

Strategies for Grassroots Activism in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Riti Pathak^a and Alesia Williams^a

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an ongoing crisis originating from the ethno-religious struggle between the Palestinian Arabs and Zionist Jews over the land of Palestine. There have been several attempts to create peace in this conflict, including foreign intervention and aid. However, one of the most overlooked methods is grassroots activism: civilian movements that work for social and political change on a local, regional, or international level. While there have been sociological analyses and other studies conducted on grassroots activism in the conflict, there has been a lack of comprehensive approaches analyzing these qualitative studies and the effectiveness of this activism. Thus, the purpose for this project was to find which strategies were most effective for grassroots movements that focus on creating peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. It was hypothesized that nonviolent activism would emerge as most effective. A mixed methods approach incorporating both a qualitative meta synthesis and a quantitative frequency analysis was conducted through a thematic synthesis. Line-by-line coding was completed on six journal articles obtained from JSTOR, Academic Search Complete, and Sociological Collection; descriptive and analytical themes based on strategies for grassroots activism were created based on this coding. A statistical analysis was completed displaying the frequency of each strategy coded as low, medium, or high success. Joint activism emerged as the most effective strategy based on the coding completed with 57% coding under high success: these results suggest that joint activism should be utilized most often for conflict resolution in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Key Words: Israel, Palestine, Israeli-Palestinian conflict, grassroots activism, grassroots movements, thematic synthesis, joint activism, nonviolent activism, dialogue, violent struggle

Introduction

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a conflict between two national ethno-religious groups in the Palestinian territories, Israel, West Bank, and Gaza Strip that can be traced back to the late 19th century. While religious differences are commonly thought to be the source of the conflict between Palestinian Arabs and Zionist Jews, the true cause is the struggle over land that both groups claim. This land was known as Palestine before its division into the State of Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip after the Arab-Israeli War of 1948-1949. The Zionist Jews claim this land as a national homeland and a safe haven from anti-Semitism, while the Palestinian Arabs have the claim of long residence in Palestine, as they are the indigenous population. After emerging nationalism in the 19th and 20th centuries and the United Nations Partition Plan in 1947, Palestine was divided into a Jewish state and an Arab state. The Palestinians refused partition and war broke out. By 1949, over 700,000 Palestinians have become refugees; in 1967, Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The new Israeli state denied them their right to return (Karkar, 2007).

To fight the Israeli occupation, the Palestinians carried out two major rebel activist movements: the First and Second Intifadas in 1988 and 2000. These were the first large scale uprisings against the oppressive Israeli regime. Also known as the “War of the Stones,” the First Intifada was a civilian uprising in which the use of leaflets helped mobilize Palestinian peoples, while the throwing of stones sent a symbolic message of resistance to the Israelis and the rest of the world (Karkar, 2007). The Second Intifada occurred after the rising discontent of the Palestinians in the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza strip. Both Israeli and Palestinian responses led to an escalation of violence (Pressman, 2003).

Further popular resistance against these Israeli injustices occurred after the creation of the separation barrier between Israel and the West Bank authorized by Prime Minister Sharon in 2002; this wall illustrates the failure of the Oslo Accords in 1993 and the Arab Peace Plan in 2002, government agreements that attempted to promote diplomacy and peace initiatives, to effectively reconcile this conflict (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014). Moreover, both external and internal repression generated grassroots movements: activism that utilizes local level collective action to affect change on a local, regional, national, or international level. Jacob Hoigilt from the Peace Research Institute performed a case study on West Bank Palestinian activism to uncover the resistance from the double repression of the oppressive Israeli state and Palestinian Authority. While the peace movements have been effective, they have often been demobilized in regions of Palestine due to external factors and internal politics (Hoigilt, 2015). In an interview at the Palestine Center with Phyllis Bennis, Adam Gallagher discussed the activist movements in Palestine, specifically the “role of external actors in non-violent civil resistance movements.” He writes about four main structural impediments to these movements: occupation, Palestinian Authority, Palestinian factionalism, and U.S. diplomatic support (Gallagher, 2012).

Human rights violations have been consistent features of the occupation since 1967. A 2015/2016 Annual Report from Amnesty International reveals the several injustices committed by the government in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories: arbitrary arrests, detentions, torture, cruel treatment of detainees, and unlawful killings and executions. Israeli forces have maintained both a Gaza blockade and restrictions in the West Bank, including strict checkpoints, barriers, and exclusion from military zone areas. For instance, there have been strict checkpoints and barriers as well as exclusion from areas near military zones. The Israeli government has also violated the basic human rights to housing as well as expression, association, and assembly. There are also new reports of violence against women and girls, and refugees are being targeted (Amnesty International, 2016). These ongoing basic rights violations have inspired civilian action through grassroots activism.

Literature Review

Introduction

Because the study completed for this project is a qualitative meta-analysis of strategies for grassroots activism in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a review of literature that relates to the conflict and grassroots activism is discussed to provide sufficient contextualization.

Strategies for Grassroots Activism

There are crucial steps that effective grassroots organizations must take, such as having specific and measurable goals, setting deadlines, and planning strategies. Examples of strategies are coalitions among multiple organizations, media publicity, and press conferences (The Leadership Conference Education Fund, 2015). More specifically, one avenue which grassroots organizers often use for political and social change is mainstream media. A drawback that comes with mainstream reliance is the obstacle of bureaucracies working against these activists (Ryan, 1991). Additionally, production of alternative content in contrast to mainstream media is important for the core values of participation and for the promotion of structural possibilities (Gangadharan, Cleen, & Carpienter, 2007). Overall, there are a variety of methods through which grassroots movements organizers advance their interests, allowing for a comparison between the success of these approaches in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Foreign Aid in Israel and Palestinian Occupied Territories

There has been a long and unstable history of United States relations with the Middle East and more specifically Israel, where there have been several events that have provoked an increase in U.S. attention. The arms race in the Middle East, the intifada uprisings, and the end of the Iran-Iraq War all encouraged the United States to promote several peace initiatives in this Arab-Israeli conflict. While the purpose of foreign intervention was to help pacify the Palestinian people and diminish the need for rebellious activism, it has had an inflammatory effect instead. For instance, the Schultz plan, an attempt for negotiations by the UN Security Council members, was largely a failure in the peace process due to the refusal of Palestinians to take part in the negotiations (Hunter, 1988). There have also been financial contributions made by USAID, Care International, and other donors to Palestinian workers. Although the financial aid had the intent to help the Palestinian economy, the three main side effects eclipse this goal: humanitarian crises, governmental collapse, and security service breakdown (Lasensky & Grace, 2006). In summation, foreign aid has not only been largely ineffective towards creating peace in this conflict, but is also a primary factor for the emergence of grassroots activism.

Regional Influences

Like the impact foreign aid and intervention has had on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there has also been regional influence that has negatively affected the conflict. As Ghassan Shabaneh, associate professor of Middle East and International Studies at Marymount Manhattan College, explains, “the effects of the Arab Spring on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict...have cast a cloud of uncertainty over the Middle East” (Shabaneh, 2013). Because of the Arab Spring, Israel has tried to delay the Israeli-Palestinian peace process: Israeli leaders use the Arab Spring as an example of Islam’s incompatibility with democracy to maintain their control over Palestine (Shabaneh, 2013). Aside from the Arab Spring, several events in Arab politics that have influenced the conflict include the American occupation of Iraq, Arab Spring, Lebanese Civil War, and invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. The leaders of Egypt have tried to harm and manipulate the Palestinian cause, which has led to a “domino effect” that has caused Egypt to lose many of its territories. Because of the tumult in Arab politics, focus has moved away from the humanitarian crises in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Grassroots Activism in the Middle East

In addition to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there are other sources of instability in the Middle East from which grassroots activism has emerged. For instance, there are several intervention movements in Syria due to military tension between Turkey and Syria along with international responses to the activism. Both quantitative and historical evidence illustrates the effectiveness of civilian administrative councils, a grassroots initiative that provided necessary services to civilians including food and shelter, that function as self-governing communities in Syria (Alhames, 2012). Another study focused on a specific grassroots movement called the Egyptian Movement for Change, or Kefaya. “Kefaya eventually faltered in the face of intimidation by the state, as had earlier movements” (Oweidat, 2008). This provides the ultimate collapse of the Kefaya movement despite its various efforts. These examples illustrate effective grassroots movements in other areas of the Middle East. However, the grassroots activism in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict fundamentally differs from other activism in the Middle East in the form of government it works under. Israel attempts to call itself the only democracy in the Middle East, but it largely fails as a truly democratic state. Almost 4.5 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have no say in the government that controls them. Even the Palestinians in Israel that do have the ability to vote are hurt by the election regardless of their political participation, because Israeli laws are designed to oppress them further (Hawari, 2015). This attempt at democracy is important for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict because it differentiates activism in this conflict and other Middle Eastern conflicts, increasing the possibility for the success of grassroots activism in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

International Grassroots Activism

Grassroots activism has been an effective means of creating social and political change not only in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but also on an international platform. The expanding global market has led to a connected global society, and transnational grassroots associations have subsequently emerged. These grassroots movements advocate for democratization and better governance, common concepts in Middle Eastern peace movements.

Case studies illustrate two effective transnational grassroots movements: Women in the Informal Economy Globalizing and Organizing and Slum/Shack Dwellers International. Studies have illustrated that these movements have legitimacy, focus on representation, center around women, and work for public policy (Batiwala, 2000). Additionally, a study done on environmental activism around the world has shown the impact that these grassroots groups have had on environmental and health policy making. Professors Robert D. Bullard and Glenn S. Johnson from Clark Atlanta University explain how “grassroots groups organized themselves, educated themselves, and empowered themselves to make fundamental change in the way environmental protection is administered in their communities” (Bullard & Johnson, 2000).

There have also been comparative studies done on grassroots movements in different regions throughout the world. A comparative study on grassroots political activism in Latin America finds a rise in non-governmental organizations and a decline in social movements (Foweraker, 2001). Similar to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, this grassroots activism has tried to shift rule in Latin America from oppressive authoritarian regimes to more democratic rule. Another comparative study on grassroots movements was done by the University of Chicago on feminist consumerism. In terms of social change specific to feminist awareness, it analyzes and compares Dove’s “Campaign for Real Beauty” and a fat-activist organization Pretty, Porky, and Pissed Off (Johnston, 2008).

There have also been qualitative meta-analyses done on grassroots movements in other regions of the world, excluding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For instance, a meta-analysis comparing case studies of successful grassroots movements led by women around the world demonstrates the vital role that effective media support and public education play in the movements’ success (Kar, 2000). Although grassroots activism is an international phenomenon that has been studied on a regional and global scale, there has never been a comparative study or meta-synthesis on grassroots activism in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Research Gap and Purpose

A comprehensive look at studies done on grassroots movements that focus on creating peace specifically in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been largely neglected in past research. More specifically, there has never been a qualitative meta-synthesis conducted on grassroots activism in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; there has also never been a quantitative study done for this topic of inquiry. A study that reviews previous studies done on grassroots movements in this conflict would allow for a comparison of different strategies and their effectiveness in the conflict. Thus, the research question is as follows: what strategies are most effective for grassroots movements that focus on creating peace in the midst of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict? The answer to this question is essential for the creation and implementation of effective grassroots organizations that focus on improving the situation in Israel and the Palestinian occupied territories.

It was hypothesized that if coding were conducted on journal articles discussing grassroots activism in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, then nonviolent activism would emerge as the most effective strategy; there were several reasons that this strategy was thought to be most successful.

Nonviolent activism’s main strength is in the reduction of moral legitimacy for the violent opposition. Furthermore, non-violent activism was based on moral virtues and communication strategies designed to attract coverage on media sites. The three main categories of nonviolent activism were described by the University of Colorado as symbolic protest and persuasion, noncooperation, and intervention (Conflict Research Consortium, 1998). The effectiveness of nonviolent activism was also demonstrated in a book published by Columbia University Press: sociological and statistical analyses were used to demonstrate the mobilization and defeat of oppressive regimes through this method. This evidence was applicable for this project because the Israeli government was the oppressive government structure that the Palestinians were working against (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011).

Methods and Rationale

This study was completed through a mixed methods approach using a qualitative meta-synthesis and a statistical coding analysis, thus answering the research question both quantitatively and qualitatively. The qualitative approach composed of the discussion and analysis of the strategies for grassroots activism, while the quantitative approach numerically measured using percentages obtained from coding for each strategy. Six articles were obtained from the academic databases JSTOR, Academic Search Complete, and Sociological Collection to complete the study.

The keywords used to find the journal articles were “grassroots activism,” “Israeli-Palestinian conflict,” “peace,” and “grassroots movement.” Each journal article was focused on one or more strategies of grassroots activism for peace during the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: six of the most relevant journal articles were chosen. A discussion of each source used in the meta-synthesis and statistical analysis is displayed in Table 1 for sufficient background information.

Journal Articles Used

Table 1. Journal articles included in study discussed.

Title and Author(s) of Journal Article	Description
"Two States or Not Two States? Leadership and Peace Making in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict" by Marco Allegra and Paolo Napolitano	The article focused on the TSS/OSS dichotomy and its relationship to discussion and policies as structural elements of the conflict. It also discussed the interactions between the two leaderships in the conflict and how it affected the outcomes of the peace-making process.
"The Potential Impact of Palestinian Nonviolent Struggle on Israel: Preliminary Lessons and Projections for the Future" by Omri Arens and Edward Kaufman	The possibility of a future Palestinian state next to the current state of Israel were predicted. Three variables were analyzed: the increasing success of these strategies internationally, Israeli perceptions, and the perceived results of actions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict mainly from the first and second Intifada. Public opinion polls, content analysis, interviews, and other analyses were utilized in the article.
"Creative Responses to Separation: Israeli and Palestinian Joint Activism in Bil'in" by Maia Carter Hallward	The concepts of territoriality and legitimation to discuss strategies that were used by Israeli and Palestinian activists and the different barriers that these activists face when working to create peace were discussed. The small agricultural village of Bil'in in which there has been a relative amount of success through consistent joint activism was the focus of the article. Previous research including interviews, film footage, reports posted on activist websites, and news coverage were used as the foundation for the article.
"Beyond Analogy: Bare Life in the West Bank" by Christopher J. Lee	Lee gave an edited and condensed transcript of an interview of Jamal Juma, a leader of the Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign. The movement, impact from the Arab spring, apartheid analogy, and Juma's history were discussed in the interview.
"Political Geography and Grassroots Conflict Resolution" by Tai Levy	Levy discusses the Minds of Peace Experiment, otherwise known as MOPE. This was an experiment used as a form of negotiation through a grassroots approach in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Moreover, this method was used as an alternative approach to agreement over definitions of the political geography in what is known as the Holy Land.
"Peace Building in Violent Conflict: Israeli-Palestinian Post-Oslo People-to-People Activities" by Ifat Maoz	Maoz analyzes the peace-building activities in the midst of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict after the Oslo peace accords of September 1993. Two questions were answered: in what way is Israeli-Palestinian peace building relevant and in what forms does it continue to operate? The specific peace building activity that was focused on were dialogues and joint people-to-people efforts.

These sources were analyzed using a thematic synthesis outlined by "Methods for the synthesis of qualitative research: a critical review" by the BMC Medical Research methodology. The three-step process of thematic synthesis from "Methods for the thematic synthesis of qualitative research in systematic reviews" was discussed by James Thomas and Angela Harden: line-by-line text coding, the development of descriptive themes, and creation of analytical themes (Thomas & Harden, 2008). This thematic synthesis method was chosen because of its power to answer questions about effectiveness using key principles of systematic reviews: this relates to the project's purpose that focused on the effectiveness of different grassroots activism strategies in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009). The coding completed through this thematic synthesis allowed for quantitative data to be obtained.

First, all six articles were coded line-by-line under categories of grassroots activism strategies as low, medium, or high success using the tool Qualitative Data Analysis Miner. Statements were coded as low success if they were described as having little support, mobilization, or results and causing an increase in violence; statements were coded as high success if they were described as having effective mobilization, causing a reduction in violence, or creating effective cooperation among the activists. Statements were coded as medium success if they were described as having a balance of the qualifications for low and high success.

The second step of the process, the creation of descriptive themes, was completed during the line-by-line coding: each grassroots activism strategy that was coded under different levels of success became a descriptive theme.

Following the completion of the coding and creation of descriptive themes, analytical themes in the third step of the process were selected for discussion in the meta-synthesis and collection of quantitative data comparing the relative success of each theme. After the creation of analytical themes based on different grassroots activism strategies, a mathematical analysis was used to find which strategies were most often associated with signs of effectiveness. Then, counting of the mention of each strategy in the text along with the mention of its relative effectiveness were completed. The strategies with the highest percentage coded as high

success in proportion to middle and low success were found to be the most effective. Through the completion of this statistical analysis using the percentages of strategies mentioned with their effectiveness in terms of creating peace, the most effective strategies for grassroots activism in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were found.

Results

Table 2. Coding Frequency Table: Coding frequencies for each analytical theme displayed.

	Low Success	Medium Success	High Success
Joint Activism	17	16	43
Nonviolent Struggle	7	12	18
Peace Talks/Dialogue	23	13	13
Violent Struggle	11	0	0

Table 3. Coding Percentages Table: Coding percentages for each analytical theme illustrated.

	Low Success	Medium Success	High Success
Joint Activism	22%	21%	57%
Nonviolent Struggle	19%	32%	49%
Peace Talks/Dialogue	47%	27%	27%
Violent Struggle	100%	0%	0%

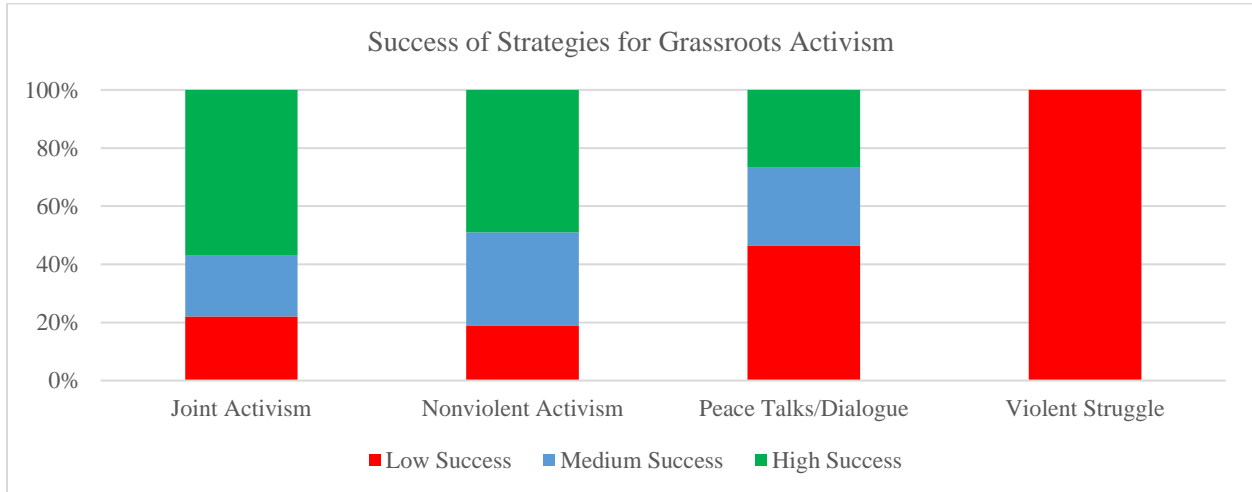


Figure 1. Stacked bar chart displaying the relative success of each grassroots activism strategy.

Overview

After coding the six articles, the categories for discussion, or analytical themes, were determined based on prevalence in the 6 articles. All analytical themes were discussed in the qualitative meta-synthesis in terms of how often they were coded as low success, medium success, and high success. After the categories, or descriptive themes, were uncovered, they were grouped under the following analytical themes: Minds of Peace Experiment, direct talks, dialogue, nonviolent struggle, violent struggle, joint activism, and Bil'in. The analytical themes that were created were violent struggle, peace talks, nonviolent struggle, dialogue, and joint activism. The coding frequency analysis found that the most effective strategy was joint activism coded under high success. Joint activism was coded under high success 57% of the time, while the second most effective strategy, nonviolent struggle, was coded high success 49% of the time. Moreover, direct peace talks and negotiations were 27% highly effective, and violent struggle was 0% highly effective. Thus, the hypothesis that nonviolent activism would emerge as the most effective strategy is not supported

through this frequency analysis. Each analytical theme was discussed in the following qualitative meta-syntheses in order from the least to most successful.

Violent Struggle

The use of violence in Palestinian grassroots activism has predominantly led to more violence from the Israeli government and difficulties for peace building (Allegra & Napolitano, 2011; Hallward, 2009; Lee, 2013). Polls looking at Israeli public opinion have determined that the use of violence by the Palestinians is exaggerated in Israeli minds; this has led the majority of Israelis don't believe in force to accomplish desired goals (Allegra & Napolitano, 2011). This overestimation of violence can be seen in the case of Bassem Ibrahim Abu-Rahma, a protester killed by tear gas, because the Israeli government claimed his stone throwing a violent act. In addition to Israelis, most Palestinians don't believe in violence as a helpful method to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Allegra & Napolitano, 2011; Levy, 2012). Violent struggle was most often used in the Second Intifada; this violent activism lead to the creation of terrorist organizations and increased security barriers around the West Bank restricting Palestinian freedom (Allegra & Napolitano, 2011; Arens & Kaufman, 2012). In other Palestinian protests, there are several examples of protestors shot by Israeli soldiers who claimed to be simply responding to violence. For instance, Mustafa Tamimi from Nabi Saleh and Yusuf Srouf were unrightfully shot by Israeli forces during a Palestinian protest of the separation barrier (Arens & Kaufman, 2012). Overall, violence should be avoided when trying to effect political and social change in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict because of its failure to achieve desired goals.

Dialogue

Peace talks and dialogue, including the descriptive themes of Minds of Peace Experiment (MOPE), direct talks, and dialogue, continue to work for negotiation despite the many obstacles. Expected success of this method is low, as several disagreements remain; for instance, the leadership in Gaza has refused to take part in the talks because it doesn't recognize Israel as a state (Arens & Kaufman, 2012). The concept of 'missed opportunities' including the negotiations in Camp David is present. The dialogue is focused on making a compromise on the distribution of land, like the possibility of Israel giving up the West Bank with the exception of its Jewish enclaves (Allegra & Napolitano, 2011; Levy, 2012).

The MOPE, or Minds of Peace Experiment, is a dialogue experiment that was included under the analytical themes peace talks and dialogue. There were Israeli and Palestinian panels that agreed on certain topics while disagreeing on others during the completion of the five-step MOPE program. One of the solutions agreed upon was a road that would be built in order to connect the Ariel block to Israel for settlers moving back to Israel from a new state of Palestine. One important obstacle that these negotiators had to face was the prospect of settlers living on previously Palestinian owned land. Both sides were also not able to make a compromise or find a way to combat the disagreements about the issue of Palestinian and Israeli refugees on both lands (Levy, 2012).

Nonviolent Struggle

Nonviolent resistance has gained official support as it has become the policy that was declared to help Palestine become recognized as a UN member state. This type of resistance allows Israelis to more accurately perceive Palestinian suffering and thus help share the struggle for peace and Palestinian liberation. In fact, public opinions have revealed nonviolent activism to be increasingly supported by Israelis (Allegra & Napolitano, 2011). However, a major obstacle for Palestinians is the lack of strong leadership and the perceived lack of spirit. One example of powerful nonviolent struggle is the activists that protested the building of a security wall on their agricultural land in a West Bank village called Budrus (Allegra & Napolitano, 2011).

There are four main obstacles inhibiting the effectiveness of Israeli-Palestinian nonviolent struggle: the Israeli peace group called Peace Now, the high level of risk for peace activists, Israeli dependency on security, and the interdependence between the peace movements (Hallward, 2009). The throwing of stones at Israeli soldiers in response to Israeli occupation is one of many disputed actions where the bright-line between nonviolent and violent activism is unclear (Arens & Kaufman, 2012). An example of nonviolent activism is the creation of imagery through the model of the "Scales of Injustice" of the US's role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that aimed to illustrate the activism's focus on the Israeli's government to follow international rules (Allegra & Napolitano, 2011). Moreover, activists built a cage and placed people inside to demonstrate how the separation barrier is more of a type of imprisonment for Palestinians than a security measure.

Another example of nonviolent activism is the Stop the Wall Campaign, started by Jamal Juma in 2002. This committee works to end the cruel actions of the settlement and the enforcement of the wall in the Gaza strip created from intentions to strengthen Israel's colonial project (Lee, 2013).

Joint Activism

Joint activism, social and political work using cooperation between both Israeli and Palestinian activists, was coded 57% as high success with the descriptive themes of joint struggle and Bil'in. A major obstacle to this kind of activism is that those who participate may be illustrated as a traitor to their nation's cause, even though the Oslo Accords attempted to reduce this stigma by bringing people together for similar concerns (Hallward, 2009). The inequity in law application for acts of joint struggle represents another major problem (the applicability of different sets of laws). While activists have tried to reduce the power discrepancy between the Israelis and Palestinians, the Jewish Israelis remain the dominant participants (Hallward, 2009; Maoz, 2004). This dominance can limit the effectiveness of the organizations due to negativity from the dominant group and the dependence upon the dominant group for action (Maoz, 2004). There are also several boundaries created by the road system, like the separation barrier, which makes coordination between activists difficult. However, joint activists have worked to reduce the stigma by using 'soft'

power and shifting the idea of Palestinian movement away from terrorism and towards legitimate activism. Joint activism combats three different types of power as described: state actions, military acts purposed against unarmed demonstrators, and media coverage of the activism (Arens & Kaufman, 2012). A major benefit of joint struggle is Palestinian access to the Israeli court system: for instance, activists won a case in the Israeli High Court concerning the separation barrier in the village Bil'in (Allegra & Napolitano, 2011).

Bil'in is a village where joint activism has been largely successful. The village had an international conference focused on its joint struggle that showed the activists' efforts to link their struggle with international activism and grassroots movements in other regions (Hallward, 2009). Another example of joint activism comes from joint organizations like Bat-Shalom or the Jerusalem Link, creating a high degree of equality between the activists from both sides of the conflict in the organizational hierarchy. These projects give both ethnoreligious groups the same power in terms of decision making as well as control over the financial decisions (Maoz, 2004). There are several components in the execution of joint activism that contribute to its success relative to other strategies for Israeli-Palestinian grassroots activism.

Conclusion

The purpose of this experiment was to complete a comprehensive comparison between types of grassroots activism in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: this purpose was created due to a lack of comprehensive analyses on grassroots activism in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This analysis was completed through a thematic synthesis in both a qualitative and quantitative way that was not previously done specifically for Israeli-Palestinian activism. The hypothesis in favor of nonviolent activism was not supported by the results that showed that joint struggle between Israeli and Palestinian activists was the most effective. Altogether, this project filled the research gap that lacked the comparison of strategies between grassroots movements in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

It was suggested by the results that grassroots movements leaders should use joint activism most often in order to create peace in the midst of conflict. Violent or armed struggle should be avoided by these grassroots activists because of its ineffectiveness. Joint activism was coded as high success the most often most likely because it included cooperation from both sides of the conflict and occurred in a greater variety of places. Nonviolent activism was also shown to be effective probably because it was used in a peaceful way and demoralized the Israeli government. Direct talks and peace negotiations were not the most effective likely because there were several disagreements between the negotiators that could not be resolved. The least effective strategy was violent struggle, probably because violent actions lead to more violence from the opposing side rather than a change in mindset. This study was important because it provided the first comprehensive outlook on different strategies for grassroots activism in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and their relative success.

The analysis of grassroots activism can account for political and social changes in the conflict. In addition, this analysis could be used for grassroots movements leaders in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, there was inevitably some arbitrariness in this method, although there were measures taken to decrease its overall subjectivity.

The results of this study were consistent with other studies proving the effectiveness of joint activism. Previous studies on grassroots activism, including those used for the thematic synthesis, were focused on several specific strategies for grassroots activism without explicitly stating which strategy was most recommended. For instance, Pallister-Wilkins from the School of Oriental and African Studies discussed the joint activism in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and how it transcended previous theories of social activism (Pallister-Wilkins, 2009). Its relation to anarchist ideas and post-structuralism were also discussed, but the effectiveness of joint activism in the conflict was not analyzed. Moreover, there was an analysis completed by Giulia Daniele, PhD from Sant' Anna School of Advanced Studies and University of Exeter, that focused on Israeli-Palestinian women's activism in both joint activism and nonviolent struggle (Daniele, 2013). While this study was related to activism in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the paper had a smaller scope, looking only at women's activism. Therefore, this study effectively uncovered previously unknown information important for both grassroots activists and scholars studying the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Future Directions

This project can be used as a starting point for further quantitative and qualitative approaches analyzing more than one strategy of grassroots activism in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The relative effectiveness of these strategies could be compared to the effectiveness of similar strategies in other regions that use grassroots activism. More studies analyzing how grassroots activism may be used in the future for effecting political and social change in the conflict can be helpful for future leaders and politicians. Additionally, coding of more journal articles in a thematic synthesis could be completed for a broader and more comprehensive qualitative meta-syntheses.

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