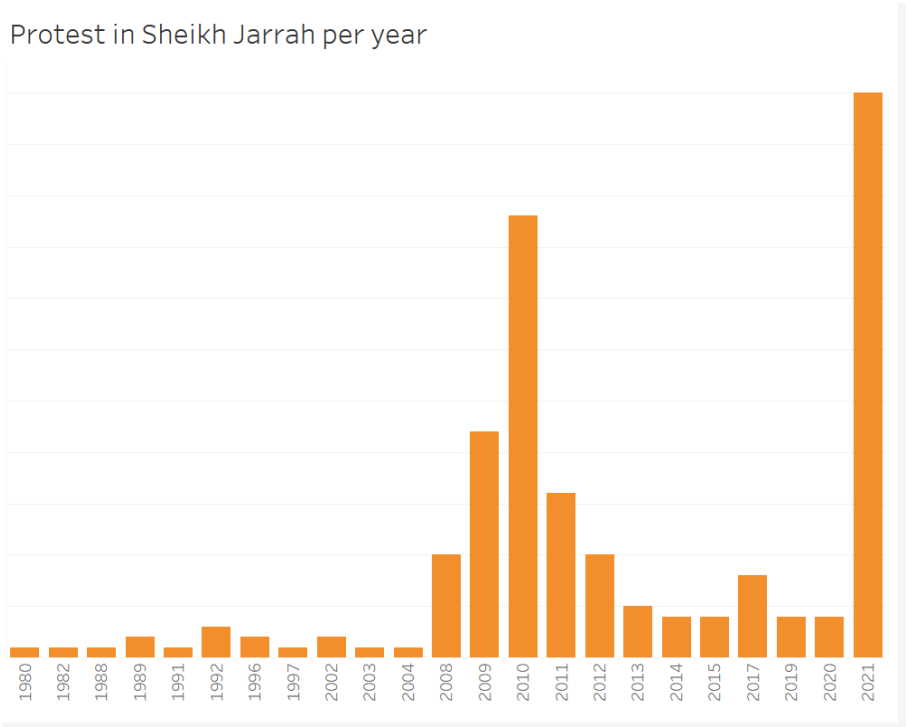


Figure 31 Protests per Year in Sheikh Jarrah

The protests that have taken place in the spring of 2021 are exceptional both in frequency and in number of participants. What has not emerged from the media, however, is that the gatherings and protests of Palestinian and Israeli groups cooperating for years to avoid the expulsion of residents continue to take place every Friday without exception. This is why I speak of a *shadowing mechanism* as different from disappearing completely or de-mobilizing implies that the presence remains, but is kept quiet and comes from a corner and not from the centre of the stage. It means remaining an active part of the movement and the coalition but from the shadows, continuing the job that was initiated on equal footing without changing the relationships with their partners, but allowing the historically oppressed group to be at the stage as the main – and sometimes only – actor. As reported by an Israeli activist part of a new group called "Free Jerusalem":

> "I don't know if it was okay for everyone, but what I was saying is that maybe the fact that they took some distance from Israelis was what allowed them to be successful. I do not know, but if it was the case okay great. I am happy if they succeed, I do not care how. However, this was last year. Now, most of the youth that participated here are no longer there. Some of the leading figures of the protests are abroad, while we are still there. I am not saying it is wrong. It is cool with me, they should live their normal lives, but it is important to say that there are people in Sheikh Jarrah with who we still work closely and who are very willing and active and want to work with us, including the formal committees. Sheikh Jarrah committees are both willing and happy to work with us. Maybe there was a change, and it was okay, but the relationships are still there." (IS31).

Here, it appears another element of the shadowing mechanism, namely, the capacity to remain, be constant and consistent through time. In the rest of this interview, we discussed which forms of coalitions are best when approaching the Palestinian counterpart. *Free Jerusalem* is a group very careful to the question of symmetry and provides support to Palestinian campaigns based on principles very similar to those identified in the previous Chapter to reduce asymmetries. However, out of the records the discussion continued.

"Mary confessed to me how tiring is working in this way and that she would like to be able to build resistant spaces in which they are equal partners. She realizes that given the historical premises, this is very difficult, but she believes that a joint movement of Israelis and Palestinians that crosses the borders of the green line is what could finally shake up the Israeli government. In the bus that accompanies us to the usual Friday protest where we go together (Figure 32), I point out how relations have deteriorated after all the promises not kept by the Israeli left, which has become an accomplice in the construction of illegal settlements in Gaza and in the West Bank. Mary obviously is aware of the several failures of the Israeli left and that is why she never tries to push for more alliances, she just wishes things were different. I told her a little about what is happening in the South Hebron Hills and in Susiya. She amazes me a lot when she tells me that she does not know anything about that. It is incredible how the campaigns I follow speak to me, but not to each other." *(Field note, 13 March, 2022).*

Figure 32 Joint Demonstration in Sheikh Jarrah, March 2022

To conclude this crucial step of the analysis, it seems necessary to clarify once again what is meant by this *shadowing mechanism*, a mechanism which is probably present in other campaigns and already implemented by other groups of activists in other movements. The mechanism of 'shadowing' implies that a component of a movement or coalition perceived as 'tricky' or even adverse by a part of the public opinion decides not to claim its belonging to a campaign to increase the chances of success of the

campaign itself. However, this does not involve a detachment or a distancing from the movement, but rather a stay in the campaign by moving away from the spotlight. This mechanism is not only strategically plausible but also ethically preferable. When participating in coalitions in contexts of colonial domination, recognizing that there is a part historically injured and subjected to an arbitrary power by another group also implies accepting that the first is the leading part of the liberation movement. Consequently, this also means agreeing to be sidelined, in the shadows, if deemed necessary by the leadership of the movement.

This paragraph has not only outlined an important mechanism that was recurrent in this diverse coalition but has also exposed how activists address moments of crisis and escalation of the conflict, answering to two of the main questions these Chapter proposed to answer. The strategies they put forward in order to maintain sometimes difficult cooperation, in particular with the joining of a new generation of more radical (and radicalized) youth, should be investigated further. However, what also emerges from this case, is the paramount importance of the *interactional maintenance paradigm,* as it displays in the presence of long-lasting personal relationships of trust among activists coming from different ethnonational groups.

5.3 Rituality

Social movements' rituality, as a topic, has been widely explored in different sociological strains of literature (Sassoon, 1984; Alexander, 2004; Alexander, 2006). While on the one hand, political collective action is something that implies the willingness of the actors to act in a choral manner, on the other hand, rituality is associated with other types of collective action such as meetings in the stadium or religious rituals. Hence, what is the difference between this type of collective action and being at the same time every Friday, marching together with the residents of Sheikh Jarrah to protest the housing discrimination faced by Palestinian families in East Jerusalem? Not surprisingly, an activist said in an interview: "Going to Sheikh Jarrah is like going to the synagogue."(IS33)

Cultural sociologists are the ones who are most interested in ritual practices. Taylor and Whittier (1999), while studying the role of discourses in social movements, discovered the importance of movement rituals as hardware in the cultural toolbox of movements. Movements use rituals in a strategic sense to increase the bonds of members. Durkheim is one of the first who recognizes the role of symbols and rituals in cultural formations and diffusion (Durkheim, 1965). Collective representations are not ideas or concepts developed by individuals or groups. Rather, they are the vehicles of a fundamental process in which shared symbols performances constitute social groups giving form to individual consciousness.

Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Practice (1977) looks at culture not as a set of rules but as deeply internalized habits, styles, and skills (the "habitus") that allow human beings to continuously produce innovative actions that are nonetheless meaningful to them. The concept of practice is essentially different from the one of culture as far as relocates the agency on culturally embedded individuals. Rituals live both in the realm of value and in one of actions.

What emerged from most of the activists I interviewed is the cruciality of this recurrency element: meeting always at the same time every Friday in the same place allowed the movement to resist the plots of time. The constancy of this collective action and their repetition makes them look very much like collective moments similar to a match in the stadium or religious rituals. Aside from the political aspect, which can be included in a secular universe of values, I would argue that the only difference is a greater emphasis on *agency* and *relation*. Although even in religious rituals there are practical actions to be performed, people in church, temple, synagogue, or mosque are mostly spectators of the performance of others, and the same goes for team sports. Here instead, the action of staging a recurrent protest is indeed a strong expression of the movement's agency.

"It is a very different kind of activism. Because we are here, as long as it takes and whatever it takes. We are not looking for making a political benefit out of it. I do not want to criticize the other folks. I am just saying there is a difference, a different approach. What we try to do differently is regularity. You come to a place again and again and you get really to know the people. And you're not just moving around having one demonstration here and one there and an action there. For me, it's more important the connection." (IS23)

Also, from this testimony, it clearly emerges how the element of time is aligned with that of trust and interpersonal relationships between people of the two-ethnonational groups. The *interactional maintenance paradigm* is therefore respected. However, there is the additional component of rituality and repetition that made this coalition last for a long time despite the conflict reactivation and escalation as it happened last year.

"I believe this is what maintains a struggle and I am sure that is much harder to bring a lot of people to a weekly demonstration, it's almost impossible. I mean, for many years from 2011 to last year (2022), we were very few people over there coming to the Friday demonstration and it was okay for us because we look for something else. We look for something different. For me personally, the importance of the demonstration, I am talking about in quiet times, was that we stay regularly over there to have contact with the neighborhood, contact with the people. I went with families to the court hundreds of times, for hearings about the houses. So, we are in touch, constantly. We knew what was going on and then when we knew that in times like now that is more acute and the danger of eviction is coming for this Palestinian family or another, we could ask more people to come. We have the capacity to call more people who do not come regularly, but who are close to the cause and tell them to come. They come because of our reputation of continuity with the struggle because they know we always coordinate with the Palestinian families, and we are not acting on their behalf." (IS32)

This testimony also demonstrates how *regularity* and *continuity* in participating in these protests allows Israeli activists to further present themselves as credible partners to Palestinians.

> "It's becoming just kind of like something that you do, part of your life. It's like, I know my family knows, my friends know that every Friday, 3:00 in the winter, 4:00 in the summer, I'm there. It's just something that they know. But again, for me, the demonstration is only one part. It's a part. It's kind of like the frame of the whole other kind of activities that relate to Sheikh Jarrah it takes most of my time." (IS28)

This activist remembers that the work of cooperation and coalition does not imply only and exclusively the moment of protest. However, the fact that it is continuous, and constant makes those instances crucial moments of visibility and commitment. A commitment and an alliance that is renewed every week.

> "What is going on here is total, and at this point, after all the way we went through it is easier. But it took time. Took time to build that trust, which is the most important thing for me: to trust. Trust with people in general." (PA16)

Trust is not only a word but, first and foremost, an active verb. To build trust takes time and repeated collective action. The coalition of Sheikh Jarrah was very hard to maintain and still is. Over the first half of 2023, problems and moments of friction have occurred between the residents of the two sides of the neighborhood and a part of the committee asked to end the collaboration with Israeli activists. Still, they continue to have their weekly demonstration in the streets of Sheikh Jarrah, no matter the political and meteorological weather. The ritual aspect of this protest is allegedly one of the factors that allowed this coalition to resist such troublesome times. On the other hand, it is also important not to fall prey to simplification. It is not possible to reduce this coalition just to the "Friday demonstration in Sheikh Jarrah" because there is much more. There is a long story of cooperation that involves also legal and advocacy work of Israeli and Palestinian NGOs, the involvement of international media to make the campaign known worldwide and several Israeli leftist MPs that have historically been very vocal in the Knesset on the issue of Sheikh Jarrah. However, the Friday demonstration is most visible. It is what the residents see, what the activists see, what the settlers sees, what the tourists randomly walking through sees, what the police sees, what the other residents of Jerusalem, Palestinians and Israelis may see passing by Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood. And it is important to be visible, even if this is just the tip of the iceberg. Hence, even if sometimes it is hard to maintain such a long-lasting commitment, the struggle over the consciousness of people certainly passes also through the symbolic dimension of emotions, constancy, and friendship, here described.

5.4 Normalization, Anti-Normalization, Challenges and Changes in the Coalition

Normalization, *tatbee'* in Arabic, means dealing with or presenting something that is inherently abnormal, like rendering oppression and injustice as normal. Normalizing relationships with Israel is, the idea of making occupation, apartheid, and settler colonialism seem normal and establishing normal relations with the Israeli state instead of supporting the struggle led by the Palestinian people to end the abnormal conditions and structures of oppression. In 2007, the Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC), the Palestinian coalition that leads the global BDS movement, adopted by consensus the following definition of what constitutes normalization and set guidelines for countering it. "*Normalization is the participation in any project, initiative, or activity, local or international, that brings together (on the same "platform") Palestinians (and/or Arabs) and Israelis (individuals or institutions) and does not meet the following two conditions*:

1. *The Israeli side publicly recognizes the UN-affirmed inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.*

2. *The joint activity constitutes a form of co-resistance against the Israeli regime of occupation, settler-colonialism and apartheid*[47]*."*

In the above, "Israeli side" refers to Jewish-Israelis and Jewish-Israeli institutions. The BDS movement's anti-normalization definition is based on the idea that joint activities between the oppressed and the oppressor that are not based on the recognition of the rights of the oppressed and do not aim at the elimination of oppression is an attempt by the oppressor to colonize the mind of the oppressed (Fanon, 1963, p. 62). The anti-normalization policy was born out of disappointment with the Oslo Accords and the worsening condition of Palestinian people's lives they brought about (Brown, 2003). Seeing the disaster that the diplomatic route had brought for the Palestinians, some civil society organizations decided to launch a boycott of Israel as it was done for South Africa. Part of the boycott also involves instructing not to collaborate with Israeli organizations. This also includes Israeli NGOs and peace organizations unless they recognize the oppressive nature of Israeli policies towards the Palestinian population.

[47] https://bdsmovement.net/news/bds-movement-anti-normalization-guidelines

The issue of normalization was amply discussed with all the Palestinian interviewees I talked to. Some see the participation of Israeli groups in protests as normalization and do not want it to happen. Others do not: they see the participation of Israeli activists as essential to reach the whole Israeli civil society and as a type of co-resistance in which differences can be used to obtain result and improving everyone living conditions. Again, the *Three Ts Rule* holds in front of these pressures too: what emerged is that when activists can establish long-standing relationships based on trust with each other, they do not consider these collaborations as normalization. However, in Sheikh Jarrah, Palestinians were more often pressured and accused of normalizing than in Susiya, for instance. The testimony of a Palestinian activist repeatedly accused of normalizing relations with the Israelis follows.

> "You know, for some people, this is normalization. For my family, for my circles, where I come from this is normalization even though I am an ex-prisoner, I was part of the prisoner's community, and my family has a history in the resistance. It is basically like leaving your base, so it's not easy. […] What is the line? The truth is that there is no line to agree on. It is very challenging because for the mainstream public opinion, it triggers a lot of the narrative, and I would say this is even more triggering among the different activist groups. Which is maybe more of a challenge for me. An ordinary Palestinian never questions me. Other activist groups question me more. It is a contest to see who is the purest. We do it publicly. I do not hide what I do, and I think the problem is that in the activist circle there is a lot of hypocrisy. This habit exists so strongly here among human rights organizations, the problem here is that people do not come to the table to find alliance and common ground. Rather, they come to influence each other." (PA18)

He goes one telling me about another event in which he was accused of normalizing by an international organization. This is even more serious given internationals' long story of interference in the Palestinian cause. As he tells:

> "I was invited to speak on a panel with an Israeli person at the conference. After a couple of weeks, the Irish coordinator wrote me an email, saying to me: 'the Palestinian organization had asked us to tell you if you could kindly withdraw from the panel, but please do not take it personally. Your organization is considered a normalizing organization.' You know what? I am fine. My brother is against me, against what I do but we are still brothers and still, there is respect and still we can talk. What makes me angry is the hypocrisy here that how can you claim this is normalization and not allow me to speak my voice? Still, you can speak in the same panel with an Israeli, and this is not normalization. I do not want the certification of being a good Palestinian, I want peace. And I want the future generations to leave out of the occupation and we need Israelis to do that. Then, the PA is the first normalizer, but nobody cares, and they are "defending the national cause". This is bullshit!" (PA18)

This reflection should be placed in the broader context of the Palestinian Authority's corruption and collaboration with Israel (Stagni & Lo Piccolo, forthcoming). By signing security agreements with the Israeli military, the Palestinian Authority has effectively agreed to be a subcontractor of Israel in the management of security (Dana, 2015). Talking to a Palestinian friend of mine who lives in Ramallah, he

described the Palestinian Police Force officers as "*the Israeli army in different jackets*". Since the Palestinian Authority was the first to normalize relations with Israel, even if not in a declared way, how can the Palestinians be blamed for doing the same in a campaign such as the one of Sheikh Jarrah that takes place in Jerusalem? This was a very recurrent theme in most of my interviews with Palestinian activists of Sheikh Jarrah and a great deterrent to work with Israelis there. This is particularly true for the new generation, who were born and have lived in no other than the system that was imposed by the Oslo Accords. This younger generation of Palestinians is completely detached from the mainstream political parties and without any leadership but still constantly discriminated against and therefore disenchanted by prospects of peace. On the other hand, the problem of the Israeli left's appropriation of Palestinian struggles is a different but real matter. In a section that described the shadowing mechanism and how Palestinian activists were required to provide vouchers for their Israeli partners, the majority of young Jerusalemites accused Shiekh Jarrah's residents of normalizing relations with Israelis. This is becoming increasingly common, and with fewer exceptions, such as the coalitions in the South Hebron Hills, whose Susiya is an example. They have instead conceptualized this joint activism as *co-resistance* (Chapter 4), which means fighting together the Occupation being aware of the differences and the privilege that a group has over the other.

5.4.1 The First Challenge to the Coalition

Some Israeli and Palestinian activists involved in the Sheikh Jarrah campaign with reference to the Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity Movement group highlighted the trend mentioned above. Several Israeli peace groups have taken the first Sheikh Jarrah campaign of 2009-2011 as a pretext to put forward their own peace agenda. They organized big fund raising, that if on the one hand certainly helped in paying fines to the activists, and legal proceedings to the residents have also enriched these NGOs themselves and helped them advance their positions within the Israeli civil society. The problem of the NGOization of the Palestinian cause is multilayered and widely studied (Hammami, 2000; Hawari, 2019; Jad, 2008; Manji & O'coill, 2002; Payes, 2005). NGOs certainly find themselves working in a context with limited opportunities, given the strong restriction imposed by the Israeli legal and security system, however, it is also true that some Israeli NGOs have often appropriated Palestinian struggles and campaigns, to improve their image vis-à-vis international sponsors. This developed frictions and disagreements between Israeli and Palestinian activists. As a resident recalls:

"Between 2009 and 2010 I was extremely involved in the Sheikh Jarrah campaign. I remember an episode in which a pacifist Israeli organization - I believe Peace Now but I would not like to make mistakes - accompanied

a delegation of French people visiting the neighborhood and told them the whole story and the problems with the settlers, but in the end, they did not speak with any Palestinian resident. They only spoke to them." (PA27)

Israeli historic pacifist organizations have often had a questionable approach to the Palestinian cause in the past because, at the time, it was not customary to discuss issues of asymmetry of power and the inequalities between the two ethnonational groups. Nowadays, things for most Israeli organizations are changing. Nevertheless, some Palestinians that had such experiences are no longer willing to work with Israelis. This example certainly explains why some Palestinian residents and activists look with suspicion at the participation of some Israeli NGOs in Sheikh Jarrah. In the specific case of Sheikh Jarrah, another level of complexity and disagreement was represented not only by the moderate and pacifist area but also by the more radical Israeli left fringe who imposed modalities and repertoires that did not always meet the will of the Palestinian counterpart.

One of the most radical and confrontational activists in the campaign accepted to be interviewed after being together in different actions in the South Hebron Hills. Interestingly, after the failed experience with the Sheikh Jarrah campaign, he changed the area of his activism and started to mobilize in the South. Indeed, we met in Susiya. He now regrets how things ended up in Sheikh Jarrah, and he was also very vocal in recognizing the mistakes of the Israeli radical left in those years and in that specific site of contentious. He was part of the Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity Movement, a collective of Israelis who later split in 2012. Some activists changed sites, some remained, and a minority demobilized completely.

"We were a group of Israelis who lived mainly in Jerusalem. Sheikh Jarrah's was an emblematic cause. At the time, we were in university, which is just over Sheikh Jarrah, high proximity, and we did not mind being arrested. So often, during the 2009/2010 protests, we provoked the police precisely to get arrested, to make the media talk about us. In this way, however, the Palestinians stepped out of the spotlight. I do not know if it was the right strategy but at one point, the residents asked us to stop. Some of us got angry and after some discussions with the residents the group disbanded." (IS34)

This type of attitude undermines the already low confidence that Palestinians have to developing relations of co-resistance with the Israelis, however well-intentioned. Although they put their lives at risk with constant arrests and confrontations with the police, it is known that this usually at a higher price for the Palestinian communities of the movement. He continued:

"Now that I think about that, after years, and after starting to be active in other areas, I am sorry. I am sorry. We got angry because we thought they were ungrateful. We got arrested again and again to let them stay in their houses and they asked us to stop, to change strategy. I believe that it was because of us that Israel stopped the demolitions. But I do also understand that maybe for the families was too much." (IS34)

Another Palestinian activist, active in 2009/10 said:

"At that time, the Israeli Peace Organization or Solidarity Organization also took part, and they took the space, the public space and kick off all the other demonstrations and activities and organizations for the rest of the year. This meant that Sheikh Jarrah was no longer a place of resistance." (PA19)

Even within cooperation that persists over time - the Friday demonstrations continue every Friday and see the assiduous participation of both Israeli and Palestinian activists – coalitions do not necessarily remain unchanged, but like all relationships have vicissitudes, evolve, take steps back, grow and modify. Following a moment of crisis, in which criticalities of the coalition emerged and were discussed, people have taken different routes, but more importantly, those who have decided to stay had to change their relational strategies and coalitional dynamics to continue to be active in that struggle. New generations, such the interviewee that in an above section mentioned the desire to have deeper relations of cooperation, need to adapt and make amend for the mistakes previously taken.

An Israeli activist, part of the Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity who stayed, recall the moment of crisis like that:

"At a certain point, some of the main activists from the Israeli side left. They were part of the Sheikh Jarrah solidarity movement, but the problem was that at a certain point, the Sheikh Jarrah part was a bit moved to the side and it was the solidarity part of what they believed that was right to do that took over. Some of them, during an internal meeting, said: 'Maybe we achieved what we could here and if we want to grow as a movement, we need to go to other parts of Israel and Palestine and to have relationships with people over there and to be involved in other struggles. Because the idea behind it and they said it, was to build a movement, a grassroots movement that will have influence nationally and not locally. So, at one point in 2011, they said: 'Enough with Sheikh Jarrah we are moving forward'. And for some people, it was very strange because some of us felt a real obligation and relationship to the neighborhood, to that specific struggle, and to the people that we got to know. And we didn't feel that the struggle was over. We felt that this was not right, that the struggle we were committed to was going to be long, and that we needed to stay with the people. So, we stayed and those who decided to leave did not manage to create a national movement, for several reasons but if I have to be honest with you, because of internal political issues between the people." (IS32).

This excerpt from an interview that lasted over two hours demonstrates, what has been lacking, as so many inter-racial movements have lacked over the years, was the very recognition of the inequalities of power between the various groups – as a first necessary step. Furthermore, another step that was promptly ignored is certainly the one that was central to the campaign described in the previous Chapter: the transfer of leadership of the movement to its historically subordinate counterparts, the Palestinians. This also explains why some of the residents, disappointed by this experience of finished cooperation, have decided not to continue collaborating with Israeli activists. The principle of anti-normalization offers an expedient appeal to escape new cooperation. On the other hand, those who have remained over the years and have maintained relationships of trust with the activists are not seen as threats but as real allies. As another activist has mentioned:

"BDS called not to work with Israeli and all these things are very strong these days. So, the mood is very high, I used to go every few months, but since the eviction last year, I nearly go every Friday. Israeli human rights organizations like Ir Amim, Yashdin, and others are there. We coordinate and exchange information and we are friends and things like that. We know each other. We talk about issues, and we are partners, sure. And I go every Friday because I got to know them. I know who they are. I got to trust those who I know, and I know them very much. I got to trust them, and we work together on some issues. But I can't say, for example, I can't say I want to do a public meeting with them. This is very sensitive" (PA26).

Apart from a clear reference to the *shadowing mechanism* and the pressure Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah receive from other Palestinians outside the neighbourhood, it is clear how the *interaction maintenance paradigm* allows for the continuation of the coalition even in a moment of ruptures and crisis. Nevertheless, because of this crisis, and moments of difficulties, some Palestinians here are no longer willing to claim their partnership with Israeli activists. Quite the opposite, they need to maintain this coalition in a shadow mood. Differently, in Susiya, where relational mechanisms were implemented from an earlier stage, Palestinian activists are not hesitant in making this coalition public.

In summary, the issues at stake in the protest cycle that went from 2008 until 2011 were twofold. On the one hand, residents felt their agency and leadership were neglected by certain Israeli members of the coalition and "took the stage" appropriate to the struggle of Sheikh Jarrah. On the other hand, they also had disagreements concerning repertoires of action and the use of confrontational methods that usually led to the incarceration of mainly Israeli activists. This is because when the police targetes Palestinians, they were hit with much higher levels of violence and longer prison sentences, and being "just" permanent residents, place them in a more fragile position, risking deportation in the West Bank or outside the country. These two sources of friction led to the detachment of a part of the Israeli component, which in turn mobilized in different areas. Those who remained accepted to be junior partners of the Palestinian residents who changed their attitude, centralizing their "monopoly of relationships", as the SNA of the next section will show.

5.5 Social Network Analysis

As for the previous Chapter, the qualitative social network analysis was based on the Protest Event Analysis data. The data collected goes from the late 1980s, with the first joint protest of Israelis and Palestinians in 1996. After that, as shown in Figure 31, there was another peak of protests around 2008-11 and then resumed in 2021 with the rekindling of the conflict. As regards the longitudinal element, T1 covers the period up to and including the year 2011 (Figure 33). T2 refers instead to the period between 2012 to 2021 (Figure 34). 2011 is a year that has been recognized by all participants as one of the moments in which Sheikh Jarrah's campaign lost its momentum. Furthermore, in 2012 there was instead

the outbreak of the Arab uprisings. Hence, it is reasonable to divide it from previous mobilizations. As a Palestinian resident reminded:

> "When it started in 2008, they used to be four or 500, and people from Jerusalem used to be a bigger number. It went in for one year. But then, you know, people get tired, and they evicted those who were evicted. Things come down so they can't keep with the same momentum. But there is this small group of people (Israelis), that continued to go every Friday, even if they are 30. Look, the thing which shows how they are determined is that they go if it's raining, if the weather it's freezing, whatever the weather, they never said, oh, this Friday, we don't go. It's cold. So, every Friday there are ready to come. You know, most of the people are very sensitive to do with Israelis because of this issue of normalization, most of the people, Palestinians in Jerusalem, don't come to this. Usually, the biggest number could be 20, 30, 40, or 50 Palestinian. There are always the people from the neighborhood, but Palestinians of Jerusalem do not come." (PA12).

This statement, taken before the huge mass movement of 2021, bridges the temporal element together with the relational and political opportunity structure. On the one hand, the dimension of the demonstrations has reduced over time. On the other, there is a component of the Israeli left that tenaciously continue to mobilize and take part in the demonstration together with the resident, but a wider public and the ordinary Palestinian residents of Jerusalem do not participate actively in the movement. This general prism allows us to enter more detail into the coalition components and actors depicted in the two networks.

5.5.1 SNA before 2012

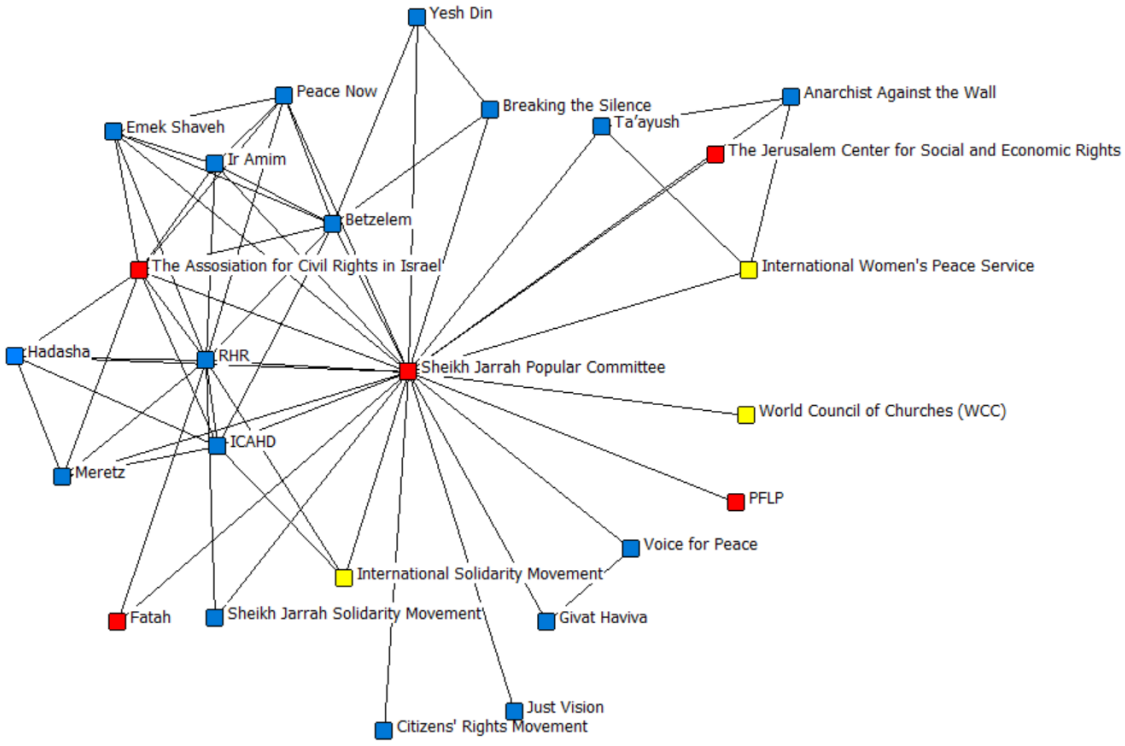


Figure 33 SNA from PEA 1986-2011

Table 7 T1 Sheikh Jarrah

Number of Nodes	25
Number of Ties	120
Density	0.307

At first glance at the network, it is notable the presence of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a Marxist- Leninist and revolutionary socialist party founded in 1967 by George Habash, which is now considered a terror organization by Israel. The PFLP does not recognize as legitimate either the Fatah-led government in the West Bank or the Hamas government in the Gaza Strip. The terrorist label made its work in the Occupied Territories and Gaza almost impossible. Now, it remains a narrow slice of supporters and political cadres. Before the intense repression that followed the Second Intifada, the PFLP had been slowly disappearing. However, before that time, it was one of the main political actors in the OPTs. The fact that it participated in certain actions in Sheikh Jarrah certainly indicates the strong political role it had during the nineties, and the same is true for Fatah, the other mainstream political party that appears in the network. A role they will no longer have in the period considered in T2. This is

due both to contingent and logistic reasons and to political ones. The PFLP lost support due to its repression and the death of most of its members, the very creation of the separation Wall in 2006 made it impossible for political representatives staying in the OPTs to reach Jerusalem and politically participate there. Meretz is the Israeli political party that was present at the beginning of the campaign and remained involved, even though it was not explicitly mentioned in the news. The party was born under the name of Meretz in 1992 from the ashes of Mapam, a Marxist-inspired party (where both Israelis and Palestinians campaigned together). The 1992 elections were a success for the new list, which obtained 12 seats in the Knesset and became part of the government led by Labor Yitzhak Rabin, which signed the Oslo Accords in 1993. This certainly explains its presence in the T1 network. During my fieldwork, I had the chance to interview two Meretz members who were representatives of the municipality of Jerusalem. They both recall a larger participation of political parties in the past, also from the Palestinian side in this kind of demonstrations and campaign, a participation that is now extremely rare. The reasons behind this change are varied. Palestinians are now completely disillusioned by the irrelevance and corruption of the Palestinian political parties. They do not feel represented by the Israeli ones either – leaving aside the fact that in Jerusalem, they cannot even vote for the Israeli national elections but just for the municipality. Nevertheless, the Meretz party remained present in the neighbourhood through the figure of Mossi Raz, who joined the weekly demonstration every Friday without exception. Differently from PFLP, Mertz, that has never been criminalized, being a party within the Israeli political system, was able to remain in the struggle as one of the few institutional voices against evictions. Now, with the new far-right government, they were not elected for the first time since their foundation.

Table 8 T1 Sheikh Jarrah Organizations

	Level of Formality	***Ethnonational Composition***	***Political Ideology***	***Repertoires of Action***	***Degree***	***In-Degree***
Anarchist Against the Wall	Collective (Informal)	Israeli	Anarchist	Protest/Riot/ Occupation	3.000	0.016
Betzelem	NGO	Israeli	Radical Left	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns / Protest	11.000	0.057
Breaking the Silence	Political Organization	Israeli	Liberal Left Zionist	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns / Protest	3.000	0.016
Citizens' Right Movement	NGO	Israeli	Liberal Left Zionist	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns / Protest	1.000	0.005
Emek Shaveh	NGO	Israeli	Liberal Left Zionist	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns / Protest	6.000	0.031
Fatah	Party	Palestinian	Secular Nationalist	Political Competition	2.000	0.010
Givat Haviva	NGO	Joint	Civic Organization	Advocacy/ Education/ Peaceful Coexistence	2.000	0.010

Hadasha	Party	Israeli	Joint Party (Israeli Community Party)	Political Competition	6.000	0.031
ICHAD	NGO	Israeli	Radical Left	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns / Protest/ Legal Assistance	12.000	0.063
International Solidarity Movement	International Organization	International	Radical Left	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns / Protest	5.000	0.026
International Women's Peace Service	International Organization	International Organization	Liberal Feminism	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns	3.000	0.016
Ir Amim	NGO	Israeli	Civic Organization	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns/ Legal Assistance	9.000	0.047
Just Vision	NGO	Israeli	Leftist	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns/	1.000	0.005
Meretz	Political Party	Israeli	Liberal Left Zionist	Political Competition	5.000	0.026
Peace Now	NGO	Israeli	Liberal Left Zionist	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns/ Legal Assistance	7.000	0.036
PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine)	Political Party	Palestine	Marxist Party	Political Competition	1.000	0.005
Rabbis for Human Rights	NGO	Israeli	Liberal Left Zionist	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns/ Legal Assistance/ Protest/ Direct Action	22.000	0.115
Sheikh Jarrah Popular Committee	Collective	Palestinian	Civic Group	Protest/ Documentation	53.000	0.276
Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity Movement	Collective	Joint	Radical Left	Protest/ Riot	8.000	0.042
Ta'ayush	Collective	Israeli	Anarchist	Protest/ Riot/ Direct Action/ Documentation/ Legal Assistance	3.000	0.016
The Association for Civil Rights in Israel	NGO	Joint	Civic Organization	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns/ Legal Assistance/ Protest/ Direct Action	13.000	0.068
The Jerusalem Center for Social and Economic Rights	NGO	Joint	Civic Organization	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns/ Legal Assistance/ Protest/ Direct Action	2.000	0.010
Voice for Peace	NGO	Joint	Civic Organization	Advocacy/ Protest	2.000	0.010
World Council of Churches	International Organization	International	Christian Ideology	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns/ Legal Assistance/	1.000	0.005
Yesh Din	NGO	Joint	Liberal Feminism	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns/	3.000	0.016

In T1 (Figure 33) is also possible to see the wide presence of Israeli organizations and collectives and a minority of international organizations. As far as Palestinian groups are concerned, it is important to

mention the fact that most of them organized themselves under the Popular Committee of the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood to coordinate protest actions more effectively and organize the different souls and positions of the two sides of the neighbourhood (East and West). The Committee is obviously at the center of the network, given its importance in organizing actions. By looking at some more specific network indicators, in-degree is an excellent index to define the centrality of an actor. An actor with a high in-degree is considered prominent in the network (Hanneman, 2001). Except for the Sheikh Jarrah popular committee, which is responsible for managing relations with the outside of the neighbourhood, Rabbis for Human Rights (RHR) and Israeli Committee Against House Demolition (ICHAD) are the two most active organizations. Interestingly, they are also two prominent nodes in Susiya's campaign networks. This could certainly suggest the existence of a spillover effect (Meyer & Whittier, 1994) of activists involved in the Israeli left. Spillover describes the influences that social movements have on each other. Social movement spillover can occur through both direct and indirect ways by which one movement affects the other's ideologies, frames, strategies, membership, organizational structure, or political opportunities. The study of social movement spillover has generally focused more on paths, repertoires, mechanisms, and symbols. What has generally emerged is that: first, movements can modify the opportunities for protest, increasing police violence or opening the path to new social forces. Second, social movements can also modify the very cycle of protest in terms of frames, discourse, strategies, and tactics according to what others are doing. This can also happen over time. Although here we do not retrace the tendency underlined by della Porta & Diani (2015, p. 247) that sees one movement spilling over from another, we have a clear case of co-membership and spillover in the sense of activists involved in a campaign, meeting with other activists in others campaigns and joining the force in both campaigns. It also needs to be reminded that organizations orbiting around the Israeli radical left and interested in human rights are a minority. They are involved in the same campaigns, although some, focus on certain issues (like ICAHD) or regions (South Hebron Hills, or Jerusalem). This allows for a more targeted type of work. These two Israeli organizations deal precisely with human rights, and, ICAHD specifically works on the issue of demolition and eviction. The fact that they are prominent in the network makes perfect sense.

Finally, the last measure considered here is the one of density that describes network cohesion. It tells us that a node has a 30% chance of participating in the same protest together with another node of the network. However relevant, most interesting results emerge when the interviews corroborate these data,

as was explored in the previous sections, about the real challenges and difficulties activists have encountered in working together on the field.

5.5.2 SNA 2012-2021

This second graph (Figure 34) shows a very different picture. It is certainly smaller in size both for the number of nodes and for the number of connections (Table 4). This is due to two reasons: 1) the time sample is shorter (it covers only ten years, even if the number of events included is more than half of the entire sample); 2) after 2012, the number of collaborations between the two ethnonational groups reduced, also due to greater pressures against the normalization of relations between the groups. However, as it also emerges from this second network (Figure 34), some Israeli groups remained involved in the Sheikh Jarrah mobilizations. In particular, the presence of Rabbis for Human Rights has remained constant, an organization which, as seen in the previous paragraph, is certainly important within the Israeli left scene. Another notable actor in the Israeli left is certainly Ir Amim, an NGO that deals with the urbanization and planning of the municipality of Jerusalem. The Sheikh Jarrah Popular Committee is undoubtedly the ego of these networks. However, what has certainly changed is its level of centralization. There is a higher number of nodes, compared to T1, that are connected only to Sheikh Jarrah Popular Committee and not to each other. This is probably due to the problems and the disagreements that the coalition has encountered over time. As it was made explicit in one of the previous paragraphs, a section of the Israeli left, after discussions and disagreements with the resident on the repertoires of action to implement, has left the coalition, or at least, it partially detached. It is reasonable to think that after such disappointment, the residents have become more cautious in their alliance making, putting themselves at the centre of every cooperation and pondering any new and old alliance.

Table 9 T2 Sheikh Jarrah

Number of Nodes	16
Number of Ties	54
Density	0.242

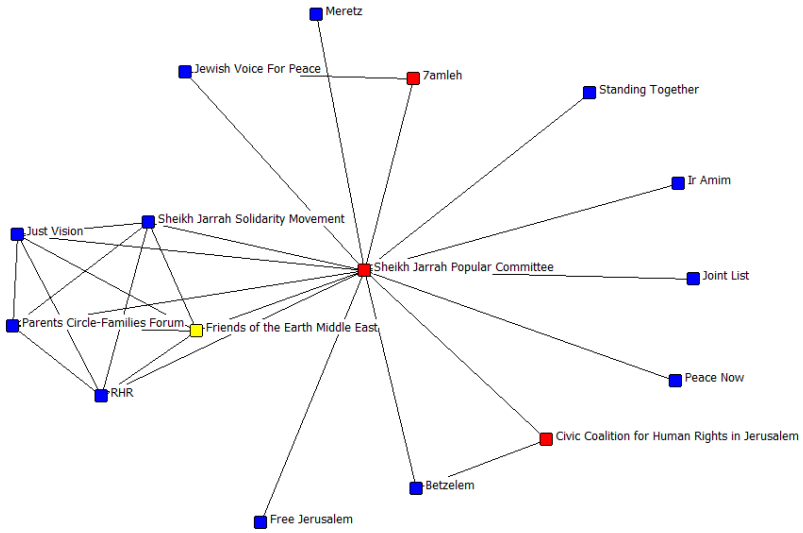


Figure 34 SNA 2012-2021

There is, however a more cohesive subgroup, circled in red in Figure 35. Clusters or cohesive subgroups are groups of actors in a network that interact with each other to such an extent that they could be considered separate entities. The common denominator certainly seems to be the fact that they are all Israeli organizations. It is also the only instance in which it was possible to detect the presence of an international organization – that was probably brought by these Israeli groups.

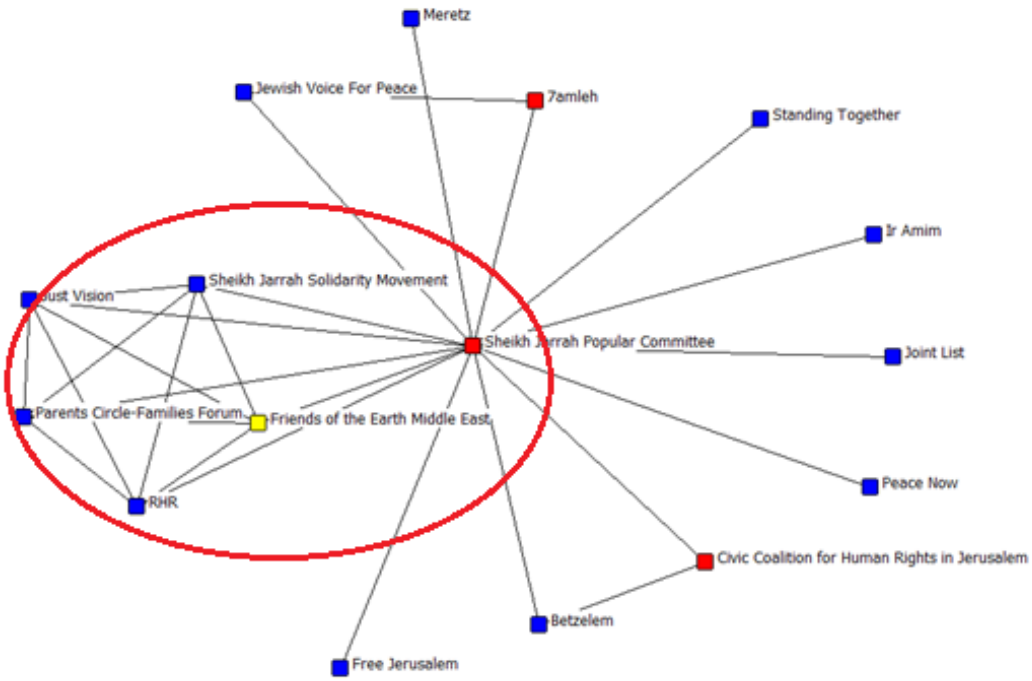


Figure 35 Cluster

Density measurements also indicate a less cohesive network. In this case, a group has a 24% chance of collaborating with other groups in the network. Given the size of the network, it is still an indicator of proximity and communication between the various nodes. However, the reduction in cohesiveness might also be due to what just previously mentioned: a moment of friction pushed some actors to depart and take different activism trajectories. This point was re-asserted by one of the activists who mobilized both during T1 and T2:

"So, we knew all the time that there are different approaches within the neighborhood and the people. Some like our presence less than others. And the beginning we said, okay, we're connecting with whoever we want. We want a lot of people to hear of Sheikh Jarrah. This is surely what they want from us. But it was a mistake. I think it was an important lesson of post 2011, everything we do, we do with the will of the people from the neighborhood and now this is the bottom line, and it's very clear" (IS32).

Table 10 T1 Sheikh Jarrah Organzations

	Level of Formality	***Ethnonational Composition***	***Political Ideology***	***Repertoires of Action***	***Degree***	***In-Degree***
7amleh	Organization	Palestinian	None	Advocacy/ Social Media Managinign/ Campaigns	2.000	0.067
Betzelem	NGO	Israeli	Radical Left	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns / Protest	2.000	0.067
Civic Coalition of Human Rights in Jerusalem	NGO	Palestinian	Civic Organization	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns / Protest	2.000	0.067
Free Jerusalem	Collective	Israeli	Radical Left	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns / Protest-Riots	2.000	0.067
Friends of the Hearth Middle East	NGO	International	Liberal Environmentalist	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns / Social Media	5.000	0.167
Ir Amim	NGO	Israeli	Civic Organization	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns/ Legal Assistance/ Urban Planning	2.000	0.067
Just Vision	NGO	Israeli	Leftist	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns/	5.000	0.167
Jewish Voices for Peace	NGO	Israeli	Leftist	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns/	2.000	0.067
Joint List	Political Party	Joint	Leftist	Political Competition	1.000	0.033
Meretz	Political Party	Israeli	Liberal Left Zionist	Political Competition	1.000	0.033
Parents Circle-Families Forum	NGO	Joint	Liberal Zionist	Advocacy/ Encounters/ Campaigns/	5.000	0.167
Peace Now	NGO	Israeli	Liberal Left Zionist	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns/ Legal Assistance	1.000	0.033
Rabbis for Human Rights	NGO	Israeli	Liberal Left Zionist	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns/ Legal Assistance/ Protest/ Direct Action	5.000	0.167
Sheikh Jarrah Popular Committee	Collective	Palestinian	Civic Group	Protest/ Documentation	17.000	0.567

Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity Movement	Collective	Joint	Radical Left	Protest/ Riot	5.000	0.167
Standing Together	NGO	Joint	Liberal Zionist	Advocacy/ Documentation/ Campaigns/	1.000	0.033

In-degree indicates which nodes are more central, but above all since it is a not-too-extensive network, it is able to highlight those that are more marginal. Also, in this case, as in the previous one, the presence of Israeli organizations is evident, mobilizing and working together with the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood committee. Also, in this case, there has been a generational change even if some older groups have continued to participate. Interesting is the new participation of Free Jerusalem, a collective born in 2015 mainly composed of young people and university students of the city. This group has also been indicated by some Palestinian residents as one of those who have spent the most time organizing protests and meetings in the last period, especially in moments of greatest tension. Talking to one of the founders, we extensively discussed the name of the collective since it is one of the few Israeli groups that has deliberately not decided to use the word *peace*. The answer I was given is the following:

> "Of course, we want peace, like everyone else, but we also believe that there can never be peace until a part of the population of Jerusalem (the Palestinian one) is trapped in a part of the city without services and treated as second-class citizens Once we are all free, and all treated equally, only then will it make sense to talk about peace". (IS31)

As mentioned in different parts of this dissertation, the generational element – for both groups – determined a change in attitude towards inter-ethnonational coalitions. Young Palestinians tend to be more careful in their relations with Israeli activists, who are instead doing a great deal of work in their attempt to address sources of inequalities and the historical roots of the conflict. This knowledge and attitude has proven indispensable for establishing and maintaining relationships with Palestinians willing to collaborate with Israeli activists.

To summarize, the network has shown two important tendencies: on the one hand, the former involvement of political parties from both parties, when the geography of the conflict allowed for that. On the hand, we witnessed a centralization of the whole network around the neighbourhood central committee. More observation should be performed on these data, but given the scope of this Chapter, the network was just a support tool to visualize the pattern of relationships of the campaign and how it changed over time.

5.6 Does Class Mater?

Social Movement Studies have been historically very careful in their understanding of class differences – more than compared to other types of inequalities such as race, disability, or Indigeneity and colonialism. Mix and Cable (2006) paid a great deal of attention to cross-class within the framework of the environmental movement. A similar topic has been addressed in Obach's (2004) book that looks at the relationship between organized labour and environmental groups showing how they are typically characterized as adversarial, most often because of the spectre of job loss invoked by industries facing environmental regulation. But, as Brian Obach shows, these two social movements in the United States share a great deal of common ground. Unions and environmentalists have worked together on several issues, including workplace health and safety, environmental restoration, and globalization. Exploring the inter-organizational dynamics that are crucial to cooperative efforts and presenting detailed studies of labour-environmental group coalition building from around the country provides insight into how these movements can be brought together to promote a just and sustainable society. A lot has also been said about the relationship between social class and social mobilization, demarking what is considered the main difference between New Social Movements (Rose, 1997). However, the scholarship has also shown how the need for coalition formation is greatest for groups that are disadvantaged in terms of resources and political impact (Gamson, 1961; Harold & Arrowood, 1960; Zajak & Haunss, 2022). Leaving aside the ample strand of literature that has merged Marxist studies with collective action, a couple of considerations concerning how the element of class emerged, unexpectedly, in this case, are made.

Sheikh Jarrah, as already mentioned, is composed of two sides, the Eastern and the Western side. The two sides are divided by an important arterial road, but this is not the only demarcation line between them. The Western side is notoriously poorer and is living in much direr economic conditions than the Eastern side. In the words of an activist:

> "The original contact between the Israelis and the residents of Sheikh Jarrah was related to the eastern part because the reason is that the evictions back in 2008 and 2009 involved families that lived there: the Hanoon family, Al-Kurd, al-Rawi. We kept strong contact with Hamed. He comes from the eastern side of Sheik Jarrah, and he was and still is the person that leads the demonstration with Muhammad Sabah whose family house was really under a huge risk of eviction just two years ago. Sometimes he had some difficulties because of his cooperation with the Israelis. But at the same time, he really appreciates the work we do together. So, it was complicated. And I knew all the time there are people from the eastern side that don't like us. So, we knew all the time that there are different approaches within the neighbourhood and the people. We said, 'Okay we're connecting with whoever that wants. Yeah, and want us to be there.' But I must be honest to say that in the eastern part, for example, they are pushing Hamed a lot to stop working with us. So, that's why we started to be involved more in

the western part, which was very different in the sense that there are two different committees. The West Side has one and the East another and to be completely honest with you, I think it's because the East side they are bourgeoise. Their kids are now studying in the US or in other Arab countries, they work for UNRWA or the UN. I am not saying they are rich, but they are richer than in the Western part." (IS4).

It was not the first time an activist mentioned to me this difference of class origin between the two sides of the neighbourhood. However, most of the time, it was something remarked out of records. As for my experience, I have also encountered a different attitude on the two sides of the neighbourhood. Mainly precisely in relation to the decision to coalesce or not with Israeli groups. What is exposed by this testimony goes in the direction of what I had the chance to experience in my own fieldwork. Residents of the Western side of the neighbourhood *need* the help of the Israeli activists because they do not have any alternative. They cannot afford lawyers and find a house in another place. The material conditions of their resistance are much more evident and pressing than for the other side of the neighbourhood where they can afford to fight on their own, but they cannot afford to lose their houses either. That is why a part of the residents, that maintains strong personal ties of trust with the Israeli activists, continue this coalition. Unfortunately, class is something that emerged just in the last phase of this research, and I could not explore it more with follow-up interviews or further research.

5.7 Conclusion

Several elements emerged from the study of this emblematic case that has, become in more recent times expression of the Palestinian cause. Sheikh Jarrah is an illustrative example to explore different moments of conflict, friction, and disagreements between groups, their strategies, repertoires, and attitudes. The Chapter showed how harder it was to maintain coalitions in moments of difficulty and after the detachment of an important part of the coalition. The analysis, then, considered different layers of interaction and understanding. First of all, it looked at the strong symbolic value attributed to the city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is a divided city that has never managed to reconcile its divisions. However, finding itself de facto under Israeli control, the residents of the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood had the opportunity to meet and confront the Israeli left as a whole, which promptly got interested in the evictions of this neighbourhood. After the first moment of mobilizations in which the pacifist groups and the Israeli radical left approached and began to build coalitions with the residents of the neighborhood, there was a moment of crisis. A portion of the coalition disbanded to mobilize in different regions and campaigns, while others remained but had to deal with the damage caused by those who left. Relationships were compromised, and some time was needed to re-establish trust. However, a group of Israeli and Palestinian activists continued to meet and march every Friday at 3 pm in winter and 4 pm in the summer to condemn

the eviction policies of Jerusalem Est put in place by Israel. Eventually, the enormous protests and clashes broke the media silence on Sheikh Jarrah in May 2021 when Israel decided to implement these expulsion orders. In Jerusalem, several mobilizations and confrontations that took place in other areas of the city overlapped, leading to a renewed bombing of Gaza.

Tilly's (2001, p. 24) well-known definition of mechanism and process-based accounts explains salient features of certain episodes, or significant differences among them, as about the case scrutinized in the previous Chapter, what I have defined as the mechanism of shadowing fits the label of mechanism. The presence of Israeli activists, however, omitted by the media, has been constant. This is because there was a consensuall decision to let this campaign be transformed into a Palestinian national campaign that represented and therefore spoke to the entire Palestinian population as a whole. However, there are also ethical reasons relating to the need to reduce asymmetries among the participants, which made it necessary to line up in this way.

The SNA illustrated how the composition of the campaign has changed over time from an analytical and longitudinal point of view, while the interviews and field observations have shown how more qualitative elements, such as the rituality of the regular meeting, have meant that a cooperation such as this could be continued for over ten years. The SNA shows the presence of political parties such as Fatah, Meretz, and the PFLP before 2011. With the creation of the separation wall in 2006, the possibility of participating in actions in Jerusalem has been drastically reduced for Palestinian national parties. In fact, in the second network, the only parties that continue to be present and participate are the Joint List and Meretz, two parties that are expressions of the Israeli left. Finally, the SNA allows us to know which organizations can be considered central to the network. An interesting element that emerges is that some of the Israeli NGOs present in Sheikh Jarrah were also active in Susiya. This certainly underlines a "concrete" spillover effect of "activists" that is coherent with the definition of "activist career" proposed by McAdam (1989) in which Sheikh Jarrah was a first initiation to a longer type of political involvement in other geographical areas. The geographical movement is something retraced instead by Jasper (1997, p. 214) when describing the attitude of certain activists of moving from one location to another to bring their organizational "expertise": "he has moved from group to group and movement to movement, but the draw has always been the many pleasures created by internal movement culture."

In addition, the Chapter has also opened an important and necessary discussion of normalization and anti-normalization strategies. The strategy adopted by the Palestinian and international civil society of

boycotting relationships with Israeli organizations and institutions has shrunk the coalitional possibility of the Palestinian civil society towards Israeli organizations. New generations, in particular, have been subject to this debate since the beginning of their activism, and sometimes even life, raising concerns about 'normalizing' relationships when they join the Sheikh Jarrah campaign. However, coalitions based on the interactional maintenance paradigm have been proven to be resistant and are still standing despite all the frictions this campaign has experienced.

CHAPTER 6 –WHERE HAVE ALL THE WOMEN GONE?

6.1 Introduction

The examination of the Coalition's work discussed here cannot be viewed in isolation from the broader context of the women's peace camp and its evolution over time. Many of the activists involved in the Coalition were active participants from the early 1980s, and through interviews, their recollections of that period were explored. Furthermore, prior to their involvement in the Coalition, most of the activists had some level of participation in Women in Black, a prominent and influential movement that gained popularity during the First Intifada. This analysis will demonstrate how collaboration was more prevalent in the past and how everything changed with the construction of the Separation Wall, also referred to by some as the Apartheid Wall. It will be revealed that, initially, there were no discussions regarding inequality or strategies to address asymmetry. Additionally, many Israeli activists showed reluctance in understanding and accepting the historical truth surrounding the Nakba and the establishment of the state of Israel. The role of the Second Intifada will also be explored, emphasizing its impact on inter-ethnonational cooperation among women. Finally, the Chapter will delve into the perspectives of Palestinian women in politics and their decision to refrain from collaborating with Israeli organizations from a Black Feminist standpoint. This decision led to the creation of an autonomous Palestinian Feminist movement that is explicitly anti-colonial.

The Chapter presents an analysis of the creation or failure of alliances, adopting a non-normative approach. The analysis is conducted on three different levels, and a comprehensive summary can be found in at the end of the introduction (Table 11). Firstly, the focus will be on the unsuccessful efforts to establish alliances between Palestinian organizations based in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) and Israeli-Jewish organizations. This dynamic has undergone significant changes over time. The Chapter will explore how these changes were influenced by the Second Intifada, which made moving more challenging for both sides, and by the unilateral decision of the Israeli government to construct a separation wall. Furthermore, the Chapter will shed light on the numerous visible and invisible barriers that women encounter when attempting to participate in joint activities. It will provide clarity on these obstacles, emphasizing their significance. Moreover, the Chapter aims to challenge the notion of women as perceived through a "Western Eyes" (Mohanty, 1984) perspective, deconstructing preconceived notions and stereotypes. Women are viewed in this context as a diverse and complex group, encompassing various identities that extend beyond conventional norms. However, even within this broad category, there exist numerous differences and distinctions.

The second level of analysis focuses on Palestinian women who are citizens of Israel, commonly referred to in the literature as '48 Palestinians, because they remained in the territory that constituted Palestine prior to the declaration of Israeli independence in 1948. Historically, collaboration between '48 Palestinians and Israelis was more prevalent, but the current landscape is undergoing change due to recent shifts in the direction of the Palestinian Women's movement. These changes are influenced by the emergence of new feminist approaches, particularly Black and Third World Feminism, which have contributed to the evolving discourse. The challenges encountered by the Coalition of Women for Peace (CWP) throughout its existence, including internal conflicts and disagreements between its factions, will be examined. Additionally, the reasons behind the decision of certain groups to withdraw from the coalition will be explored.

The third level of analysis examines both internal and external factors that have contributed to the overall failure of the coalition. Specifically, the dissolution of the coalition in 2020 will be analysed, which can be attributed to two main factors. Firstly, the coalition faced extensive repression, primarily due to their decision to participate in the international Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaign. Secondly, the lack of effective relational mechanisms identified in previous campaigns also played a role in the coalition's dissolution.

Table 11 Different Barriers to Cooperation

	Exogenous Elements	***Endogenous Elements***
Cooperation with Palestinian Women OPTs	Geographical Component	Unwillingness to work together
Cooperation with Palestinian Women '48	Physical proximity	Lack of strategies to handle power inequalities
End of the Coalition	Repression	Disagreements

6.2 The Coalition of Women for Peace

A wide range of social movements and interest organizations, whether engaging in occasional or ongoing collaboration around a shared cause, can be referred to as coalitions. These coalitions can assume various shapes and structures. Some may be informal and persist over extended periods, while others may involve temporary partnerships that dissolve once a specific campaign or objective is accomplished (Van Dyke & McCammon, 2010). Scholars have employed the term "coalition" in various ways, with William Gamson providing one of the fundamental definitions: “A coalition is the joint use of resources by two

or more social units" (1961, 374). Regardless of their specific structure, alliances play a crucial role in facilitating collective action and understanding the dynamics of social movements. Some of the largest global protests have been successfully coordinated by organizational coalitions. Previous research has emphasized the significance of pre-existing social connections and shared threats as catalysts for global protests. These factors have also influenced the formation of coalitions around various issues during different periods (Van Dyke & McCammon, 2010). The examined Coalition in this Chapter encompasses all of these thoughts and considerations, highlighting the numerous similarities that exist between "conventional" coalitions and coalitions that bridge differences. However, the Chapter will also identify specific differences that arise within this context.

The Coalition of Women for Peace, established in 2000, self-identified as an independent movement despite comprising ten organizations[48], and some of its activities were shared among these organizations. It presents a distinct dynamic and structure compared to other long-term coalitions or independent organizations. Some women are involved as activists both in the independent association of the Coalition of Women for Peace and in one or more partner organizations or other groups. Rather than primarily serving as a facilitator of dialogue between different organizations or functioning as an intermediary, the Coalition operates in a manner that allows it to undertake activities in which all organizations can participate without imposing any obligation to join. Instead of acting solely as an umbrella organization, it functions as a Feminist Peace Movement that welcomes women who wish to act on these issues, even if they do not belong to a specific organization.

Communication between organizations took place through various means throughout the campaign. Initially, meetings were held to collectively develop campaign messages and objectives. According to the activists interviewed, most of the initial encounters were organized in Nazareth, a city where a significant portion of the '48 Palestinian population resides. A busy schedule, coupled with a focus on public relations, enabled the different organizations to agree on partnership objectives and content. Despite differences of opinion, particularly mentioned in subsequent sections, during confrontations, agreement prevailed. In the early stages, women adopted a tactic of selecting a theme that could mobilize broad public support while also generating a radical-feminist discourse around it.

[48] The founding organizations are: Machsom Watch, Noga, Women in Black, The Fifth Mother, TANDI, Bat Shalom, New Profile, NELED and Ba Tzafon for Peace and Equality. Then, certain left and other joins.

After 2008, the Coalition began adopting more radical positions that led to the distancing of certain Palestinian and Israeli organizations. The increased visibility of activists from Palestinian organizations and anti-establishment women's groups was seen as advantageous by some participants, while others considered it a disadvantage. Many Jewish feminist organizations, primarily focused on providing individual services, either did not join the Coalition or participated in a limited capacity. They argued that while they supported the dominant presence of a radical political discourse addressing the Occupation of the territories and discrimination against Palestinian women in Israel, they did not feel comfortable enough to actively engage with the Coalition when it decided to join the BDS movement. For most feminist organizations, the political reality in Israel and the region creates a significant barrier that prevents both ethnonational groups, Jewish and Palestinian, from meeting on equal footing. Some organizations emphasize this distinction because they recognize the inherent limitations on equal interaction between Jewish and Palestinian women. In organizations dedicated to opposing the Occupation and promoting equality between Israeli Jews and Palestinians, Jewish activists tend to have more prominence than Palestinian activists. The emphasis on mobilizing more Jewish women for feminist activities often hinders organizations from establishing a clear connection between gender-based violence and national-based Occupation. These pressing issues emerged from the analysis of all the interviews conducted for this Chapter.

6.2.1 Which Feminism

Feminist movements emerge when organized groups of people unite with a strategic approach to combat and dismantle patriarchy. The landscape of feminist ideology and practice underwent a profound transformation when radical women of Colour vehemently contested that "gender" alone dictated a woman's destiny. Recognizing the interconnectedness of gender, race, and class has decisively shifted the trajectory of numerous feminist movements (Hooks, 2015, p. xii-xiii). However, this understanding has been lacking in most Israeli women's organizations, as they remain strongly tied to Zionist and nationalist ideas that do not align well with a feminist comprehension of power and oppression. Furthermore, there has been a notable absence of explicit discussions regarding inequalities and power asymmetry. Many of the Jewish women involved in these movements and the coalition were Ashkenazi Jews from privileged backgrounds. Even when they wholeheartedly supported Palestinian struggles, such as the BDS movement, they often failed to genuinely include Palestinian women and, most importantly, neglected non-Western understandings of feminism. Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1984) has cautioned against viewing "Third World Women" as a monolithic entity. The definition of colonization invoked in

her text primarily revolves around discursive modes of appropriation and codification of "scholarship" and "knowledge" about women in the Third World, based on analytic categories rooted in specific writings that draw on feminist interests articulated in the US and Western Europe (Mohanty, 1984, p. 333). The mistake lies in assuming that by categorizing women, all individuals who share the same gender across classes and cultures are automatically socially constituted as a homogeneous group prior to the analytical process. As eloquently expressed by an Israeli feminist activist:

"If we want to work together, we must work on inequalities. It does not come automatically, naturally, or quickly: quite the opposite. Just because we are all women does not necessarily mean it will work. The first joint groups thought that. They believed it would have come automatically. It was a mistake." (IS6)

The idea of women's homogeneity is not based on biological factors but rather on secondary sociological and anthropological universals. Consequently, in Feminist analysis, women are often portrayed as a unified group due to their shared experience of oppression. This perception of women is rooted in the sociological concept of the "sameness" of their oppression (Mohanty, 1984, p. 337). Israeli Feminism has predominantly adopted this approach. However, a new wave of Palestinian Feminism has emerged, emphasizing the recognition of intersectional oppressions drawing on perspectives from Black Feminism (Stagni, 2023). Moreover, women living in rural areas or those who directly experience the violence of the Occupation have a distinct understanding of womanhood and the implications of gender in their specific environments. This was highlighted by a Palestinian woman actively engaged in the South Hebron region during a focus group discussion:

"Okay, we are women. As a woman, I am standing in my land, in my community. This is my contact with my land, stronger than the Occupation, stronger than everything everywhere. They have forbidden us to use the water and electricity. But the line of water and electricity is just 20 meters from our home. It is the same the settlement is using. We cannot use all these things and at the same time, they forbid us to use ours. They come here and say we cannot stay here because there are no services, no water, no electricity. They created the cause, and they used cause as a result. But we are staying in our land. Without water, without anything. We are staying on our land (F2)"

Before proceeding with this analysis, it is crucial to critically examine the use of "Women" as a fixed category of analysis, as it assumes an *ahistorical* and *universal* unity among women based on a generalized understanding of their subordination. The testimonial evidence presented above highlights that women in marginalized areas face specific and life-threatening risks that are unfamiliar to many Israeli women within the context of Israel. By solely focusing on gender identity, the definition of the female subject neglects the intersecting dimensions of social class and ethnic identities, which are integral

to understanding the production of women as socio-economic and political groups within local contexts (Mohanty, 1984, p. 344). This limitation has proven to be a significant challenge in joint women's initiatives in Palestine and Israel, as indicated by a Palestinian Queer Activist based in the Occupied Territories:

"To be very honest, I do not work in Israeli Women's groups, but I work with mixed groups because I do not like the power dynamic within these groups. For example, I was invited so many times by the Coalition of Women for Peace, but I won't join them […] Because we are not equal in the decisions. We are not equal in many other things. If you look at who is traveling abroad in such initiatives, or to speak with the media is always Jews, who have the money to be in such initiatives? Jewish. They have everything. They come to peace activism after they retire once they have time. Late in life, they have income, they have homes, they have food, they have family, they have done everything. Their family is safe. I came into peace activism when I was thirty. I did have my daughter already. My brother was in the occupation jail. They took my house. It was very different, for me activism is not a hobby. And when you go to these initiatives, they do not really want to know your ideas. They want you to follow. So, I am not, I'm not following my occupier. I cannot allow to follow my occupier, even if we are in peace activism because still, we are not in the same power dynamic, if we both do not take decisions at the same level. If I do not have the transparency of everything. Financial and non-financial. I will not be involved. I do not want fame through media, I could have gained lots of fame in the past ten years because of my involvement in peace activism as a Lesbian Palestinian. I do not want fame. I want our reality to change. I want to go to my daughter's [high school] graduation and I could not go because she is in a school in Jerusalem, I do not have the Jerusalem ID [the daughter does because her father has it]. I'm missing these days of her life and I cannot have those days back. This is what I want. I want Maryam and Samna to be able to travel wherever they want and to live peacefully and not to be told: 'Hey, don't speak Hebrew' [49]. That's what I want. I do not want Facebook pictures and going to the Knesset and shaking hands with somebody. I think they do a good job with the Israeli society, but in the approach, I disagree. I think in any organization, any organization, any initiative if a partnership is a real partnership there must be trust and I do not trust these people. I trust a community of people like the one we have in Al-Noor" (PA23)

What is noteworthy about this activist and her testimony is that she did not reject participation in peace initiatives altogether; instead, she pursued a path of becoming a professional peacemaker within a community-based approach. While I won't delve into the specifics of the community she joined, it is essential to highlight that it is a diverse community of Israelis and Palestinians residing in the West Bank, guided by principles of peaceful coexistence and co-resistance. Significantly, she expressed strong criticism of Women Peace initiatives, which aligns with the analysis of previous campaigns. Additionally, she also introduces a class critique that resonates with what was underlined in the previous Chapter. Central to both the Susiya campaign and Sheikh Jarrah is their focus on place-based solidarity. These campaigns involve heterogeneous communities of people fighting for their survival and their right

[49] These are the interviewee's brother's daughters that come from a mixed marriage between a Palestinian and an Israeli woman. They speak both Arabic and Hebrew and when they are in the West Bank they are told by their parents not to speak Hebrew because it's not safe.

to remain in their respective locations. This context fosters relationships that often transcend mere activism and evolve into community organizing. In contrast, this element has been largely absent in the Coalition of Women for Peace (CWP) campaign and in the broader landscape of women's activism in Israel. This can be attributed to the increasing process of NGO-ization affecting women's movements worldwide and the nation-based framework of the coalition, which did not prioritize specific areas.

However, this research unequivocally demonstrates that genuine cooperation across ethnonational divides and differences can only be achieved at the community, village, or neighbourhood level, even though it is not always an easy task. Nevertheless, the community scale provides a foundation for deep understanding, mutual knowledge, and the implementation of relational mechanisms. These mechanisms, in turn, enable the formation of coalitions that would otherwise be challenging to establish.

6.2.2 Exogenous Limits to Solidarity

The Coalition of Women for Peace was also born in 2000, and in that case, the moment of crisis was the impetus to start joint activities and unify under a new organization to avoid separation and dispersion (Abramovitch, 2008).

> "It was the beginning of the Second Intifada. For this reason, we decided to create the coalition, we saw that many people started to separate we, instead, wanted to try to expand our activities." (IS31)

Why do some partnerships work, and others do not? In the present case, it is possible to highlight how endogenous and exogenous elements have participated together in making this type of cooperation possible. First, something that has perhaps not been stressed enough in Social Movement Studies, is the fact that women and all nonconforming subjects face greater barriers to entry mobilization and collective action than other groups. As noted, gender can be considered a unifying category when the necessary pondering has been done. Women and individuals who identify with this gender and sex may be very different, both within Israeli and Palestinian society and here, society does not coincide with country.

6.3 Palestinian Women in the OPTs

To proceed with the analysis, it is necessary to identify four distinct layers. Firstly, cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian women, whether within the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) or in Israel, poses greater challenges compared to other forms of collaboration. As a result, Israeli women often struggle to involve Palestinian women in both feminist movements and peace initiatives. This difficulty arises from two external factors, one of which has already been discussed in the previous section regarding the critical period of the Second Intifada. It pertains to the logistical and practical difficulties faced in facilitating meetings and joint work between the two groups. The subsequent quotation

specifically addresses this issue, describing the initial attempts made by the Coalition of Women for Peace to establish contact with Palestinian Women Organizations operating in the West Bank. Related to this is important to consider the distinct contexts in which most Palestinian women residing in the Occupied Territories find themselves. A different layer, however, seeks to comprehend why Palestinian women living in Israel, within the '48 territories, who faced repression from Israeli institutions as second-class citizens, are no longer participating in joint-feminist coalitions. Indeed, despite inhabiting the same territory and lacking physical barriers that divide them, these women are rarely joining joint movements, and even in the CWP, some of them eventually disengaged from the Coalition due to various reasons. Finally, there exists a fourth level of analysis that evaluates the ultimate dissolution of the Coalition in 2020. Both latter outcomes can be attributed to a combination of external and internal factors.

"We tried to contact the Palestinians living in the Territories, but we did not manage. They could not travel here already at that time, and for us was not safe to go there." (IS26)

In the words of another Israeli activist:

"In Israel there were also Israeli Palestinians they are the Palestinian citizens of Israel, they took part with WIB, and we were good friends. When we extended our activities in the Coalition of Women for Peace some of them joined. But when we tried to get involved and cooperate with Palestinians from the Occupied Territories, well, it was very difficult to contact and to make demonstrations with them. But we tried to do so. There were many reasons. We were distant physically and we could not travel anymore. Then there was the wall and it made it impossible to get into contact. And after that, all the discourse around Normalizing also started." (IS31)

Again, a different activist remembers the difficulties of working with Palestinian in the OPTs.

"At first, they wanted to organize themselves, some of them did not want to get together with Israelis, and they considered most of us the occupiers, but we were looking for peace. At the time, after the first intifada I heard that they were criticized because they cooperated with us, so they stopped to work with us." (IS20)

Another significant aspect pertains to the increased difficulty faced by Palestinian women residing in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) when attempting to mobilize independently outside the realm of national movements and mainstream political parties. Additionally, Palestinian society is undergoing a noticeable trend of gender segregation, which further exacerbates these challenges (Roche, 2022). Given the failure in reaching out Palestinian women living in the OPTs, some Israeli activists have taken the occasion of the Coalition to increase the pressure on the Israeli government to re-initiate peace negotiations:

"First, most of us started with Women in Black and the thing was making vigil on Friday, and we consisted in one issue: stop the Occupation. But we did just that. Later, we thought we might expand our activities. To be more precise, for instance we started in Israel where there was a law that prohibited having contact with and

speaking to Palestinians from the OPTs. And in the CWP, we started to demand the Israeli government to make negotiations with the Israeli people. And the other subject was the feminist issue. That's why we created the Coalition, we wanted to expand our issues." (IS25)

However, it is crucial to emphasize the presence of institutional, legislative, ideological, and territorial constraints on such collaborations. In the subsequent interview, a long-standing activist who has been involved in the women's peace movement in Israel from its inception reminisces about how much "easier" cooperation used to be prior to the construction of the wall and the subsequent restrictions on movement imposed by Israel after 2000.

"In the First Intifada, we worked together so much, very much! Because you could go from one place to another, and they could, most importantly, they could come over to Jerusalem or to other places! We did not go to the Occupied Territories so much because we wanted to respect their borders, unless it was a solidarity visit or official thing, because we thought that one of the things we should not do was to go there because many Israelis used to go shopping in the Occupied Territories because it was cheaper. So, we refrained from going to the Occupied Territories. But in the First Intifada, they could come over. So, it was easier to collaborate. They often come here to Jerusalem in particular. Now it is the opposite. They cannot come in anyway. We have to go, and this is a petty, of course now they do not want to work with us." (IS19)

On the contrary, the following account sheds light on the other side of the narrative: a Palestinian woman actively participates in peace activities alongside mixed-gender communities in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). However, she keeps her involvement in joint groups a secret from most of her friends due to the potential accusation of "normalizing." This risk is particularly pronounced for women. Adding to be active in peace activism, she identifies as bisexual. If the Palestinian police were to discover this aspect of her identity, she would likely face charges of sodomy and normalization of relations with Israelis. The repressive actions of the Palestinian Authority (PA) greatly hinder individuals from mobilizing in peace initiatives. However, this is different when it comes to entire communities, such as Susiya or other Palestinian communities in the South Hebron Hills, where the risks are shared collectively. Individual women and those with non-conforming identities are unable to bear such risks.

"All my friends accused me of normalizing. I no longer have friends within my community of origin. People know me very well; they respect me but from far away. So, I am not really involved in the community's social life. Recently, with the project I am working on with the Italian NGO, I started meeting with the municipality. So, they already know that I am a peace activist in joint peace activism. I bring youth and people for political tours around Bethany. So, I think recently people are starting to realize what I am doing and that does not mean agreeing with the occupation. I am actually speaking against it. However, in the past, I did through many investigations. I do fear…there is lots of risk as a woman being in this field and also, I think this is why there are not many women in this field. There is a huge risk that most Israelis do not even imagine […] Like recently, I have been considering figuring out a way to be under a certain umbrella because the PA is becoming more dangerous. Like, the more and more I am known the more risk I am subjected to, and I have been discussing with my partner what to do if it

really happens. Because we cannot stay here if I got arrested. For example, Palestinians, when they are arrested by Israelis, we can call B'Tselem they have lawyers that know how to deal with Israeli courts. And then B'Tselem comes. But if you are arrested by the PA, B'Tselem cannot come to Ramallah. And who of the Arab lawyers will come to represent or defend a peace activist? No one. And we do not have any foreigner lawyers who by law, could take such a position. We do not have Italian lawyers that could defend you for example. You know that you can approach them, but nobody would represent me in court. So, within the last few investigations, they threaten me differently. I think they really want me to stop. So, I have discussed with my ex-husband and with my partner: what do we do if they come? Look, the situation is becoming horrible from PA, horrible from the other side [Israel]. We are not safe from any side, and if they call me a normalizer, like if somebody would say I am a normalizer in the street, to me, I am sure people will take it as an excuse to harm. So yeah, we are trying to figure out ways like what is the best way to try and get visas to go out of the country in case it happens that we have to leave, and I think it is the only way to actually be safe." (PA23).

The above section of this interview keeps together the whole complexity of the Palestinian issue. Israel, as an occupier entity, needs to be kept accountable by international laws, and those who try mobilizing for this aim are constantly targeted by the Israeli government. However, since the PA has signed Security Coordination Agreements (SCA) (Lisiecka, 2017) with Israel, it lost its autonomy and acts as a subcontractor for the IDF (Dana, Corruption in Palestine: a Self-Enforcing System, 2015). They target activists who are vocal and critical against the PA and also non-conforming subjects such as LGBTQ+ individuals and people who do not conform to gender roles, like women who decide to mobilize in joint and peace activism. Nizar Banat's case (Al Tahhan, 2022), brutally killed by the PA police without a trial, was a blatant example. He was a critical voice that condemned the PA corruption and, in particular, the inaction of the Palestinian president Mohammed Abbas. The Palestinian Police Force came to take him in the middle of the night from his bed, where he was sleeping with his wife. He was first beaten in his house in front of his family and later again harassed at the police station. He was declared dead the morning after. Engaging in pro-democracy and peace activism becomes an even more perilous endeavour when individuals face the risk of social discrimination and vulnerability due to their identities. This heightened vulnerability makes mobilization efforts increasingly challenging and places the lives of activists at stake. This section has examined the challenges associated with forming coalitions across differences, particularly when faced with physical, geographical, and regime-related barriers that impede such collaborations. For the women of the Coalition of Women for Peace (CWP), involving Palestinians from the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) proved exceedingly difficult due to both practical obstacles to communication and the growing perception of Israeli women as adversaries. In the subsequent section, I will delve deeper into the contextual disparities to provide readers unfamiliar with these circumstances a clearer understanding of the prevailing conditions experienced by Palestinian women in specific areas of the West Bank.

6.3.1 Contextual Differences

Palestinian women who are citizens of Israel belong to the national minority of Palestinian Arabs, constituting roughly 20% of Israel's population. In official Israeli documentation, they are referred to as Arab Israelis, occasionally differentiated by religious affiliation (Muslim, Christian, Druze), and even sub-ethnic groups like the Bedouin. This terminology is employed in an effort to negate their "Palestinian" identity. This ethnonational minority has endured discrimination and oppression on multiple fronts, including through legislation, governmental policies, state practices, and societal dynamics (Zinngrebe, 2018; Kanaaneh, 2002).

Since the establishment of the state of Israel up until the present time, there has been only one occasion when a Palestinian woman was elected as mayor of a local government. Furthermore, from 1948 onwards, a mere 44 women were elected as members of local government councils, in stark contrast to the thousands of men who held such positions. In the 2008 local governance elections, 149 women put themselves forward as candidates, but only 6 were successfully elected. Similarly, in 2013, 12 women were elected as council members, while an additional 6 were elected on a rotational basis until 2018 (Zinngrebe, 2018).

Regarding the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs), women experience varying conditions depending on their location. In the Hamas-governed Gaza Strip, a highly conservative government has been established, resulting in more stringent control over women's bodies and personal identities (Hammami, 1990). Similar circumstances can be observed in specific regions of the West Bank, such as Jenin or Hebron, where Islamist parties are gaining influence. Conversely, in areas like Ramallah and Jerusalem, there exists a notable contrast. In these regions, it is more customary for women to opt not to wear the Hijab, and the university environment fosters the exchange of ideas, resulting in a comparatively more progressive outlook on women's rights. Nonetheless, it is evident that there is an overall deterioration in women's circumstances and a widespread resurgence of Islamic conservatism across all the Occupied Territories (Roche, 2022). In the methodological section, I explored the gender implications by considering my own positionality as a White woman and the type of activism I observed and documented during my fieldwork. In this section, I would like to share an excerpt from my field diary that captures a particularly intense moment of reflection on my positionality. It occurred when I arrived in Hebron, known as one of the most gender-segregated locations in the West Bank.

"Here we are, in the most contentious city after Jerusalem. I feel it from the very first moment. In an election poster, the only woman without a veil has her face erased, they put a flower instead. It is no coincidence that in

the afternoon there is a demonstration by the Islamic group Hizb ut-Tahri against the adhesion of the PA to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). I pass by the demonstration by mistake - very naïf on my part but I honestly had no idea - there are two women, entirely covered with a black burqa on the stage. Once I realize the situation, I move away from the crowd as soon as possible. Hizb ut-Tahri refuses violence as a political tool, differently from Hamas, however, they are the most conservative force when it comes to women the LGBTQ+ individuals, and they have never hidden the fact that they support honour killing as a punishment for these non-conformity subjectivities." (Field note, March 23rd, 2022).

The representative for the General Union of the Palestinian Women (GUPW) effectively described these contradictions and the general situation of Palestinian society, making a particular reference to the city of Hebron. This interview was carried out some days after my stay in Hebron, and surprisingly, she referred to the very same event.

"There is a problem in society, not just of the regime. Whether it's a Fatah or Hamas regime, it is society above all that must support women. For example, I can tell you what happened a few months ago in Al Khalil (Hebron), here in the West Bank, not in the Gaza Strip under Hamas. As GUPW we organized a conference on CEDAW and Islamist groups organized a counter-initiative of Islamist women against us. Women against women, you understand? Islamist women claimed they would fight CEDAW and accused us of being against the Koran and Islam. Islamist groups also threatened retaliation against the owners of houses and halls in al Khalil who rented the spaces to us. So, I ask myself, is the situation in Gaza really more serious than in Al Khalil? I will give you another example: still in Al Khalil about two months ago a husband killed his wife. The heads of families of the two families involved held a meeting, came to an economic agreement and everything was resolved without the intervention of the law. And it is precisely this type of family who opposes our activities for the implementation of CEDAW. Three weeks ago, here in Nablus, we organized a conference on CEDAW. Representatives of many organizations and parties came, from the Popular Front to Fatah. During the conference, a man suddenly got up and publicly said he was from Hizb al Tahrir (literally the Liberation Party, in reality it is a Salafist group born in al Khalil) and started yelling at us interrupting the initiative. […] We don't have Daesh here in Palestine, we have Hamas and Hizb al Tahrir here. And remember, you often get confused in Europe, Jihad Islami is not part of this type of political formation, it is a completely different trend. These Islamist or Salafist groups or whatever they prefer to call themselves are playing into the hands of the occupation. It is very simple: the occupation wants us to fight each other instead of uniting to fight the occupation. Why, for example, did Israel allow Hizb al Tahrir to hold his congress in Al Khalil? The occupation controls everything, it even counts how many olive trees we plant and how many litres of water we have available and then allows the congress of a Salafi group to take place. It is obvious to any clear mind: if we kill each other among Palestinians, as happened in Gaza between Hamas and Fatah in 2007, we are doing a great service to the occupation." (PA14)

Navigating through these numerous elements and complexities is undoubtedly challenging. However, when it comes to women and other marginalized identities, who have frequently been overlooked in mainstream narratives, it becomes crucial to meticulously examine all the factors at play. The Palestinian society is undergoing transformation. In casual conversations, I have learned that families are apprehensive about sending their daughters to demonstrations due to the presence of Islamist groups and the potential for experiencing sexual harassment in such settings. Tal'at, a Palestinian feminist movement

established in 2019, dedicated an online discussion to addressing and combating sexual violence during protests (Stagni, 2023). Nevertheless, over the past few decades, there have always been numerous women who actively participated in marches and demonstrations. The reality is inherently complex, and it is often a characteristic of reactionary political factions to deny this complexity and instead impose their own simplistic vision rooted in hatred and oppression. The underlying problem lies in the fact that Palestinians in the OPTs are living under occupation and have been deprived of the opportunity to vote for a new parliament for nearly two decades (Stagni & Lo Piccolo forthcoming).

Palestinian society remains highly segregated along gender lines, yet there has emerged a Palestinian feminist movement known as Tal'at. This movement, drawing inspiration from Black feminist insights, seeks to redefine feminism within the context of Palestine (Stagni, 2023); which will be further discussed in subsequent sections. This paragraph aims to highlight the significance of gender in such a context and its profound impact on relationships. While it may be reasonable to assume that gender could potentially facilitate cooperation, it is important to recognize that this category is diverse and not necessarily a unifying factor. Moreover, certain forms of activism pose greater challenges for women due to specific characteristics associated with those activities. Such as those exposed in relation to Susiya, for example.

We now shift our focus to the experiences of activists who have actively participated in joint women's movements, aiming to comprehend both their successful and unsuccessful endeavours. In conclusion, we present the testimony of an Israeli activist with a longstanding involvement in Feminist Peace movements. She highlights the extent of violence they have encountered from the Israeli public throughout their lives and sheds light on the role of feminism in shaping their activism.

> "First of all, in the Coalition we were what we call "belonging to the left" in a very general term, if we have to differentiate between the right and the left, we are from the left, in the mind of the people from the right we are traitors. They told us that we are "Arafat's whores". I have been told that at the checkpoints, and when demonstrating. They say we do not care about the Jewish people, and we help terrorists. We are against the occupation and the conflict, the national conflict. We believe it should end, and this is something we will continue to say forever. And even if we have never done feminist actions, I believe that what we are doing is a product of feminism. The very fact that women can act in the public realm and politically is because of feminism. So, I believe we can say we are also a feminist organization. Most of us are not religious, but some of us are Judaists. We are mainly secular." (IS25)

In this section, while it may appear descriptive and contextual, it serves as a necessary component that elucidates the additional constraints faced not only in fostering cooperation and building alliances that transcend ethnic divides but also in mobilizing women from both populations in activism that goes beyond the national cause. Women encounter challenges stemming from accusations of betrayal from

their respective communities, and their gender identity further exacerbates these obstacles. Additionally, activism within these contexts often assumes a violent and risky nature, making it difficult for many individuals to feel at ease. Furthermore, the Palestinian context tends to become increasingly conservative while the Israeli context shifts towards the right. Lastly, the territorial barriers imposed by the Israeli state pose significant hindrances, making it arduous to even convene for a shared objective. Given these limitations, it is now possible to delve into the specificities inherent within the coalition under examination in greater detail.

6.4 The Initiation of the Coalition

> "There were about nine to ten groups. We were many more groups at the first meeting but just nine or ten groups decided that they should join into a Coalition so, first of all, to increase the numbers in their activities, and also to have more women joining these activities". (IS25)

Within Israeli society, coalitions are a common and widespread approach to collaborative work. In the realm of feminist movements, some prominent voices within the Israeli feminist landscape originate from Haifa, a city often regarded as mixed and progressive. In Haifa, for example, there exists a building where various Palestinian, Israeli, and joint organizations come together, sharing the same space while maintaining separate entities and activities. It is crucial to acknowledge the significant distinction between differences and divisions. Differences, as previously discussed, do exist, persist, and impact relationships. Divides are additionally enforced by the Israeli government through the imposition of distinctions and the withholding of rights based on the ethnonational origin. In this context, separation signifies a deliberate choice to maintain a certain level of distance being institutionally and, most importantly, physically and geographically separated.

The CWP, on the other hand, operated on a national scale. We observed instances of overlapping terms, both in formal coalition capacity and collaborative work. This can be attributed to the relatively small number of Women Feminist Peace groups in Israel. During one of the interviews, an organization that was already a part of the Haifa Women Coalition shared their decision to join the CWP:

> "We realize that one has much more power when you do campaigns when you come and demand to the municipality something, you have much more force if you come as four, five, or six organizations than one organization by itself" (IS19)

Here, the necessity to have some sort of coordination on women issues, when it comes to different ethnonational groups, is felt both by '48 Palestinian women groups and Israeli women equally. However, in Haifa, the way they found to work and cooperate is by maintaining separate individual spaces under

the same roof. The story is very different when it comes to Palestinian women's organizations in the Occupied Territories:

> "[As for Palestinian women in the Occupied Territories] we have meetings and every kind of international seminar together, and sometimes we still do some types of programs together. But if you ask me how this is started the first thing that comes to my mind is that it was slow. It was tough sometimes and today, if you want to make these connections and if you try to make these connections, most of the time you need international organizations that will do these connections, and maybe at a certain point they will agree to do some kind of activity with you. And it will be under the title of this international organizations and not the Israeli-Palestinian collaboration." (IS26)

In this particular scenario, in contrast to the two previously discussed cases, international organizations have the potential to serve as mediators. However, in Susiya and Sheikh Jarrah, these organizations do not function as expected bridges between different parties. Instead, they often operate independently and lack the deep connections necessary to be actively involved in these contentious fields.

Returning to the coalition, I present the testimony of one of the Palestinian funders, who sheds light on the inception of the coalition at its early stages:

> "We created a Coalition for Women and Peace, which was a coalition of all-women organizations working for peace in the country, in 2000 after the outbreak of the second intifada. Most of us came from Women in Black, that was a movement and then we had our different organizations. But we were friends. Women in Black was not an organization, it was a platform and did not have a board and it was very, very dispersed in terms of local organizing. The main slogan was "Stop/end the occupation". Of course, we were demanding also other things, but the main demand was to stop the occupation. And as such, it was a platform to say that our activism was open for everyone; whoever can come on Friday between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. in specific locations everywhere in Israel. And it was all the same without a lot of organizing. But some of us in Women in Black felt the need for more political activism and discourse. That is why we created a Coalition of Women and Peace, the first Coalition of Women and Peace. I was one of the co-founders of this Coalition and its first development. We had the first meeting in Tel Aviv to decide about the CWP, just after an attack of a Palestinian on Israeli civilians in Jerusalem. Then, the second meeting was in Nazareth, and we created the Coalition of Women for a Just Peace, we added "justice" to the issue. And we added several other points in that demand. We were both Israeli and Palestinian organizations, but mainly Israeli. I believe it is important that Palestinian and Israeli women do it together because I feel that they are part of my history, part of my history of activism. I was one of the founders of Women in Black and the Coalition of Women for Peace." (PA15)

From the very beginning of its formation, the Coalition encountered certain disagreements. The initial step involved gathering together to establish the principles that would guide the selection of partners. Although efforts were made to engage women from the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs), these attempts proved unsuccessful. However, a decision had to be made regarding the involvement of women residing in illegal Jewish settlements in the West Bank. This decision was justified by the fact that Palestinian women from '48 (referring to Palestinian citizens of Israel) maintained connections with

Palestinians in the OPTs, and in order to sustain these relationships, they needed to sever ties with settler women. It is important to note that these settlements are deemed illegal according to international law.

"The beginning of the Coalition was difficult, it involved a lot of dialogue, meetings, coffees, and drinking. It was just difficult; and even harder to reach out to Palestinian women living in the Occupied Territories. Instead, settler women came to us. I will give you one example of when I was director. We wanted to set up a dialogue between 'average Israeli women' meeting with 'average Palestinian women' with professional coordinators, a Palestinian, and an Israeli. When I say professional, I mean people who had experience with dialogue groups and the difficulties of dialogue. And so, we ran these groups, and they were going on well. But at some point, we learned that two of the women in the dialogue groups were themselves the daughters of settlers in the West Bank. And they came to the groups because they wanted to meet Palestinian women and see if there was some way to end the conflict. I do not know if they opposed to territorial annexation. All I know is that they were parts of families who were settled on the West Bank and when this became known to us and then also subsequently known to the Palestinian side, they highly objected: 'We will not have settlers in our dialogue rooms'. And we said, well, these are people we want to reach with the message that Palestinians are suffering under Occupation, and they are good, decent people. These should be the people that are in the dialogue groups. But the Palestinian women said, no, the settlers are criminals. Furthermore, not only on the grounds they act as they are the owners of the land but also because we Palestinian women living in Israel will be attacked by the Palestinian NGO organizations in the OPTs if we allow this to continue." (IS26)

In the second section of this interview, the topic of LGBTQ+ communities and organizations is covered. As the questionnaire also noted, formal Palestinian NGOs that concentrate on women's concerns tend to be more conservative on these subjects. This also applies to the abortion debate. Israeli feminist organizations, in contrast, tended to lean more toward progressive causes, but this is changing as the country's entire civil society shifts to right-wing conservatism.

"By the way, there was also the issue of gay people on which we had a huge conference and we wanted one of the sessions to be about gay people, women, lesbians, and the peace movement. And the Palestinians said 'No, we cannot. It is okay with us. It is not okay with Palestinian society, and this will undermine our legitimacy within Palestinian society if we have a session about lesbians and peace.' So, there were so many different things going on. Maybe you could write an encyclopaedia about the difficulties between Palestinian and Israeli women. Even when both sides were completely dedicated to ending the occupation and arriving at peace the path there was so strewn with obstacles" (IS26).

Here, the respondent recounted an occurrence from the early days of the Coalition. Similar debates and disagreements drove some '48 Palestinian activists to disengage. Another Israeli activist clarified this claim in a different interview as an example of how interviews can speak to each other:

"What I'm saying is that most of the time when two groups are getting into a coalition or are getting together is to achieve, perhaps something together most of the time. Nevertheless, their motivation is not identical, because each group has their own interests and their own place in society and their own intersectionality, which is different with Palestinian women and among Palestinian women, than it is amongst Israeli women." (IS34)

Palestinian women – both in the OPTs and Israel – have to negotiate their role of peace and women activists in societies that are nationalist, militaristic (Israel) and patriarchal. Then, as indicated in the surrounding paragraph, religious and conservative beliefs add to the complication. However, this section also tells us a lot about coalition building and negotiation of differences. It resonates with the words of Bernice Johnson Reagon (1983, p. 301), who advises, 'Coalition work is not work done in your home'. Coalition building must take place on the streets. "In other words, coalition building necessitates individuals leaving their safe havens, to reach out to one another". Here, in the story of this coalition, there were several moments of discomfort and pain and different and failed attempts.

> "The thing is that in the first meeting, we managed to reach out to 500 women activists in the whole country, and we did it, because all these women were spread in different areas and organizations. So, it was only reasonable to do so, and this was the call for the Coalition of Women for Peace that started in the 2000s. Something similar was done already in 1988 it was the very first coalition of women that were involved in the Peace Movement. The CWP was more radical in its discourses. The first coalition was more institutional and connected to the Knesset. They were more women, but they were less radical. (PA22)

All of these testimonies indicate that past attempts to unite forces under a common flag to achieve peace from a women's standpoint have already been made. I recommend reading "Our Sisters Promised Land" for a more detailed analysis of these movements (Emmett, 1996) and "Women and the Israeli Occupation" (Mayer, 1994) an edited volume with Chapters written both by Israeli and Palestinian scholars. Some of them have been interviewed for this research as well.

This other quotation also points to the hardship and difficulties still present at the level of the Coalition since their very beginning:

> "For example, when it started at the beginning of 2000, and in October 2000 a very harsh event happened already. The Israeli Army killed several Israeli Palestinians. And the Coalition argued whether to continue or not to make vigils, since most of us were part of Women in Black. And the other argument was about the Second Intifada because the women saw there was a lot of bombing and many Israelis got killed in terroristic attacks and some of the women didn't want to demonstrate when people got killed, and this was a big argument" (IS20)

The previous Chapters addressed how disruptive episodes, such as conflict realignment or attacks on civilians, impact the relationships between coalition actors. However, the preceding incidents revealed a mutual awareness of the refusal of violence and the desire to keep the other group safe due to the dominance of human ties over ethnonational identities. The direct exposure to the Israeli public forces the organizations to consider whether to continue to demonstrate during attacks on Israeli citizens while the occupation continues. Nonetheless, maintaining a good relationship with the Palestinian counterpart

while addressing the Israeli public is the only way to keep cooperation alive. However, this might raise critical issues and disagreement among the counterparts.

Another critical factor in the Coalition's formation was the fact that the majority of the women involved were friends and had previously mobilized in earlier social movements, including Women in Black. Much has already been said on the significance of earlier ties and co-membership in other organizations and movements, so I will not go into further detail. The only thing that can be added is that this element is equally true for non-ethnonational mobilizations and alliances that span national boundaries. However, here is the testimony of some of the activists who funded the CWP:

> "Israel is a very small country, we know each other, and friend brings friends and their groups, women from other groups came to join us from Women in Black, and at the end of the day, everyone knows everyone. We met them in other activities and demonstrations, so we decided to work with them on other activities. And there were a lot of overlapping issues and groups. So, we found women who were activists in other groups, and we started working together in the Coalition" (IS38)

The element of friendship is, therefore, extremely important, and I would say even more important in politically closed and repressive contexts. However, being friends in an extremely rarefied and violent context might not be enough to maintain stable relations of cooperation as it will be shown in the following section. In fact, this cannot preclude having a serious discussion about principles, inequalities, asymmetry of power, coloniality, and language.

> "Sometimes you were friends before but yes, this does not mean no discussions were going on. There were discussions about the language, for example, but there was not much to discuss because, well, maybe there is, and it was our mistake now that you make think about that but, you know, the feeling was that we all knew Hebrew and we spoke Hebrew. But there was no way you can decide to speak Arabic, even if you think it's a good decision, an ethical decision, because nobody understands what we did, eventually, when we had a little bit more money, we used to have conferences with translation." (IS14)

The decision to speak Arabic on the ground, as fully explored in the other two empirical Chapters, enabled concrete decolonization of the language. This passage was lacking in the CWP, and it arguably rendered the participants' personal relationships weaker and less symmetrical. On the other hand, they spent a significant amount of effort developing an ideological manifesto that could bridge the ideological gaps between the various organizations. None of the other campaigns have ever addressed this issue. In contrast to the other cases, ideology appears to play a role in this case; in the other cases, the issue of ideology was never addressed, by contrast, certain groups had significant ideological differences regarding the legitimacy of the state of Israel. Even though there were Hamas supporters among the Palestinians, they were able to cooperate during the campaign because to the trust and relationship work

done on the ground. The same was true in relation to Zionism. Hence, ideology, different from what the literature tends to suggest, did not play any significant role neither in facilitating nor in distancing members of the coalition.

"I will tell you one really important activity in which Arab and Jewish women were equal partners. It was writing the ideological platform of our Coalition because it was felt by many women that we could not work together, Arab and Jewish women unless we agreed on the ideology. And so, we spent a whole night writing out the main points on which we agreed. And we did come up with the main points, and that made it possible for us to move ahead. It also strengthens the bond between us and made us trust each other more." (PA15).

This undoubtedly simplified the coalition's formation and facilitated communication among the various parties, but over time, issues and conflicts reappeared. What clearly emerged from the study of the beginning of this coalition is how the presence of previous ties is confirmed as an initiating factor also in coalition across ethnonational divides. The ideological diversity was instead proven to be irrelevant. However, the presence of time and trust can be seen in the shape of enduring friendships. Which, however, is different from the meso-level interactions highlighted in the earlier Chapters. The role of the issue at stake has also been little examined in the literature on coalitions and even less so in coalition across divides but seems to be relevant. Further emphasis will be placed on that in the concluding Chapter.

6.5 Endogenous Obstacles to Solidarity

6.5.1 Steps not Taken yet: Lacking Relational Dynamics

The issue of asymmetry of power between '48 Palestinians and Israeli Jewish within the Coalition was perfectly understood by some activists, but some others did not pay enough attention to that - hence, it was never properly addressed.

"First, it is never easy, it is never easy. It is very complicated to work together because we are not equal groups. There is one group that has a privilege and one group that does not have a privilege. And this is something you see on the ground while doing this work. I do not see in the work we are doing as a Coalition that there is one group that is much better than the other at managing asymmetry. But all these issues are coming inside the work itself. I know that some groups do not have enough awareness of power struggles power relationships and this kind of stuff. And a lot passes through the issue of language. What language do you speak? If you want to do something together like on equal standing you need to speak Arabic and unfortunately, most Jewish women don't speak Arabic so if you want to work together, you must do it either in English or in Hebrew, and this re-perpetuates inequalities." (IS6)

Here, the activist I spoke with hits on several of the factors other two cases saw as crucial: the decolonization of the language and the creation of practical tactics to lessen power imbalances. Activists were able to create strategies that allow for the development of long-lasting cooperation, as was shown

in the previous Chapters in both Susiya and Sheikh Jarrah. All of these strategies passed through the recognition of an unequal departing point from activists of the two ethnonational communities. Additionally, a substantial portion regarding the significance of decolonizing the language is included in the Chapter on the Susiya campaign. Despite the fact that most Palestinians in Israel and the Occupied Territories speak Hebrew, the majority of Israeli activists active in Susiya are fluent in Arabic and this is true also for some Israeli activists in Sheikh Jarrah. Thus, this sentence emphasizes how important these techniques are to a particular coalition's maintenance and survival as well as to making the work of that coalition more equitable toward its members. These endogenous factors are all to blame for the decreasing frequency of cross-border collaboration on female rights issues in Israel and Palestine.

Another activist made a similar point about the language component. They appeared to recognize the importance of decolonizing the language in a second period of reflection on what had gone well and wrong:

> "It depends on the circumstances. It depends on the issue. It depends on many things. It also depends on the language. Because when we meet together, we usually speak in Hebrew because Israeli Jews don't know Arabic. And the Palestinian women inside Israel do speak Hebrew. So that's also a very poignant aspect of the relationship and now I can see the problem there". (IS14)

Further from the words of a '48 Palestinian activist:

> "So, the issue of language was on the table, but not in the sense of ever discussing what I feel when I come to a meeting, and I cannot speak in Arabic? It was more than I wanted Arab women to hear Arabic in the public space and when we were doing discussions. I spoke Hebrew and was fine for me, but some Arabic women from unprivileged backgrounds do not. And this is a problem, and it means they cannot participate in the discussion and the Coalition" (PA10).

This is again a very crucial point that underlines the inherent exclusion of certain social groups from the possibility of working together in collective action. This was clear also to another Israeli activist:

> "We never discussed the problem of the language from an emotional level, point of view, you know, okay, it's a problem. We recognize it is unfair. We recognize that creates another gap between ourselves. Exactly, but beyond recognition we did not do anything" (IS6).

The other important issue that operated as a deterrent in the work of the coalition was the lack of recognition of the damages that Zionism created to Palestinian subjectivities. The issue of the different attitudes of Israeli activists approaching joint struggles and movements has started to be more thoughtfully studied in recent years. Alice Baroni's (2023) dissertation deals precisely with this aspect, and it represents a recent notable exception in the peace studies front that has often depicted the two sides

as monolithic and homogenous. In contrast, there exist ideological contradictions for those Jews who no longer identify with the state of Israel and have begun to position themselves as anti-Zionists in Israel.

"I think that one of the problems is that a lot of the groups that are part of the peace movement in Israel do not want to give up on their Zionism. Zionism is an obstacle, because if you want a Jewish state, that is an ethnocracy by nature, you hold the Zionist attitude, and you act like you have a "primordial" right or something, on this land, it is really hard to make collaboration." (IS25)

In the words of a Palestinian feminist activist, who declared a refusal to work with Israeli organizations and is part of a new-born Palestinian grassroots feminist movement:

"We are still waiting for a radical anti-Zionist and anti-normalization feminist group in Israel of Jewish women. At the current moment, there are individuals but there are not movements." (PA3)

This urge and lack of concrete stances against Zionism by Israeli women's groups were very much felt by several activists. Another Palestinian feminist activist who took part in the Coalition with her Palestinian organization recognized the importance of un-doing and recognizing the tragedy of the Nakba. This is a recurrent theme in the Susiya campaign that was explored and well-addressed by the activists of that coalition.

"To have a real future for Israeli and Palestinian you must acknowledge what happened in 1948, we must acknowledge the fact that Israel destroyed 540 different Palestinian villages. You must acknowledge that you made 75% of the Palestinian people refugees. You must acknowledge that all that land you are building in your own state was Palestinian land. These issues, if you really want to speak about a future, that is a shared future, for both Jews and Palestinians, need to be recognized, and then, after that point, you will be able to create a future based on recognition and acceptance, based on a shared discourse, and on taking responsibility for what had happened." (PA15)

This testimony represents an important development in studies on the building of coalitions that is all too frequently overlooked and downplayed, but that is pivotal in the creation of alliances across divides. It is impossible to expect communities with a history of deceit and brutality to cooperate only on the basis of a shared goals or ideals. As a result, they are not just different but also *divided* by a history of colonization. Although they are significant, these things do not suffice. This thesis aims to demonstrate that when a coalition across divisions and differences is sought, it can only be achieved if actual work is done to handle power imbalances. When injustices have been perpetuated, justice must be re-established through the recognition of the historical roots of such injustices.

"So sometimes you work together, and you have to say, okay, stop. We cannot go on because you are, not using the language that we need to hear. The language here is very important because sometimes we only have language. We only talk. We do not have an impact on reality, or at least not the impact we wish. So, language becomes very important. And if you do not want to recognize, that Israel occupied Palestinian lands, then you are

not my ally. And there are two Occupations here. Many Israelis on the left were ready to say 'Occupation' when they talked about 1967. But they were not recognizing the one of 1948. Because '48 is the Occupation. It is the problem. '67 is the second stage of the same problem. So, because it took this historical meandering, this is how it happens. And on the Israeli left, many, many people, or most people were ready to recognize the occupation of 1967, but not ready to recognize that there was something evil done more than evil in the Nakba in 1948. And if you recognize that this is just another stage in your understanding of what had happened, then you will be able to become an ally to Palestinians." (IS26)

Something related to the recognition of the Nakba and the past violence the Palestinian people had undergone during the Israeli colonization of Historical Palestine is the 1948 Refugees' Right of Return sanctioned by UN Resolution 194. Most Israelis do not recognize the legitimacy of this resolution even when they recognize that it was Israel's fault if more than 700.000 Palestinians were forced to leave their houses.

"Yes. I think the one principle that was the hardest to get agreement about was the principle of the return of Palestinian refugees to Israel. There were on the one side Israeli women who said, although we agree on principle, it would destroy the Jewish character of the state of Israel if Palestinian refugees were allowed to come in in large numbers. And on the Palestinian side, they said, you know, refugees have a right of return to where they came from. So that was a very difficult sticking point. And often we could come up with a formulation that allowed both sides to agree. But that was definitely the hardest one." (IS25*)*

The recognition of the importance of enforcing the right of return of Palestinians to their homeland is a very controversial point for Israelis, and it is also one of the issues that remained out of the discussion of the Oslo Agreements and further peace talks. The historiography has demonstrated that it was not possible to reach an agreement during the second round of peace talks in 2000 precisely because of the insistence that the Israeli negotiators put on Arafat to give up on the right of return (Pappé, 2017). For Palestinians who have not yet given up, the right to return is a crucial one, and the civil society level has reproduced what has been happening in the public discussion on the issue.

What emerges from this paragraph is that all these elements were instead clearly addressed and handled in the other campaigns - with the due differences exposed previously. Additionally, the lack of a community - based approach goes hand in hand with the lack of moments of collective inaction. All the relationships were mainly personal relations of friendship but never communal relationships. This might be argued as something that makes bonds less tight.

6.5.2 The Lack of Collective Inaction

The three Ts rule is still in effect here. However, the glue that made the other coalitions survive until nowadays and was never mentioned by activists involved in the CWP is the time dedicated to collective inaction. Although collective direct action like protests and public events, as well as being threatened

during demonstrations, are considered and discussed, there is not enough time spent fostering inter-communal relationships.

> "The Trust emerged from doing actions together that were sometimes high risk. Sometimes we found ourselves arrested afterward and in jail, we were supporting each other. Throughout all of this, the trust emerged from being under attack so often by the extreme right-wing, and it really helped the group coalesce and it also made us come together very strongly because, you know, when you are under attack, it helps to solidify the togetherness of the group. So that trust generally emerged over time." (IS19)

While the sense of threat and taking dangerous risks together undoubtedly helped fortify the relationships between the participants, and as was already the case, friendships survived the dissolution of the political Coalition, they failed to forge ties with both communities of origin. Unlike the other activists in the campaigns previously explored, these women did not operate as brokers for their communities. It is important to note that the majority of the events in Susiya and Sheikh Jarrah included activist communities. The extremely significant disparity is also affected by changes in time, geography, and generations. The sons and daughters of former activists who started a joint resistance project in a very specific place are still active and have been participating in the same struggles from both sides in the other two campaigns. All the campaigners here lamented the lack of participation from younger generations, which left them without anyone up to the task.

> "There were no new energies generated and then it was difficult to get money" (IS20)

This research has unquestionably shown that some elements that have been previously identified in the literature — such as the presence of prior ties, co-membership, close personal ties or friendships and the presence of imminent threats — remain crucial in the development of coalitions that cut across ethnonational differences and, in this instance, racial and colonial divides. There are redlines for both communities that cannot yet be crossed; this is an important factor that plays a part but was not discussed in the literature. Being a feminist or identifying as a "woman" undoubtedly helped to forge some connections in the instance at hand, but the aspect of ideology has been shown to be at least minimally non-influential.

Additionally, a new understanding of time that allows for taking time for group inaction and sharing ordinary life moments with one another is what permits the long-term sustaining of coalitions across divides. This not only fosters interpersonal relationships between activists from various ethnonational groupings but, more importantly, fosters community relationships that enable the transfer of this social capital to the next generations in the form of cross-communal partnerships. This can only work, though,

if real examination has been done on divisions, differences, but also similarities, their sources, the asymmetry they produce, and the privileges they occasionally entail. These components were all mentioned in the earlier Chapters and are reaffirmed in the dissertation's conclusion.

6.6 When the Palestinian Women Left

"We entered the coalition because it was feminist and anti-occupation. Somehow in the development, afterward, these two points were not there anymore and when there was the discussion about the 1325 convention and the settler women joined, I found myself also outside the coalition for a period. Then, when the Coalition joined the BDS, I re-joined the coalition's activities with my NGO, and I reconnected to the history of the Coalition. But yes, it was not always easy this is one point: if you are speaking about red lines, real partnerships need to be built on acceptance, respect, on including all the discourses available. We had one of the experiences of the movement that we did, what we call gendering the peace process it was an international initiative that came from the Palestinian women in the WB and Gaza to the Palestinian Israeli women included Palestinian from Israel and I was part of that group in Israel, and they decided to work together with the Palestinians present in the agenda. And the bottom-line idea was that Israeli women could not say "no" to the agenda, they could just intervene on some issues of the agenda. And this was a concrete action to empower Palestinians that are otherwise underrepresented and underprivileged. That's why we need to give them more control over their lives and over the agenda they were dealing with. So that was also an experience that was out of learning that happened nationally and internationally in the feminist peace activities. Also, most of the Palestinians do not trust the agents in the peace process when it came to the real discussion around how should be open for the Palestinian citizens and the Jew citizens, how can they live with Palestinian citizens, and acknowledging that 20% of the population inside Israel is Palestinian and recognize the national minority, this is our demand when this discussion came to the agenda it was difficult. The Zionist Jewish women among us do accept this discussion, they were not happy, but they accept this discussion because we are still struggling for that." (PA15).

The lengthy piece of the interview with this Palestinian woman from 1948 that deals with her first coalition membership and eventual departure from the movement opposing the inclusion or exclusion of settler women from particular working groups is unquestionably the most important aspect of the interview. But after the Coalition adopted a position that was both explicit and risky within Israel in favour of the boycott movement, this Palestinian organization rejoined. This process is also retraceable in the very story of the CWP and its involvement with the BDS. The coalition began as a moderate group that attempted to expand its activities to have a national scope, and it aimed to target the government, as noted in Chapter 3, where the case is first discussed. This tactic, however, caused some partners to feel cut off from the coalition's purview, mostly because Palestinians in 1948 did not genuinely believe that the Israeli government was their representative. Therefore, to maintain these organizations' membership in the coalition, they turned to the BDS movement, which promotes a global boycott of Israeli firms that profit from the Occupation. However, as we will see in the next section, this implied several downsides for the coalition.

Another Palestinian-led organization that initially joined the coalition stated:

> "What motivated us to support and participate in the Coalition of Women for Peace was their stance towards the Palestinians, against the occupation and their demand for a just peace in the region. However, we stopped dealing with them because they turned to the extreme left". (PA10).

When I asked to explain further what they meant by the extreme left, they mentioned some groups' stances on abortion and LGBTQ+ people. As mentioned before, even though Palestinian women groups tend to have progressive stances, the general Palestinian society is still very conservative towards certain issues. This was indeed recalled also by another Israeli activist that stated:

> "Yes, later on, we had some problems, never about the main subject, which was stopping the Occupation, this main thing was never questioned. But later, when we experienced other feminist issues, there were some arguments. Israeli women have always fought for liberation, freedom from religion, for abortion, but most Palestinian women were more traditional on these subjects sometimes, we had arguments. And was certainly a problem that made some people leave the Coalition. But these were important issues for us, and still are. Gay people are constantly discriminated against, some of us are Lesbian. I mean, it was not something we could compromise too much. With Women in Black, we did not have these problems, it was one issue movement: end the Occupation. There was not so much to discuss on. However, the CWP had another scope. We wanted to broaden our activities both on the Occupation and on feminism. It was certainly a little more feminist and because of that we had discussions." (IS26).

The comments mentioned above highlight how challenging it may be to reach an agreement and create conditions that would allow each party to feel like an equal member of the coalition. The subject of "the issue" is raised once more in this context. The two ethnonational communities may readily agree on topics like "the Occupation," "ending violence against women," and "empowering women in the workplace." Conflict could develop once attention is diverted to other horizons, though. However, I think it's crucial to note that there are significant LGBTQ+ organizations and movements in Palestine that are working very hard to alter how society views this problem. I advise reading "*Queer Palestine and the Empire of Critique*" (2020) by Sa'ed Atshan for a more thorough knowledge of this subject.

However, there could be conflicts and various interpretations of the same issue, even within certain strongly feminist matters. From a feminist perspective, this is where the illustration of what it meant for *security* appears. The military regime over the Occupied Territories, where thousands of people have lived in a state of *insecurity* since 1967, does not break the glass ceiling. However, a different idea of *safety* would very much go in the direction of ending it. Israeli civil society has experienced unprecedented militarization, and masculine ideas of control and security have ostensibly dominated the public discourse on these issues. However, even Zionist feminists should be able to understand that there will never be security as long as thousands of people are kept in a constant state of insecurity.

"Feminist organizations sometimes looked at the issue of violence in a very narrow way, in terms of security for example. And for Palestinians, this has very different meanings. The understanding of security is where the radical feminist discourse begins. We speak about security in terms of human security not about military security. Palestinians do not trust the military or the police. We are not "safe" in this country and sometimes we are not safe even at home. This is what we should discuss" (PA5)

Nevertheless, for some organizations, certain ideas and attitudes went against their values and concerns as organizations, and they decided to separate and not continue to be part of the Coalition.

"My take on the work of the Coalition is that we have built a lot of knowledge through the work of the study groups for example. Some Palestinian organizations were not always officially part of the Coalition, because as one of them put it at some point: 'our guns are not on the kitchen table, they are under the kitchen table'. We are addressing a different kind of reality. We work very closely together, and with a lot of mutual knowledge building and knowledge sharing and support practical support, and action, joined the action, but we do not officially have this joint coalition. And many of the Palestinian feminists who were involved don't really want to foreground the Jewish Palestinian aspect of this work. They say: we are working on opposing domestic violence and ruling back small harm proliferation it is important. But this is also our issue, and we want to focus on the issue, and we just do not want to make it in any kind of "Jewish Palestinian" group etcetera. We are working on issues we are Jewish or Palestinian, we are feminists we are all kinds of things. We are doing this joined thing but it's not about this feature and this is not how we want to present ourselves. (IS19)"

Here again, another aspect emerged. Certain Palestinian organizations might be interested in cooperating and working together to create mutual knowledge and understanding. However, they sometimes do it in the shadow. The *shadowing mechanism* introduced in the previous Chapter is recurrent on the opposite side. Palestinian organizations interested in working on certain issues related to feminism and the end of violence, for example, who do not want to be associated as a "join-coalition", still join working groups and work in coalition but without officially being part of these coalitions. The issue is certainly relevant for them as well; however, they will be considered less authoritative when addressing their own communities in the moment they would do it as part of join group. Hence, working together in the shadow allow for advancing the issue of gendered violence, working on it with Israeli feminist activists, sharing information and strategies, while still being heard and respected when they approach Palestinian society.

However, not only Palestinian organizations find themselves in uncomfortable position at a certain point, but also Israeli ones, when they face the decision of joining the BDS or not.

"At some point during the history of the coalition, there was a big conflict over the issue of whether we support BDS or not. And almost all the Palestinian women wanted to support BDS on the Jewish side, but many of us, including me, did not want to support BDS this was not a conflict, but a disagreement, and people like me did not disagree ideologically but believed that it would harm our cause and make it more difficult for us to achieve peace. And eventually, the coalition did support BDS and does support it. But I myself do not and that is when I left." (IS13)

Of course, disagreements did not just affect the Palestinian side; they also affected Israeli activists who occasionally found themselves at odds with the Coalition's overarching direction. Following this will be an examination of the Coalition's disintegration, which also deals with the last quotation, as well as the decision to support the BDS movement.

Table 12 Factors that hamper cooperation

	PALESINIAN WOMEN IN THE OPTS	'48 PALESTINIAN WOMEN	BDS MOVEMENT
EXHOGENOUR	Different context of origin and life experiences	Ideological and cultural differences	Illegal and highly criminalized by the Israeli Government
ENDOGENOUS	No discussion of initial power asymmetry	Lack of strategies to reduce power asymmetry	Some Israeli Women's Groups did not want to join

6.7 The Coalition Dissolution

Aside from the endogenous elements described in the previous sections, which have to do more with relations, friendship, time for action, and time for inaction, some exogenous elements must be re-considered. The difficulties and flaws identified by the activists are different, a lot of which concerns the reduction of funds after the choice to join the BDS:

"I can tell you that once I left the coalition, it moved into a place that I was not comfortable with and that was in full support of the BDS movement." (IS6).

Similarly, another Israeli activist recalls:

"Then, we split up from the Coalition and they continue to do some work, in 2006, however, when they decided to join the BDS I left. This was a very bold decision to do it inside Israel because you lose some donors and support. I think these two things were major and not everybody, especially Jews, of course, in Israel are ready to join an organization that called for the BDS. It is more complicated than to join any organization that calls for peace or even talks about anti-occupation." (IS12).

A major source of contention and something that resulted in a significant drop in money and support within Israeli society was the decision to join a contentious movement like the BDS, which was later outlawed by the Israeli lawmaker. Eventually, the CWP's experience became increasingly difficult as a result of the reduction in funding brought on by the general lack of funding for human rights initiatives and cooperation, the decision to join the BDS movement, the lack of new energies and new generations, and the general deterioration of the political situation in Israel. This Israeli activist vividly describes the ongoing struggle to raise money and support in this passage.

"There were a lot of reasons for the end of the coalition but first of all the lack of funds. We used to get funds from other places like the US, and I think it began to reduce with the great depression of 2008, the funds got

smaller and smaller, and we could not act without money, and the other reason is the lack of hope. Women in here got tired. I hope that younger women will start all over again new campaigns" (IS26).

Nevertheless, the "daughter" of the Coalition, a campaign called "Who Profits", resisted and is still working independently from the Coalition. This is how certain activists described it:

"One of the main results of the Coalition was the project "Who Profit?". It was a success; they were a very nice group and without the Coalition it would have not existed. So, we tried to spread the word outside our own circle, and abroad not to buy things from the OPTs and that's something we had never done before, and we lobbied the Israeli government in order not to take economic advantage of the Occupation. But it also failed. Many women would like to think we were successful but if there is Occupation, I don't call it a success. We did a lot of things in the early nineties, as WIB and connecting women all over the world, and very nice demonstrations and vigils (that we started) all over the world. So, WIB was very famous at the time, but can we call it a success? I'm not sure." (IS14).

Several members mentioned the Who Profit campaign:

"One of these organizations was a project called Who Profit. It really looked at the West Bank and really give information to the public about the Israeli companies that work in the West Bank, and we should not buy their products, we should boycott those. So, this project became independent, by itself, and it still goes on. It is the child of the Coalition that is still working and doing actually a good job and it all started because of the decision by the Palestinian civil society to call for Boycott in 2005. And the Coalition also joined the BDS (IS25)

Interestingly, this project maintained the economic and anti-occupation dimension, living aside from the feminist one. Others have highlighted the Coalition's growing institutionalization as one of the factors that contributed to its failure. The problem was not that much the institutionalization per se, but the fact that once there is a paid staff, the issue of money and resources become paramount.

"After many years, it turned from a volunteer group to an organization, a women's organization with paid staff. And eventually, there were no more funds. And this year (2020) the Coalition died." (IS33)

As was previously noted in the Chapter that details the course of events, the Coalition got funding from the New Jewish Fund before joining the BDS. Following that, all of the country's assistance was lost. As the BDS campaign was banned in other states, they stopped receiving benefits from both national and international funds. The CWP and other peace organizations attempted to challenge the Israeli High Court's decision to declare the BDS campaign unlawful in Israel in 2012 but were unsuccessful. As a result, they had to pay a hefty fee to the government, and their jobs got tougher and harder to hold down. The Covid-19 outbreak was the final straw that caused them to lose their ability to continue.

The CWP instance serves as a showcase of the myriad aspects that might decide a coalition's demise and ability to bridge disagreements. The highly diverse living situations that women and other non-conforming subjectivities encounter, depending on where they are living, made it very difficult for Israeli

organizations to engage women who live in the Occupied Territories. The Coalition works also lacked numerous relational processes and a thorough examination of inequalities. Due to this weakness and other organizations' opposing viewpoints on particular subjects, some CWP member groups left while others remained. Finally, the political strategy of joining the BDS was very detrimental to the CWP as far as fundraising was regarded. However, while the CWP was dissolving, a new radical feminist anti-colonial movement was rising. It is a Palestinian women-led grassroots movement that I have discussed in an article recently published on Critical Sociology (Stagni, 2023). I will briefly talk about it, considering its transitional dimension.

6.8 What's Next? For Something that Ends there is Something that Begins

6.8.1 Tal'at Movement: The Anticolonial Version of the Palestinian Feminism

On September 26, 2019, thousands of women of all ages descended into the streets and squares of historic Palestine and the diaspora with a striking message: "Free homeland, free women". Free women in free Palestine. Or, better, declined: there can never be a free homeland if women remain prisoners. The first demonstration took place in Haifa, Al-Jish, Jaffa, Nazareth, Raffah, Taybeh, Ramallah, Arraba, and Jerusalem, and the diaspora, in Beirut and Berlin. Giving a first glance at the protests' locations, we notice that half of them were held in now-day Israel. Therefore, this feminist and anti-colonial movement strongly mobilized the Palestinian community in Israel, something that neither the CWP nor other joint organizations were able to do. This represents a prime element of difference compared to previous feminist protests in Palestine. In this new wave of feminist protests, Palestinian women living in Israel emerged as a disruptive and innovative reality. Their presence represents a fundamental gesture to reaffirm a denied identity through the transversal participation of Palestinian women, regardless of their positioning, united by a condition of multiple marginality and subordination. Therefore, on the one hand, Palestinians in Israel still share a sense of collective identity with Palestinians of the diaspora, and in the OPTs. On the other hand, Palestinian women in Israel have been comparatively more exposed to Western feminist conceptualizations. The scholarship, while recognizing the specificity of their condition, simultaneously neglects the study of this specific group within the framework of the Palestinian feminist movement. The reality is that they coordinated a common effort with Palestinian women in the Occupied Territories and the diaspora to launch a movement that transcended territorial borders capitalizing on a shared ethnonational identity. Despite the strong sense of collective identity that binds all Palestinians beyond borders witnessing a common movement that unify such a fragmented territory – politically, ideologically, and territorially – is not as common as we might expect. Here, in the words of one of the activists who initiated the movement:

"The main idea of the movement was that there is no liberation of the homeland without the liberation of women. So, it's about the reintegration of feminism politics into liberatory politics into the liberation discourse. Tal'at is a Palestinian women's movement. And it's franklin anticolonial struggle. Israeli women are not fighting against colonialism. They are not colonized subjects." (PA3)

Palestinian women are increasingly marginalized, and their human rights are constantly negated and abused. Hence, whatever liberation movement needs to include feminist instances in their discourse. The clear stance against the involvement of Israeli women that are not seen as possible partner resonates with the principle and ideas spread by the first Black Feminist authors and theorists. Making a clear reference to intersectionality, they want to show how the matrix of discrimination is, indeed, varied. However, women who did not experience colonial violence and discrimination need to deconstruct their idea of Whiteness and racism as much as men.

"And I think there cannot be a joined struggle when certain conditions are not met. Political conditions. But having said that I also think it is also important that there are spaces for Palestinian women to exist and be organized without Israeli women. I mean imagined telling a group of Black Feminist women that they must include White Women in their spaces of organizing. It is simply the case of Women of Colour do not always feel safe around white women because of the historical context of oppression. So why cannot women of color, in this case, Palestinian women have a space that belongs to them? Without being watched from every angle by the Israeli regime. So, it is important for women. For Palestinian women when they want to work politically and radically because this is not going to be a movement that is going to be accepted easily by the authorities." (PA3)

Again, Black Feminist authors are recalled as they played a very influential role in the movement discourse and ideological development. Israeli women are the White Women, those who are in a position of privilege and who have not experienced being colonized and racialized. This legitimates the movement's decision to maintain a Palestinian space.

"So, it's important that the Palestinian women have something that is for them. And it is also by the way the same context, I mean, not the same context but we can use the same logic to refer to men. Why no men in the meetings? Because this is a space for Palestinian women." (PA9)

To summarize, Tal'at recognizes that internal Palestinian patriarchy is a direct outcome of the Israeli domination system they all live off and benefit from the repression and killing of Palestinian women, both within and beyond its borders (Ihmoud, 2022). Therefore, the solution does not lay in the pinkwashed Israeli propaganda that depicts the Jewish state as the sole saviour of Palestinian women and queer minorities but in the dismantling of that very colonial system of oppression. Tal'at is outspoken on taboo issues such as harassment, marital rape, gender identities, and transactions. There is a strong coherence between the diagnostic and prognostic components of Tal'at discourse. By identifying the problem as resonant, they then framed both its source and solution in terms of anti-colonial struggle

making a linear connection between the two. Tal'at movement is also a clear response to all those failed attempts of joint Women's movements that, as this Chapter has shown, historically had serious flaws. Finally, their radicalism made them an easy target of the Palestinian Authority, an increasingly corrupt entity that no longer allows for any lone and critical voice. Tal'at gives us a very different image of Palestinian 'Woman' from those presented so far. However, as mentioned, this is not a single dimension identity, but it is very composite and changes together with the material conditions Palestinian women live in.

"Well, in terms of security, it's quite difficult to go out. But I would say that what I expect to be the main challenges are within the Occupied Territories. There are many forces that are not happy about an autonomous Palestinian Radical Feminist Movement. Those are not only the Israeli Authority but the Palestinian Authority as well. Because for the Israeli is really useful if fifty percent of the Palestinian population is immobilized, politically empty. So, for them to see a re-politicization or a mobilization of the Palestinian movement is problematic of course, in general, any political mobilization of Palestinians for the Israelis is problematic. Because they want us to be quiet and the same goes for the Palestinian Authority. It is a patriarchal oppressive Authority, and it is not very happy with young activists and people with an activist movement and different political opinions. So, you know it would expect for such a movement to face a lot of backlashes from both these sides and on top of that is about building any type of social movement that is grassroots in Palestine." (PA3)

As previously mentioned, this quote points to the collusion between the PA and the Israeli government. No autonomous political formation is now allowed in Palestine, and this is also the reason for a resurgent armed struggle within the Occupied Territories. Palestinians, from all sides, are deeply unsatisfied with the current situation and are tired of both the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli colonial rule over the Territories. Tal'at has now experienced the backlash they feared, particularly from the PA and the Palestinian society. Hence, most of their activism has now moved online, or they were forced to flee. This digression on the Tal'at movement was needed to show all the facets of 'women' and feminist mobilizations within historic Palestine. If feminism and women's mobilizations are one of those fields where coalitions are perhaps more likely and sometimes even expected to occur, this case, as also amply explored by Giulia Daniele (2014), has shown that such a route, has been taken yet.

6.9.2 Finding Liminal Ways

"We are aware that their [Palestinian] reality is not our reality as Jewish Women in a sovereign country. And we learn a lot from them. So, we are very, aware, and careful when we do things together. I try to call it *coordination* rather than collaboration. Coordinating, listening all the time about what needs are shared and what needs are very different and how we share this, and how we can advance together. As I said, we have done it for four years, and we've done a lot of various kinds of work together, on localized specific things but it is not a formal Jewish-Palestinian coalition. Because we learned this does not work". (IS14)

Activists engaged in ongoing collaboration with '48 Palestinians have discovered that the *shadowing mechanism* and the *coordination* mode of cooperation offer an effective solution to sustain their joint work. While they seldom emphasize the extent of their collaborative efforts, they primarily collaborate on sensitive matters such as gender violence and the use of firearms in civil society. Consequently, they prefer to emphasize *coordination* over collaboration. This approach has proven successful in various instances and has experienced a growing trend in recent years.

"A lot of these women are really really experienced facilitators-group. And political activists. Some of them are younger but they are experienced activists. We talk and we facilitate carefully respecting different views and different feelings, and when there is something problematic or something wrong, we try to talk through it and try to see what it is. And again, I think that because is a committee, it is also very loose and flexible. Women in groups can move in and out. Without necessarily abounding forever, if they kind move away for a while does not mean that they broke their bridges. They can still belong. If they want, they can have something to contribute, they can always come back more involved." (IS19)

For the majority of these women's groups, a flexible and seamless coordination approach centred around short-term projects seems to be more effective. However, it is important to note that while this approach may yield positive results in the short run, it is unlikely to foster the development of coexistence and co-resistance relationships, as evidenced by other campaigns.

"Me, I prefer doing projects with friends. Because being friends help you to be equal. There is this project I am doing with a Jewish friend of mine to build a safe house for women and kids who were victims of domestic violence and we have been working for the past seven years together. We did so many projects together. Not one decision leaves my mouth without her knowing. Not one decision leaves her mouth without me knowing. And if it does, it is out of such deep trust and deep experiences that we both have proved to each other that we are equal. So, it's really out of trust. So mainly I work on projects that I feel pretty much equal" (PA23)

The concept of symmetrical relationships has been extensively discussed in previous sections of this thesis. However, it is crucial to highlight here that the implementation of the Three Ts and the Interactional Maintenance Paradigm enables the maintenance of cooperation. The interviewee in question was not a member of the Coalition; on the contrary, she chose not to be part of it. Nonetheless, she managed to discover alternative ways to work with Israeli Jews as equal partners. This research has demonstrated, among other findings, that friendships play a significant role in initiating and sustaining inter-group cooperation. However, it is important to note that friendships do not automatically guarantee symmetrical political alliances. Achieving such symmetry requires dedicated relational efforts. The findings of this section are summarized in table (13) below. It is evident that the cooperation and strategy for forming cross-ethnonational alliances vary greatly depending on the desired goals of the activists and the type of societal change they seek to achieve.

Table 13 Women's Mobilizations and their Strategies

	TAL'AT	CAMPAIGN	FRIENDISHIP
STRATEGY OF COOPERATION	Separatism	Coordination/Shadowing Mechanism	Interpersonal relations
ISSUE	Feminism/Decoloniazation	Feminism/Combating Gendered-Violence	Peace Activism and Spaces of Coexistence
IDEOLOGYCAL COMPONENT	Radical Black-Feminism	Liberal Feminism	Pacifism
PRIORITY TARGET	Women and Homeland Liberation/Cultural Change	The approval of laws against domestic violence	The creation of physical shared spaces.

Table (13) presents various forms and mobilization as proposed in this Chapter. By examining the table, one can derive subsequent modes of cooperation by directly drawing upon Diani's definition[50]. This differentiation, although initially derived from the context of the women's movement, is probably applicable to all cases of coalitions formed across caried differences and divisions. Further exploration of this topic will be undertaken in the concluding Chapter, where all the research findings will be discussed. In Table 14, different modes of cooperation emerged in this thesis and from the last empirical Chapter in particular are exemplified.

	Time	**Trust**	**Ties**
COALTION	Short-Time	High	Strong
COORDINATION	Both	Low	Weak
CO-RESISTANCE	Long-Time	High	Strong
SEPARATION	Both	Low	Non-existent

Table 14 Modes of Cooperation

Establishing and maintaining personal relationships is a challenging task, particularly in contexts characterized by deep mistrust. Nevertheless, these relationships serve as the binding force that enables mobilization in such circumstances. Without them, the initial stage of cooperation becomes unattainable. However, when personal relationships do develop, coupled with the cultivation of trust and engagement in relational work, they have the potential to give rise to *coalitions*. Unlike in other contexts, these coalitions cannot rely on loose and superficial connections. Yet, *coordination* is just one of the potential modes that these alliances can adopt, depending on their specific goals and the nature of cooperation. For

[50] While Diani provides a systematic framework for categorizing various forms of coordination in collective action, my aim here is to rationalize the different types of cooperation across differences. Diani's framework emphasizes two distinct axes: collective identity and the exchange of resources and information, I gave priority to the dimension of time, trust and ties.

instance, an alliance formed to address short-term objectives, such as preventing the demolition of a neighbourhood, may manifest as both *coordination* and *coalition*, depending on the nature of the established relationships. Conversely, in cases where the objective is to end the occupation and establish long-term scenarios based on strong interpersonal ties, a *co-resistance* approach may be pursued. However, in scenarios where the goal remains the end of occupation and the decolonization of Palestine, but no relationships across the conflict divide, *separation* becomes unavoidable, resulting in a lack of any form of cooperation and trust.

This table (14) incorporates references to other cases studied and examined in this thesis. Through the opportunity to observe coalitions and types of cooperation that have persisted for decades, different processes were derived based on these observations. The time dimension, strength of personal ties and level of trust, served as axes that facilitated the conceptualization of distinct typologies. The coalitions analysed in preceding Chapters serve as examples of *coalitions* initially formed to support specific campaigns, which evolved over time into what can be termed as *co-resistance*. They represent a resistance to the prevailing apartheid system involving activists from both communities. Instead, the CWP (Coalition of Women for Peace) was a comprehensive coalition that had the potential to transition towards the co-resistance mode of cooperation, but this potential was not realized due to the absence of necessary relational work to manage differences. In this regard, most of the new projects within joint Israeli-Palestinian women's activism primarily fall into the category of *coordination*. This involves cooperation through meetings and the development of reports without formal commitments or alliances between the two national groups. Lastly, the example of Tal'at has demonstrated that *separation* remains an option. While both Israeli and Palestinian women may desire an end to the occupation, if there is no way to establish trustworthy relationships, division becomes the only remaining outcome.

In the conclusion this Chapter a powerful testimony that resonates with the initial discussion on women's political positionality within the West Bank is proposed. The interview with this Palestinian woman spanned several hours, and we also met on other occasions in the Jerusalem area. She shares her experiences of engagement in the peace movement, participation in peace initiatives, and her profound bond with an Israeli woman who has become her closest friend. They initially connected through gender-mixed peace activism, but interestingly, not within the circles of women's peace activism.

"I tell you one story. Once I was in East Jerusalem, I have a brother who lives in Issawia that we barely get to see and my mom was also living there because she was sick in fact, it was the year she died. So, I needed to go visit them. The moment we entered Issawia we discovered that there were military and disorders. And of course,

the guys are throwing stones and the military is shooting and throwing tear gas. And we got stuck between the military in the front of the bus I was in, and the Palestinians throwing stones on the other side. I had no permit to be within Jerusalem and Issawia is one of the most conflicted neighborhoods within East Jerusalem. You know, they shoot people constantly. And my daughter was with my brothers, and she was three years old or four years old. I do not really remember. But I really needed to go, you know, I really needed to reach home to get her and take her away. That was the only thing I could think of. So, the military put the light on the bus. They started screaming in Hebrew, throwing gas, and wanting to come up to search for people. And I could hear the bombing and gas. And my brother was on the phone with me telling me that they were stuck in one room of the house that really could breathe well and that my daughter was scared that my mom had heart failure. I was so scared for them, so scared for myself. I did not know how to survive. My best friend is Israeli. I called her. I closed my eyes. I was barely able to breathe, and I went under the seats. And I started telling her everything, that the military is there. I have no permit. Like she knew of my situation and that now I was stuck. And she stayed on the phone with me for… I do not remember. I think an hour, maybe more. Telling me just to breathe and praying and telling me that it is going to pass and trying to call other people to see what she could do and I could not think of anyone else to call. Even though it was her on people. It was her own people that was threatening me and my family at that very moment. I knew that no one else would know how to calm me down, what to tell me in order for me not to lose my brain and not panic. And that I could run out of the past from behind the bus and escape before they catch me. And I did. I threw myself off the window and I ran in the darkness, and she stayed only through. I had to go all around the fucking Issawia in full darkness. I could only hear screaming, shouting, and gas bombing. I lost service on my phone. And every time I had it back, you know, she was still online, or she was calling, or she was writing messages.

[…] I think when we are honest when we meet when we are honest in our belief that we both deserve home safety and security and that we are both equal worth of this life. Then whatever someone else will cause could only bring us closer. Even in moments of agony, even in moments of anger, even in moments of frustration, we have moments where, oh, my gosh, like you would think 'That is it'. They're going to kill each other discussing and fighting. And we would fight, and we would come back, and we would laugh, and we would talk, and we would get upset at each other. And we still do today. I have a friend that I know for ten years and still we get into discussions, and we call each other, and we mark each other safe and yes, my text messages do not go to Tel Aviv because I know a lot of them are, you know like they live off the grid, this is happening. And then they write posts, post on Facebook and they take the lead in media because they know if I do, then I am in danger. So, they take this part and do it. So yeah, again, meeting with the level of humanity, if people are honest, it will not… what is happening will only bring more awareness and knowledge and strength for us to be together and to even learn. What is it that we are not doing right? That these things are still happening and realizing that even though we are powerful, we are not yet powerful enough. And we need to learn. I agree very much with the saying that these activists or these leaders need to be as strong, rich, and powerful as world leaders. Even more. And we still do not have it. We don't have international support, really. We are not yet very much seen within our field. We are not yet hundreds of thousands of people who are coming together. But also, again, we're not supported enough for us to uprise further or to grow faster than we are. But yes, we are growing. (PA23)

This activist's general reflection on the peace movement and the importance of personal relationships here is self-explanatory. Life trajectories are unpredictable, and relations are something that sometimes falls aside the political realm. However, in a context characterized by high levels of violence, racial discrimination, and constant appropriation and exploitation of the Palestinian land by the Israeli Zionist

regime, relationships, that strives to reduce power asymmetry, are the first source of glue to keep these rarer and rarer movements going.

6.9 Conclusion

This third empirical Chapter presented a completely different understanding of activism, coalitions across divides and differences, internal asymmetries, and political campaigns in Israel and Palestine compared to the previous one. The negative case aimed to and brought a new light on the limits, problems, and concerns that might emerge in trying to bring about coalitions that concern women and gender non-conforming identities. Here, the spotlight was posed on the general feminist panorama within the Israeli political arena. First, a questionnaire with some of the organizations who took part in the Coalition of Women for Peace, a campaign initiated in 2000 to bring about a change in the peace and feminist Israeli panorama, was undertaken. It was mainly focused on their strategies, topics, activities, and their alliance tactics. A wider part concerning their network of interaction was not included in this Chapter. Afterwards, interviews and fieldwork followed. I decided to keep together in this Chapter voices of different women activists from both sides who had experiences in the coalition and join women's peace spaces to underline the main relational dynamics that take place in these seats. I here contend that certain relational approaches do not only help in the creation of inter-communal coalitions and relationships but are what make this coalition workable and last through time. The example of the Palestinian-Jewish feminist and women realm and its involvement in the wider peace movement has exemplified the importance of looking at this relationship through a Black Feminist approach that has been perhaps overlooked by Western scholars on how to study the issue. The Chapter not only presented the work of the coalition but it has also explored the different levels of complexity that characterize cooperation among Women's groups. First, they faced big difficulties in reaching out to Palestinian women living in the OPTs. Second, internal disagreements emerged between '48 Palestinian and Israeli members of the campaign. Third, the shortage of funds made the coalition collapse during the year of Covid-19.

Examples of successful cooperation exist but rarely in the form of a coalition. Either they are based on the long-lasting friendships between activists from different ethnonational groups who have worked together in previous movements, or they take flexible forms of coordination and exchange of information and knowledge.

"I think that there is a shared desire and understanding that we are connected to each other especially when it comes to talking about feminist issues, and even though each group has its own specific

needs and their own specific struggle we still have a lot of things in common and a lot of struggles in common and I hope that what keeps us together will always overweight was keeps us apart." (IS26)

It is probably true, as mentioned by certain Israeli and Palestinian activists, that certain steps have not been taken yet in the realm of Women activism (Daniele, 2014). White Women still have to decolonize their gaze to collectively create more equitable relationships with Palestinian counterparts.

"A lot of serious changes have to happen here to be able to work really together. First of all, we have to stop the occupation, the second of all we have to really, establish equality here in Israel between Jewish and Arabs, and I think that if it will be really true equality between Jewish and Arabs it will be much easier to work together. Because even after it will be equal there are still two different groups with different needs. But if they are equal, they can collaborate together. But I think that the fact that there is no equality, that we are not living in an equal country, and we have the occupation, it's making it too hard to work together. (IS20)"

However, the continuous Occupation of the Palestinian land and the discriminatory policies constantly reiterated by the Israeli government put the two groups systematically into two very unequal power dynamics. Hence, as the previous Chapters have shown, some strategies and mechanisms can be implemented to mitigate it since a regime change seems unfortunately out of reach.

Although the situation might appear very complex, given specific constraints that are present in all the campaigns here scrutinized, certain activists were able to utilize and develop relational mechanisms that allowed for the maintenance of cooperation across differences. The presence of a negative case allowed us to look precisely for what was missing, which can be retraced only in comparative terms with cases that were successful in doing that under certain political similar conditions. However, here, we are not talking of a proper comparison because certain exogenous conditions related to barriers for women to start peace activism exist. Nevertheless, once in the field, the relational dynamics that were implemented or lacking certainly played a consistent qualitative difference allowing us to see that some activists were able to create e maintain a political engagement that goes beyond the ethnonational identity but also beyond time, campaign goals, and communities. The conclusion of this dissertation further scrutinizes these different dimensions.

CHAPTER 7 – CONCLUSIONS: MAKING AND MAINTAINING COALITIONS ACROSS MULTIPLE DIVIDES AND DIFFERENCES

"The fact that we are here and that I speak these words is an attempt to break that silence and bridge some of those differences between us, for it is not difference which immobilizes us, but silence. And there are so many silences to be broken." (Lorde, 1984, p. 32)

7. 1 Introduction

Scholars have taken various approaches to interpreting the word "coalition." One fundamental definition, proposed by William Gamson in 1961, characterises a coalition as the combined utilisation of resources by two or more social entities (p. 374). While the concept of a coalition always suggests multiple actors coming together to achieve a specific objective, the degree of coordination involved can vary significantly. Nonetheless, the term "coalition" also denotes coordinated action among organisations. This can manifest as short-term, issue-specific coalitions, where organisations merely add their name to a list of supporters, or as highly coordinated endeavours among groups forming stable, enduring alliances collaborating on multiple issues. Coordinated actions like these, may even involve the establishment of a separate office, dedicated staff, and allocation of resources to oversee coalition activities as it was the case for the CWP. In this thesis, I employed the term coalition to specifically refer to coordinated efforts among Palestinian and Israeli organizations and individuals with the occasional participation of international NGOs and activists. This dissertation considered a comprehensive spectrum of coalition activities, ranging from limited involvement in a single issue to ongoing partnerships that crossed borders, identities, power differentials, and above all, time. In my usage of the term coalition, I provided a definition that includes a diverse range of relationships spanning across multiple dimensions.

This dissertation demonstrated that in order for individuals with diverse social backgrounds, experiences, and identities to form meaningful coalitions, "shared spaces" must be established at the interpersonal level. These spaces function as connections that allow individuals to engage with the lived experiences of others. However, such endeavours necessitate the development of empathy and mutual understanding. The shared space should be regarded as a neutral environment where participants can engage in open dialogue without the apprehension of one person or group dominating others. According to Nira Yuval-Davis (1997, p. 130), this process involves dialogue and negotiation that does not require individuals to disregard their own values or experiences. Rather, it entails maintaining one's own perspective while also empathising with and respecting the identies of others.

Nevertheless, the establishment of such spaces is not a straightforward or easily attainable task. Most of the existing scholarship has overlooked and disregarded the specific strategies employed by actors to create these spaces. This dissertation addressed this gap by shedding new light on these strategies, focusing on a context that is both exceptional and emblematic—the Palestinian question. By examining the process of Palestinian land colonisation and the resultant divides, this research offers insights into the strategies utilised to bridge these divides.

Throughout this thesis, I frequently used the terms "divides" and "differences" interchangeably. However, in conclusion, it is crucial to provide further clarification. The concept of "divides" as it is employed in other contexts concerning social movements (Ali, 2019; Alimi & Leitz, 2019; Bosi & De Fazio, Contextualizing the Troubles Investigating Deeply Divided Societies through Social Movements Research, 2017; Berriane & Duboc, 2019; Nagle, 2016; Hickel, 2017; Touquet, 2015), emphasises not only the existence of various types of differences (Beamish & Luebbers, 2009; Bystydzienski & Schacht, 2001; Cole & Zakiya , 2010; Gawerc M. I., 2021; Greenwood, 2008), such as those related to sex, class, gender, and national origins, but it highlights an additional layer. This layer pertains to the fact that these differences, rather than merely contributing to diversity, can create barriers that keep groups apart. These barriers, whether imaginary or concrete, intentionally hinder collaboration and make it even more challenging for groups to work together effectively. In contrast to differences, divides stem from conflicts, or as in this case, colonization and a history of mistreatment, creating substantial barriers preventing people from coming together spontaneously. For example, in most societies, differences of race, ethnicity and gender are present in many different realms. Then, differences and factual inequalities have historically created an imbalance of power that favours certain groups. Hence, it is possible to make political statements concerning this existent inequality. Israelis and Palestinians, on the other hand, face structural divisions that hinder their ability to connect, and upon closer examination, they may not be as different as usually assumed.

Thus, the efforts undertaken by these social movement actors not only involve addressing the existing differences but also encompassing the task of surpassing the barriers created by these differences. This is precisely why I utilized the phrase "*across*" (2000) divides, as the activists engaged in this relational work had to physically cross various obstacles, including physical barriers pertaining to geography, ethnicity, sex, class, race, colonialism, and nationality. They were not simply able to overlook or transcend such corresponding identity categories—although some activists did manage to do so—but instead had to confront and immerse themselves within these divides. They needed to *traverse* them. It

was through this process that certain groups were able to mobilize and unite, eventually forming long-lasting coalitions.

7.2 How are Coalitions Across Divides Born?

There were both differences and similarities in how the three campaigns evolved over time. The initial meeting in Susiya was remarkable. Israeli activists contacted Palestinians living in very remote areas to stop the ongoing destruction of their villages. They were not reached by the Palestinian counterpart but rather the other way around. A group of Israeli leftists felt it was their duty to make up for what their country had done in the late 1990s. And so, they started to work with Susiya's Palestinian activists. The events at Sheikh Jarrah started with a similar process; what differed were the encounters that came after. As for the CWP, the desire to advance the work of women's peace organizations from a more feminized perspective led to the formation of the coalition. The coalitions I discussed were formalized in three distinct campaigns that established the course of these movements and varied over time as some old organisations left the stage and were replaced by new ones. All these coalitions were formed as a result of an act of profound trust, which, as demonstrated by this thesis, is not entirely unexpected when a more nuanced understanding of contextual factors is taken into account. There were undoubtedly important opportunities that impacted the strategic assessments made by the Palestinians who were present. However, the decision-making process, as a whole, cannot unquestionably be restricted to a framework based on rational choices. In contrast to Susiya and Sheikh Jarrah, where coalitions were formed in response to immediate threats of demolition and displacement of the local population, members of the CWP knew each other and had participated in other movements together, including Women in Black. As a result, several factors identified in the literature as well as those identified in this thesis impact the formation of the alliances with varying effects. The various campaigns are all summarized in Table 15. On the horizontal axe of the table, there is the name of the campaigns. On the vertical one, are the elements that are identified in the literature as coalition facilitators. I introduce this table to provides a preliminary indication for future research on inter-case comparisons based on the conclusions that can be drawn from this thesis. It shows a variation of elements which were missing or present in each campaign. The following paragraphs go through these factors one by one.

Table 15 Factors that facilitate the start of a coalition (comparison inter-case)

	SUSIYA (CHAPTER 4)	SHEIKH JARRAH (CHAPTER 5)	CWP (CHAPTER 6)
PREVIOUS TIES	Absent	Absent	Present
SHARED IDEOLOGY	Absent	Absent	Present
COLLECTIVE IDENTITY	Absent	Absent	Absent
THREAT	Present	Present	Absent
LEADERSHIP	Present	Present	Absent
BROKERS	Present	Present	Present
RECOGNITION OF DIFFERENCES	Present	Present	Present

7.2.1 Previous Ties and the Element of Issue

The literature generally agrees that prior ties (Arnold, 2011; Corrigall-Brown & Meyer, 2010) may help coalitions get started. Van Dyke and McCommon have shown that these prior ties are a not always a determining factor for the creation of coalitions (2010, p. 310). Elements such as co-membership make interpersonal relationships between organizers easier (Diani, 2000). Diani (2000) in his influential discussion of Simmel and Rokkan's work. He emphasised the crucial role of partisan memberships in sharing most associational affiliations, which also extended into personal friendships and family networks. This process bears more than passing similarities to the one described by Simmel, who noted that membership in a core organization also entails a whole range of other related affiliations. The practical chances for social interaction are limited by concentrated patterns of social relations, to the extent that those participating are primarily related to others from the same milieu. They also influence societal representation and individual identity. This definition perfectly describes the trajectory of the CWP. Some of the activists had previously mobilised with others from the same organisations. This did not occur in the other two instances. Instead, these coalitions were built from the ground up based on a commonality of shared purpose, which, leans more in the direction of interests in a particular cause and *issue*. The ties and interpersonal connections that now hold these coalitions together were formed from scratch. This arises from the fact that individuals often exhibit sympathy towards the topic of demolition and forced displacement due to its inherent material nature, tangible ramifications, and the presence of injustices that resonates widely. This sentiment was expressed by an Israeli activist during an interview that was further elaborated upon in Chapter 5. This is why probably, more than ideology or a

commonality of perspectives, what has emerged as paramount in making Israeli activists involved is the very issue of demolition and constant violation of human rights. Past relationships, friendships and cooperations have proven to be crucial in the development of the CWP. Issues like combating violence against women and ensuring equal opportunity for women, for instance, favouring cooperation across ethnonational divides. Yet, there are some problems that easier unite groups across differences, such as the destruction and displacement of families: no national identity can justify such a horror. Therefore, although more research on this specific dimension is required, the conclusion of this dissertation implies that when communities are structurally divided as a result of occupation or other forms of draconian control, the proposed campaign topic may assist to bring people together.

7.2.2 Ideology & Collective Identity

At the transnational level, organizations' possibilities of influencing the policy process can be increased, and their workloads can be decreased through a coalition of international NGOs (Cullen, 2005, p. 71). The success of such a collaborative organization on a global scale is constrained by elements including the political environment, disagreements over finance, strategy, and *ideology*. Coalition development can be hampered by competition among NGOs, for example, for funding and public attention. Another source of conflict could be different ideological positions on issues (Cullen, 2005, p. 84). In the influential work of Van Dyke and Amos (2017), the authors demonstrated how some of the factors affecting organisational action and the dynamics of movements are consistent with those affecting coalitions. Other factors are specific to coalitions and result from the involvement and interaction of different organisational entities, each with their own ideology, identity, structure, and operating process. According to the *social ties* as described by Van Dyke and Amos (2017), supportive organisational structures, *ideology*, culture, and identity, the institutional environment, and resources are the five critical elements conditioning the potential of coalition building. Gawerc (2020) discovered that the element of ideology, which varied widely both between and within groups, did not constitute a fundamental element in the formation of these coalitions: the reasons to join varied widely. In this research, the element of ideology was never mentioned in the interviews with the first two cases. People who participated in this research ranged from the whole spectrum of the Israeli Radical and Liberal Left, being both Zionist and Anti-Zionist, anarchist, and close to certain political parties. Some of them were rabbis, religious people, professors, workers, university students, all with very different ideas and political views. The same was true for Palestinians. I have interviewed people who did not identify with any political party, who were secular or Islamist, pro-Fatah and pro-Hamas, Marxist from the Popular Front for the Liberation of

Palestine and socialist, nationalist, liberal and pro-Trump. The spectrum was wider than I expected. This was very different from the case of the CWP. The women involved in this coalition had very strong and precise ideas on the role of ideology on making coalitions, in the words of one of them:

> "First of all, we do not enter a process of cooperation if there is no ideological or some kind of compatibility with the other organization" (IS19).

What these cases suggest is that the *absence* of strong ideological alignment and convictions do facilitate coalitions across certain divides that are mainly ethnic and nationalist. However, what emerged, is also that ideology, after confrontations, can be modified. In fact, Israeli women involved in the coalition with Palestinian women started to have a stronger discussion on the Occupation and Zionism. Similarly, Palestinians in Susiya and Sheikh Jarrah started to become more critical towards the Palestinian Authority and Hamas movement. Ideology, as well as identity, can be modified through interpersonal relationships and interactions.

According to Polletta and Jasper (2001, p. 285), collective identities are formed through individuals' cognitive, moral, and emotional connections with a broader *community*, category, practice, or institution. These identities can be shaped using narratives and discursive activities. The issue of collective identities poses a significant complexity. Throughout this thesis, I attempted to explore it in various ways while intentionally avoiding an in-depth analysis of these aspects. Due to the multiplicity of identities, comprehending the foundation and extent of a collective identity that extends beyond the campaign or collective action becomes exceedingly challenging. Additionally, determining its defining characteristics, and the basis upon which it can be considered shared, raises further complexities. The study of social movements has predominantly focused on the question of identities, potentially overlooking power asymmetries, the privileging of certain subjectivities, and the material inequalities that result from them. On the other hand, I recognise identities have value and strong meanings for activists, particularly for the context they are part of. The existence of a coalition that spans the conflict line is inherently challenging due to its potential to be perceived as a threat to the unity of the national community, which holds paramount importance for each coalition partner in terms of their *identity*, long-term interests, and political effectiveness. The coalitions discussed in this thesis, display strong affiliations with their respective national community, adding further complexity to the collaborative efforts (Gawerc M. I., 2012, p. 92). The cases examined in this thesis have demonstrated the primary significance of national identity compared to other identities. As a result, it is challenging to argue that we have witnessed the emergence of collective identities within the first two coalitions. However, in the

case of the third coalition, the emphasis placed by many interviewees on feminism and pacifism suggests the potential development of an internally shared identity among its diverse members, while maintaining distinct community references.

7.2.3 Threats

According to research on social movement coalitions, organizational elements and environmental factors influence the likelihood that groups will join coalitions. The research of Suzanne Staggenborg (1986) demonstrated how political settings impacted movements' propensity to create coalitions. When confronted with opportunities or *dangers*, organisations typically collaborate to make the most of the available knowledge and material resources. According to this research, environmental factors influence the timing and likelihood of coalitions, but actors react differently to the *threats* and opportunities they perceive (Smith & Bandy, 2005, p. 8). Consistent with political opportunity theory, the literature shows coalitions are more likely when movements experience increased political opportunities (Lee, 2011; Maney, Transnational mobilization and civil rights in Northern Ireland, 2000) and threats (Chang, 2008; Clarke, 2011; Campbell, 2012; Okamoto, 2010; Kleidman & Rochon, 1997; Downey & Rohlinger, 2008), or both (Obach, 2004; Rose, 2000; Staggenborg, 2015). A range of threats, real or perceived (Smith & Bandy, 2005), foster organisational collaboration, from the presence of antagonistic political actors at various levels and even mortal threats such as violence or war (Okamoto, 2010). However, it has also been demonstrated that *threats* sometimes inspire groups to overcome ideological or cultural differences to work together against a common enemy (Staggenborg, 1986). Political opportunities do not appear to play as significant a role in forming cross-divide coalitions as imminent dangers do. As said before, home demolition and family uprooting are quite concrete. Everyone can sense their gravity, even if they only *threaten* one group, the Palestinian one. Similarly, during the second Intifada (Chapter 3), when Israeli citizens were attacked on Israeli streets, the feminist coalition (CWP) against the Occupation was born in an effort to stop the escalation of intergroup tensions. The conversation about how feminists and peace movements could collaborate began because of this threat, even though it was not as imminent as the others. This study contributes important insights to the advancement of how humanist perspectives can be applied to the evaluation of *threats*. Confronted by the very survival of others, the future of coexistence must grapple with the current threat of aggressive policies and discriminatory practices. This shift in understanding may be the catalyst some progressives need to unite in opposition. Therefore, threats of different kinds—both material and moral—might undoubtedly encourage cooperation and collaboration among various groups.

7.2.4 Leadership and Brokerage

To promote collaboration, brokers are the individuals that bring together different movement organisations. They frequently have a position that allows them to communicate with both sides and frame issues in a way that appeals to both audiences, bridging the gap between the opposing factions. Along with these people, some external groups also frequently play a part in the broker role (Obach, 2004, p. 3). Reger (2002) has exemplified the crucial role of leadership in the coalition of social movements. By illuminating how organizations' leaders may exert significant control over social movement organisations, she showed the importance of considering influences on their strategy, tactics, and objectives. Organisational dynamics in the two cases she studied were influenced by leaders' consistency of involvement and the potency of their charisma. She specifically contends that a leader's charisma and values influence identity development. Internally formalised leadership structures, well-networked leaders, or ideology that is congruent with other groups may foster alliances (Roth B. , 2010, p. 101). Similarly, in their study on the creation of transnational networks, Smith and Bandy (2005) have demonstrated the importance of leadership of skilled movement brokers. Their work indicates that the first quality of a good broker figure is to be granted legitimate authority among a diverse range of coalition members. The brokers must be instructors. Moreover, they should be excellent communicators and translators because they also play a role in spreading movement beliefs. Then, using a shared coalition framework, they may employ common ideas to codify member pledges. They also have a crucial role in controlling conflicts that may develop within coalitions. The ability to allow for open discussion of disagreements, however time-consuming or ineffective the discussion may be, is also a crucial quality (Smith & Bandy, 2005, p. 240).

The findings of this dissertation support previous studies on brokers and leaders. Even though the two figures do not always coincide, they did in the first two cases discussed in this thesis. Here, the movement's top leaders were also responsible for resolving conflicts between the positions of the various communities and bringing new forces and organizations into the coalition. On the other side, in the Coalition of Women for Peace, there were undoubtedly female mediators who tried to control conflict and the connection between the movement's various strands and their respective communities. As a horizontal coalition that attempted to avoid leadership roles and hierarchical positions, no one played or mentioned the role of leadership.

7.2.5 Recognition of Differences

In all these cases, a critical factor is the deliberate recognition of differences, which are then navigated and transformed into a source of strength in the collective pursuit of social justice objectives. Coalition work cannot be constrained to the limitations of one's personal space. It needs active engagement in the public domain and requires individuals to step out of their comfort zones and communicate with one another. Engaging in coalition work includes embracing discomfort, even confronting pain as individuals cope with the reality and complexities of their disagreements. However, such anguish is crucial for individuals to properly appreciate and acknowledge their uniqueness.

Additionally, it is essential for the parties to honestly examine how privilege, which results from elements like gender, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, age, and others, affects their particular alliance or relationships. It takes both accepting a collaborative perspective of power and letting go of any privileged status one may hold to develop the attitude and emotional state required to transcend the boundaries between oneself and the "other". This process requires understanding how one's own social situations frequently impact their relationships with others, not just crossing a subjective barrier. Moreover, it necessitates, to a certain extent, admitting the legitimacy of the viewpoints held by the opposing party. This dimension was already underlined in the literature both by Daniele (2014), Todorova (2019) and Gawerc (2019). This was a common line in all the campaigns and coalitions followed in this dissertation. The recognition from all the privileged activists of the inequalities existing between them and their Palestinian counterparts was there; however, some subsequent passages were then lacking. Indeed, this is just the first step to allow for the creation of coalitions across divides, the second phase relates to the work of maintenance and care towards these coalitions that orbit around constant and recurrent interactions that aim at the management of these asymmetries. Even though the concept of intersectionality is not directly discussed in this thesis, the provided analysis shows strong similarities that open such considerations for potential future research.

Over the past three decades, intersectionality has gained wide prominence as an analytical tool, for example, manifested in the increased adoption in social movement scholarship. The concept is predominantly adopted to analyse the mobilisation of racialized women in feminist movements. However, this thesis shows that such intersectional analysis is also significant for coalitions. This resembles the Combahee River Collective's seminal utilisation of intersectionality as an analytical tool and political strategy to inform coalition building in the 70s. Applying the concept of intersectionality to the examination of privileged groups brings focus to unmarked categories. Intersectionality emphasizes

the impact of structures on multiple subordinations and inequalities (Crenshaw, 1991). These manifest at the individual and group level, where individuals may find themselves multiply disadvantaged, privileged, or both, depending on different aspects of their identity. Intersectionality can be applied to inform a participants' positionality, particularly how they experience their social status concerning gender, class, race, ethnicity, age, or sexuality. This recognition of positionality matters greatly in terms of how grievances are identified, causes framed, adversaries understood, potential allies approached, and alliances sustained. By adopting intersectional perspectives, we gain insights into the structural representation and involvement of various groups in social movements, leading to a deeper understanding of the consequences for these movements and organisations (Einwohner et al., 2019). These dynamics are crucial when developing strategies that address issues of political intersectionality (Einwohner et al., 2019). According to Roth (2021, p. 14), coalitions offer a means to practice intersectionality. This study has demonstrated that this necessitates that actors recognise these inequalities and work with them.

7.3 How are Coalitions Across Divides Maintain?

Additional inter-cases should be considered. First and foremost, what distinguishes the three cases is the political context and the unique structure of the POS. Susiya's remote location in Area C allowed for an unprecedented coalition that was not achievable in the other cases. The rural setting and the presence of a peasant movement provided the village committee with a remarkable level of independence and autonomy compared to other areas of the West Bank. Moreover, the absence of the Palestinian Authority and its representatives spared the village from the stigma of "normalizer", differently from #savesheikhjarrah campaign. In Jerusalem, especially among the younger generations, there is growing reluctance to collaborate with Israeli activists due to anti-normalization pressures. In addition, in Sheikh Jarrah, the presence of the police is usually associated with higher levels of violence. Hence, the coalition needs to make more conscious choices concerning the functional repertoires of action they adopt.

While both cases experienced the presence and pressure of the settler movement, the settlers in Susiya tended to be more aggressive and violent, possibly due to their relative isolation in the area. This led to a widespread show of solidarity towards the Susiya community from both the Israeli and international public. Similarly, in the case of Sheikh Jarrah, the concrete displacement of people is perceived as a vulnerable aspect of Israeli democracy, highlighting discrimination against its own minority. On the other hand, the Coalition of Women for Peace was a movement that operated on a national scale, primarily focusing on the Israeli public. This outreach was necessary as the Israeli population, in general, tends to be less receptive to the issue of the occupation of Palestinian land. Their goal to work towards ending

the Occupation should be considered as rather far reaching. Additionally, as explored in Chapter 6, the decision to align with the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) movement within Israel did have an impact, seemingly weakening their position or influence. As evidenced in the empirical Chapters, the analysis considered various factors, including the impact of the Political Opportunity Structures (POS) and other relevant contextual elements, that impacted the trajectory of these campaigns.

7.3.1 Interactional Maintenance Paradigm

The existing literature frequently emphasises how the same elements that encourage the formation of a coalition also contribute to its persistence (Van Dyke & Amos, 2017). What this dissertation has demonstrated, however, points in a different direction. While each of these characteristics is unquestionably significant, the combination of three key factors and how they interact allows for coalitions to persist. These components, which ostensibly do not directly address the problem of disparities, divisions, and differences, could potentially be applied to a larger variety of coalitions. This is not the case with elements that deal specifically with how to handle inequality, which in turn also makes coalitions last over time.

The concept of the interactional maintenance paradigm highlights the endurance of coalitions beyond the isolated moments of a campaign. The paradigm consists of the Three Ts, which are crucial as they are interconnected and interdependent. Put simply, the interactional maintenance paradigm suggests that maintaining coalitions across social differences is achievable by embracing a new perspective on time, ties, and trust. Rather than being an obstacle, time becomes an ally that facilitates the formation of trust-based personal relationships among activist groups that would otherwise remain separate due to structural barriers. To form and sustain such relationships, constant and repetitive interactions are necessary. Most interviewees, regardless of their perspectives, stressed the strong connection between trust and time. Building relationships and establishing strong bonds of trust necessitate ongoing and repetitive interactions. While previous ties are deemed significant in the process of coalition building, what distinguishes this case from the existing literature is the observed generational continuity. Maintaining relationships allows for the maintenance of inter-community links. This requires developing a level of trust that can only be reached when collective action is carried out for a long and recurring time. This is arguably also applicable to a wider range of coalitions, even if they not necessarily deal with divides and differences. The following strategies and relational mechanisms allowed coalitions to be maintained across divides.

7.3.2 Find new Ways to Manage Asymmetry: Collective Inaction

Structural power asymmetries are inherent, and activists are bound to operate within these pre-established confines. As mentioned earlier, acknowledging these differences is undoubtedly a key initial step. While crucial for coalition building, it alone is insufficient to sustain them over time and amidst various divisions. The "negative" case discussed in this thesis, the CWP, has illustrated how a failure to address and manage inequalities ultimately led to disagreements and issues among the various organizations. Activists in Susiya and Sheikh Jarrah instead spent a great deal of attention in developing strategies to facilitate everyday collective action. One of those is what I call collective inaction. In both campaigns, but particularly in the case of Susiya, what became evident as crucial for the coalition was the opportunity to not only spend time actively engaging in work and mobilising together but also to have moments of inactivity or simply being together without any specific tasks or actions. A significant theme that surfaced from both the interviews and the extensive fieldwork is the value of spending time together in everyday life, which may not necessarily be directly linked to activism in a conventional sense. Engaging in everyday activities alongside fellow activists does not always involve political actions, but it is precisely these experiences that foster the development of interpersonal community relationships. One recurring example, highlighted both in the Protest Event Analysis (PEA) and the interviews, particularly during the campaign's peak, was the practice of staying overnight in the community's facing demolition. Beyond the hours spent living in these communities, what becomes evident is that, due to circumstances, there are not only instances of collective and political action but also moments of rest, shared meals, waking up, and watching the sunset with people from diverse backgrounds. I believe these moments of collective inaction are primarily responsible for forging inter-communal bonds that transcend ethnonational origins and offer a glimpse into the potential of an inclusive society. Their impact is, unfortunately, not extended structurally. Nevertheless, these moments undoubtedly play a pivotal role in reducing inequalities and bringing people closer together.

According to della Porta (2020), prefiguration develops in these shared moments where it is possible to conceive of future ideals in the present (p.370). As protests spread following the initial disruptive event, novel norms often arise in the open spaces generated by social movements. These spaces of encounter facilitate the cultivation of intense emotions and the dissemination of alternative visions through diverse forms of prefigurative politics aimed at enacting changes in the present (p.364). Although this certainly happened also in the coalitions in question, prefigurative politics do not necessarily include work and reflexivity on inequalities. Sometimes, the created spaces might end up even reproducing existing

inequalities present in society. The way collective inaction is conceptualized here, despite presenting a prefigurative component, is mainly in reference to the strategic management of asymmetries in coalitions.

This was particularly immanent in the case of Susiya, where the coalition seems to be stronger nowadays. Finding communities willing to host Israeli Jewish activists is quite uncommon, and maintaining a strong commitment over time is equally challenging. Moreover, collective inaction plays a role in mitigating power asymmetries. For many Israeli activists, one recurring issue is leaving contentious spaces once actions are concluded. However, the newly created contentious spaces persist in the relationships with the Palestinian communities who continue to reside there. Thus, finding ways to bridge the reality of Israeli activists with that of Palestinian activists is essential to address power imbalances. Spending these moments of slowness together allows for strengthening the ties that emerged during the confrontation with the military and the settlers and during activism and co-resistance.

7.3.3 Leadership to the Subaltern

Participants in coalition-building initiatives must construct new structures or alter existing ones for individuals to cooperate successfully and promote mutual understanding while aligning with common values and aims. Structures are pre-established patterns of connections, processes, and procedures that underpin how groups and organizations do their daily business. The common patterns seen in the majority of groups and organizations within contemporary society, as Dorothy Smith (1990) emphasised, are based on "relations of ruling." The organising, *leadership*, and control of individuals by members of dominant groups, such as those wielded by people with Euro-American, ethnic, and economic privileges or those who align with predominant modes of masculinity and heterosexuality. These relations often go unnoticed and unchallenged until individuals from marginalized groups begin to question everyday practices from different perspectives. This distribution of the burden of teaching, is exactly what needs to be overturned when approaching coalitions that deal with internal divisions and antagonism.

Numerous Israeli activists have emphasised the importance of heeding and supporting the Palestinian leadership in taking action. This plays a crucial role in rectifying the initial power disparities, given that they are unequal due to historical circumstances. It is imperative to restore balance in relationships. One approach that has been used in the presented cases is for Israelis to be "junior partners." Chapter 4 and 5, demonstrated what this means by drawing on several examples of actions that went in this direction. Israeli activists present themselves as supporters, protectors, and promoters of human rights within Israel and internationally. However, once they engage in collective activities, it is up to the Palestinians to determine the methods and implementation of these actions. During collective actions that promote

decolonisation, it is paramount to follow and support the leadership of the impacted community. There definitely are more adapt strategies for liberatory organising, but this approach ensures at least a re-balancing of those parts of the power hierarchy inherited by dominant difference. As easy and trivial as this might sound, it is actually very hard to implement on the ground. Israelis are typically perceived as being White, displaying higher levels of confidence and education, and often having extensive experience as activists over extended periods. They tend to dominate conversations and speak more loudly during collective gatherings. In most of join and shared initiatives Palestinians have historically been pushed towards more inhibited demeanour, like following rather than taking the lead. In these instances, the concept of leadership is crucial. Not only is it necessary for marginalized groups to assume leadership roles, but to be supported as leaders. Within such groups, the presence of individuals capable of acting as bridges and assuming leadership positions has proven to be essential. The third empirical case was missing this element. The feminist activists in that case advocated for a leaderless and horizontally structured movement, where collective decision-making would occur through ongoing discussions and confrontations. This approach is likely the way to progress in contexts without power hierarchies. However, the other two campaigns emphasized the significance of rebalancing the system as much as possible so long as discrimination persists. This entails being willing to follow and accept certain measures. In this context, another strategy that has been successfully demonstrated is not only to establish distinct lines of leadership but also to be willing to step aside when necessary.

7.3.4 Shadowing Mechanism

The protests witnessed during the spring of 2021 stand out for their exceptional frequency and the significant number of participants involved. Yet, what has not been widely covered by the media is the consistent occurrence of gatherings and protests organized by Palestinian and Israeli groups working together for years in a joint effort to prevent the displacement of residents. These actions persist every Friday. This is what I refer to as the "*shadowing*" mechanism, a concept that differs from complete disappearance or demobilization. Instead, it implies maintaining an active presence while operating discreetly from the sidelines, rather than the centre stage. It involves remaining an integral part of the movement and coalition, upholding the initial relationships with partners, while allowing the historically oppressed group to take the forefront as the primary - and sometimes sole - actor. Another crucial aspect of the *shadowing mechanism* is the ability to endure, maintain a constant presence, and remain consistent over time. However, as mentioned in the Chapter on Shiekh Jarrah, this is not only due to strategic reasoning, but is also part of how the conflict developed, and how join-movement are perceived by both

the Israeli and Palestinian civil society. This theme was recurrent also in the last empirical Chapter. The mode of cooperation displayed here is define by me as a mode of "*coordination*": a cooperation that benefit from sharing resources and information but remains in the shadow and does not advocate for joint moments and campaigns. It primarily pertains to coalitions, and it has proven to be particularly effective for the Palestinian side. However, as discussed in the Chapter on Shiekh Jarrah, this dynamic is not solely driven by strategic considerations. Furthermore, it is influenced by the historical development of the conflict and how joint movements are perceived within Israeli and Palestinian civil society. The distinction between the shadowing mechanism and modes of cooperation lies in their respective objectives. The shadowing mechanism aims to achieve specific outcomes linked to particular campaigns, prompting certain segments of the movement to operate discreetly in order to amplify the movement's message and overall success. On the other hand, modes of cooperation encompass different approaches by which ethnonational rival groups can collaborate and maintain their relationships, even without formally joining a coalition. The goal is to find ways to cooperate while retaining the integrity of distinct identities.

7.3.5 Community Based Engagement

This element, which bears resemblances with theorizations on relationality in Indigenous studies (Coulthard & Simpson, 2016) and peasant struggles worldwide, appears to have played a significant role in sustaining two of the coalitions examined in this study. In the cases of Sheikh Jarrah and Susiya, the struggles were deeply rooted in specific locations. The relationships that developed were not limited to individuals from the two ethnonational groups. Indeed, they extended to encompass the land, houses, livestock, and the entire community residing there. This material and tangible connection to a particular space underscored the reality of subjugation and dispossession experienced by the people involved. Scholars have extensively explored the relationship between social movements and the spaces they operate within (Hume & Mulcock, 2004; Koopmans, 2007; Meade, 2011; Joronen & Griffiths, 2019; Salih & Corry, 2022). However, studies that examine the presence of community-based activism often remain confined to the realm of anthropology. The role of the community is paramount when it succeeds in uniting diverse political groups and identities. As discussed in the section on ideology, this is particularly important when communities exhibit significant internal variations and differences. Moreover, since most decisions impact the lives of an entire group of people connected to a specific space, activism must align closely with the needs and desires of the community.

Navigating disagreements within the community poses a greater challenge. In the case of Susiya, community leaders were able to address and resolve disagreements, persuading those initially reluctant to collaborate with Israeli activists. However, in Sheikh Jarrah, the community is divided between the East and West sides of the neighbourhood. This necessitates resolving conflicts promptly to prevent them from leading to a decision to end the coalition with Israeli activists. Once the community's support is obtained, all other actions and activities become more manageable, and it becomes easier to express conviction and pride in working alongside Israeli activists as they gradually integrate into the fabric of the entire community. In contrast, the lack of a localised focus in the CWP coalition, which operated on a national level, made collaborative efforts more challenging. Instead of fostering unity, it generated disagreements with the very communities it aimed to engage with. It is difficult to claim that one type of cooperation is inherently better than another. However, localised activism is more likely to succeed when it *involves the entire community in the movement*. Additionally, localised objectives tend to have more focused scopes. For instance, advocating for an end to the military occupation of the West Bank from a feminist perspective is a challenging goal to achieve. It is understandable that over time, women activists may become exhausted and discouraged by the lack of progress and the prevailing direction taken by the government and society at large. However, it seems that this coalition oriented around a specific community makes it easier to work together over a longer time and facilitates the maintenance of coalitions.

7.3.6 Generational Change

The generational element is best communicated in consideration of temporalities. The different perspective on time this work is trying to propose reflects the nature of the ongoing struggle and the perseverance that activists in the region aim to bring to their endeavours. Conflicts, such as the Palestinian cause, are rooted in deep and distant injustices that cannot be resolved within a single generation. The intergenerational trauma resulting from such conflicts cannot be healed through but one cycle of protests (Beausoleil, 2020). Hence, activism and reconciliation need to be passed down from one generation to the next. It is through building upon the legacies of struggles and conceptualisations of resistance developed by previous generations that co-resistance can progress and improve.

In the case of Susiya, the generational shift has led to a remarkable development where the children of Israeli and Palestinian activists are now actively collaborating within the same coalition established by their parents. This occurrence is not only extraordinary, but it also serves as a concrete demonstration

that long-term peaceful coexistence is possible. Furthermore, this generational change has ensured the coalition's survival and facilitated its transformation by incorporating new thematic areas.

Young Palestinians are now more exposed to issues such as LGBTQ+ rights and gender equality through their participation in the coalition, providing valuable insights they might not have encountered otherwise. Israeli activists are compelled to continuously deconstruct their identities and confront their privileges, too. The new generation of Israeli activists possesses a deep understanding of the Nakba, actively refuses military service, and showcases a remarkable fluency in Arabic. Through these efforts, the involved activists recognise the significance of decolonizing language to foster a more just society. In this way, the integration of the new generation has not only allowed the coalition to thrive but has also fostered a process of growth and learning, expanding the coalition's focus, and advancing the cause of social justice.

The situation in Sheikh Jarrah is characterised by its complexity. The newer generation of Israeli activists, having learned from past mistakes in the neighbourhood, approach relationships with residents cautiously. The younger Palestinian generations in the area face pressures against normalisation and find it challenging to initiate and maintain connections with Israeli activists. Nevertheless, the young residents are aware of which activists supported their parents and relatives during the initial evictions. This knowledge contributes to the survival of Sheikh Jarrah's coalition, despite the radicalisation of some Palestinian youth. Unlike in Susiya, the generational factor in Sheikh Jarrah has varying aspects and is not as advantageous. However, it can be argued that the new generation of Israeli activists, conscious of international criticism towards Israel, exercise greater caution and possess more tools to comprehend the delicate balance of these relationships while acting accordingly.

The CWP has experienced a lack of generational change, leading to its eventual demise. Israeli and Palestinian feminism are charting new paths. However, they face challenges to finding common ground and ways to collaborate. While my discussion has only directly discussed one outspokenly feminist struggle, people involved in the other campaigns have thoroughly considered feminism and how to align their struggles with feminist principles. In an interview, one of the young Israeli activists in Susiya expressed their thoughts, saying:

" It always remains a question for us as well. I mean, I used to be critical and sceptical of other activists in the past, both men and women, who appeared to fight for something but then compromised on specific feminist or sexist issues in the field, citing cultural differences. We need to acknowledge the gaps and ensure that I, as a woman, am not mistreated or exploited. That's one aspect. On the other hand, as a

woman residing in this area, I witness the treatment of women, and it often makes me uncomfortable. But, who am I to intervene and dictate what they should or shouldn't do?" (IS29)

Despite the existence of feminist developments and discussions, the formation of a unified feminist movement or the ability to collaborate effectively through coalitions has not been achieved. This highlights the need for diverse approaches to activism and working methods.

7.4 Different Modes of Cooperation

In the final section of this thesis, as I encountered various feminist initiatives, I learned that the women participating in the CWP (Coalition of Women for Peace) consistently approach their collaborative work with utmost dedication. Rather than simply trying to analyse what went wrong or how to improve, they actively strive to understand the issues at hand and foster cooperation in different ways that do not necessarily fit the label of coalition. Many of them engage in diverse initiatives, experimenting with different approaches to sustain the relationships and trust they have established with one another. This classification aims to exemplify how cooperations across divides can manifest. This thesis emphasized the insights emerging directly from the studied campaigns and their cooperation practices, rather than attempting to present an interpretative model of how such cooperation is framed. This classification should be expanded by exploring additional variables and different dimensions that can influence the various types of cooperation. It should be developed in conjunction with the elements previously introduced and must be acknowledged as not exhaustive in capturing the entirety of possible cooperation dynamics. These various modalities are better understood as processes and trajectories of cooperation rather than rigid types of cooperation. As such, the primary purpose of the table below, is to classify the differences observed during the fieldwork.

Teble 16 Modes of Cooperation

	Time	**Trust**	**Ties**
COALTION	Short-Time	High	Strong
COORDINATION	Both	Low	Weak
CO-RESISTANCE	Long-Time	High	Strong
SEPARATION	Both	Low	Non-existent

Based on the practical alternatives encountered during my fieldwork and the discussions I had with these women, I formulated a framework (Table 16) that combines the timeframe chosen by organisations and the nature of the connections and relationships they maintain. These connections encompass both

organisational ties and personal relations, although it is worth noting that most of the interviewed individuals had personal relationships with members from other organizations. Given the importance placed on time in this dissertation, the objectives and duration of these collaborations impact the degree and type of formalization they seek to achieve. The existing literature suggests that coalitions, as a mode of cooperation, are typically characterised by a relatively short duration. Nevertheless, there is strong agreement that they tend to reflect strong relational ties. An example put forth by members of the CWP involved a campaign aimed at electing the first Israeli woman president (Eglash, 2006) in which some of the organisational members I interviewed took part. Various organisations had united to raise awareness about the low level of women's representation in institutions. Once the electoral period concluded, the coalition disbanded. However, this was not the case for some of the campaigns examined in this dissertation. Despite the dissolution of the coalition, personal connections based on trust remained vital in persuading '48 Palestinians to join. The Coalition of Women for Peace differed from this model and resembled more of a movement, still encompassing diverse organisations under its umbrella.

In instances where groups spanning social divisions manage to sustain cooperation over time, existing literature suggests a progression towards a cohesive social movement (Diani & Bison, 2004). However, considering the prevailing inequalities that persist among various actors, I personally lean towards defining these instances as *co-resistance*. This term signifies the shared commitment to continue working together in line with the chosen direction of coalitions during specific campaign episodes, while still acknowledging the significant discrepancies and differences that exist.

Based on the insights shared by the feminist organisations involved in this study, some of them have highlighted the success of different experiences were working together is possible while maintaining a certain level of distance. They emphasise the importance of sharing information that is valuable for women in general. The Haifa Women Coalition represents a unique approach that focuses on *coordination*, as feminist organisations within this coalition are divided based on their ethnic backgrounds. However, they share a physical space where they can exchange information and ideas when they choose to collaborate, while otherwise remaining separate. All the organisations that are part of the Haifa Women Coalition were also members of the Coalition of Women for Peace.

"The Haifa Women Coalition serves as a platform for us to collaborate. It is different from the Coalition of Women for Peace because we wanted to come together and work jointly, but each organization maintains its independence, agenda, staff, and activities. However, we also have this shared space, primarily a physical space where we coexist in the same building. Sometimes, we engage in activities together, which has happened frequently over the years. Although the collaboration has become

less intense nowadays, we still continue to work together. Interestingly, one of the organizations in the building that we have always collaborated with is Kayan. They emerged from Isha Lisha when the Palestinian members decided to focus solely on Palestinian women while maintaining connections with everyone else, including us." (IS31)

Furthermore, the example of Kayan introduces another case that diverges from cooperation and instead seeks *separation*. However, in this case, Kayan managed to find a way to maintain proximity and communication. Separatist groups do not always remain connected to similar realities. For instance, feminist groups like Tal'at advocate for a safe space exclusively for Palestinian women, excluding Israeli women. Nevertheless, during my fieldwork, I discovered that many Israeli women still participated in Tal'at demonstrations to express their support for an independent Palestinian feminist movement. These are the options that groups sharing a highly contested space based on ethnonational grounds decide to pursue. The objective of a feminist revolt remains ambitious and entails the transformation of society as a whole, making it a long-term endeavour. While there may be shared goals among certain members, it is crucial for them to continue their efforts separately. While not exhaustive, they represent initial steps towards comprehending coalitions that bridge otherwise divided societies.

7.5 Levels of Interaction

This work has mainly focused on the *micro* and *meso* level of interaction. Although coalitions primarily operate at the meso level, between organisations, groups, and collectives, they are implemented and carried out at the micro level, where the attitudes and traits of the players involved significantly impact the structure and characteristics of organisations. Thus, there is a critical connection between the two layers. Undoubtedly, the significance of individual interpersonal interactions cannot be overstated. It is through these personal exchanges that collective inaction is challenged. This establishes a foundation for overcoming differences and divisions, allowing many coalitions to form and endure. However, as evidenced by the example of the CWP, this dimension alone is insufficient to sustain coalitions. The social capital derived from these relationships has solidified the bonds within certain coalitions, enabling them to navigate moments of crisis and uncertainty. Most importantly, it empowers them to confront challenging and perilous situations. It is no by accident that the experiences of those who participated in social movements have been a major focus of research to understand the characteristics and origins of movements. Even if it occasionally exhibits certain biases, these attempts reveal the actual tactics used by activists to build and maintain coalitions across ideological divides. Individuals and organisations, however, can differ and are not always in agreement on all the problems and stances that pertain to their organisation. This issue certainly surfaced during my fieldwork as well. However, they are implemented

and performed at a micro level where the attitudes and qualities of the actors engaged have a significant influence in determining the shape and characteristics that coalitions have. Interactions can vary at the macro level when different organisations engage with institutional actors. Relations with institutions, including foreign governments and the Israeli high court, have undoubtedly been complex. How the coalition was *presented* and *portrayed* played a pivotal role in this context. Susiya positioned itself as a joint campaign, emphasizing the strength that diversity brings. Conversely, Sheikh Jarrah, through its shadowing mechanisms, presented itself as a purely Palestinian movement. Both campaigns primarily targeted the international community, recognising its potential to mitigate the impact of Israel's decisions and actions.

In contrast, the CWP primarily focused on addressing the Israeli government and society, making it more challenging for Palestinian women to remain in the coalition and engage with institutions they may not consider legitimate.

While the three levels of interaction integrate and communicate with each other, this thesis emphasises that relational and coalitional work primarily takes place at the individual and organisational levels. Therefore, the micro and meso levels are the main arenas where the interactional maintenance paradigm, along with the various mechanisms, strategies and frameworks described are implemented. However, they also exhibit meso-level interaction in terms of the goals these coalitions aim to achieve.

7.6 Conclusion

7.6.1 A Decolonial Desire

If a conflict arises from a system of interconnected relationships that engender radically conflicting interests, aspirations, and identities within two communities, then a potential resolution lies in dismantling that system. This thesis conceptualises cases that contribute to such processes through the advocation of emancipatory practices. The concept of emancipation has a rich history in social theory spanning from the Enlightenment and Marx to contemporary critical theory. It is commonly used to describe the liberation of a particular group from political subordination imposed by another. However, it also carries a broader meaning: a process in which participants within a system, which determines, distorts, and limits their potential, actively come together to transform it and, in turn, transform themselves. In this context, emancipation is not confined to specific instances but takes on a general scope. It is partial rather than all-encompassing. Its aim is to dismantle a system that perpetuates mutually antagonistic and destructive relationships between two communities. However, it is partial in the sense that it focuses solely on dismantling a particular system, without directly addressing the struggles of

women and other marginalised groups for self-determination, participation, and social justice. Nonetheless, as the process of reorganization necessitated by emancipation unfolds, various struggles may converge and reinforce one another. The objective of emancipation is to end the Occupation of Palestine and develop concrete strategies of decolonization of this land, not merely manage or contain it. Its immediate goal is not a compromised political settlement but a collective endeavour to dismantle the underlying causes of the conflict. To achieve this goal a broad political support and commitment is required – a conscious decision to participate in dismantling the conditions that fuel the conflict. However, it is crucial to recognise the longevity of these processes.

Butler introduces a significant caveat to this vision, stating that "there can be no workable 'living together' under conditions of colonial subjugation that does not ratify such a political condition" (2012, p. 7). Consequently, for Butler, cohabitation goes beyond a mere "coming together" of Jews and Palestinians. Any form of "coming together" must first necessitate transforming the colonial relationships between these groups. Butler emphasises, at an epistemological level, what certain groups of activists have already put into practice at the grassroots level. This dissertation owes its existence to these activists who made the conscious choice to share their complex, bewildering, and sometimes contradictory stories. This is why the majority of activists I have encountered during these years decline the idea of co-existing and cohabiting, opting instead to focus on co-resistance. They believe that only by collectively fighting and resisting can a shared future on this land be envisioned.

In this final reflection, I would like to revisit the concept of knowledge production as an anti-colonial praxis and its implications for analysing the Israeli state and society. It is evident that liberal frameworks of knowledge production conceal the mechanisms of Israeli settler violence and the active suppression of Indigenous knowledge, extending beyond the geographical boundaries of Palestine. However, it is less apparent that these concealed spaces often occur in the very spaces where many critical scholars operate. This realisation aligns with Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) Orientalism reminds that imperial imaginings heavily influence hegemonic discourses concerning the "East." Importantly, the harm caused by these assumptions, theories, and discourses extends beyond textual and literary realms; it has tangible and lasting consequences that shape the everyday lives of colonised peoples. The Western academy is intricately intertwined with this dynamic, and yet it serves as the primary site of our work and writing. Recognising these aspects is not intended to discourage action or promote self-flagellation. Instead, it is an attempt to encourage researchers to transcend the impasse presented by this dilemma (Hawari,

Plonski, & Weizman, Seeing Israel through Palestine: knowledge production as anti-colonial praxis, 2019, p. 15).

The decision to incorporate settler colonial studies and anti-colonial scholarship underscores the importance of approaching the investigation of the Israeli state and society with the aim of transformation. This ambition is guided by a political commitment that goes beyond mere understanding, emphasising the necessity for scholars to stand in solidarity with the decolonisation of Israel – an inclusive and comprehensive project that, as Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2012, p. 13) argue, "implicates and unsettles everyone and everything in the process." As a result of this work's aspiration to contribute to decolonization, numerous obstacles and limitations in analysing settler colonial relations in Palestine, as well as modes of resistance, undergo a significant shift. This process challenges the notion that intellectual rigour requires a "balanced debate" where settler colonialism is treated as just one paradigm among many to be considered and problematised. It also rejects the idea of Palestine as an exceptional case or Israel as an isolated entity with unique logics at play. Instead, it calls for "zooming out," to perceive Palestine as a site where territorial, capitalist, and nationalist logics intersect, influenced by global and regional processes. It recognises Palestine as a space connected to circuits and dialectic relations that both feed into and emerge from global capitalist and colonial interconnections. This underscores the need for a dual commitment in our work as researchers: an understanding of the Israeli state and engagement in anti-colonial praxis.

Finally, a decolonial ambition for research must critically examine the extent to which the conceptual frameworks at our disposal effectively capture the lived experiences and meet the needs of activists involved in the contentious social movements that are the focus of our study and writing. Assessing the impact of academic writing on the trajectories of the social movements it analyses can be challenging. In the realm of social movement studies in Palestine, certain influential Western academic paradigms, while aiming to oppose imperialism, have unintentionally contributed to what can be termed an "empire of critique" (Atshan, Queer Palestine and the Empire of Critique, 2020). This adds another problematic layer to the reproduction of colonial relations through research, adding to the surveillance and critical scrutiny to the struggles for solidarity with Palestine.

7.6.2 Contributions, limitations, and ways forward

This research uncovers multiple paths that could be explored in future studies. Each Chapter serves as a potential starting point for further investigation, expanding the realm of social movement research while examining divisions and colonialism. Once diverse strategies for addressing differences and maintaining

coalitions have been identified, it becomes crucial to examine more closely the mechanisms through which each strategy is adopted and implemented, particularly the connection between strategies and outcomes. Currently, the only mechanism identified is the shadowing mechanism, making it intriguing to explore whether other movements have employed similar tactics. Additionally, applying this framework to other cases could be considered. This approach would not only dispel the notion of exceptionalism often associated with the study of Israel and Palestine, but also determine which elements are transferable, which are specific to the region, and which may find equivalent manifestations elsewhere. Another possibility is to employ the settler colonial framework when studying collective action in other relevant contexts, such as Cyprus, Northern Ireland, Australia, the United States, Canada, and, presently, through the invasion of Ukraine.

The deterioration of the political climate and the growing influence of far-right parties and settler organisations have significantly impacted activist perceptions of political opportunities and their hopes for the future. Over the past few years, there has been a noticeable decline in optimism regarding potential solutions and conflict resolution, with feelings of helplessness and hopelessness becoming increasingly prevalent. Activists from various groups are becoming more pessimistic about their ability to make a meaningful impact and bring about change in their respective countries. The costs associated with participation are continually rising, while new activists are becoming increasingly scarce.

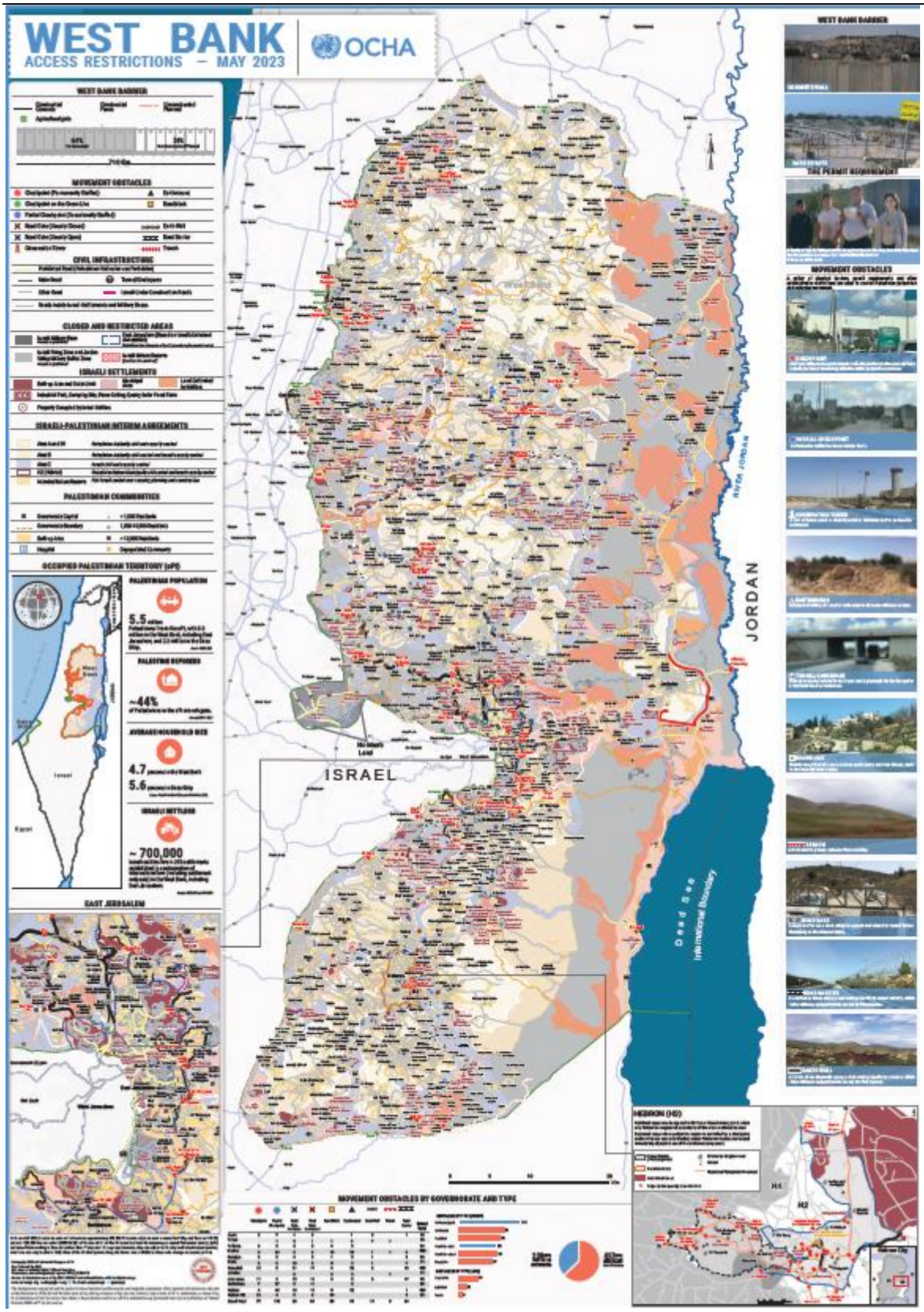
This thesis had two primary objectives. Firstly, it aimed to contribute to the ongoing discourse in the field of Social Movement Theory (SMT) by exploring coalition building across various divides and divisions. Secondly, it sought to enhance the conversation surrounding the sustainability of coalitions over time.

Furthermore, the thesis aimed to emphasise that alternative forms of joint activism are not only viable but also deserving of serious consideration. Often, these grassroots efforts are overlooked or marginalised in favour of formal peace talks such as those held at Camp David or in Oslo. However, this thesis demonstrated that the work of activists on the ground can be significantly more impactful and meaningful for peace than any formal negotiation. The three cases presented in this study cannot be considered representative of the entire landscape of contentious politics in the region. The majority of activism still revolves around national discourse, making these cases exceptional rather than the norm. Nevertheless, even though they remain in the minority, these cases exemplify joint activism in Israel and Palestine.

Further research should explore dimensions that were not adequately addressed in this thesis, such as class and race differences within both groups, as well as religious dynamics. Additionally, future studies in Social Movement Studies (SMS) are encouraged to place a greater emphasis on power dynamics within social movement organizations and groups. There is still much to uncover, as these sensitive issues impact inequalities within activist communities. This thesis has only scratched the surface of these complex matters.

Finally, there is a pressing need for more work to be done on concepts like decolonization, anti-colonial struggles, and decolonial analysis. These provide substantial contributions to disrupt Israel's Apartheid system and its discriminatory attitudes toward Palestinians. Many Western universities have yet to fully engage with these ideas. As Antonio Gramsci emphasized, researchers have a responsibility to engage in praxis by bridging theory and practice, behaviour, and knowledge. Only through this integration can social science meaningfully contribute to revolutionary struggles.

Annex I Map of the West Bank



Annex II: List of Interviews

IN = International 9

PA = Palestinian 28

IS = Israeli 34

A1: Expert Interviews (Total 7)

ID	DATE	LOCATION	ACTOR TYPE	GENDER	LANGUAGE	DOCUMENTATION
IN1	04/06/2019	Rome	Journalist	F	Italian	Transcribed
IN2	12/06/2019	Online (Gaza)	NGO	M	Italian	Transcribed
IN3	11/07/2019	Bologna	NGO	M	Italian	Transcribed
IN4	22/07/2019	Bologna	Professor	M	Italian	Transcribed
IS1	16/09/2019	Bologna	MP	M	Spanish	Transcribed
PA1	04/11/2019	Bethlehem	UN	F	English	Transcribed
PA2	13/01/2020	Bologna	Journalist	M	Arabic (with Translator)	Transcribed

A2: Save Susiya Campaign (Total 24)

ID	DATE	LOCATION	ACTOR TYPE	GENDER	LANGUAGE	DOCUMENTATION
IS3	17/11/2019	Jerusalem	Activist	M	English	Transcribed
IN5	23/11/2019	Susiya	Activist	M	Italian	Transcribed
IN6	23/11/2019	Susiya	Activist	F	Italian	Transcribed
PA4	23/11/2019	Susiya	Activist	M	Arabic (with translator)	Transcribed
IS5	24/11/2019	Susiya	Activist	M	English	Transcribed
IS8	15/09/2021	Online (Jerusalem)	NGO	M	English	Transcribed
IS9	23/09/2021	Online (Jerusalem)	NGO	M	English	Transcribed
IS10	23/09/2021	Online (Jerusalem)	Activist	M	English	Transcribed
PA7	25/09/2021	Online (Bethlehem)	NOG	M	English	Transcribed
IN8	20/10/2021	Online (Susiya)	NGO	M	Italian	Transcribed
IS11	10/09/2021	Online (New York)	Organization	F	English	Transcribed
IS15	08/09/2021	Online (Jerusalem)	Activist	M	English	Transcribed
IS16	17/09/2021	Online (Jerusalem)	NGO	M	English	Transcribed
IS17	29/09/2021	Online (Jerusalem)	NGO	M	English	Transcribed

IS18	18/08/2021	Online (Jerusalem)	Activist	M	English	Transcribed
PA11	22/09/2021	Online (Hebron)	Activist	M	English	Transcribed
IS22	09/10/2021	Online (Jerusalem)	NGO	F	English	Transcribed
IS24	13/09/2021	Online (Ber Sheva)	Activist	M	English	Transcribed
PA13	05/06/2021	Online (Susiya)	NGO	M	English	Transcribed
PA17	19/03/2022	Susiya	Activist	M	Arabic (with translator)	Transcribed
PA20	01/04/2022	Susiya	NGO	F	Arabic (with translator)	Transcribed
PA22	02/04/2022	Susiya	UN	M	English	Transcribed
IS29	03/04/2022	Susiya	Activist	F	English	Transcribed
IS30	03/04/2022	Susiya	Activist	F	English	Transcribed

A3: Save Sheikh Jarrah Campaign (Total 20)

ID	DATE	LOCATION	ACTOR TYPE	GENDER	LANGUAGE	DOCUMENTATION
IS2	05/11/2019	Jerusalem	MP	M	Spanish	Transcribed
IS4	19/11/2019	Jerusalem	Activist	M	English	Transcribed
IS7	25/11/2019	Jerusalem	NGO	F	English	Transcribed
PA12	05/11/2021	Online (Jerusalem)	NGO	M	English	Transcribed
IS21	16/03/2021	Online (Jerusalem)	NGO	M	English	Transcribed
PA16	10/03/2022	Jerusalem	Resident	M	English	Transcribed
PA18	18/03/2022	Ramallah	Resident	M	Arabic (with translator)	Transcribed
PA19	25/03/2022	Jerusalem	Resident	M	English	Transcribed
PA21	07/04/2022	Jerusalem	Resident	F	English	Transcribed
IS27	13/04/2022	Jerusalem	MP	M	English	Notes
IS28	14/04/2022	Jerusalem	NGO	M	English	Transcribed
PA24	15/04/2022	Jerusalem	NGO	M	English	Transcribed
PA25	16/04/2022	Ramallah	Resident	F	English	Transcribed
IS31	17/04/2022	Jerusalem	NGO	F	English	Transcribed
IS32	18/04/2022	Jerusalem	Activist	M	English	Transcribed
IS33	19/04/2022	Tel Aviv	NGO	M	English	Transcribed
PA26	20/04/2022	Jerusalem	NGO	M	English	Transcribed
IS34	20/04/2022	Jerusalem	Activist	M	English	Transcribed
PA27	22/04/2022	Jerusalem	Resident	M	English	Transcribed
PA28	22/04/2022	Jerusalem	Resident	M	English	Transcribed

A4: The Coalition of Women for Peace (Total 20)

ID	DATE	LOCATION	ACTOR TYPE	GENDER	LANGUAGE	DOCUMENTATION
PA3	18/11/2019	Ramallah	Activist	F	English	Transcribed
PA5	20/11/2019	Bethlehem	Union	F	Arabic (with Translator)	Transcribed
PA6	20/11/2019	Bethlehem	Union	F	Arabic (with Translator)	Transcribed
IS6	27/11/2019	Tel Aviv	Organization	F	English	Transcribed
IN7	22/01/2020	Florence	Journalist	F	Italian	Transcribed
IS12	18/08/2020	Online (Tel Aviv)	Activist	F	English	Transcribed
IS13	30/06/2020	Online (Tel Aviv)	Activist	F	English	Transcribed
IN9	21/06/2020	Bologna	Activist/Union	F	Italian	Transcribed
PA8	25/06/2020	Online (Ramallah)	Activist	F	English	Transcribed
PA9	05/07/2020	Online (Haifa)	NGO/Activist	F	English	Notes
IS14	12/10/2020	Online (Haifa)	NGO	F	English	Transcribed
PA10	20/10/2020	Online (Nazareth)	NGO	F	English	Transcribed
IS19	05/06/2020	Online (Haifa)	NGO	F	English	Transcribed
IS20	12/06/2020	Online (Tel Aviv)	NGO	F	Hebrew (with translation)	Transcribed
IS23	23/06/2020	Online (Haifa)	NGO	F	English	Notes
PA14	10/02/2020	Online (Nablus)	Union	F	Arabic (with translator)	Notes
PA15	12/01/2021	Online (Haifa)	NGO	F	Arabic (with translator)	Notes
IS25	13/03/2022	Haifa	Activist	F	English	Transcribed
IS26	13/03/2022	Haifa	Activist	F	English	Transcribed
PA23	21/04/2022	Abu Dis	Activist	F	English	Transcribed

List of Focus Groups:

ID	DATE	LOCATION	ACTOR TYPE	GENDER	LANGUAGE	DOCUMENTATION
F1	20/03/2022	Susiya	3 Israeli and 2 Palestinian Activists	All Men	English and Arabic (with Translator)	Notes
F2	02/04/2022	Susiya	5 Palestinian Women	All Women	English and Arabic (with Translator)	Recorded
F3	04/04/2022	At-tuwani	5 American Jews – 2 Israelis – 2 Palestinians	Mixed	English	Notes

This appendix does not include the countless chats, discussions, talks in front of coffees and meals, in the fields or in the cars I have not been able to record and only partially transcribed in my fieldnotes. Life experiences that go beyond data-gathering cannot fit the space of an appendix.

Annex III PEA Sources on LexisNexis

1) Agence France Presse
2) Arutz Sheva
3) Associated Press International
4) BBC
5) BBC Summary of World Broadcasts
6) BBC Monitoring Middle East - Political Supplied by BBC Worldwide Monitoring
7) CNN.com
8) FARS News Agency
9) Jordan News Agency
10) Jordan News Agency (Petra)
11) Ma'an News Agency
12) MENA English
13) Middle East Eye
14) Mondoweiss.net
15) National News Agency Lebanon (NNA)
16) Palestinian News Network (PNN) – English
17) Palestine News & Information Agency (WAFA)
18) Press TV
19) Qatar News Agency
20) The Associated Press
21) The Canadian Press(CP)
22) The Daily Star (Lebanon)
23) The Jerusalem Post
24) The Jordan Times
25) The National
26) The New Your Time
27) The Palestine Chronicle
28) The Times of Israel
29) Xinhua General News Service
30) Jpost.com

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