

The Palestine Solidarity Movement in Ireland and the UK:

Mediating and Framing Palestine Online

by

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Declaration

I, Shadi Abuayyash, certify that this thesis is entirely my own work, and I have not obtained a degree in this University, or elsewhere, on the basis of this thesis.

Shadi Abuayyash

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Abstract

This research explores the Palestine Solidarity Movement's contemporary collective action in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland and the impact of online media on the dynamics of the movement's activism. It does so through examining the movement's strategies, in particular on advocacy, lobbying and the mediation of Palestine via the World Wide Web.

The research provides insight into the movement's activism as it is influenced by Internet interactive platforms, particularly the social media sites Facebook and Twitter, in a global solidarity context.

The importance of this thesis lies in its contribution to the body of research that examines the effect of the Internet and its interactive social platforms on national and transnational mobilising, organising and mediation within the Palestinian–global context.

A textual and contextual analysis of the movement's communication dynamics online has been applied to better understand the frames that have been adopted, and the forms of representation that have been used in mediating the question of Palestine between 2011 and 2014.

The research also offers new knowledge and understanding of the contemporary mediation of Palestine both as a location where the displacement of an entire people is taking place and as a symbol of an indigenous struggle that global activists relate to.

The contribution to the movement's activism of its online presence is identified through examining the continuous nature of the online communication between the movement and its activists, and through identifying the expansion of the movement's online communities.

Social media sites contribute to empowering activists by enabling them to organise better both online and offline, enabling a process of mediating Palestine, and facilitating engagement with like-minded activists locally and globally. Furthermore, the social

media sites maximise the number of engaged global citizens in organised media advocacy and online lobbying campaigns.

This research concludes that the use of online platforms for lobbying parliamentarians on the case of Palestine is growing and is becoming more established on the Internet. In addition, the framing analysis found that a resistance frame had been re-introduced in the movement's online discourse through university-based campaigns that articulated and amplified the resistance aspect of the Palestinian political prisoners' hunger strike.

Although the movement is engaged in many aspects of the Palestinian struggle, including supporting the Palestinian resistance, its collaboration with the Palestinian national movement was found to be limited.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

BBC.....	The British Broadcasting Corporation
BDS.....	Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions
ECCP.....	European Co-ordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine
EU.....	European Union
Fatah.....	Palestinian National Liberation Movement
Hamas.....	Islamic Resistance Movement
ICTs.....	Information and Communications Technologies
IPSC.....	Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign
ISM.....	International Solidarity Movement
NGOs.....	Non-governmental Organisations
PFLP.....	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PLC.....	Palestinian Legislative Council
PLO.....	The Palestine Liberation Organisation
PNA.....	The Palestinian National Authority
PSC.....	Palestine Solidarity Campaign UK
SMO.....	Social Movement Organisation
SPSC.....	Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign
TSMO.....	Transnational Social Movement
UK.....	The United Kingdom
USA.....	The United States of America

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Chapter 1: Introducing the Research

1.1 Introduction: Solidarity and Mediation of Palestine on the Internet

Researching human communications at the individual and mass level not only sets our mediatised age in a historical context, but also provides insight into the factors that affect the dynamics of human communication.

There are many reasons for studying the varied influences new media are having on contemporary society. New media are clearly embedded in many levels of communication today, and play at least as active a part as any of the other factors that structure communication. They are not only advancing human interaction, but are also having an effect on and, in some cases transforming, other human practices, including political participation.

Examining how groups organise social and political actions through the analysis of communications among participants produces knowledge not only about the mediated ideas and messages exchanged, but also about the changing forms of the communication structures used in collective action.

The ongoing debate about the role that new media play in shaping contemporary society, in particular political engagement and participation, has gained attention in media and communication studies as well as in other fields of social sciences such as political science and sociology (Garrett, 2006). In recent years, much research in communication, sociology and political science has been focused on examining the power of the Internet, in particular social media sites, to advocate and mobilise and its effect on shaping contemporary grassroots popular movements. The popular grassroots movements, the so called 'Arab Spring' that took place in the Arab world, starting in Tunisia in late 2010 and moving to Egypt and other countries in the region, in protest over social injustice and directed against the governing regimes, have been subject to examination from several perspectives. These include their similarities with popular movements driven by social changes in the West, such as the Occupy Movement. There has been research into the similarities between the two contexts, including the use of the Internet, the occupying of space and networking (Castells, 2012).

Palestine has a different communication context that distinguishes it from the rest of the Arab region or Western countries, so, when the new media that bridge time and space were introduced, a lot of attention was given to the new opportunities this media could provide for the Palestinians and their supporters in the communication arena. The use of advanced Internet platforms has been of benefit to the Palestinians, as it has helped them to connect to the external world, including to Palestinians in exile, and to form transnational connections (Aouragh, 2010). The global forum of the Internet has also provided an effective platform for mediating constant live information on Palestine and its people living under Israeli control.

The new media's ability to enable users to engage in two-way communication with local and international actors has arguably also had a positive impact on the Palestinian political struggle for independence and self-determination. It has enabled local actors to engage in constant communication on the Internet, aimed at advancing the Palestinian narrative.

Traditionally, the Palestinian national movement has welcomed the presence of foreign media reporters in occupied Palestine and the West Bank, including Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. It believed that reporters provide an opportunity for the movement to promote its narrative and to show the world audience the brutality of the Israeli occupation. However, the world media, in particular western mainstream media, have always been accused of giving in to political influences that forced them to censor the Palestinian narrative, and provide biased coverage of the nature and context of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict. With the increasing use of Internet-based interactive platforms, new opportunities may have opened up for the Palestinian national movement to advance its narrative and reach international online audiences directly in order to present their case effectively to world public opinion.

The Palestinian–Israeli conflict mainly takes place in Palestine, yet the battle of the two sides to attract the support of the international community, which could mean gaining political support for their cause, takes place globally including on the Web. The traditional negative portrayal of Arabs, including Palestinians by the large media corporations in the western world, and the limited access that western societies have to

information about the reality of living under Israeli control in Palestine, however, have all helped to make the Israeli narrative dominant in many social circles in the USA and Europe.

The developing Internet interactive platforms, on the other hand, have been seen as a new arena, in which the Palestinians can tell their own story directly to global audiences. That is not to suggest that the social media sites have had a great impact on the conflict in favour of the Palestinians narrative, but it can be argued that they have the potential to be an effective channel through which to tell the Palestinian side of the story.

Among the opportunities that the new media provide for the Palestinian narrative to be advanced among global audiences is that of mediating Palestine on the World Wide Web. Mediation consists of the communicated processes through which the production of ideas and their representation take place, and it can also introduce narrative to audiences. Yet representation, whether through text, image or moving image, is also a dynamic process of framing that puts the narrative into a particular perspective, as ‘media representations ... contain specific frames that guide interpretation and understanding’. (Siapera 2010, p. 117). Thus, understanding mediation requires that we pay attention to several components, including the means of representation, the frames used and the context in which the process is taking place.

This research enquiry examines the online communication dynamics of a growing solidarity movement with Palestine in Ireland and the United Kingdom (UK). It analyses these dynamics through the examination of the movement’s processes of mediating Palestine and its associated frames. Such framing processes have proved to be an essential component of research into understanding how social movements build their perspectives on conflictual issues.

1.2 Focus of the Research

This research project is about the significance of the Internet as a venue for expression, for mediating messages and as a mobilising tool, as used by the solidarity groups involved in the Palestinian cause. Specifically, this research studies the Palestine

Solidarity Movement in the Republic of Ireland and the UK from two angles: communication and social movements.

Through more than four years of research and exploration, this inquiry has examined the Palestine Solidarity Movement's building activism for Palestine. This grassroots movement has demonstrated solidarity with the people of Palestine within the Irish and British social and political contexts. The enquiry has studied the effects of Internet use on the movement's contemporary activism, particularly the way in which Facebook and Twitter have been used for advocacy, mobilising collective action.

This dissertation consists of two sections, and is divided into eight chapters. Chapters one to three introduce the research context and the research questions, provide a historical overview of the global political factors that led to the rise of the solidarity movement, and explain the methodological approach adopted. Chapters four to seven study the movement's communication practices in relation to internal and external networking, advocacy and lobbying in specific case studies. Chapter eight provides discussion and conclusions.

The research examines the use of Internet-mediated interactive platforms constructed by leading solidarity groups, and the extent to which this impacts on and shapes the movement's communication strategies for organising, advocacy, awareness raising, networking and lobbying. It looks at how cyber space has become an alternative platform for disseminating the discourse and political message of activists. It also examines the context in which the movement operates, both online and offline.

While the research identifies and studies the impact of online interactive platforms on the movement's structure of mediation and the collaboration of its activists, it is the movement itself that is the centre of this research. The focus of this research work is how the movement's communications for mobilising, organising and mediating are influenced by social media, and the Internet in general. That is to say, the dependent variable in the thesis is the solidarity movement: the thesis looks at how the Internet has an impact on and influences the way that the movement communicates and thus shapes the movement's activism.

The impact of the Internet, particularly Facebook and Twitter, on contemporary political participation has been studied from several angles. A great deal of research has been conducted on the dynamics of the new social movements, including how they communicate, mobilise and organise collective action in the digital age. However, the extent to which such sites are fully embedded in the shaping of the growing global movement's solidarity in relation to the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, and the movement's mediation of Palestine on the web requires further research. In particular, it requires examination of how the sites are used for communication, advocacy, reporting and informing, mobilising, connecting and networking, and framing the conflict.

The project was motivated by several elements – personal, professional, and academic. These include the researcher's involvement in university-based political activism for Palestine, in Palestine and Scotland; the desire to explore the extent to which the new Internet-based interactive platforms might affect participation in political advocacy, particularly within a Palestinian-related context; how Palestine is represented by its global supporters; and the opportunity provided by the Digital Arts and Humanities doctoral programme at the National University of Ireland Galway.

The research has been conducted through a combination of social science qualitative research methods, which include theory, methods and analysis from sociology, in particular research on social movements, and from media and communication, including mediation.

The argument of this research is based on the major findings from the data provided through data collection methods, including observing the movement's online and on-the-ground advocacy and mobilising practices over several periods between 2011 and 2015. The arguments in this dissertation are based on conclusions about the movement's construction of local and transnational networks, through which it has built a particular mode of coordination with allies; its lobbying campaigns; the mobilising of its followers and supporters for solidarity actions; the advocating of Palestinians rights; and trends in the mediating of Palestine on social media sites.

The analysis concludes that the movement's groups in Ireland and the UK are becoming ever more engaged with their activists, supporters, followers, and other components of the global solidarity movement through online interaction. That makes the movement a frontrunner within the noticeably growing online solidarity communities. Even more, the constant interaction on the web, enabled by popular social media sites, mainly Twitter and Facebook, both between the leaders of the movement and their supporters and among the supporters themselves, contributes to strengthening the dialogue among solidarity activists and influences the construction and amendment of old and newly adopted frames.

There is little doubt that the new media have influenced the solidarity movement's communication in several ways. There is daily reliance on digital means of communicating with counterparts and allies, on informing online followers of the escalating situation in Palestine and the actions organised in response, on challenging the mainstream media's biased coverage of the conflict and on motivating activists and followers to take part in organised web-based lobbying of parliamentarians and candidates on Palestine, including coordinating transnational lobbying efforts with other European solidarity groups. All these indicate that the solidarity movement operates within a digitally influenced form of activism through which the Palestinian political struggle is mediated in cyber space.

Within a media-saturated environment, Palestine is constantly represented in the Internet arena within the political context of the struggle with the Israeli occupier. Although the movement still relies heavily on international law norms and human rights principles in framing the conflict, focusing on Palestinians as victims through text, images and moving images, the student solidarity groups within the movement were found to be more outspoken in their support of the Palestinian resistance. The re-emergence of the resistance frame within the student-led campaigns – which had not been a major element after the Oslo accords of 1993 – is becoming clearer, partly due to regional and local Palestinian factors, but also because different voices within the movement became easily identified due to the interactive and open nature of social media sites.

Interestingly enough, during the final stage of the research writing, it became clear that a new wave of Palestinian popular uprisings that challenge the Israeli military occupation is taking place, with the younger generation taking the lead in what may be the third Intifada. In this new uprising, the solidarity movement has been operating in a similar way in communicating, informing, organising and mobilising for solidarity collective actions as it did during the periods studied in this research between 2011 and 2014. Challenging the mainstream media coverage of the uprising, actively engaging with global solidarity actors online, and coordinating actions on the ground with local allies all took place in October 2015. That is to say, the use of the Internet as reported, interpreted and analysed in this research project is increasingly embedded in the movement's organisation and advocacy.

1.3 Academic Context

The way in which the development of information and communications technologies (ICTs) has affected human life in recent times has provided academia with a wide range of possible areas for study and investigation. Within these, researchers have had significant questions related to the impact of ICTs on contemporary societies. As a result of the great impact of digitisation in our lives, it is not surprising that digital arts and humanities have emerged as fields of study.

Advances in communications have unique potential to enable activists in grassroots movements to exchange information freely, as opposed to through traditional controlled vertical communication (Castells, 2000b). Advances in ICTs have had important and positive effects in terms of the freedom to exchange information between movement members and the use of channels for exchanging ideas, all contributing to the implementation of communication strategies and the delivery of messages to wider audiences.

All of this contributes to maintaining and organising collective action. Collective action is one of the characteristics that define the concept of a social movement (Tarrow, 1996, 2011; Melucci, 1996; Diani and McAdam, 2003; Della Porta and Diani, 1999) and is an area that has benefited considerably from the development of ICTs, as they became more cost effective, frequent and wide ranging.

Among the features of the rise of ICTs is the creation of a new media environment that challenges mass media monopoly of power and provides movements with ‘alternative means for mobilisation, communication and representation’ (McCurdy, 2013) (p. 59).

Within this environment, there are not only opportunities for competing with the mass media in reaching public and wider audiences, but also with the alternative media, in which blogs, websites and social media sites that are managed by individuals and organised movements provide different perspectives on news of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict.

While the struggle in Palestine has a different dynamic to that of the social movements, social media has proved from its early stages its influence on the mediation of Palestine, and the Israeli–Palestinian media battle in general. Referring to the Israeli assault on Gaza in 2009 in what was named operation ‘Cast Lead’, Ward (2009) argues in favour of the role of social media, and the opportunity they offer to many concerned citizens around the globe who are eager to engage in mediation of the conflict:

Social media are playing a growing role in the current conflict for several reasons. There is a natural increase in use of the technologies, especially in the Arab World as internet penetration rates continue to grow. The decades-festering Arab-Israeli conflict has built and galvanized large constituencies around the world who are eager to lend their side a hand in the media battle

(2009, p. 2)

There is little doubt that the new media have influenced the solidarity movement’s communications in several ways. There is daily reliance on digital means of communicating with counterparts and allies, on informing online followers of the escalating situation in Palestine and the actions organised in response, on challenging the mainstream media’s biased coverage of the conflict and on motivating activists and followers to take part in organised web-based lobbying of parliamentarians and candidates on Palestine, including coordinating transnational lobbying efforts with other European solidarity groups.

Although this research studies the solidarity movement's use of Facebook and Twitter, it does not discuss the notion of such sites as the products of capitalist business, but rather looks at them from the perspective of the activists, who seem to endorse them as a useful tool. Aouragh (2012) considered this point when she looked at mediation and social media within the 'Arab Revolutions'. She saw the Internet as a tactical feature, arguing that it should be appreciated for what it means for activists themselves.

In the broader theoretical dimension, this research project is concerned with three elements of the communication process, namely the sender, the message and the medium. It looks at their relation to the collective action that takes place within the solidarity movement, including how it is framed.

While the research pays close attention to the communication processes that consist of the interaction of online users who are following the studied groups' accounts on Twitter and Facebook, it is limited to the content produced, which it looks at in relation to representation, framing and followed action. It does not deal with reception however. The examination of the possible impact of the movement's message on Irish and British public opinion towards Palestine in relation to the conflict is a very relevant and needed research task. Such a study could be conducted through an audience-feedback research project. This thesis, however, is concerned with the development of the disseminated message and the context in which it is structured. Audience research remains valuable and research worthy, but it would require a specific audience research method that does not form part of this research project.

Studying the communication processes of social movements, particularly their discourse and accompanying communication strategies, provide insights into the movements themselves and how they see the world and the cause that they advocate. In order to understand social movements, it is vital to examine and better understand the communication processes through which they interact, connect with counterparts and institutions and endeavour to maintain themselves (Stewart *et al.*, 2012).

1.4 Rationale for the Choice of Research Subject

The nature of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict and the uniqueness of the Palestinian cause, which have always been present in the collective consciousness of Arabs and Muslims and have been considered as a popular global icon for fighting oppression and colonialism around the world, have attracted support and sympathy from regional and global political and social movements.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Fatah and the other components of the national movement, particularly the Palestinian factions on the left, increased their alliances with global and regional political and revolutionary movements. Throughout its history, the Palestinian national movement has been forced into political and then military conflict with regional and global forces to defend its political independence and to maintain what has come to be known in the national political literature as ‘the independent national decision’. The movement has also been aware of the importance of non-state players, particularly the political and social movements, that support its aims of freedom and justice, and encouraged the notion of global solidarity with Palestine and its people’s struggle.

The continuation of the Palestinian struggle for freedom and liberation, the development of the Palestinian national movement’s relations and alliances with regional and global grassroots actors, the continuous Israeli policies of displacement and control applied against the Palestinians, and the failure of the global political community to achieve justice for the Palestinian people have all contributed to an increase in support for the Palestinians regionally and globally at grassroots level. As a result, organised efforts to increase awareness of the Palestinian cause were established in the form of solidarity groups around the world.

These organised solidarity efforts varied in their structure, names and forms of operation, yet they shared the moral, ethical and humanistic motivations of being engaged in solidarity with the Palestinian people. Said (2004) states that equality and justice are the main motivators that influence the stance of solidarity activists around the globe on Palestine.

The Palestinian struggle for justice is especially something with which one expresses solidarity, rather than endless criticism and exasperated, frustrating discouragement, and crippling divisiveness. Remember the solidarity here and everywhere in Latin America, Africa, Europe, Asia and Australia, and remember also that there is a cause to which many people have committed themselves, difficulties and terrible obstacles notwithstanding. Why? Because it is a just cause, a noble ideal, a moral quest for equality and human rights.

(Said 2004, p. xvii)

Different forms of collective action movements are focused on solidarity with the Palestinian cause. Castells distinguishes between political and social movements, explaining that, although in practice the two mix all the time, the aim of political movements is to intervene within the established system of the state, which may include transforming power within the state, while the aim of social movements is ‘transforming the values of society, the way people think’¹ about an issue. This notion is closely applicable to the solidarity movement in the West. Although the movement aims at engaging with decision makers to positively lobby them on Palestine, it is more involved in strategically changing people’s perception of Palestinians, that is to say, opening the eyes of Western societies to the Israeli occupation policies through campaigns of public advocacy and awareness raising.

The leading Ireland and UK-based Palestine solidarity groups present an appropriate case for study because they are increasingly becoming active not only in advocacy, but also in mobilising, and pushing forward the Palestinian question to the media and within social–political local contexts. Palestine may not be perceived as a mainstream global problem within western societies, including Ireland and Britain, in the immediate future. However, there are both internal and external factors that suggest that the solidarity movement may form the basis for a much stronger mainstream movement in the longer term. Such a movement would have a better level of resources and participation and

¹ London School of Economics and Political Science (2011). Manuel Castells on Social Movements in the Age of the Internet. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rXGgvPGdu34>(Accessed: 20 May, 2015).

could have an impact on European policy makers and their decisions about the Palestinian–Israeli conflict.

Relevant external factors, such as the continuous Israeli oppression and the policies of displacement and land theft, contribute to the expansion of support for the Palestinian national struggle. However, Israel has been enjoying strong political and economic relations with governments of the main global political powers, particularly in Europe and the USA, along with friendly relations with the mainstream media. These are all built on mutual interest and promoted by well-resourced pro-Israel lobbying groups. The growing support for the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement among academics, students and unions, pioneered by solidarity groups, the increasing level of alliance building, the challenging of the mainstream media framing of the conflict, and the extensive use of new media for advocacy, mobilisation and lobbying purposes. All would suggest that the solidarity movement has a realistic opportunity of becoming a force that could affect policies.

While the solidarity movement is a growing global movement that advocates for Palestine, it is neither a political nor a social movement according to the traditional definition of the terms. However, the practices of its leading groups are very similar to those of the new social movements, in particular its networking structures, advocacy practices, mobilising efforts and use of new media.

1.5 Contribution of Research

An important contribution of this research project is its examination of how the Palestinian cause is being re-introduced to the world by its global supporters through the use of new media at a time when the world is largely dominated by digital modes of communication. It also provides an understanding of how the activism of social movements is being influenced by the new media.

Studying the solidarity movement in Ireland and the UK provides the opportunity to glimpse how globalising the Palestinian cause is being mediated by European supporters. It provides a different perspective from the Palestinian or Arab contexts. Globalisation of the Palestinian cause is not a recent phenomenon, as the cause has been

conceptualised as a symbol for global struggle against the powers of imperialism and oppression since the 1960s and 1970s, and continues to be an icon in the media for contemporary global conflict.

The 'Palestinian cause' is a paradox. The combination of internationalization and of global media attention has resulted in wide circulation with the added jeopardy of being 'picked up' across various networks as a cause that can be tied to, added onto, or subsumed under other issues. The cause is an icon of oppression, colonization, neoliberal globalization, Islamophobia, and so on.

(Tawil-Souri, 2015, p. 154)

Mediating Palestine is as old as the age of the conflict, and has been rich material for the traditional media, including the mainstream news media. The presence of the news media in the occupied Palestinian lands has always been a welcomed opportunity through which the Palestinians could give their story and voice to the world. From the early stages of the history of their national movement, the Palestinians established their own media outlets. In Palestine, this was through independent initiatives, as the national newspapers were subject to continuous direct military censorship by the Israeli authorities. Outside Palestine, the PLO leadership in exile established its own magazines, news agency (Wafa), newspapers and radio (Voice of Palestine). In addition, many leading Palestinian parties had their own media departments and publications.

With the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) after the Oslo accords, under which the PLO leadership returned to Palestine, further advanced media institutions were established, particularly the Palestinian Broadcast Cooperation, which included national TV (Palestine TV), radio (Voice of Palestine), and, at a later stage, a satellite channel, all of which started broadcasting from the cities of Jericho and Gaza and later from Ramallah. However, this gradual development of Palestinian media institutions, which mainly carried content in the Arabic language, has not widely reached international audiences, and therefore has not been able to make the impact on the western audience's perceptions of the Palestinians.

The traditional mainstream media corporations, in particular in Europe and the USA, have been seen by many Palestinians and their supporters as biased. According to Palestinian activists, their coverage of the conflict constantly undermines the Palestinian rights and focuses on the dissemination of the Israeli narrative. Although the Palestinians acknowledge the importance of the international media for the ability they still have to reach international audiences, the development of new media has enabled the strategy of reaching that international audience directly through Internet platforms. This may have an effect on the perception of Palestine by Westerners, including in Ireland and Britain.

In this regard, this project studies the feasibility of using new online media to construct horizontal communication that enables users to interact with local and global audiences with fewer limitations than through traditional media and opens new windows through which the Palestinian narrative can bypass the censorship of the mainstream global media.

This research explores how supporters of the Palestinian struggle re-introduce Palestine to global English-speaking audiences via the use social media. It does so through examining how the conflict, the Palestinians, and Israeli behaviour is shown by analysing the text, images and frames being used. This will add to the understanding of how a global cause can be reintroduced and reproduced to an audience in a different way through the Internet.

Another aspect of this research is its examination of how the discourse adopted is used in a motivational way. One of the differences between the solidarity movement and social movements is the way its actors' actions are based on achieving change within foreign social and political contexts. Motivated by the values of human rights, the individuals involved in the solidarity movement, as Passy (2001) puts it, do not serve their own interests, but are driven to protest over human rights abuses: 'human rights violations form the main grievance that underlines its mobilization' (p. 8).

How the norms and language of human rights, serving as the basis for advocating for the rights of the Palestinians, have been clearly embedded in the discourse of the Palestine-

organised solidarity groups is a concept that has been addressed previously (Tawil-Souri, 2015; Landy, 2013). This research project further analyses how this discourse serves as material for framing the conflict and as a motivational factor in encouraging potential supporters and participants to collective action.

This research project also contributes to the further examination of the massive level of networking that takes place through social media sites. The research explores the extent to which solidarity groups are using the Internet to advance networking between their supporters, followers and allies in civil society organisations. The idea of expanding networking including collaboration to include online networking between followers of different groups has possible implications for reaching wider online audiences, is worth paying attention to.

1.6 Research Questions

In order to be able to examine the extent to which Internet-based interactive platforms influence the solidarity movement's political activism and contribute to enhancing its channels of communication to activists, it is vital to research extensively how those activists use the Internet for their activism. This research comprehensively maps the main Palestine solidarity activist groups in Ireland and the UK and examines their methods of using the Internet for political activism purposes. It does so through qualitative research consisting of media content analysis, interviews, online questionnaires and participation observation. It aims to answer the following main question:

How does use of the Internet, including interactive social media sites, by the leading Palestine solidarity groups in Ireland and the United Kingdom contribute to the movement's efforts in awareness raising, mobilising, maintaining collective action, lobbying and creating local and transnational networks?

The research also attempts to provide answers to the following sub-questions:

- How are language, text, image and moving image used in the movement's framing processes?

- What impact does the use of the Internet have on the sustainability of activists' collective action?
- How is Palestine mediated by its supporters on the Internet?
- To what extent does the mediation of the solidarity movement's advocacy, mobilisation and collective action contribute to building online communities of solidarity activists?

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The study's limitations lie in what it does not offer. Since the focus of the study is the agency and communication structure, that is, the medium – in this case the Internet – along with the mediated message content, the research does not provide comprehensive material on audience feedback. Although an examination of the feedback from the online audience and the effect of interaction with Internet-mediated platforms on the understanding of global political conflicts, in particular the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, is a seductive topic of research, this research inquiry is limited to the studied movement's role in narrating and advocating the message and the ways it uses available resources, including new media. That is to say, this research is concerned with the message and the medium, and does not go further to examine the reception of the message and its effect.

Another limitation of this research is related to the chosen case study. The project provides an understanding of how the use of the Internet contributes to the solidarity groups' methods of activism for Palestine. This can provide a general overview relevant to the activism of similar movements. However, this examination excludes the individual use of the Internet by those activists who are very engaged online through their personal accounts on social media sites.

A further limitation of the study is that its coverage of the solidarity movement is limited to the Republic of Ireland and the UK. Although the review of the few previous studies that have examined the relationship between new media and solidarity movements in the American context would suggest that there are similarities in

discourse and networking, the inquiry examines the research questions within the limited geographical spaces of the Republic of Ireland and the UK.

Another possible focus for looking at the role of the Internet in influencing the perception of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict would have been the study of Hasbara. Hasbara is a Hebrew term that translates as public relations or public diplomacy; it refers to the Israeli government’s official efforts – noticeable on social media sites – to justify their mistreatment of the Palestinians, counter the Palestinian narratives and portray them negatively for the international media and audiences. The study does not examine such Israeli PR efforts on the Internet. Further research to include examination of this Israeli-organised propaganda would be useful but would need a differently focused study, period of analysis and context.

1.8 Outline of Chapters

The thesis consists of theoretical and practical components. Through chapters one to three, the text maps the research questions, the theories and the main debates that guide the research, such as on new social movements, new media and activism, and the concept of mediation, as well as the methods used and applied in this research enquiry. Chapters four to seven examine the studied phenomena through applying the theories to four different cases at four different time periods between 2012 and 2014.

1.8.1 Chapter 1: Introducing the Research

This chapter introduces the context in which the research is taking place, the justification for the choice of case study, and the questions it sought to answer, along with its contribution and limitations. It also provides an outline of the main theoretical debates on the central theoretical concepts, mainly in the fields of social movements and communication studies. It consists of a literature review of the concepts of new social movements, including collective action and networks; other forms of movements, including transnational social movements and solidarity movements; and new media-related concepts, including interactivity, online activism and mediation.

1.8.2 Chapter 2: Methodology and Research Design

This chapter addresses the methodology that the researcher adopts for this empirical research. It consists of two main theoretical sections, the first concerned with the qualitative approach to data collection, which includes interviews, a literature review, observation and analysis of online content. The second section provides an introduction to the analysis used, in particular to framing analysis borrowed from studies of social movements.

1.8.3 Chapter 3: Historical Context

This chapter provides a historical overview of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, covering the main phases of the conflict, the role of state and non-state actors, and a historical perspective of the solidarity movement and its re-birth in 2000. Then it shifts the focus toward the use of new communications and information technologies in contemporary solidarity activism.

1.8.4 Chapter 4: The Internet, Reflections of Modest Coordination

This chapter maps the major active solidarity groups in the UK and Ireland, along with classification of their main forms of organised collective action. Through examination of the actions and relations of these groups, internationally and regionally, this chapter distinguishes the leading groups and their geographical distribution in the two countries, along with an overview of their presence on the Internet. It also examines the movement from the perspective of networking, particularly collaborative relations with local allies, including methods of building coalitions with components of civil society in the two countries.

1.8.5 Chapter 5: The Prisoners' Hunger Strike Campaign: Factors in change of Frame

This chapter focuses on the campaign led by Scotland-based students in support of the Palestinian political prisoners' hunger strike in 2012. The analysis is concerned with the framing efforts of the solidarity movement online and offline. It identifies and examines the frames used, particularly the re-introduction of the resistance frame, through applying framing process analysis. The chapter consists of an analysis of the text,

images and moving images used and their relationship to motivating potential participants in collective action within this campaign.

1.8.6 Chapter 6: Lobbying via the World Wide Web

This chapter examines the employment of new technologies by the solidarity movement's activists in their coordinated lobbying campaigns at national and transnational levels. It provides an examination of the movement's coordination at national level during the annual lobbying day of the UK Parliament for Palestine. In addition, it extensively analyses the dynamics of a coordinated online lobbying campaign by leading Ireland-and England-based groups, in coordination with other European counterparts, in response to the European Commission's guideline that prevents funding of Israeli bodies involved in any activity in occupied Palestinian lands within the 1967 borders.

1.8.7 Chapter 7: The War on Gaza Online: Mediating Palestine in Times of Crisis

This chapter examines the movement's use of online media platforms in mediating Palestine during a crisis, in particular during the Israeli military operation against Gaza in 2014. It looks at the representations of the Palestinians, and the frames deployed to provide pro-Palestinian narrative. In doing so, the chapter examines the movement's activities in organising, mobilising and applying collective actions on social media platforms in times of Palestine-related crisis. It analyses how Twitter and Facebook were used to inform followers and the online audiences about the developing situation in Gaza during the Israeli war of 2014, as well as for organising and sharing news of solidarity protests in the two countries, and the movement's online campaigns, challenging mainstream media-biased coverage of the war.

1.8.8 Chapter 8: Discussion and Conclusions

The last chapter of the thesis consists of two sections: the first offers a discussion of the research findings, their relevance and significance; the second provides the conclusions that the research has arrived at, based on the analysis of the data, along with recommendations for further research in this area of inquiry.

1.9 Debate on Main Concepts

This section of the chapter introduces the main theories in the two fields relevant to the research, namely the study of social movements and media studies. It provides a literature review of the main debates on the theoretical concepts that guide the research project. On social movement studies, it lays out the main arguments around the concepts of new social movements, collective action, and networks. On media studies, it covers new media theory, digital activism, interactivity and mediation. In addition, the related concepts borrowed from the field of political science, such as solidarity movements and transnational advocacy networks, as well as a review of the main works that address Internet-activism and mediation in the Palestinian context, are covered.

1.9.1 Social Movements, Collective Action and Networks

Scholars in the fields of sociology and political science have developed a substantial literature addressing concepts of collective action, framing processes and the networking of transnational and social movements (Benford and Snow, 2000; Della Porta and Diani, 1999; Diani, 2003; Diani and McAdam, 2003; Keck and Sikkink, 1999; Smith *et al.*, 1997; Snow, 2007; Tarrow, 1996) and others.

This body of literature analyses several aspects of the movements, including collective action, mobilising, resources and networks. The major theoretical concern with which this section deals is the network concept. Establishing the structures and levels of networks within organisations and among activists is a central aim of this study.

The traditional European and American approaches to the study of social movements differ in their examination of how and why social movements emerge: the European scholars contributed to the field by introducing the new social movement theory, while the North American scholars focused on a resource mobilisation approach (Canel, 1997). An attempt to bridge the differences between the two paradigms can be seen in the work of Alberto Melucci and renowned American social movements scholars such as Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly (Vandenberg, 2006).

In mapping the main literature and the scholars who have addressed theories of new social movements, Buechler used the term ‘new social movement’ to refer to a different

group of collective actions, replacing the old social movement of proletarian revolution associated with Marxism. He states that

new social movement theorists have looked to other logics of action based in politics, ideology, and culture as the root of much collective action, and they have looked to other sources of identity such as ethnicity, gender and sexuality as the definers of collective identity.

(1995, p. 442)

Equally important, collective action is a primary element that is considered vital to any social movement. Melucci (cited in Diani, 1992) defines a social movement as:

a specific class of collective phenomena which includes three dimensions: it is a form of collective action which involves solidarity; it is engaged in conflict, and thus in opposition to an adversary who lays claims on the same goods or values; it breaks the limits of compatibility of the system that it can tolerate without altering its structure.

(1992, p. 6)

Furthermore, in a later work, Melucci (1996) defines the term as a:

set of social practices (i) involving simultaneously a number of individuals or groups, (ii) exhibiting similar morphological characteristics in continuity of time and space, (iii) implying a social field of relationships and (iv) the capacity of the people involved of making sense of what they are doing.

(1996, p. 20)

He also emphasises that collective action could be seen as a result of interactions that are mediated through networks of inclusion.

While Melucci here clearly points to the very basic elements that engaged actors who are involved in collective action have in common, generalising this concept to contemporary digitally connected individuals can be problematic. Classical forms of

collective action, in which organised bodies traditionally lead, organise and apply the action, are arguably out of date. Because of the influence of the digital world, centralised movements are no longer the only actors to participate in and organise collective actions. Digitally connected users – who are not necessarily recruited or involved in any movement or organisation – contribute to the public debate on contemporary matters on Internet platforms. A live example can be drawn from the numerous global digital users, many of which are celebrities or actors/actresses, engaged for example on Twitter in public debate on the issue of Palestine; those people are not part of any organised effort around the issue of Palestine.

However, the role of organisations, according to Della Porta *et al.* (2006), has a positive impact in strengthening movements and therefore collective action. They emphasise that organisations capable of providing useful resources for activities play an important role in organisational networks, mobilising activists and sympathisers. The role of a structured body that may lead the effort remains essential for two purposes: to organise networking efforts, and to provide long-term goals to maintain organised collective actions. However, it remains important to acknowledge the role of non-engaged, unorganised actors who engage in these actions, facilitated by new media.

At a movement level, networks formed by ties between movement members are valuable for strengthening solidarity among these individuals, and this has a positive effect on collective action. In this regard, Tarrow (1996) notes that collective action mainly exists and is maintained through face-to-face interaction between actors and through their social networks and institutions. This analysis emphasises not only the important role of organisations in any movement – as important as the role of individuals – but also the crucial part played by social networks in movements.

For Melucci (1996), networks are also important for their role as a key element contributing to internal solidarity and the flow of information between active members of movements.

A movement consists of diversified and autonomous units which devote a large part of their available resources to the construction and maintenance of internal

solidarity. A communication and exchange network keeps the separate, quasiautonomous cells in contact with each other. Information, individuals, and patterns of behaviour circulate through the network, passing from one unit to another, and bringing a degree of homogeneity to the whole.

(1996, p. 113)

Although many renowned scholars see the concept of collective action as a basic element that defines movements (Melucci, 1996; Tarrow, 1998, 2011), others consider networks as vital elements for the mobilisation of social movements. Diani (1995) argues that the level of collaboration in the movement is decided by its members and individuals. This argument is also asserted by Shirky (2008), who sees that, although 'new social tools' i.e. new interactive media platforms, have made sharing costs effective and easy, collaborative production requires commitment from group members at all stages, from decisions to production.

The importance of networks lies in their ability to provide channels of communication to members through which a flow of information is maintained. For movements, networks can represent the frame within which all organisations, activists and allies interact.

Although networking, either through face-to-face interaction or via other means of non-technological communication, has been part of human socialising practices, the development of ICTs has given networking in the digital age a new face. The network, as Castells conceptualises it, is another definition of globalisation, as networks overcome geographical and national boundaries. He does not suggest that all humans are part of networks, but they are affected by their frameworks, modes of communication and power.

For Castells (2000a), the emergence of the network society has been influenced by modes of consumption, production and power within society in the information-technology dominated era. The Information Age, he argues, refers to a 'historical period in which human societies perform their activities in a technological paradigm constituted around microelectronics-based information/communication technologies, and genetic engineering. It replaces/subsumes the technological paradigm of the

Industrial Age, organized primarily around the production and distribution of energy' (Castells, 2000a, p. 5).

Castells (2005) also argues convincingly that the advancement of ICTs influenced the transformation of social structure over recent decades. Despite this, he suggests that society shapes technology based on its needs, and not the opposite. Moreover, he states that society's new structure, built on ICTs, was the result of other social and political factors: 'I have conceptualized the network society as the social structure resulting from the interaction between the new technological paradigm and social organization at large' (p. 3).

While Dijk believes that networks are as old as humans, explaining that information and communication in the present and in past centuries made it possible to talk about a networked society, he argues that a networked society is 'a modern type of society with an infrastructure of social and media networks that characterizes its mode of organisation at every level: individual, groups/organizational and societal' (Dijk 2012, p. 48).

Shifting from vertical methods of communication that depend on one-way communication to the horizontal multi-user communication method has created what Castells (2000b) refers to as the 'network society'. He puts forward the argument that 'social context' is the third element of the interaction process between the human brain and machines. For him, new electronic communications systems will not change the character of communications alone; culture will also have an impact. This is because of its 'potential interactivity' and role in integrating all communications media. The new 'culture of virtuality' to which he refers is mediated by several political, social and business interests and policies, and has emerged from new communication systems.

This argument may be most applicable in domestic social movements, as ties within these are much more structured, dense and strong among activists, when compared to ties between transnational cross-border activists. That is not to say that movements are only created by personal ties. Shared values, goals, aims and participation in the same activities can create varying levels of linkage between movement members. Diani

(2003) stated that: 'individuals may also be linked through indirect ties, generated by their joint involvement in specific activities or events, yet without face-to-face interaction.' (p. 7)

While indirect ties can be established through participation in collective action, it can also be argued that collective identity or feelings of belonging can increase during on-the-ground actions. Interviews with the activists studied imply that participating in events increases feelings of collective identity among core activists.

For his part, Diani (2003) notes that organisations form major nodes in networks of movements and that ties between organisations can exist in the form of information exchange and combined mobilisation of efforts. On a transnational organisational level, Smith (2002) argues that it is cost effective and provides access to greater resources when transnational social movements join in coalitions.

As much as individual participation in movements is important, relations between organisations and between individuals and organisations are crucial to understanding the structure, ties and sustainability of a movement's network.

Here it is essential to point to ICTs as factors that add value and assist in the construction of networks among the groups that form movements, their counterparts and allies. Based on this understanding, it is clear that the Internet, for example, complements the face-to-face efforts of networking and alliance building and cannot effectively substitute for them.

1.9.2 Transnational and Global Movements

This section examines the primary framework, characteristics and end goals of the transnational solidarity movement.

It has been argued that, since the 1960s, many social, cultural and geographical changes have impacted the organisational environment for social movements. New forms of network have spread across borders as a result of the transfer of power from state to

market and multinational corporations. One development which has consequently taken place is complex internationalism, 'which provides both threats and opportunities to ordinary people, to organised non state actors, and to weaker states' (Della Porta and Tarrow, 2005, p. 2).

Non-state actors and organisations carrying out transnational collective action at a global level have been classified into four types: international non-governmental organisations, transnational advocacy networks, transnational coalitions and transnational social movements (Khagram *et al.*, 2002).

Transnational Social Movements

In examining transnational social movements (TSMOs), Smith (1997) defines the term as a subset of social movements that operate in more than two states. She refers to the increasing numbers of these kinds of movement and the expansion of worldwide institutions. TSMOs reflect the main issues of conflict in the global political realm, as most perform in areas involving defence of human rights, as well as environmental, justice and economic cases (Smith, 2002). While globalisation has encouraged the growth of transnational activism, Tarrow (2005) also found that 'internationalism ... offers a framework, a set of focal points and structure of opportunities for transnational activists' (p. 3).

Factors other than structural and organisational ones may have an impact on the role of transnational movements, as this kind of movement is more common around issues with limited political opportunities at national level (Smith *et al.*, 1997), and the closing off of local opportunities sends activists into the global arena. While it is important to examine the structures afforded by domestic opportunities, it is also necessary to examine the structures of transnational opportunities (Khagram *et al.*, 2002). Transnational movements are not always able to frame a unified approach. Nevertheless, according to McCarthy (1997), human rights represented one of the most successful unifiers in this regard.

Other descriptions of transnational social movements (Maiba, 2005) imply that their frameworks are not necessarily global. Their actors might communicate across two countries only, while a global movement includes actors from more than two continents.

However, Della Porta and Tarrow (2005) suggest that the most important organisations that have emerged as a result of the development of transnational movements focus on issues such as global justice, peace and war or what they call ‘transnational collective action’, which they describe as ‘coordinated international campaigns on the part of networks of activists against international actors, other states, or international institutions’ (p. 2).

As with social movements, identity building is essential for transnational social movements, as it is vital for the ability to carry out collective action and has a positive impact on the ability of movements to sustain and achieve desired changes: ‘TSMOs must advance strategic frames and foster group identities that motivate members to engage in collective action’ (Smith, 2002, p. 506). However, Smith also notes that boundaries created by geographical distance, limited shared experiences, different cultural backgrounds and transaction costs can complicate this process.

Transnational Advocacy Networks

Transnational Advocacy Networks are another transnational form of collective action which, according to Keck and Sikkink (1999), ‘includes those actors working internationally on an issue, bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchange of information and services’. Similarly, Khagram *et al.* (2002) define the term as ‘sets of actors linked across country boundaries, bounded together by shared values, dense exchanges of information and services, and common discourses’.

1.9.3 International Solidarity

Passy (2001) argues that actions taken by solidarity movements can be described as political altruism, involving groups acting on behalf of other groups and interests where the actors do not benefit from the intended social or political change. Baglioni (2001), on the other hand, distinguishes between two kinds of solidarity movement intervention in conflicts – the advocacy and the operational – stating that the former focuses more on

political protection or principles, while the operational is mainly active in working in conflict fields through providing humanitarian aid.

In his working definition of the term, Hope argues that:

international solidarity is a form of international co-operation, involving activists in multiple countries, around the achievement of a specific political struggle. This usually involves co-operation between activists in the Global North and Global South, around a specific Southern issue, but is distinct from international development aid due to its political goals and relation to a shared solidarity discourse. Encompassing both normative and descriptive elements, international solidarity is both a form of political action and an idealized conception of transnational relations.

(2011, p. 14)

Although each form of collective action at the national and international levels requires a different definition in terms of the scope of its action and aim, similarities among them can be noticed through examining their methods of networking, actions, and use of available resources such as interactive new media, including the Internet and its social media sites.

Each theme in this thesis is examined within the communication process of the movement, shaped by and taking place mainly on the Internet. Networking, collective action, framing process and mediation are all addressed significantly in different chapters. However, we need to look at these themes as interplaying factors that interact and shape the movement in relation to the Internet as a whole.

Benford and Snow's work on the theory of the framing processes including frame articulation and amplification guides the analysis. Three chapters cover the framing processes of the movement from two angles. The first identifies possible reasons behind the re-introduction and growth of the resistance frame in the movement's online platforms. In doing so, it looks at the political and historical factors that contribute to the appearance of this frame; it also refers to other Internet-related factors that facilitated

this appearance. The other two chapters analyse the motivation and articulation of the movement's frames that are dominated by the human rights agenda, in relation to on-the-ground collective action.

In the discussion sections at the end of chapters 4 to 7 there are considerable references to related empirical studies to enrich the analysis and to compare findings, particularly in relation to the framing processes. These include Voltolini's (2015) study that focuses on a different non-governmental organisation role in framing and formulating new frames to influence the EU policy makers in relation to the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, and Ben Moussa's (2013) study that discusses frame articulation and amplification within the solidarity movement in relation to Morocco.

Tarrow's conceptualisation of political opportunity relates to the efforts of social and political movements to change policies and systems and engage in the political processes. In this thesis, the opportunities relate to the movement's efforts to amplify its media messages on advocacy, particularly through the online web, and especially during rising crisis in Palestine.

1.9.4 New Media and Contemporary Activism

Since the emergence of digitally based electronic devices, users have enjoyed the most interesting aspect of the newly created technology, which is an increased level of interactivity. From computers through mobile phones to digital TVs, the more interactively based technology made it easier for users to become involved in the production of an outcome. In other words, users are no longer receivers only, with a low ability for interaction, but can be active in creating an outcome themselves.

In contrast to traditional media, where the order of presentation is fixed, the user can now interact with a media object. In the process of interaction, the user can choose which elements to display or which paths to follow, thus generating a unique work.

While this section introduces the definition of new media, the thesis in general takes an analytical approach and focuses on online interactive platforms, better known as social media sites. As opposed to traditional or 'old media', new media in this thesis is defined from the perspective of online interactivity. That is to say, the nature of this media,

particularly the Internet-based platforms in which users have greater scope for interaction with the content including the production of new content that can now easily be shared within Internet-based communities, is an important aspect that has an impact on the areas of mediation, mobilising and organisation.

Notion of Interactivity

Though interactivity, with all of its different definitions and various characteristics, is a feature of digital media, it also relates to other types of human engagement. Manovich avoids using the term ‘interactivity’ solely in relation to digital media, and Kress and Van Leeuwen (Thomas and Roda, 2005) stated that there is no communication without interaction.

Nevertheless, this interactive characteristic of new digital media has affected, to some extent, our way of communicating. It provides us with the ability to choose the content, time and norm of production. Furthermore, users are getting involved in the creation and shaping of content. Viewers/users who were passive receivers of TV, radio and newspaper products are now fully active users of the new interactive digital media.

The notion of the advanced interactivity of users has attracted many authors to try to define, describe and study it, yet they have failed to reach a unified definition. That is because it is a wide concept, shaping our perception and relation with communicated media. Looking at interactivity will reveal social implications if it is studied within the network communications frame (Bucy, 2004).

McMillan (Cover, 2006, p. 142) suggests that there are four main levels of interactivity: allocution, which requires minimum engagement; consultation, which can be interactive but with not much involvement from the user; registration, which is concerned with recording patterns of access; and conversational, which occurs while mimicking face-to-face contact through computer-mediated communication technologies.

Thomas and Roda suggest that digital interactivity should be discussed in relation to interactive hypertext, which they describe as ‘multidimensional’. This conceptualisation of digital interactivity suggests that it is not a two-way horizontal method of communication only, but has a clear further dimension.

Multidimensional hypertext at its best takes advantage of and exploits the human tendency to construct narratives to make sense of the world, relying on individual human selection of appropriate stimuli, and human ability not simply to choose links but to create connections, rather than simply following pre-ordained paths.

(2005, p. 5)

The uniqueness of the Internet, as discussed by DiMaggio *et al.* (2001), comes from the space and opportunity it provides for people at a distance to communicate in several ways, publically or privately. Internet users can discuss and chat with each other without previous acquaintance. Having similar interests attracts people into online discussion much more than their geographical location, as the Internet eliminates geographical boundaries and makes it easier for an ‘online community’ to be virtually in one place.

Aouragh (2008) studied the Palestinian online context from an anthropological point of view. She argues in her thesis that:

In the case of Palestine this virtual space is shaped mostly by a continual reference to a particular place. The internet is a tool of communication and can be an alternative meeting ‘space’ where members of virtual communities meet on websites, chat rooms, online discussion lists, email, etc. However, this medium is not divorced from offline reality. It is a ‘space’ that has to be entered via computers, cables, and so on; these are placed in houses, or internet cafés that are located in cities, refugee camps, occupied land, a host country, and so on.

(2008, p. 28)

In his emphasis on how the medium affects the message transmitted, the communications theorist McLuhan (1964) argues that *the medium is the message*, i.e. that the medium that carries the message shapes the interaction between sender and

receiver. In other words, as put by him 'it is the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action' (1964, p. 9).

It has been argued that the major development of ICTs has impacted not only on the media landscape, but also on social relations (Williams, 2003). This has had implications for many aspects of our lives, including political participation and social change activism. Holmes (2005) sees that one result of the advances in ICTs is the ability to associate beyond the boundaries of the nation state, and McQuail (2010) argues that digitalisation and the convergence of all forms of message in one medium are among the distinct aspects of the new media.

For Livingstone (1999), the Internet has new features that integrate interactivity with limitless content, which can reach different types of audience and cover the globe. McQuail (2010) explains that the new media created new opportunities and forms of publication and reception that challenged the old forms, adding that, for the audience role, there are

large possibilities for change, especially in the direction of greater autonomy and equality in relation to sources and suppliers. The audience member is no longer really part of a mass, but is either a member of a self-chosen network or special public or an individual.

(2010, p. 140)

Two decades ago, Neuman (1991) suggested that the new media, which promotes one-to-one communications, allows user control and an expansion of digital networks. Communications are becoming more horizontal, and the new media have provided opportunities for humans to go back to a community-centred society. In other words, digital communications provide further opportunities for horizontal communication, and new media have provided opportunities for humans to go back to a community-centred society.

The horizontal aspect here refers to a shift from the vertical forms of communication that arguably dominated analogue media (Mason, 2014) to digital media which allows masses to masses, as well as individual to individual, communication.

This is unlike the vertical messages which dominated the media during the period of the ‘industrial city’, in which there was little room for the public to express its vision. Livingstone (2009) suggests that, by using both the old vertical and the new horizontal communications, individuals in the new media environment are more engaged with content. Rainie and Wellman (2012) argue that the rise of social media changed the media environment and that ‘networked individuals have new powers to create media and project their voices to more extended audiences that became part of their social worlds’ (2012, p. 13).

This shift has not only created the new concept of the citizen journalist, but it has also enabled political activists to set up their own ‘news-stand’ to disseminate and exchange information, in their websites, social media accounts, blogs, etc. These activist stories could be conveyed in various forms, from text, to image and moving image. A crucial part of this new ability of individuals to enrich the content of the Internet is how activists’ beliefs and ideologies affect the way in which they form, write, edit and frame their stories.

The advanced level of interactivity which is among the distinctive aspects of new media is examined in this thesis through studying the contribution of the solidarity movement’s different components – i.e. the different groups – to solidarity discourse, narration and opinion formation on the web. These contributions that can be seen through examining the contents of the movements’ online accounts are a product of constant interaction with developing events in Palestine, and with the movement’s organisation of collective action.

In other words, interactivity in this thesis refers to the ongoing interaction between the movements’ members on the web through which they produce the contemporary mediation of Palestine by deployment of online content. This content reflects the ordinary victim frame that accords with the movement’s human rights dominated

language, and the non-traditional resistance frame, which, this thesis argues, appeared because of the political context and was facilitated by the notion of interactivity.

Furthermore, this thesis aids understanding of interactivity, by shedding light on the new, non-traditional frames used by the student-led campaign. The campaign's independence enables the students to produce and advocate different frames from their counterparts, as a result of their independent interaction with Internet content.

Communication, New Media and Collective Action Movements

Tarrow (1996) argues that the basic properties of movements are collective challenge, common purpose, solidarity and the sustaining of collective action. Historically, the printing press, as well as campaigns and collective action, contributed to building solidarity among greater numbers of people and spreading ideas to new members of the public. He points out, however, that 'national movements needed more than the "push" provided by print and association to develop; they needed the pull of a common target and a fulcrum of their claims' (p. 61).

What shapes the structures of movements and their ability to seize political opportunities still needs to be examined. These are important strategic elements for activists to consider when constructing and implementing collective action. Tarrow (1996) emphasises that political opportunities encourage actors to transform possibilities into action. Political opportunities are seen by the scholars of mainstream social and political movements as the chance to intervene and change political structures.

Communication has always been key in the development of social movements, their modes of collective action and frameworks. As Mellucci (1995) argues, communication has made the focus of social movements much more cultural. Tarrow (2011) sees the impact of the Internet and ICTs as the most dramatic change in the organisation of social movements. He argues that the Internet has become a tool for organisers, a message-transmitting vehicle. For Castells (2012), the major change brought about by the advancement in ICTs is the way in which messages can now be mass communications or can be tailored to individuals. Messages can be transmitted to audiences, with the messages and receivers being selected by the sender. Schulz (2004) points to the ability

to pick and choose messages received, based on need and interest, and the ability of political actors to communicate with masses or individuals. ‘Political actors, rather than having to adapt to the media logics, can bypass the mass media and use their own channels for directly communicating to the public or to specific target groups’ (2004, p. 95).

For activists, the highly interactive medium of the Internet has given them a place to assemble and to exchange information and experiences. The Internet has also added value to activists’ endeavours to deliver their message to their audience. Holmes (2005) says that ‘compared to broadcast forms of media, the Internet is said to offer free-ranging possibilities of political expression and rights of electronic assembly which encounter far fewer constraints, whether technical, political or social’ (2005, p. 9). Cyberspace, defined by Holmes as ‘any medium which encloses human communication in an electronically generated space’ (2005, p. 45), provides a virtual arena for individuals to communicate publicly and privately.

In addition, the Internet provides a successful solution to the high cost of transactions between TSMOs, which had complicated the process of cross-border activism as well as of locals collaborating and networking. Shirky highlights the significance of ‘social tools’ for collective action and group collaboration:

The cost of all kinds of group activity – sharing, cooperation, and collective action – have fallen so far so fast that activities previously hidden beneath that floor are now coming to light, we didn’t notice how many things were under the floor because, prior to the current era, the alternative to institutional action was usually no action. Social tools provide a third alternative: action by loosely structured groups, operating without managerial direction and outside the profit motive.

(2008, p. 47)

The advancement of communication technologies has had an impact on methods of assembling. For activists, friends, colleagues and family members, new media has facilitated communication and gathering. Ó Dochartaigh (2009) argues that ‘new

technologies increase the mobilization potential of political groupings by bringing vast new audiences within broadcast range of even the most marginal and peripheral groups. This is of particular significance for transnational mobilization efforts' (2009, p. 121).

These movements, which have a 'hostile representation' in the mass media, found that the Internet was a place to express what they believed to be a moral point of view that is in the interest of humanity (Salter, 2003). This kind of global communication allows activists to monitor and learn from the experiences of others and set ethical rules for their actions (Lipschutz, 2005).

Juris (2005) uses the example of the anti-corporate globalisation movement in the last decade, which has succeeded in mobilising protesters during economic forums and corporate representative conferences, as well in coordinating its efforts, through the use of technology.

Since the World Trade Organization protests in Seattle, and through subsequent mobilizations against multilateral institutions and forums in Prague, Quebec, Genoa, Barcelona and Porto Alegre, activists have used e-mail lists, web pages, and open editing software to organize and coordinate actions, share information, and produce documents, reflecting a general growth in digital collaboration.

(p.189)

The term 'activism', which can be seen nowadays to mean mass protesting only, also includes activities such as lobbying policy makers and media representatives. Loudon (2010) points to the example of a South African society that advocates the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS. The group uses ICTs, such as e-mails and mailing lists, to communicate with 'elites, professional groups and media, as well as in the development of local and international movement networks' (2010, p. 1069).

One of the advantages of interactive media is engagement in online discussions of political and social matters. Experiments have proved that using online and offline news

alongside political discussion, face to face and through the Internet, increased political participation prior to the Iraq war (Nah *et al.*, 2006). ‘These results stress the importance of online political discussion as a complement to face-to-face political discussion for political activism, especially when individuals oppose the actions of government and find themselves in the opinion minority’ (p. 240).

However, intensified use of social media for social and political advocacy and mobilisation has not always been seen as an entirely positive influence in contemporary political and social activism. For example, the renowned intellectual Noam Chomsky in a recent interview disregards the importance of the Twitter platform as a source of expanded news and information. He says ‘I don’t look at Twitter because it doesn’t tell me anything. It tells me people’s opinions about lots of things, but very briefly and necessarily superficially, and it doesn’t have the core news’ (Chomsky 2015, para 10). The devaluing of the role of social media sites in political activism, as by Gladwell (2010) in ‘the revolution will not be tweeted’ article, may be argued as due to the overestimation of the role of these tools.

Debating Social Media Influence

The research that examines the relationship between collective action and social media emphasises the mobilising and organising functions, but casts some doubt on the informative aspect. One side of the debate disregards Twitter, for example, as a source of information (Chomsky 2015); others find it an informative arena that provides live news from the ground (Siapera *et al.*, 2015).

The political or social contexts in which Twitter is used may have influenced perspectives on the platform. Siapera *et al.* (2015) studied Twitter during the 2014 war on Gaza from a ‘mediality’ perspective, in which mediality is understood ‘as the specificity of Twitter as a communication medium, the noise it produces or adds to the communication’ (p. 1311). The study found that the witnesses of war now communicated what they had seen of the events of war on Twitter alongside traditional communicators such as governments, militaries, activists and the media.

The rising role of online social media in times of crisis can be traced through observing how users rush to the social media arena to express ideas, debate and discuss these crises and seek further details and possible alternative stories and information that are not necessarily available from corporate TV and traditional media in general.

That is not to say that tweeting is replacing traditional journalism. Making a comparison between social media and traditional news media may not be the best way of examining social media's role in informing online users of world events and crises. Social media is more an arena in which alternative stories, narrative, story details and public discussions can be found, rather than a practical substitute for traditional journalism-based news media.

The maximum 140 characters of a tweet could be considered limited if compared to a newspaper or TV news report. In particular, the probable lack of balanced journalistic reporting in these tweets may imply unreliability. However, the question is not whether social media, in particular Twitter, can replace the traditional reporting of TV and newspapers, but how it differs from them.

This thesis, as well as Siapera et al.'s (2015) work, provides examples of how Gaza-based citizens and activists became a source of information to the outside world. The interaction of their tweets with many users around the world is due to their position at the centre of attention in Gaza. Their tweets were treated as informational news from ground level.

A similar approach to Twitter from a different context can be found in Bruns and Highfield's (2014) study that examined the use of Twitter during the 'Arab Spring' in Egypt and Libya. The study examined the use of Twitter as a communication tool with informational and organisational functions and found differences in terms of the issues discussed that represent local interests.

Another aspect of the informational role of Twitter is the diversified information and stories that its users provide to the world. In that respect, it can be compared to the

traditional media, which have reporters around the world. However, any news that is disseminated on Twitter always requires verification and further examination.

Despite its influence on individual participation and citizen engagement on the web and offline, Fenton and Barassi (2011) argue that social media has overlooked the challenges that Web 2.0 technologies can have for collective groups and collective creativity as a result of the 'self-centered forms of communication' that social media enable and encourage (p. 180).

Social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter are designed on the basis of self-communication, with individuals having personal accounts through which they share their thoughts with their connections. It is this that enables collective action groups to connect with different individuals based on their interest. User interest is one of the elements that empower collective action movements and social media relationships through which mobilisation, information exchange and participation can be enriched.

The research on social movements indicates that the engagement of activists on the web is an essential key for mobilisation (Mercea, 2012), including the mobilisation of the unaffiliated. Mercea's study argues that 'mobilization into activism and the formation of a movement identity may largely hinge on unmediated socialization' (p. 165), and calls for further research on how sociality in these contexts can be maintained through digital communications.

This body of work provides this thesis with a directive angle in which the relation between Internet media as a form of new media and the solidarity movement as a form of collective action can be understood. That is to say, the thesis examines how online media is incorporated in all phases of collective action – organising, participating, and the continuous favourable presentation of Palestine – through the use of particular frames and a specific focus.

Within the media-saturated environment in which contemporary movements act, there are opportunities to engage in public debate on emerging issues, with concerned activists and organisations informing and raising awareness through digital platforms.

This is visible in the solidarity movement's engagement in online campaigns around crises in Palestine, as described in chapter four on the mediatised activism of the solidarity movement. Thus, the political opportunities that Tarrow (1996) refers to are examined in this thesis in relation to the movement's efforts to seize the opportunity of times of crisis to amplify their advocacy.

The increasing success of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign on campus and among academia, unions and civil society in Europe and the United States of America cannot be credited to only the use of new media. Needless to say, these successes came as a result of long strategic on-the-ground campaigning, including discussions and dialogue within academia and civil society organisations. These actions faced many challenges, but were morally justified. Yet, the BDS campaign journey that is characterised by success and challenges has been very salient on the Internet. The Internet is clearly effective in communicating, and also as a venue in which the movement's frames and opinions can be constructed and viewed. That is why this research attempts to evaluate the communication aspects of the movement that is striving to make the Palestinian cause a mainstream issue in Ireland and the UK, as well as in other parts of the world.

Thus, the coming chapters look at the relation between online media and solidarity actions as an interactive process in which the production of a positive and sympathetic perception through mediation process that include representation and framing of Palestine is taking place. They consider how the mediation of Palestine through the Internet has influenced participation in collective solidarity actions.

Mediation

Mediatisation and mediation are at the centre of the debate among media and communications scholars (Schulz 2004; Silverstone 1999). They may have similarities in terms of their subject of concern, but they approach the effects of media on contemporary societies differently. A straight-forward differentiation between the two terms is made by Hepp (2013), who argues that mediation 'is a concept to theorize the process of communication in total; "mediatization", in contrast, is a more specific term to theorize media-related change' (2013, p. 616).

Silverstone (2005) positions mediation in a power formula, as he describes it as ‘fundamentally implicated in the exercise of, and resistance to, power in modern societies’ (2005, p. 190).

There are new forms of production which provide representations adapted to suit the audience and material, whether through text, image, moving image or a combination of all three. In this regard, Silverstone (2002) claims that mediation is involved in all communication, as the mediation process comprises meaning and constructing. He further explains that the mediation aspects, which carry adverse influences, involve elements of ambiguity and paradoxicality, physicality, sociability and ethics.

Another conceptualisation of mediation is suggested by Couldry (2008), who proposes that ‘it may be more productive to see mediation as capturing a variety of dynamics within media flows’ (2008, p. 380), explaining that media flows here are concerned with movement of production as well as circulation and interpretation. The importance of examining mediation processes is more for their ability to provide an understanding of ‘the social structures and agents than because they tell us about “the media” per se’ (Livingstone 2009, p. 4).

Competing over the dissemination of favourable narratives is very salient on the web, and the increasing struggle over the power of information is one aspect of the Internet’s influence over contemporary forms of mediation. The market-driven growth of the Internet provides an accessible and untraditional arena for the exercise of the power of information by excluded actors in all political and social contexts. The Internet is not only an arena for the exercise of the power of information – a growing arena for the struggle between the marginalised and elites – but also an arena for new forms of representation of the people, ideas and causes that are portrayed adversely by the traditional media.

Understanding the process of mediation within media and communication research was found to be very relevant to this thesis. This research analysis is interested in the Internet abilities not only in enhancing internal communications for networking or mobilising activists, but also the way it enables activists to tell their story and deliver content for

targeted audiences, as well as challenging dominant narratives those of mainstream media.

The two are conceptualised in this research as follows. Mediation of Palestine is understood as the presentation of Palestine online by solidarity activists, to provide a different narrative of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict. In this narrative, Palestine is referred to as a victim of Zionism and of Israel’s displacement policies and occupation project. Those efforts also include the re-positioning of Palestine as a symbol of the global struggle against oppression and colonisation, as Tawil-Souri (2015) indicates. In other words, mediation of Palestine in this thesis means how Palestine – with its different roles both as a place and as a symbol – is being presented by the movement on the Internet. This involves particular reference to the work of Tawil-Souri, Aouragh and Siapera, who address mediation within the Palestinian context.

Chapter 2: Methodology and Research Design

2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodological route adopted in conducting the research, including the methods used and the analytical approach to the collected data. It consists of several sections that provide descriptions of the methods and the arguments that support their adoption. It also addresses how qualitative methods are an appropriate tool for examining social science questions, including an insight into applied methods for examining case studies, the periods selected for analysis, and data collection tools. Other sections of this chapter address questions of accessibility and the ethical dimensions of the research.

There are five approaches to conducting qualitative research, namely narrative study, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnographical research and the case study approach (Creswell, 2013). The case study approach stands out as valid and relevant because of the inquiry tools that it provides: these are suitable for empirical research into, for example, a particular advocacy movement. The case study, as described by Yin (2003), is ‘a way of investigating an empirical topic by following a set of prespecified procedures’ (2003, p. 15). Keeping the research questions in mind as the end goal of the inquiry, a research design and methodology based on the qualitative methods case study approach has been set up.

The chapter is concerned with two points: describing how the data were collected, analysed and interpreted; and providing the justification and explanation for why these particular methods and approaches were selected. A description of the main themes for the data coding, along with the detailed definition and justification of the tools used and the approaches to the analysis, is also included.

The interpretive/descriptive approach of qualitative research was found to be suitable and appropriate for conducting the study. Human actions and discourse, with its contextual framing and embedded communication processes, are at the centre of the study. These elements are examined within the movement’s geographical and political

contexts. A study of such human–media interaction requires research tools for the description and interpretation of the process by which organised groups interact.

2.2 Relevance of Qualitative Methods

There is continued debate about which research methods are suitable for social science inquiries. The point, however, is not whether the interpretive/descriptive or positivist paradigm is always the most appropriate, but which approach provides the more appropriate tools to answer the particular question in hand.

Poynter (2010) explains that, if two researchers applied the same method and research steps and the results were the same, the method would be quantitative: the results depend only on the data and method used. Qualitative analysis also depends on the data and method, but in addition on the interpretation of the researcher.

For this research project, it was clear from the initial phases that the interpretive approach was appropriate because of the subject matter of the research, which involved social actors and their communication tools being examined within their political and communication contexts. Marshall and Rossman (2011) characterised qualitative research as research that ‘takes place in natural world, uses multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic, focuses on context, is emergent rather than highly prefigured and is fundamentally interpretive’ (2011, p. 3). Furthermore, within the interpretive approach, pragmatism was found to be a useful approach to the process of data collection, and well suited to the question examined.

Analysis of the data is guided by concepts that are well developed within both social movement studies and communication studies. The theoretical framework relies on pre-existing theories of social movements, including new social movements and resource theories, which represent both the classical European and the North American social movements’ schools of thought. Both deductive and inductive approaches are used, in order to cover existing theory and data collecting perspectives. Such an approach is encouraged by Berg (2001) who advocates that ‘researchers need not limit their procedures to induction alone. Both inductive and deductive reasoning may provide fruitful findings’ (2001, p. 249).

The interpretive approach is also valuable in taking into account the human factor in the project, both in the researched groups and in the researcher's interpretation of their actions. Unlike the positivist approach, which is driven by theory testing, conducting research through interpretive methods expands the areas of exploration, in particular in human interactions, and provides answers on the motivations behind the actions, taking into consideration the political and social contexts in which these actions are taking place.

Qualitative research enables researchers to examine the details of human experience, through applying methods such as interviews, observation, content analysis, visual methods and biographies. It can also be used to examine and comprehend cases of a complex nature (Hennink *et al.*, 2011). For such cases, qualitative research would be a suitable method for comprehending human behaviour, opinions, the meanings and motivations for actions, interactions within social contexts, social values and identity, providing a voice for the matters studied, as well as an in-depth analysis. Researchers applying qualitative methods tend to 'study people in their natural settings, to identify how their experiences and behaviour are shaped by the context of their lives, such as the social, economic, cultural or physical context in which they live' (Hennink *et al.* 2011, p. 9).

Another related aspect of the study is the conceptualisation of the Internet as a venue for conducting qualitative research. The Internet content is an element of the analysis, as it is being used by the actors in the solidarity movement for networking, narrating and mobilising. With its advancement and increase of use, the web is becoming a rich subject for social science research. Paul St. John Frisoli, in Marshall and Rossman, argues that the Internet is 'seen both as a tool and a site for qualitative research, developed from the observation that social life in contemporary society communicates, interacts and lives more online' (2011, p. 25). Similarly, Markham (2011) sees the Internet as phenomenon and tool. She points to the challenges it poses for how social relations and cultures are structured. The Internet is a medium of communication, which affords the possibility of examining the interactions of its community (Markham, 2011). Self-expression, absorbing knowledge, exchange of information such as news, ideas,

opinions, etc., activity organising and user interactions are all available materials for study provided by Internet-based communication.

That is not to suggest that online content analysis would be able to replace participatory or interviewing methods. Analysis of online content, interviews and observation as sources of analytical data are not competing methods, but rather complement each other.

A case study approach was chosen for the research as it allowed the topic to be explored in depth and detail. Case study research is preferred when the research is concerned with answering questions in the form of 'how' and 'why'; when the researcher has no control over the researched events; and when the studied case is a contemporary phenomenon taking place in a real-life context (Yin, 2003).

For Creswell (2013), the case study is regarded as a research method in which a qualitative research approach is conducted within a 'contemporary bounded' system, over a period of time, through examining several sources of information, such as interviews, observation, documents or reports. He illustrates features of this research approach that mainly consist of the ability to define a case within boundaries or parameters such as specific periods of time and space.

Case studies are a path to understand a specific problem or unique case. They can be compared with other case studies on the same issue, to show the similarities and differences between cases. The conclusions come in the form of 'assertions' as Stake calls them, or 'patterns' and 'explanations' as Yin calls them (Creswell, 2013).

Mabry (2008) argues that qualitative case studies can give us a deeper grasp of particular instances. Qualitative research provides flexibility in terms of amending the research as the collected data provides new information.

2.3 Selected Case Study

Qualitative case studies can be of different types, with the focus, for example, being the individual, group or activity. They can also be distinguished by their intent (Creswell, 2013). In this research project, the case study includes several similar groups distinguished by their geographical and national locations, yet similar in their purpose, scope of work and activities.

The case study for this research inquiry – the major Ireland- and UK-based groups that are leading the work on Palestine solidarity in the two countries – was selected for three reasons. The first main reason is the existing interest in the work of this particular solidarity movement, as it becomes more vocal in the Palestine–Israeli conflict at global grassroots level, both on the ground and online. The researcher’s ease of access to the main actors and decision makers in the movement was also a reason for this selection. Finally, examination of this movement, which advocates for the Palestinian people’s rights both in global arenas and in Ireland and the UK, provides a contribution to the better understanding of the solidarity movement around the globe and the role of social media and other Internet platforms in the field of political grassroots activism.

The case chosen for study has been selected carefully to meet the requirements of representation and validation. The particular subjects were selected because they have aspects that qualify them to represent the whole solidarity movement in the UK and Ireland, and also because they were found to be valid cases for examination, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

Four leading groups in the solidarity movement plus the student solidarity network, were selected. These were the Palestine Solidarity Campaign UK (PSC) with its local affiliated groups in many cities in England and in Cardiff in Wales, the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign (SPSC) with its local branches in cities all over Scotland, the Irish Friends of Palestine, formally known as the Derry Friends of Palestine, a highly active group in the north of Ireland, the Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign (IPSC) and the student network, which consists of all the Palestine societies that are active in English and Scottish universities.

The criteria for selecting these groups were based on three elements: geographical location, activism at national level, and online presence. For the geographical dimension, it was important to select major groups working in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and England. The Wales-based group works under the auspices of the PSC. Another reason for selecting these particular groups is for their capacity and mandate as groups that work at national level in their countries and regions. With the exception of the Derry-based group, which is active mainly within the city, apart from some cooperation with Belfast-based counterparts, the work of these groups extends beyond the immediate locations of Dublin, London and Edinburgh, as they have branches and affiliated activist groups all over the two countries.

An active online presence was another reason for selecting these groups. Since the research is examining the role of the Internet in shaping the movement's contemporary activism, it was vital to choose groups that have an active website, in which they deploy discourse, disseminate information and announce activities, and active accounts on Facebook and Twitter.

Campus-based groups were selected for similar reasons, as being highly active within their campuses. They also form a network of university solidarity groups that are connected through Scotland and England. Their social media sites are a major medium for connecting and organising cross-university collective activities. Their constant activism and high online activity were also among the reasons that they were chosen to be in the sample for the case study.

2.4 Time Frame

Three events which took place at different times within the Palestinian–Israeli conflict were chosen to be the centre of analysis. The events were selected due to their significant political implications, internally and internationally; the high level of activity they generated in the studied groups on the Internet and on the ground; the rich data generated by these groups on the Internet during these times; and their contemporary nature.

The solidarity movement responds to daily events that take place in Palestine. The major events selected, however, provided particular opportunities for both the researcher and the activists. For the researcher, these events resulted in an increased amount of content generated on the groups' Internet and social media sites; for the activists, such events provided opportunities for increased efforts in advocacy, networking, mobilising and collective action with the help of interactive platforms on the web.

Each of the selected events is analysed in a separate chapter within the thesis; each of these chapters addresses a different theme or focus that seeks to answer one aspect of the research questions.

2.4.1 Political Prisoners' Hunger Strike 2012

The first period selected for analysis is the Palestinian political prisoners' hunger strike in 2012, which generated a high level of activity in the Scottish university students' collective action campaign. Significant use of the Internet, including the creation of a dedicated blog and use of Twitter and Facebook, supported this campaign's action on the streets of Scotland.

2.4.2 European Union Guidelines on Israeli Settlements 2013

The second period of analysis covers the annual day for the lobbying of the UK Parliament on the issue of Palestine, and the lobbying of European Parliamentarians and European Commission institutions on the EU guidelines of 2013 that prevented Israeli settlements and any Israeli projects active within the occupied Palestinian territories from getting EU financial support. This period demonstrates the solidarity movement's coordinated lobbying through the use of online communication and the construction of Internet based campaigns.

2.4.3 War on Gaza 2014

The third period of analysis is the Israeli war on Gaza in the summer of 2014. This period allows for an examination of the movement's efforts to galvanise and mobilise collective action in a time of crisis and of how Palestine is mediated through the web at such times.

The examination revolves around the movement's use of group websites and accounts on Facebook and Twitter for informing followers about the war, mobilising activists,

organising solidarity protests and challenging the mainstream media narrative on Palestine.

The text and images used are examined through applying framing analysis. Several elements are focused on, including how the groups responded to the Israeli narrative of the reasons behind the war, how the Internet was used for organising local activities and coordinating with counterparts locally and regionally, and how news from Gaza was shared by activists online.

2.5 Data Collection

2.5.1 Literature Review

Prior to embarking on the process of data collection, an extensive examination of the related literature was conducted, mainly in the field of communication studies. This included reviewing studies of new media, the concept of mediation, contemporary activism, the body of knowledge of social movements (in particular collective action, political opportunities and networking), and solidarity, both in general and in the Palestinian context.

The choice of literature to be reviewed was directed by the multidisciplinary nature of this research project, which combines theories of communication and social movement studies in researching a particular case study within a political context. The examination of the exciting contemporary scholarly work provided a general conceptualisation of possible areas of inquiry in relation to the growing relationship between solidarity activism and the Internet generally, and within the Palestinian context in particular. It enabled the researcher to examine the theoretical framework that would guide the research at a later stage, in particular the framing process.

The literature review also addressed the history of the Palestine solidarity movement, the history of the Palestine cause, concepts of online activism, social movement theories and the basis for qualitative social science research. This scholarly work is considered to be a foundation for understanding the fields and the case study.

Reviewing a relevant body of work is found to be helpful on two levels. It familiarised the researcher with the body of work that addresses social movements' main areas of

research, including the movements' relation with new media, and with previous similar studies that addressed this relationship within the Palestinian context. This process of reviewing previous scholarly work had a direct impact on the formulation of the research questions that emerged because of the limited work conducted in this area of inquiry.

Within the few studies that research the solidarity movement as a structured collective action movement, there is very limited research that examined the movement from the mediation perspective, including what is mediated within the movement's internal online network. Thus, reviewing the literature enabled the researcher to better spot the research gap in this body of work, and to formulate in a later stage a reasonable research question to investigate this area of inquiry.

2.5.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Working in the field allows the researcher to better understand those researched and establish close relations with the subjects (Creswell, 2013). The researcher interacted directly with the studied groups, and interviews conducted with leading activists and first-hand observation through participation in on-the-ground collective actions were found to be essential in limiting the distance between the researcher and the subjects of the research. They were also a means of collecting rich first-hand narrative, which was the foundation of the analysed data and its interpretation.

Interviews are an important tool for collecting data and information that cannot be obtained by observation alone, for finding out about the ideas that people have, their points of view and behaviour, and the motivations behind their attitudes, through asking the right questions (Berger, 2011). The main source of data for understanding the perspective of the researched groups was therefore semi-structured interviews.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted in two phases. An initial pilot phase took place, in which interviews were conducted with six selected interviewees, leading activists in solidarity groups in London, Glasgow, Dublin, Cork, and Derry. In the extended phase, interviews took place through the second and third year of the research, beginning in October 2011, with nineteen leading activists from the four major selected

groups and their affiliated branches (IPSC, SPSC, PSC UK, and Derry Friends of Palestine) and the students' network of Palestine societies in universities in Scotland and England.

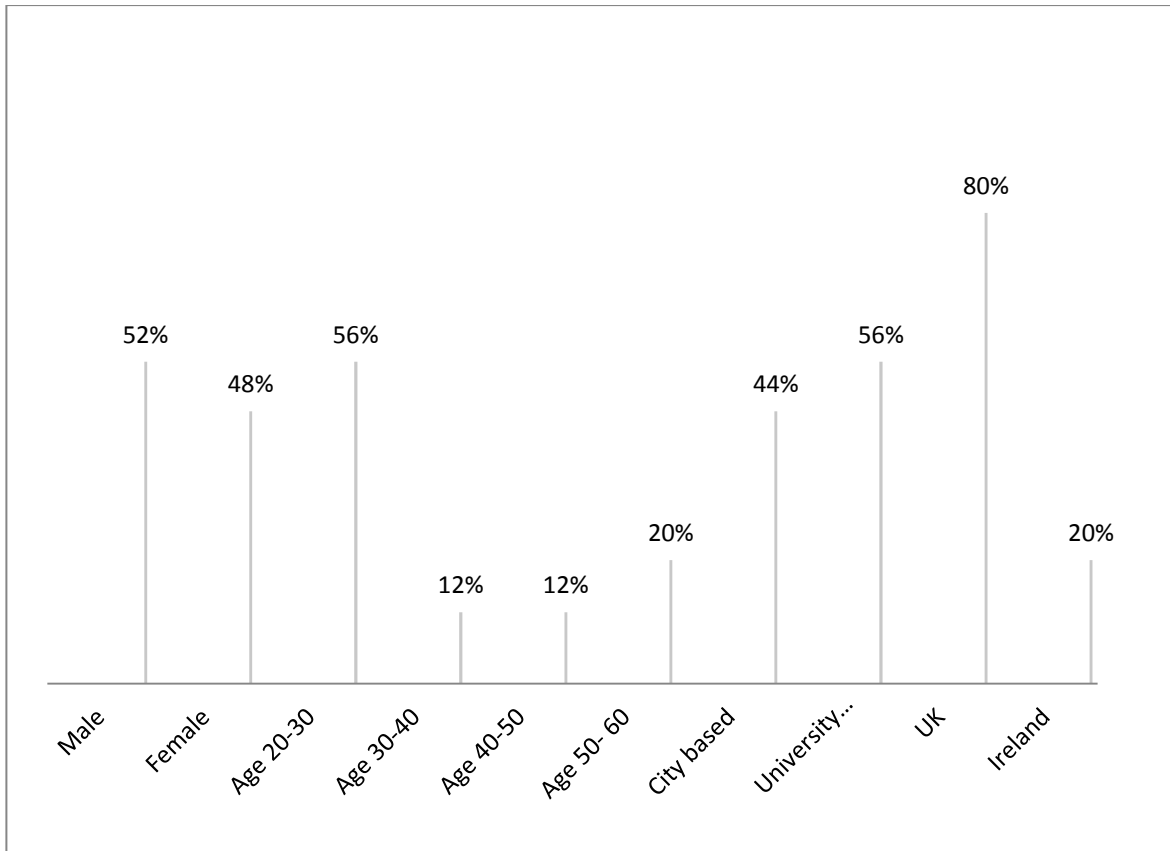


Chart 2.1: Interviewees' gender, age and location

Interviews were conducted for the purpose of getting to know the leaders of the researched groups, their background and their history of involvement in the Palestine solidarity field of activism; the nature and structure of the groups and their vision of solidarity with Palestine; their communication dynamics internally and externally, including the use of the Internet in their communication processes; the groups' messages disseminated through new media; and the relations among their activists and with other external players and allies.

The semi-structured interview approach was selected for the flexibility it provides researchers; using this method, interviewers can extend the area of discussion with their interviewees through initiating new questions.

The pilot phase interviews provided the researcher with insights and new paths that needed to be discussed with the interviewees. As a result of the initial phase of interviews, new questions and questions about other areas of activism were introduced as subjects for discussion in the later phase.

Themes from the twenty-five semi-structured interviews were divided into three general areas: web-based action, on-the-ground action, and networking. The questions covered matters of involvement in the solidarity movement, offline activity, online activity, online content, relations with local, national, and regional organisations, networking internally and externally and the views shared by the group members.

In each phase, private communications and exchanges of email messages to discuss the topic of the research and the purpose of the interview, and to agree a time and location preceded the interviews. This was done mainly through private communications via email and personal Facebook accounts. While this research had been granted the NUI Galway Research Ethics Committee approval, the researcher followed the maximum possible ethical procedures in conducting the interviews.

Prior to the start of each interview, an information sheet giving an explanation of the aims of the research, the questions and the purpose of the interview was provided to the interviewees. In addition, the interviewees were provided with consent forms, which they happily signed. While some interviewees preferred not to be mentioned by name in the dissertation or published academic papers or any other form of publicity, others agreed to have their name and group affiliation published in this dissertation.

2.5.3 Observation

The third method of collecting the data necessary to explore and answer the research questions was through observation. There are four forms of observation in qualitative research, namely: complete participant, participant as observer, nonparticipant/observer as participant, and complete observer (Creswell, 2013). The researcher used the

‘participant as observer’ form of observation. In this form, Creswell explains that the researcher is taking part in the activity, and the ‘participant role is more salient than the researcher role. This may help the researcher gain insider views and subjective data’ (2013, p. 167).

Observation in qualitative research, as Marshal and Rossman explain, includes ‘hanging around in the setting, getting to know people, and learning the routines of using strict time sampling to record actions and using a checklist to tick off pre-established actions’ (2011, p. 139).

Four particular events in different places in Ireland and the UK were pre-selected for observation on the basis of geographical location and organising group, and taking into consideration the diversity of the activities. Two of these observed activities were on-street collective actions, the third was an organised parliament-based lobbying activity, while the fourth was a social activity organised by a solidarity group, in which members and affiliating activists and supporters participated.

In the four activities, the researcher observed the entire activity process, from the organising phase through online communication, including the emails sent, to information posted on social media sites accounts, in particular on Facebook, to the actual on-the-ground activity, followed by the sharing of the news of the activity through the Internet and social media platforms afterwards.

The Galway city activity, which took place in July 2014, was a massive demonstration that the National University of Ireland Galway Palestine Society organised in protest over the Israeli War in Gaza that summer. The organising of the demonstration started through a call for action on the group’s Facebook page, and participants consisted of students and local community members.

The London-based activity took place at the House of Commons in the UK Parliament. The Palestine Solidarity Campaign UK and many pro-Palestine organisations in the country organised a day for lobbying British Members of Parliament on the Palestinian cause on 27 November 2013.

Two Dublin-based activities were observed. One was a social activity on 29 September 2013, organised by the Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign, in which members and supporters of the group went hiking at Sugarloaf Mountain, in county Wicklow near Dublin, and raised the Palestinian flag. The other was during the annual remembrance of the Palestinian Land Day on 30 March 2012, when activists gathered in Dublin and raised the Palestinian flag in O'Connell Street.

These activities were not the only ones organised by the solidarity groups during the period 2011 to 2015, but they were ideal opportunities for the researcher to gain first-hand experience in observing the studied groups' actions and their organising methods closely. The observed actions produced rich material and notes that were valuable for analysis of the internal relations among groups based in the same country.

2.5.4 Web Content Analysis

In addition to the semi-structured interviews and the participatory observation, Internet-based textual material generated, published and disseminated on solidarity groups' online platforms was used as a rich source of data.

Internet content, in particular the groups' websites and social media accounts, provides in-depth material for analysis that contributes to understanding the movement's messages and constructed frames. Material published on the web in different forms, such as signs, text, images or moving images, reveal the direction of the movement's discourse. Content analysis was applied systemically to the Internet contents, particularly from social media sites, and analysed through the adoption of framing analysis, an approach that is widely used by scholars of social movements.

Since text was a main source of data, qualitative content analysis, which, according to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), is one of many methods that aim to analyse textual data, was used. Content analysis is relevant for this research because the research question is concerned with the movement's messages and framing process. These are relied on heavily by the leading activists to encourage, motivate and justify collective solidarity actions.

Krippendorff (2005) explains that content analysts who embark on the analysis process with a particular question in mind often read the analysed texts with that aim in view, rather than being taken to where the text's author leads. Krippendorff (2005) therefore suggests that content analysis needs to become a collection of methods aimed at producing conclusions from all the communicated data, and needs to be conducted through reliable techniques that lead to replicable and valid outcomes. His suggested framework for conducting content analysis-based research comprises several components: text, research question, context, analytical construct, inferences and validating evidence.

Holsti (1969) finds that objectivity, system and generality are the three main requirements of content analysis that most scholars agree on. Objectivity means that the steps of the analysis must adhere to clearly created rules, so that future researchers using the same procedures and data would end up with similar findings. System refers to excluding and including analysed content based on constant criteria, and generality means that the conclusions are relevant to a theoretical framework (Holsti, 1969).

Although content analysis has been regularly applied to online content by social science researchers and requires a similar framework to that applied to offline content, it has its own separate techniques, due to the nature of online-based materials. Since the Internet provided a platform for activists to spread their written materials and deliver their message, social movement researchers are now accessing such materials much more easily than was the case years ago (Ó Dochartaigh, 2002). The World Wide Web provides the researcher with opportunities to access enormous amounts of data, and researching its content may be challenging. Some of these challenges, as Weare and Lin suggest, arise due to the shape of the Internet, which makes it difficult to choose a representative text to analyse, or due to the variety of materials deployed on websites such as images, words, and moving images, that may work as an obstacle to organising them in 'valid descriptive categories' (2000, p. 273).

Another challenge of web-based data collection is related to the limitations of accessing data online. The data collected may consist only of content shared by users or only of

content accessible to the researcher, which may limit the data which the researcher can collect to understand users' behaviour online (Ben Abdesslem *et al.*, 2012).

The limitations of online data collection and the possible challenges which may limit the accessibility of online data are acknowledged by the researcher. However, the data selected from the studied groups' social media accounts, Facebook and Twitter, are meant to be as representative as possible. The data collection of the content of the groups' accounts on these two online platforms during the selected time of analysis is considered to be as comprehensive as possible. Samples of content (text, images and moving images) were systematically selected from these platforms during the studied periods in three different weeks.

The availability of analysing software made this approach easier, by gathering Internet-based data on one screen. As this research analysis generated online data, the software NVIVO 10 was used as a tool for coding, analysing and visualising all the data steps.

The solidarity groups' websites and social media accounts include a great number of images that are used within certain contexts to support their framed messages online. The research analysis includes image analysis in addition to textual analysis. Similarly to the study approach of Govers and Go (2005), this research has analysed images in terms of motifs and themes. On the basis of the context of the content, the images were analysed in relation to the message they convey, the subject of the image and the accompanied text, if relevant. Sampling and coding are among the challenges of analysing web content, since it comprises several types of content other than text (Kim and Kuljis, 2010).

2.6 Data Coding Approach

2.6.1 Websites and Social Media Sites Sampling

Website sampling is essential when examining online content. The content of the websites of the studied groups and their accounts on Facebook and Twitter is the main material for analysis. Weare and Lin (2000) consider the list of domain names as a useful analysis frame, as IP addresses are not necessarily stable and may be moved to a new host. They are much more useful when the research question is dealing with a

‘domain-based category’. However, that may lead to excluding other samples that are categorised in other domains.

For this research project, reliance on search engines was limited, as they were used only to locate the websites of pre-selected groups. Locating their websites facilitates locating the Facebook and Twitter accounts that these groups have created for themselves. That is to say, the sampling frame used was based on a combination of reliance on search engines, in particular Google, to identify working groups in the area of solidarity with Palestine in Ireland, Scotland and England, and a list of domain names that were already known to the researcher.

Bryman (2012) states that sampling is sometimes based on appropriateness and not presentation. This inquiry includes a comprehensive analysis of the web presence of the main active groups located in three different geographical locations, with the sampling frame based on specific criteria chosen by the researcher. These criteria were location, Internet activity, off and on campus and offline/on-the-ground activity. The selection of the websites was based on these criteria. In other words, the sampling frame includes the popular active groups located in major Irish and UK cities, as long as they were active both online and offline. Direct sampling was applied by selecting twelve main group websites, based on popularity and levels of activism, both online and offline.

Weare and Lin state that ‘researchers may choose to use multiple techniques either to validate the samples generated by a single technique or to ensure that the population of interest has been fully identified’ (2000, p. 280). Based on this, it is worth mentioning that the chosen sample of websites of major active groups was selected to represent identified active groups on ground. In other words, the activity and popularity of active groups on the ground determined their inclusion in the sample.

2.6.2 Recording Units

One of several definitions for coding units is the use of ‘words, sentences, or paragraphs that act as separations, ... there are three kinds of units that can be implemented in content analysis: the sampling, context, and recording units’ (Stemler, 2001).

When analysing websites, researchers should consider individual webpages as recording units (Weare and Lin, 2000). However, the size of a home page which may extend to many linked pages poses a problem for the unit of analysis (Herring, 2010).

The recording unit adopted in this research considers each home page as one unit, including the links created within the homepage that lead to other pages, as long as they are related to the main group homepage. This approach has been advanced by Herring (2010), who suggests defining all pages linked to a home page to a certain extent as the unit of analysis. She argues: ‘The homepage is the minimal unit that defines a website; it is the part that users are most likely to encounter, hence, arguably, the most salient and important part to analyze’ (2010, p. 52). The context of the content in terms of theme, timing and frame has also been taken into account in the coding procedures.

2.6.3 Thematic Coding

The main themes and sub-themes of the coded data were classified into categories. These categories were the main themes of analysis directly connected to the research questions, as well as the solidarity movement’s main pillars of activism. These are on-the-ground activism, online activism, internal relations, local coordination, transnational networking, lobbying (members of parliament, decision makers, and mainstream media critics), and BDS-oriented actions.

The categorisation of data into themes is a valid qualitative content analysis technique. According to Zhang and Wildemuth (2005), qualitative content analysis ‘involves a process designed to condense raw data into categories or themes based on valid inference and interpretation. This process uses inductive reasoning, by which themes and categories emerge from the data through the researcher’s careful examination and constant comparison’ (2005, p. 2).

2.6.4 Data Analysis Software

The two software computer-based programmes Nvivo 10 and NodeXL were used in this project for coding, for online data collecting and extracting, and for visualising data. With the use of the coding software Nvivo, several categories were created into which all relevant data including online content (text and images), interview answers and observation notes were coded.

The tenth version of the Nvivo software has the ability to organise data, including audio, text and image, which facilitates the analysis, particularly the coding process. NodeXL provides the ability to extract data from social media sites, mainly Twitter. It also provides researchers with the ability to organise data into spreadsheet sets and graphs and to visualise extracted data.

2.7 Analytical Framework

The online communication is analysed in light of the broader concept of mediated collective action.. The communication practices are analysed in relation to their effectiveness in achieving their goals; the analysis sheds light on any missing forms of communication, and allows the emergence of new frames to be noticeable.

Within social movement theory, data are analysed and interpreted through framing processes and, to a lesser extent, organisational analysis. Chapters 5, 6 and 7, which address the periods selected for analysis, use framing processes. Chapter 4, which addresses organisational structure and alliance building, uses organisational analysis to a limited extent.

2.7.1 Framing Analysis

Framing is becoming an increasingly popular approach to media content analysis. As has been argued by Nisbet (2010), the question for journalists or advocates is not *whether* to apply framing; rather it is *how* to frame the message to their audience in an effective manner. From the political communication perspective, Entman (1993) argues that framing:

essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.

(1993, p. 52)

He argues that there are four elements in the communication process – the communicator, the receiver, the message and the culture – and that all four are based on selecting and highlighting.

Framing analysis is used in this research to examine the construction of opinions, meaning and public information by the activists in solidarity movements. In particular, this examination focuses on the presence of three related elements within the web content, namely, the framing of tasks, the discursive process, and framing and reasoning devices.

Framing Processes

From the perspective of social movement research, the framing process is essentially a set of actions for the negotiation and exchange of opinions among the active members of movements, through which they construct a general understanding of their own position in relation to their ultimate goal. This enables activists to encourage supporters to mobilise and deploy their resources, and thus to galvanise and maintain collective action.

The most important element remains the engaged activists, who construct the movement's narrative, position and point of view. 'Movement actors are viewed as signifying agents actively engaged in the production and maintenance of meaning for constituents, antagonists, and bystanders or observers' (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 613). Benford and Snow argue that 'collective action frames are action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization' (p. 614).

The framing process among movement activists is essential in that it sets a baseline that activists can use in narrating their story in relation to any controversial matter. In other words, framing is an essential method that allows progress towards resolving controversial issues, and allows activists to adopt a collective understanding of the problem.

Snow (2004) says that ‘collective action frames, like picture frames, focus attention by punctuating or specifying what in our sensual field is relevant and what is irrelevant, what is “in frame” and what is “out of frame”, in relation to the object of orientation’ (p. 384). Frames are essential factors that add value in the mobilising process. ‘The culture of collective action is built on frames and emotions oriented toward mobilizing people out of their compliance and into action in conflictual settings’ (Tarrow, 1998, p. 112).

The framing process is an essential mechanism for researchers of social movements to use in examining how activists construct and adapt their understanding of important matters and build their activism strategies based on this understanding. Applying framing process analysis to the case studied facilitates our understanding of why the discourse, language and point of view of the movement are structured online and offline in a particular way, and why a specific discourse is adopted.

Framing Tasks

The analytical approach to content in this research is based on identification of the three main framing tasks that are central to analysing the movement’s framing processes. These are diagnostic framing, prognostic framing and motivational framing (Benford and Snow, 2000).

The identification and analysis of the framing tasks provide clear information on how the solidarity movement’s discourse on the web and interactive social media platforms is related and connected to its efforts to mobilise and galvanise collective solidarity actions on the ground. Cress and Snow (2000) argue that, for social movements, ‘the diagnostic and prognostic framing tasks play an important but unrecognized role in the attainment of desired outcomes’ (2000, p. 1071). They explain that diagnostic framing is essential as it addresses how the problem is perceived and the sources of the problem seen by activists, while prognostic framing suggests solutions and goals to be achieved by social movements. It is suggested that motivational framing calls supporters to collective action and includes creating language that motivates participants. It is ‘a “call to arms” or rationale for engaging in ameliorative collective action, including the construction of appropriate vocabularies of motive’ (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 617).

Lee (2009) points to the centrality of the language of the movement resulting from framing processes, and further explains that, through framing processes, activists deconstruct the language disseminated by mainstream institutions and articulate a new language and narrative of their own that clarify their agenda (p. 57).

Discursive Process

The discursive process is examined through identifying how the frames used were articulated and amplified. Benford and Snow (2000) explain that the social movement's communication and discourse take place in the context of its activities. They argue that collective action frames are created through two basic discursive processes: frame articulation and frame amplification/punctuation.

Frame articulation 'involves the connection and alignment of events and experiences so that they hang together in a relatively unified and compelling fashion'. Frame amplification, on the other hand, 'involves accenting and highlighting some issues, events or beliefs as being more salient than others' Benford and Snow (2000, p. 623).

Framing and Reasoning Devices

A third component of framing analysis is concerned with framing and reasoning devices. Framing devices may appear in five forms: metaphors, examples to be learned from, catchphrases, descriptions, and visual images. Reasoning devices come in the form of roots or causal analysis, consequences or particular effects and moral claims (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989). 'We distinguish framing devices that suggest how to think about the issue and reasoning devices that justify what should be done about it' (p. 3). Following this approach, the research extends the analysis to identifying and examining how such devices are used to push forward frames, and construct parts of the narrative.

2.7.2 Organisational Structure Analysis

This research examines whether organisation can be considered as a crucial aspect of a successful movement through which their activists maintain their collective action. Organisation theory, as used by scholars of social movements to analyse, study and examine the structure and action of active movements, can be a valid method, not only

for analysing the structure and method of action of the studied groups, but also for analysing the organisational relations between different groups.

Although a common basis has not been clearly established, a similarity between studies of social movements and organisation studies has been noticed by many scholars, in particular in relation to research methods into how organisations and movements develop and change (Campbell, 2005).

In his work on organisation theory and transnational social movements, Ghimire (2011) argues that the alternative globalisation movement is able to work on both the domestic and global level, in both industrial and developing societies. He suggests that the characteristics of the alternative globalisation movement are its political philosophy, organisational structure, and means and methods of operation.

Ghimire (2011) describes the general characteristics of the alternative globalisation movement:

Political philosophy [...] pragmatic antagonism against the present neoliberal economic and political systems; organizational structure [...] based on non-hierarchical, informal and occasional cooperation and alliance among networks of ideologically and geographically diverse NGOs and social movements; means [...] popular and worldwide mobilizations, especially at international events; and method of operation [...] nonviolent and persuasive.

(2011, p. 11)

He adds that its organisational structure is based on a loose network of organisations such as non-governmental organisations, social movements and global campaigns. That is to say, it is not an organised body in which there is a central administration; rather, it is a space for several players, with ‘no specific organizational obligation attached to those who may want to join the movement’ (p. 12).

When looking at links between national and international organisations, we see that many variables affect transnational cooperation. Ghimire (2011) suggests that ‘organizational linkages between international and national groups were based on

informal and occasional collaborations' (2011, p. 62). He finds that Internet-mediated communications contributed to this frequent pattern of cooperation.

Similarly, Smith (2005) notes that the ability of transnational social movements to create transnational relations among their counterparts does not depend on their geographical location, but rather on the form of activities that are taking place among these organisations. She adds that the networking and organisational mechanisms that have been constructed among transnational social movements enable them to overcome cultural and language differences.

In other words, organisation theory, as it is used by scholars of social movements to examine the structure and managerial shape of domestic movements, and as is also used by researchers into global social movements, could be an appropriate method to be used in this research. Using this method, the analysis in this project attempts to answer a key research question that addresses not only the organisational relationship between domestic and regional transnational pro-Palestine groups in Ireland and the UK, but also the digital tools facilitating the structuring of these alliances and relationships.

This research studies the organisational structure of the groups, which includes their internal structure, communication methods, and alliance building with other organisations,. The internal organisational communication structure is important for understand how mobilising and organising efforts take place within solidarity groups. Methods of communication among group members and supporters are as important as the message the groups deliver to the public.

Gamson (1990) as cited in (Cress and Snow, 2000) analysed the success and failure of social movements from an organisational perspective, with the analysis taking into consideration structural characteristics, goals and tactics. Social movement theorists have adapted concepts from the organisation studies field, such as mobilising, construction of goals, and alliance building, although when using these concepts their focus remained on social related processes (McAdam and Scott, 2005).

An examination of how transnational the solidarity groups in Ireland and the UK are is essential for answering one of the research questions. Through examining organisational

relations among the UK and Ireland groups, the research explores how strong the local, regional and global links and networks among the Palestine solidarity movement are.

Alliance building in relation to political opportunities is extensively analysed in this project. Understanding the role that the groups play in building alliances with national social movements is essential for an understanding of how the solidarity movement performs within its local environment in relation to the core task of networking. This analysis is important because of the possible impact that alliance building has on collective action in support of Palestine.

2.8 Ethical Context and Research Challenges

Issues of accessibility and transparency were challenging in this research. Access to social movements is challenging (Amenta, 2014), and researching Internet communities may be difficult since dividing the content posted online into private and public is challenging (Eysenbach and Till, 2001). In fieldwork, there are challenges over interviewing activists, including university students, which raise the issue of vulnerability.

All the ethical challenges of this research have been clearly addressed through being transparent with the studied groups, particularly the interviewees, and by adhering to the National University of Ireland Galway's research ethics procedures. The NUI Galway's research Ethics Committee has approved this research, to be conducted and carried out in the way it was presented by the researcher in the research ethics application.

2.8.1 Vulnerability

Luna (2009) suggests dividing the concept of vulnerability into layers, so that each group or person's vulnerability and need for protection may be considered. In the light of this argument, we may want to consider examining each participant's vulnerability individually. Studying each participant's vulnerability, person by person, rather than examining that of the whole group, requires much time and effort, which may affect the research timetable and number of participants. The disadvantage of this approach is its potential to require researchers to spend a lot of time defining a potential participant's

level of vulnerability, resulting in there being less opportunity to include highly vulnerable participants in the study.

Since the research examined the personal narratives of political activists, and their personal involvement in activism within this conflict, each interviewee's vulnerability and level of eagerness to participate in the research differed and that difference had to be taken into account. Their security and social and political concerns might have an effect on their willingness to participate or consent to reveal their names in the publication of this project. University students in particular were not always willing to participate. This research therefore took into consideration the vulnerability of each individual interviewee.

Providing participants with a clear and transparent consent and release form appeared to help in convincing them to participate in the interviews, and was a crucial element in encouraging them to take part in the research. The researcher found that many of the interviewees were very eager to participate and share their experiences of acting within a solidarity group and were willing to provide their narratives on the work of the solidarity movement on Palestine.

2.8.2 Transparency

It was vital for the researcher to be as transparent as possible with the research participants when conducting all the research steps. Transparency seemed to be a key to avoiding obstacles when communicating with possible interview participants, and conducting pilot research interviews to explore the interviewed activists' environment was of added value in this regard.

Pilot research not only directs the researcher into more accurate and useful questions for the later phase of the extended research, but also helps the researcher to better understand the activists' concerns in terms of transparency at an early stage. In other words, it could be described as a rehearsal phase that allows the researcher to examine possible errors, weaknesses, or mistakes on a small scale. That may improve the researcher's ability to come up with better content or questions for the larger scale

research, as well as familiarising them with and raising their awareness of any ethical issue they may face, so that they can avoid such ethical dilemmas in the future.

Studying previous research and learning from other researchers' experiences in facing similar challenges and how they were able to overcome them was essential. But pilot research conducted at an early stage was useful in many ways, as it was very informative about the activists' community perspectives.

2.8.3 Accessibility

Although accessibility remains a challenge for social movement scholars, due to the nature of the structure of movements and their members' sensitivity to being researched, the researcher managed to gain access to the studied groups. In this, he was assisted by three factors.

The first was his personal relations with members of the Glasgow-based university activists from his previous study in Scotland. Glasgow student activists helped the researcher to be introduced to other Scotland-based groups.

Communicating with and interviewing groups based in England, Wales, Ireland, and Northern Ireland was facilitated by web communication. Facebook and Twitter were useful for communicating with prospective interviewees. Lengthier communications exchanging information and sending participants an information sheet prior to the interview took place by email.

Relations with certain activists in Scotland, direct transparent communications with the leading activists in groups, including clarifying to them the research goal, and being Palestinian himself, helped the researcher to overcome the accessibility challenges.

Chapter 3: Contexts: The Road to the Rise of Global Solidarity

3.1 Introduction

European and American support for the Zionism movement, and then for Israel, contributed to maintaining the Israeli policies of displacement, control and occupation of the Palestinian people's land. The involvement of western political powers in the conflict encouraged Israel through providing it with military and financial support despite of its anti-human rights record. In recent years, political support from successive British and American governments has empowered Tel Aviv to either ignore or obfuscate concerning the international laws and United Nations resolutions that relate to Israel's borders seized in war or the rights of the Palestinian people.

Although the research does not take a historical approach, it is important to understand the basis and original factors that led to the need for and creation of a solidarity movement to confront – at least at the levels of public opinion and media – Israel's policies in a global context.

Because the global political arena has been led by states complicit with Israel and its anti-Palestinian policies, any opportunities to find a resolution to the Palestinian people's problems were blocked through global politics. This drove the Palestinian national movement to search for allies, not only at political and official levels but also at grassroots levels. There were limited political opportunities at the national level at which transnational movements are usually active, according to (Smith *et al.*, 1997), and that contributed to the creation of a structured global solidarity movement.

The chapter introduces the different phases of the history of the Palestinian global solidarity efforts, with a special focus on the period after the Intifada of 2000. It describes in a later section, the contemporary movement's use of new technologies in its activism, the human rights directed language, the movement relation to internal Palestinian politics, the rise of the BDS global campaign, forms of pro-Palestine collective action and ends with the introduction of the main groups studied.

3.2 The Road to the Palestinian Nakba

The creation of Israel led to an ongoing conflict between the Palestinians (and their national movement) and the Zionist movement, and the history of Palestine is full of events caused by this. These events – before and after 1948 – have had political implications at both regional and international levels. Above all, the creation of the state of Israel, through the replacement by force of the Palestinian people with Jewish immigrants, first from Europe and then from the rest of the world, has had ongoing social, political and economic implications for the people of Palestine.

Among the many important dates in the history of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, 1948 stands out as the most important. The history of the conflict is long, with a large number of events that would require lengthy chapters to cover. Therefore, the focus here is limited to the political factors in the international context prior to 1948 that led to the conflict, since this year is central to its history.

Although the first Arab–Israeli war took place in 1948, as a result of the Zionist militia's attacks on the Palestinians, the massive confiscation of Palestinian land and the announcement of the birth of the state of Israel, the roots of the conflict may be traced to as early as the 1830s. At that time, European rabbis first considered the idea of the Jews returning to the 'Holy Land as a necessary prelude to the Redemption and the coming of the Messiah' (Philo and Berry, 2011, p. 10).

For generations, the Palestinian people have named 15 May 1948, when the state of Israel was announced, as Nakba day. Nakba is an Arabic word that means 'catastrophe'. What was catastrophic for the people of Palestine was that they were forced by the organised militias of the Zionist movement to leave their lands in what is now called Israel.

Although internal factors have had roles to play in the creation of the Palestinian problem as it is now, it could be argued that external factors, which have mainly involved international powers, have been at the root of the conflict. Among the internal factors that led to the defeat of the Palestinians were the lack of an organised Palestinian military force, the absence of strong allies, low financial resources and divisions among

the leadership. By contrast, the Zionists were unified, better organised militarily, well financed, and managed to build allies with effective global political powers, including the United States and the Soviet Union (Khalidi, 2001).

The Zionists' colonial theory and practice were more focused on displacement, and the Jewish military groups who became more active in the years 1947 to 1949 used extensive fire power to achieve their goals, resulting in terrorised civilians in Palestine and a wave of fleeing men, women and children.

Certainly atrocities, such as Deir Yassin massacre of 250 Arab civilians by Menachem Begin and his Irgun terrorists in April 1948, had their effect. But for all its horror, even Deir Yassin was one of many massacres which began in the immediate post-World War I period and which produced conscious Zionist equivalents of American Indian-killers.

(Said, 1980, p. 101)

The Zionist emigration and later colonisation of Palestine has taken place in two major phases, the first taking place between 1918 and 1948, and the second from 1967 to this day (Khalidi, 1991).



Image 3.1: The loss of Palestinian land to the Zionist militias and Israel authorities throughout the history of the conflict

3.3 Palestine and the International Powers: Great Britain and the USA

The Palestinian–Israeli conflict, and the Arab–Israeli conflict in the larger context, has been a central issue of discussion in United Nations bodies from as early as 1947,² when the UN was only three years old. But more than that, the area in general and Palestine in particular was an interest for many global powers over its history, due to its geopolitical location and rich religious importance.

Palestine was a place of interest not only for Zionism but also for many other European colonising movements (Scholch, 1992). The philosophical understanding of the Zionism alliance with Europe is analysed by Said (1980), who argues that Zionism from its early days has been addressing a European audience which approves of the classification of the ‘natives’ of overseas lands into unequal classes. Yet the colonial vision of Zionism was not the same as that of the nineteenth-century powers in Europe. The European colonial school thought of the local inhabitants as part of the imperial project, as materials that needed to be civilised. The Zionist movement, however, adopted the displacement approach in Palestine.

Although there were other major political powers in the international political arena pre- and post- the two global wars, it would be most relevant to review the role Great Britain played from 1917 until 1948, and the involvement of the United States in the Palestine question from 1948 until today. That is because those two countries have had a special relationship with the Zionist movement, and this consequently affected the situation in Palestine and had implications for the Palestine problem. Khalidi (2010) argues that academic work along with media discourse in Great Britain and the USA played a role in creating a supportive atmosphere in the two countries towards the Zionist narrative. ‘Establishing the hegemony of Zionism in the field of ideas in an Anglo-American academic and public discourse was a vital precondition for its successes in the political and diplomatic arenas’ (2010, p. 1).

² The United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, The Question of Palestine, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/udc.htm> (accessed 24 May 2014).

3.3.1 The Palestine Question and Great Britain

When examining the historical role Great Britain played in the Arab region, in particular in Palestine, there are schools of thought that suggest that the reason behind the British alliance with Zionism is because it is in line with British colonial interests in the region. Other analyses suggest that it is related to sympathy with the Jews after the Holocaust, and to religious reasons. Whatever the actual reasons that motivated the British politicians' behaviour, the outcome of the British role was disastrous for the Arabs, particularly the Palestinians, who have continued to suffer its consequences to the present day.

The idea of having a state for the Jews in Palestine had its supporters in the British mainstream political arena and among the intelligentsia decades before the famous Balfour declaration, in which the British foreign minister expressed the support of his government for the Zionist ambition of creating a state for the Jews in Palestine. Thus, the Balfour declaration³, issued in 1917 by the British foreign minister, had its foundations in British policies toward the Jews and Palestine.

During the 1840s, many British journalists, clerics, politicians, colonial officials, and officers were more direct: they demanded, in one form or another, Jewish colonies or even a Jewish state under British protection, to fulfil the goal of the 'restoration of the Jews' and to protect British strategic and commercial interests in the region.

(Scholch, 1992, p. 45)

³ On November 7 1917, the British government would come out in open support of the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, by issuing the Balfour Declaration in the form of a letter from Foreign Secretary Balfour to Lord Walter Rothschild. The heart of the letter said: His Majesty's government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which will prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country. (Stork, 1972, p. 10)

Furthermore, Britain's concern for the welfare of Palestine's Jews was an official policy that was carried out by the British government's advisers in Palestine as early as the mid-1930s. Even after Britain had changed its policy towards the Ottoman Empire, protecting Jews and Protestants continued to be a main plank of British policy in Palestine (Scholch, 1992).

Said (1999) highlights that British policy towards the Palestinians was not based on an idea of equality between Palestinians and Israelis. This concept, he argues, was embedded in the British policy towards Palestine as early as the Balfour Declaration.

Neither the Balfour Declaration nor the mandate ever specifically conceded that Palestinians had political, as opposed to civil and religious, rights in Palestine. The idea of inequality between Jews and Arabs was therefore built into British, and subsequently Israeli and United States, policy from the start.

(1999, para. 5)

For his part, Shlaim (1987) rejects the idea that the British implemented a pro-Zionist policy in Palestine, claiming that the decisive reason behind their policy, in particular the method by which Britain ended its Mandate over Palestine and acted during the Arab–Israeli war of 1948, was the aim of reducing damage to their imperial interests.

Another analysis was put forward by Huneidi (1998), who argues that the Middle East Department of Britain's Colonial Office had played a crucial role in maintaining a British policy in Palestine favourable to the Zionists' ambitions between 1921 and 1923. She points to 'the department's efforts to neutralize the growing domestic challenges to the Jewish national home policy' (1998, p. 23).

Waves of systematic Jewish emigration to Palestine prior to 1948 were taking place under British eyes and military protection. These waves, in particular the first between 1918 and 1948, affected the status quo in Palestine. 'It was during this first phase that the balance of power between the indigenous Palestinian population and the Jewish immigrant population slowly but relentlessly shifted in favor of the latter' (Khalidi, 1991, p. 8).

The British role in Palestine before, during and after the Mandate has been a great asset to the Zionist movement, regardless of what seemed to be a conflict between the two parties during the Mandate years 1920–1948. What Great Britain gave Zionism was far more than a letter signed by its foreign minister that expressed sympathy for Zionist ambitions in Palestine. Britain provided diplomatic support in the United Nations through the partition plan, which provided legitimacy for the Zionist goal of a state for the Jews, along with a supportive political environment in which newly immigrated Zionists were able to construct military and economic entities in Palestine years before the war of 1948 (Usher, 2005).

3.3.2 The Palestine Question and the United States of America

Since the mid-1950s, the Palestinian movement has been critical of the political behaviour of the United States in providing full military, political and financial support to Israel. The USA has proved to be a better and closer ally of Israel than any other country, including Britain.

After the 1967 war, American policy on the Middle East shifted, with Israel becoming the central focus. Israel's interests were advanced because of the US support (Mearsheimer and Walt, 2006):

For the past several decades, however, and especially since the Six-Day War in 1967, a recurring feature – and arguably the central focus – of US Middle East policy has been its relationship with Israel. The combination of unwavering US support for Israel and the related effort to spread democracy throughout the region has inflamed Arab and Islamic opinion and jeopardized US security.

(2006, p. 29)

Israel found in the US support a great protection against any international involvement that might force it to end the occupation. This support has lasted through occupying the rest of Palestine in 1967 (the West Bank, including Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip), to implementing harsh controlling policies towards the Palestinians, with continued confiscation of lands, to erecting a separation wall on Palestinian lands and building Jewish settlements in the occupied territory. In addition, Israel is the recipient of the

highest level of financial support from the USA in history and became so dependent on this support that it is essential for it to keep functioning (Said, 2001).

In general US foreign policy since after the 1967 war has always favoured Israel. It took the USA only eleven minutes after the first Israeli Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, declared the birth of Israel to recognise the new state, despite the objection of the State Department, while the Soviet Union took the same step of recognition soon afterwards (Philo and Berry, 2011).

When examining the basis on which US policy is determined in the Middle East, particularly towards the Palestine question, two important issues should be taken into consideration: US interests in the region and the influence of the pro-Israel/Zionist lobby in the USA. Said (2001) explains that the US Zionist community's support of Israel was transformed in the mid-1970s so that it became an organised, disciplined player in the US political arena; and Newhouse (2009) suggests that the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the central organisation of this lobby, has a noticeable ability to influence policies in Washington.

Mearsheimer and Walt (2006) explain that the US political system provided opportunities for interest groups to interact with decision makers and influence policies. In their work, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, they have analysed the strategies and methods that the Israel lobby uses to influence policies. These strategies work mainly by influencing Congress and the executive branch in the US political system and manipulating the media. Most commentators in the mainstream media are pro-Israel, and they dominate the think tanks which play a role in public debate, influence academia, and use a charge of anti-Semitism, which the authors named the 'Great Silencer', against any criticism of Israel's policies.

In his account, Chomsky (1999) admits the existence of the pro-Israel lobby. However, he argues that US national interests are more important and more decisive in influencing the country's policies towards the Middle East in general and the conflict in particular. He says 'no pressure group will dominate access to public opinion or maintain a consistent influence over policy-making unless its aims are close to those of elite

elements with real power' (p. 61). From this national interest perspective, he argues that Israel's existence in the Middle East is understood by US decision makers as being an asset for US political interests, through which it can control the region (Chomsky, 2008). He explains how Israel started to be considered in the mid-twentieth century as a 'strategic asset' to the USA in the region, as it acted as a barrier against any radical Arab nationalists who might affect US interests. The role Israel played in aiding the US intelligence expansion in Africa, in addition to other 'subsidiary services', all helped to promote Israel as an asset to the USA, and helped the lobby's standing (Chomsky, 1999).

A similar argument is put forward by Ibrahim (1986), who states that the war of 1967 was a crucial point at which US–Israeli relations were strengthened. The USA decided to support Israel in this war, in the hope of defeating the pro-Soviet Union Jamal Abdel-Nasir of Egypt. He symbolised Arab nationalism at that time, and was heavily involved in the internal conflict in Yemen, which was located near the Arab Gulf countries which are the major oil suppliers to the USA.

It could be argued that the USA's own interests are more powerful than any lobby efforts or attempts to influence policy. In his recently published work, *Brokers of Deceit: How the US Has Undermined Peace in the Middle East*, Khalidi suggests that the Israel lobby has a major influence, but that, when the lobby's interests conflict with US interests in the region, the US decision makers pressurise Israel and undermine the Israeli lobby's efforts (Khalidi, 2013). Another reason that Khalidi suggests the Israeli lobby has shaped current US policy to be favourable to Israel is because there is no counter lobby that is pushing forward the Arab and Palestinian interests in the US political arena.

Another factor, which is economic related, that may have affected the current US policies towards the conflict is its ability to undermine any chances of using Arab oil to put pressure on its policies. The US government has had success in separating its policies in relation to the Arab oil supplies issue from the Palestinian–Israeli conflict. If, however, Arab oil supplies to Europe and Asian countries were jeopardised as a result of

US Middle East policies, countries in those regions would put a great deal of pressure on the USA to change its policies (Weiss, 2013).

What can be concluded is that US government policies towards the Palestine question are affected by a mixture of elements, whereas the US public's perception of the whole conflict can be framed as pro-Israeli, as a result of many factors including the influence of the mainstream media, academia and religion. The pro-Israel/Zionist lobby may have an influence on US policies in the Middle East, particularly when it comes to the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, but US interests in the region, such as in relation to oil for example, are much more decisive elements than any pro-Israel lobby efforts.

The Israeli state and the Zionist project has succeeded in becoming identified with the core national interests of Britain and the USA, being helped in that by the absence of a strong pro-Palestinian lobby in either country.

In the global arena, effective political powers, Great Britain before the Nakba of 1948, and the USA, with its adverse involvement in the question of Palestine at a later stage, have contributed to the rise of the solidarity movement to counter the global politics complicit with the Israeli policies.

The unconditional political financial and moral support of the USA, Britain and European countries – to different extents – to Israel has contributed to what Smith *et al.* (1997) name in the literature of the transnational social movements as closed opportunities. Closed or limited opportunities in this sense drive local forces to seek help from external global players, a situation that set the foundation of the establishment of the growing global solidarity movement. Closed opportunities exist in local arenas where the Palestinians who have been forced to live under direct Israeli control cannot practise their basic human and political rights including self-determination

However, the birth of a pro-Palestine solidarity movement at grassroots level among trades unions and university students in the west, including in Britain and the USA, has added a new element to the Palestinian–Israeli conflict at the global political level.

3.4 Birth of Global Solidarity Movement with Palestine

3.4.1 The Second Intifada of 2000

Solidarity movements that were created with the notion of standing together with people who are suffering developed in the 1980s. The solidarity movements among activists in occupied countries had an impact both on oppressed peoples and on the people of the occupying force (Chomsky, 2003).

The worthy, but limited, literature that addresses the activism of Palestine solidarity groups has examined it mainly within the US context. However, the literature that is available on this growing movement suggests that there have been some major waves of solidarity activism. These can be divided into four main periods: the 1960s to 1980s, in particular during the Israeli war against the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) fighters in Lebanon in the early 1980s; the first and second Palestinian Intifadas of 1987 and 2000; and more recently after the BDS call of 2005.

Although the idea of solidarity with the people of Palestine is as old as the conflict, solidarity as a growing and much developed global movement has been shaped during the last fifteen years. It has been argued that the new wave of solidarity movements with Palestine represented a revival after the second Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation (Intifada), better known as the ‘Al-Aqsa’ Intifada of 2000 (Hanieh and Ziadah, 2010). During this time, demonstrations and meetings were held and petitions signed by activists who also later joined the movements against the war in Iraq.

Many campaigns and activities organised and implemented by various Palestine solidarity groups in Ireland and the UK have emerged as a direct response to Israeli military escalation in the occupied Palestinian territories. They have become more organised and consistent since the Intifada of 2000, and more activists have joined them after the Israeli Wars on Gaza in 2008 and 2012.

The rebirth of the movement after the second Palestinian Intifada in 2000 (Hanieh and Ziadah, 2010) could also be seen as a response to the political failure of the US-sponsored talks between the Israelis and the Palestinians, in the light of US policies that are based on the Israeli vision of the conflict and aim to manage the conflict rather than

solve it. For Khalidi (1991), the USA is as much part of the problem as it is a decisive player.

For the Palestinians during the second Intifada as much as other struggle phases, it was vital to have international support for their struggle against the Israeli occupation policies. More Palestinian voices have arisen during the Intifada to point to the impact of the lack of international protection from the Israeli forces (BADIL, 2001).

These included incursions, land confiscation, building separation walls and the construction of more settlements in the occupied territory.

Although the idea of having international forces to protect Palestinian civilians was not politically realistic because of the known US–Israeli opposition to such an idea, the existence of international civilian activists in the occupied territory among the Palestinians was highly appreciated locally both at official and at public level.

It was not the UN troops in smart uniforms who took up positions in our villages and cities, nor was it US soldiers storming ashore, as in Somalia. It was individuals who responded to our calls, and small groups from trade unions and churches, anti-globalization activists, committees from the World Social Forum, Jewish and Christian groups opposed to the occupation, as well as those belonging to Palestinian solidarity groups.

(Barghouthi, 2003, p. 13)

The movement has become more global, more widespread and made up of many different organisations; some have strong international ties in the form of affiliations, branches and associations, while others work similarly in different countries, sharing similar discourses, actions and goals. Others define the solidarity movement as that movement which comprises international solidarity activists and their partners, the Palestinian activists (Saba, 2015). She sees that ‘activism by internationals and activism by Palestinians has come to embody a loose but coherent social movement that is central to the advancement of Palestinian rights in a way that extends beyond solidarity’ (p. 214).

Although a great deal of pro-Palestine-related activism takes place within the Palestinian occupied territories, it has been argued that Palestinian activism has local and international extensions (Loddo, 2005). Palestinian activism includes many organisations that are associated with the global solidarity network, such as university students, trade unions and religious and peace-promoting societies.

The solidarity movement during the apartheid regime in South Africa was similar to the global solitary movement in Palestine. This has become clearer in recent years, as the Palestinians and their allies around the globe have managed to copy the example of the South African movement by endorsing and advocating the BDS campaign against Israel. In their description of the way in which the BDS call was thought of, Hanieh and Ziadah stated that:

a real turning point took place in 2004–2005 when a variety of efforts around the globe began to coalesce around an analysis of Israel as an apartheid state that demanded a strategic response of boycott, divestment and sanctions in the manner of the struggle against South African apartheid.

(2010, p. 88)

3.4.2 BDS Dominating the Scene

On 9 July 2005, 171 Palestinian civil society organisations issued the BDS statement (Baroud, 2013). These organisations included non-governmental organisations, movements, political parties and unions from all parts of Palestine. They issued a call to the international community to boycott Israel, divest from business cooperation with it and impose sanctions against it until it complied with the United Nations resolutions related to the Palestine cause. The call, which came to be known as the BDS call, was received positively by many global civil society organisations, solidarity activists, pro-Palestine organisations and supporters of the Palestine cause.

The statement had called on the international community to adopt BDS until Israel ended its occupation of all occupied Arab lands, recognised the rights of Palestinians living in Israel to be equal citizens and respected the UN resolutions, particularly

resolution 194, which gives Palestinian refugees the right to the homes that they, their parents and their grandparents were forced to leave in 1948.

We, representatives of Palestinian civil society, call upon international civil society organizations and people of conscience all over the world to impose broad boycotts and implement divestment initiatives against Israel similar to those applied to South Africa in the apartheid era. We appeal to you to pressure your respective states to impose embargoes and sanctions against Israel. We also invite conscientious Israelis to support this Call, for the sake of justice and genuine peace.

These non-violent punitive measures should be maintained until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law by:

1. Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall;
2. Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab–Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; and
3. Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.⁴

Ten years after the BDS call, many noticeable successes have been identified. In Europe, the USA and other parts of the world, universities, unions, academics and celebrities have endorsed the BDS and announced their support for the Palestinian national struggle against the Israeli occupation. Music performers and singers have cancelled tours in Israel as a response to the solidarity activists' call to adhere to BDS. Student unions have passed motions that endorse the call, in which they urge their universities to cut ties with companies and institutions that are involved in any kind of

⁴ BDS Movement, 2005. Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS. (accessed 30 May 2014). <http://www.bdsmovement.net/call>

cooperation with the Israeli occupation authorities, particularly those companies that are working within the Palestinian land occupied in 1967.

Academics have adopted the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI), which is another organised boycott effort initiated in 2004 by local academics and intellectuals who urged their international counterparts to boycott Israeli academics and academic institutions that are complicit with the Israeli occupation authorities.⁵

The important role that international academics and students can play in changing the current unjust situation in Palestine is assessed by Hammond (2011.), who argues that action led by academics and students on an international level can have an impact on the situation in Palestine.

Only international action amongst academics and students will change the current conditions. In the most peaceful way possible that is open to people of conscience, a grassroots movement must be encouraged that says no to all the cosy collaboration with Israel. Academics and students have taken a lead that is allowing everyone to rediscover the importance of justice and the absolute need to speak out against Israel's occupation.

(2011, p. 31)

BDS's on-going successes could be due to 'the links established between civil society organisations internationally and within Palestine itself [which] have also been significant' (Bakan and Abu-Laban, 2009, p. 46). The growing power of BDS among solidarity activists is as a mechanism to engage societies in the conflict in the absence of political pressure on Israel from the international community. One of the aims of the BDS activists, according to Hallward (2013), is to reframe the discourse on conflict, and in doing that they use actions similar to those of social movement activists.

⁵ PACBI, 2008. Call for Academic And Cultural Boycott of Israel. (accessed 30 May 2014). <http://pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=869>

In the USA, for example, solidarity groups use similar online and offline tactics when advocating the BDS in their local settings, and each group tailors its campaign tactics on the basis of which strategy will attract more supporters and achieve the sought-after goal. While many British-based activists have been actively involved in talking to shoppers directly and asking them to boycott products from Israeli settlements, US-based activists became famous for their flash mob methods, in which they put on dancing/singing performances inside shops that sell such products in order to attract shoppers' attention and send out the BDS message in an artistic way. That is by no means to say that activists in each country act in a centralised way using similar methods. Hallward (2013) quoted some of the BDS organisers in the USA, who do not see the lack of BDS campaign coordination as a negative aspect of the movement, as for them a non-centralised campaign makes it difficult for opponents to target leaders.

3.4.3 Palestine, Solidarity Movement and Human Rights Discourse

The solidarity movement in global, including western, contexts could be seen as both a reflection of the globalisation of the Palestine cause and its iconic symbolism as a struggle against the powers of oppression and imperialism (Tawil-Souri, 2015), and/or as a strategic response to the lack of opportunities at national level.

It is clear from an examination of the research that has looked at the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), which is heavily involved in organising and implementing community volunteering activities in Palestine, and the global based component of the movement, which is the case study of this project, that the language adopted by the movement is heavily influenced by human rights discourse.

Landy relates the reasons behind the adoption of this discourse to several factors, including its role in justification of the activists' involvement, and suggests that it is 'acceptable language' (2013, p. 424). Qato and Rabie (2014), in their discussion of solidarity in the US context, regard it as strategically problematic for the solidarity movement to approach the Palestinian cause from an international law perspective, which would shape it as a question of the implementation of laws. 'Through the rise of organizing based on international law, the larger struggle for Palestinian liberation has

transformed liberal, left, and Palestine solidarity discourse into a question of rights' (para 13).

Tawil-Souri (2015) discusses the problematic aspects of focusing on individual rights as an approach to the Palestinians question; among these problems is the geographical fragmentation of the Palestinian people. The Palestinians, as a result of being ethnically cleansed by the Zionist militias from their land by the newly established colonial state of Israel in 1947–48, are located in several geographical locations. There are those who remained in their lands in the historical land of Palestine and became residents of Israel; others who have live in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, in great numbers as refugees since 1948; and the Palestinians in exile, including millions of refugees who have been living in refugee camps in the surrounding countries since 1948 and 1967. Thus, adopting the perspective of individual rights would jeopardise the colonial nature of the conflict 'issues of rights and justice neglect the anticolonial principles at the heart of the Palestinian struggle' (Tawil-Souri 2015, p. 153).

The intervention of many international bodies, including international NGOs, in the Palestinian–Israeli conflict is shaped by the humanitarian approach. In fact, part of the Palestinian discourse that addresses the world focuses on the Israeli violation of human rights in Palestine. This is very justified because there is a humanitarian tragedy produced by occupation policies, and there are endless Israeli violations of human rights. However, limiting the problem to a humanitarian situation per se without putting it in the context of a political struggle between occupier and occupying power would undermine the Palestinians' political rights, including their right of resisting this occupier.

3.5 Adoption of New Technologies and Pro-Palestine Activism

For the activists in contemporary social and political movements, the use of interactive communication media became a requirement because of their great power to create networks for exchanging information that are beyond the control of external powers. Castells (2012) describes the importance of being able to communicate internally and externally in an independent way. He says, 'social movements exercise counter power

by constructing themselves in the first place through a process of autonomous communication, free from the control of those holding institutional powers' (p. 9).

The solidarity movement is no different from other social change and social movements in seeking ways of communicating autonomously, yet communicating with wider audiences and the public in general remains a crucial goal for the movement in exercising its advocacy and awareness raising on a large scale. New media-based communication became prominent in the movement's daily solidarity actions.

Like many other global causes, the Palestinian–Israeli conflict has not only taken place in the form of a political and military struggle, but has also reached cyberspace, as the Internet became another battleground for activists defending their cause. For Palestinians, the Internet was an opportunity to interact with a global audience and tell their side of the story, a side that the mainstream global media do not usually cover.

For Palestinians, the Internet was an opportunity to interact with a global audience and tell their side of the story, a side that the mainstream global media do not usually cover.

Even prior to the social media era, the Internet's impact in connecting Palestinians with the outside world was found to be valuable. While social media may have reshaped online political participation, the Internet's original influence on the connectivity of young Palestinians was studied by, for example, Aouragh.

Aouragh noted that 'Immobility and control was partly overcome when Internet usage enabled direct transnational communication and grassroots participation in news production' (2008, p. 254). She explained that the ISM is an example of a well-organised group that works in Palestine, and has the Internet 'at the core of its work' (p. 263). She pointed out that recruiting new volunteers is done online, and that the official website of the movement is multilingual. However, she added that the group's activists will still travel to be involved in public speaking, protests and other activities, which indicates that offline activism was still important and non-replicable.

Earlier studies point to the beginning of the incorporation of the Internet in the activities of solidarity organisations, mainly through dedicated websites to connect and organise potential volunteers interested in visiting Palestine.

Dudouet (2006) found that communication is a vital aspect of the ISM's work, and Seitz (2003) suggested that the Internet was widely used by prospective volunteers who could log on to the ISM website to find out information and get involved in volunteering programmes in Palestine.

Those early studies also examined how the pre-social media Internet contributed to forming online communities of Palestinians in exile. Stamatopoulou-Robbins (2005) clearly set out the argument that the advancement of the Internet, which led to the creation of many mediated websites and forums about Palestinians, created an opportunity for Palestinians to reach an international audience and therefore tell their own story. In addition, cyberspace offered Palestinians an alternative way to express their own political hopes and goals, and in particular to give themselves a feeling of a 'homeland'.

The connectivity of the Internet provides Palestinians with the ability to communicate with their immediate social surroundings and with the external world, including the Palestinian diaspora, bypassing the borders and political realities on the ground that limit their ability to have physical interaction (Aouragh, 2010). Social and political factors may play a recognisable role in shaping emerging virtual groups. That is not to say that communication among Palestinian Internet users is based only on social circles and political divisions, but social interaction and political activism in Palestinian society is certainly influenced by these two factors.

Palestinian virtual communities have been affected by other external factors. It has been argued that the development of Palestinian online societies was influenced by different political systems and technological and global factors (Aouragh, 2010). Research has showed that, although the favoured content and topics within the cross-border online Palestinian communities consist of music, romance or lifestyle subjects, at a time of political and military escalation political subjects dominate (Aouragh, 2003).

In a related work, Aouragh (2008) examined the role of the Internet in creating transnational links and images of Palestinian communities, and investigated how the Internet is used to mobilise local and transnational (pro) Palestinian activism. Through the Internet, Palestinian activists and groups target international, mainly western, audiences to show their side of the story, while at the same time engaging in ‘live confrontations’ with pro-Israel online users. Similarly, virtual space has been used as a means of collaboration between Palestinians and their friends, international solidarity groups and pro-Palestine activists for exchanging news and organising campaigns.

Although the Internet provides an open platform for Palestinians to use, in which their voice can be heard globally, Siapera (2010b) finds that it does not contribute much to the issue of Palestine. She says that ‘rather than democratizing – or conversely radicalizing – the Web seems to contribute little to the issue of Palestine, which can then be seen as still ruled by the old-fashioned principles of realpolitik’. (p. 24)

Although digital media, particularly the Internet, proved to be assets for pro-Palestine activists, offline networking between activists is still essential for the success of the movement’s work. In the US context, Marmura (2008) explains in his research on peace camp use of the Internet and US Middle East policy that:

although the Internet technology has clearly become essential to the mobilisation efforts of this project identity, care should be taken not to conflate the Internet's usefulness to Arab/Israeli peace activists with its potential to alter the American political status quo in their favor.

(2008, p. 31)

He argues that, although the pro-Palestine camp in the USA is less resourced and less influential than the Zionist organisations, the Internet provides an added value to their activism (Marmura, 2008).

Chapter 4: The Internet, Reflections on a Modest Coordination

4.1 Introduction

When reviewing the literature on the resources and organising concepts of movements for collective action, it is hardly possible to ignore the substantial proportion of the research that is focused on the role of networking. Leading groups in the Palestine solidarity movement have adopted similar networking approaches for maintaining collective action as those used by new social movements. They are engaged in alliance building with counterparts, including local actors in the solidarity scene and trade unions.

However, not only would active solidarity groups in the Irish and British contexts rather work individually on their advocacy campaigns, and combine their efforts only at times of crisis in Palestine, but, except for campus-based solidarity societies in the UK, inter-organisational collaboration among the leading groups was found to be modest, to say the least.

Despite the strong presence on the web, manifested by active social media accounts, and the constant contact with Palestinian activists in Palestine and in exile, it is safe to say that strategic collaboration between the global solidarity movement and the Palestinian national movement is still absent.

Diani (2015c) introduces the perspective of the ‘mode of coordination’ in which he defines collective action as a ‘set of practices oriented to the production of collective goods’ (p. 934). For him, understanding the mode of coordination among movements requires attention to ‘the question of the relational patterns between the actors mobilizing to produce public goods’ (p. 935). What is found to be relevant in Diani’s work to the subject of this chapter, and to the whole thesis, is the question of relations among solidarity groups and their civil society allies, and how these relations are constructed and reflected through collaboration on the web.

This chapter addresses the movement’s approach to all levels of networking and collaborating, internally and externally, including with leading components of the

political movement in Palestine, and the Internet's role in this process. This part of the thesis explores these arguably limited relations through examination of their existence on the Internet.

After defining the movement, the chapter provides a brief description of the motives behind solidarity activists' involvement in the movement, followed by a comprehensive mapping of main solidarity actors in the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom. The chapter classifies active groups into three main layers, identifies the forms and areas of activism, points to the shape of relations with civil society organisations, and ends with discussing the cold relations with the Palestinian national movement from the coordination perspective. Then, the chapter analyses how the movement's limited inter-organisational collaboration can be seen through examination of these relations on the Internet.

This chapter argues that the limited web-based collaboration reflects the modest forms of collaboration among the leading solidarity groups, their partners in the national movement of Palestine and local civil society organisations. The argument sees the Internet as a means of enabling researchers to better understand the structural relations of networking, including collaborations among the allies of grassroots movements.

4.2 Defining the Movement

Since the mid-1960s, the Palestinian national movement, led by the PLO, has been the major force confronting Israel in its endeavour to achieve liberation and self-determination for the people of Palestine. However, this national movement has managed to establish many partnerships, among which are the global solidarity organisations.

Little scholarly work has addressed the role of such groups in the Palestinian national struggle. Apart from books and research studies addressing the specific stories and personal experience of ISM activists or BDS campaigns (Bakan and Abu-Laban, 2009; Dudouet, 2006; Lim, 2012; Obenzinger, 2008; Sandercock *et al.*, 2004; Seitz, 2003; Stohlman and Aladin, 2003), little academic work has looked at the Palestine solidarity

movement in western contexts as a form of collective action movement, and its input to internal Palestinian politics.

For clarification, two forms of organised solidarity collective action should be distinguished. The first is the ISM, which consists of activists who make journeys to Palestine, mainly to the West Bank and Gaza, to live with Palestinian families and participate in voluntary work and peaceful demonstrations. The second organised form of solidarity, which this thesis is concerned with, is the solidarity campaigns that are active around the world in campaigning for the Palestinian people's rights through advocacy campaigns around the world, including in Europe. There is overlap between the two forms of solidarity organisational work, both in their missions and in the activists involved; they are part of the extended global solidarity movement. However, each is working in a different territorial space, with the first operating in Palestine among Palestinian communities, and the other acting around the globe.

During the researcher's studies in Scotland, he came to learn more about the organised form of solidarity in western contexts, through encountering activists in Glasgow. The regular activities witnessed included talks, stalls in the main streets and demonstrations. The specific scholarship scheme (The Palestinian Student Scholarship) through which the researcher was awarded a scholarship by the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow in 2010 to undertake an MSc in Media and Communication Research was originally created in 2009 as a result of action taken by student solidarity activists. As part of their response to the Israeli war on Gaza between 2008 and 2009, groups of student activists occupied the main buildings of many universities all over the UK in solidarity with Gaza and demanded that universities cut relations with the Israeli water firm Eden Springs, accused of using water from territories illegally occupied by Israel.⁶ Demands were also made that universities should cut ties with arms companies providing weapons to Israel,

⁶ BDS Movement (2010), 'Eden Springs Fact Sheet'. <http://www.bdsmovement.net/2010/eden-springs-fact-sheet-5115>. (accessed 8 April 2014).

such as BAE systems.⁷ The students called for the strengthening of ties with Gaza-based universities and the provision of scholarships for students from Palestine.⁸

Activities undertaken in solidarity, in which many students and non-students participate, take the form of sit-ins and occupation of university buildings or demonstrations. Developments in Palestine remain a central point of attention, and often solidarity activities are organised in response to these developments.

Working Definition

There are two elements involved in forming a movement and determining its scope, namely the actions taken by the movement and the actors forming it. The solidarity movement consists of active solidarity campaigners and their affiliated branches and activists, their allies, supporting unions, non-active groups and individuals that support collective solidarity actions. The actions taken by the movement, including lobbying, are dedicated in the short term to advocacy, informing and raising public awareness, and, in the long run, to changing government policies towards the Palestinian–Israeli conflict. In this regard, Sarah Colborne, director of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign in the UK, confirms that her group is interested in building support for and understanding of the Palestinian struggle in Britain, and in changing government policies towards Palestine (Interview, 9 October 2013).

This thesis argue that the Palestine Solidarity Movement is a transnational social movement in its shape and a transitional advocacy network in its character and mission, although it adopts contemporary activism methods from new social movements. For this reason, and since the movement is examined through studying its communication perspectives, it is studied from the social movement approach.

The working definition of the movement that this research has built is based on combining the two elements that form the movement and the form of collective

⁷ The Scotsman (2009). 'Spirit of Sixties revived as student protests at links with Israel spread'. <http://www.scotsman.com/news/spirit-of-sixties-revived-as-student-protests-at-links-with-israel-spread-1-828949> (accessed 8 April 2014).

⁸ PulseMedia (2009). 'Strathclyde Students Win Agreement'. <http://pulsemedia.org/2009/02/05/strathclyde-students-win-agreement/> (accessed 8 April 2014).

solidarity action undertaken by its actors. The working definition of the movement defined by the researcher and used in this research, is as follows:

The solidarity movement is a form of transnational advocacy network that leads solidarity-oriented collective action. It is formed by multiple organisations that adopt solidarity with Palestine as their main mission in their social and political contexts. It is a combination of local, national, regional and international groups, societies and activists in and outside universities. Involved groups have similar missions of challenging media bias by advocating the Palestinian narrative, implementing campaigns that aim at changing the current situation in Palestine through raising awareness in their local surroundings, lobbying local decision makers and members of parliaments and endorsing and advocating the BDS call.

4.3 Main Groups in the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom

4.3.1 Involvement Backgrounds

The pro-Palestine groups in the UK and the Republic of Ireland are different in size and levels of online and offline activity. They also have different political backgrounds, areas of focus and specialisations. The four leading organisations and their branches in the UK and Ireland, which are the chosen components of the case study, form a ‘primary nerve’ of the solidarity movement network. They have similar discourses, missions, tactics and campaigns, including online activities, yet each interacts differently with affiliates, external organisations and allies, as well as with each other.

Sarah Colborne of PSC UK describes how she first got involved in solidarity activities during the first Palestinian Intifada (1987–1993) when she was a student active in human rights campaigns (Interview, 9 October 2013). She mentions that the first Palestinian Intifada (1987) was a big issue for the student movement at that time. In later years, in particular when the second Intifada broke in 2000, she became more involved in the PSC UK, first on a voluntary basis, and later as the director of the campaign.

In European universities, youth involvement in the anti-war movement has been a way to explore global politics, including those of the Arab region. James Haywood, previous

head of the University of Goldsmiths' Palestine Society, became involved in the movement after his involvement in the anti-war movement in Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001–2002, when he participated in demonstrations against the war. During that time, he illustrates how he became much more aware of the politics in the region, started following Middle East policy more generally, and got more active in the solidarity society when he got into university (Interview, 3 September 2012).

The media coverage of the rise in Israeli exclusion and aggression policies has been another factor that has encouraged people to get involved in actions in support of the Palestinians. Liam, a leader in the Palestine solidarity organisation in Edinburgh, said that operation Cast Lead of 2008, in which the Israeli army launched a 22-day military offensive against Gaza, opened his eyes to the issue of Palestine, and he started to learn more about the cause, joined the Palestine Society in Edinburgh University and later became its coordinator (Interview, 8 September 2012).

Similarly, Kajsa, of the Manchester solidarity group, became aware of the cause of Palestine through the *Tears of Gaza* film and after watching it felt the need to get involved:

I felt the need to dig deeper and actually do something about it. I was angry and morally outraged that nothing had moved forwards in 60 odd years, soon came to realize that there was the need for a global movement in order to pressure governments and to demand Palestinian human rights in order for some sort change to occur so the more people who join solidarity groups and campaign for change the greater the pressure.

(E-Mail Communication, 5 December 2013)

While the media could open eyes on global issues, cultural and ethnic background can have an influence as well. Two leading activists in the Palestine Society at King's College London⁹ learned about the issue of Palestine from their Arabic and Muslim families. The first activist took a course in Middle Eastern practice, in order to explore

⁹ The two activists of the Palestine Society at King's College London whom the researcher interviewed prefer not to be identified in this research.

the politics and further understand the foundation of the conflict. They argue that friends can have an effect on participation in political activism, as among the many factors that encouraged them to become involved was that many of their Arab friends were involved in activism for Palestine. The second activist points to the fact that his/her siblings are all involved in Palestine solidarity (Interview, 15 October 2013).

Personal stories are also among the motivations for activists getting involved in solidarity. Catherine, a previous leader of the Glasgow University Solidarity Society, knew about the Palestinian cause through a visit to Syria and Lebanon in 2010 when she visited a Palestinian refugee camp in the south of Lebanon (Interview, 8 September 2012). After this visit, she met a friend from Palestine who explained to her more about the conflict, and then searched the Internet and looked for volunteering opportunities. She volunteered in Palestine, where she participated in a UniPal NGO exchange programme in which she taught English in Aida refugee camp, near the city of Bethlehem. Later, she returned to Glasgow to complete her degree, where she learned about the existence of the Palestine Society in Glasgow University, joined, and later became its president.

4.3.2 Main Actors

National Groups

The Palestine Solidarity Campaign

The PSC is the leading solidarity group working in England and Wales. It has many local branches around the country, as show in map 4.1, including in the major cities of Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Nottingham, Cambridge, Liverpool, Southampton, Bristol, Brighton, Leicester and Lancaster. It also has an active branch in Cardiff, Wales. ‘The PSC has over 3,000 members and numerous branches as well as affiliated organisations, including trade unions. The PSC is patronised by a variety of individuals, including members of parliaments, actors, and academics’ (Omer, 2009).

The organisation has its main office in London and defines itself as:

An independent, non-governmental and non-party political organisation with members from many communities across Britain, and increasingly throughout

the world. PSC represents people in Britain from all faiths and political parties, who have come together to work for justice for the Palestinian people. PSC was established to campaign for Palestinian rights, including the right to self-determination and the right of return, and to oppose Israel's occupation and violations of international law. PSC is opposed to all forms of racism, including anti-Jewish prejudice and Islamophobia.¹⁰

Similarly to other major national groups, the PSC UK runs several ongoing campaigns, in addition to responding to events occurring in Palestine. Its main campaigns are focused on lobbying British MPs and British government officials on Palestine-related issues, countering mainstream media-biased coverage, mainly from the BBC, and raising awareness about Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights.

Colborne explains that her organisation has existed for 31 years, currently has over 40 branches, and has affiliations with major trade unions (Interview, 9 October 2013). The organisation's activities, elaborates Colborne, increased again with the outbreak of the second Intifada, as 'there was much more the need for acts of solidarity'. She identifies her group's aims as changing public opinion in Britain towards Palestine, changing British policies, and building solidarity with the people of Palestine.

¹⁰ Palestine Solidarity Campaign, 2013, *About PSC*, UK, (Viewed 12 November 2013), <http://www.palestinecampaign.org/about/>



Map 4.1 PSC UK branches: the red mark represents the main branch

Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign

The Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign (SPSC) was formed after the second Intifada in 2000 and consists of volunteers who ‘are independent of all political formations, and wholly dependent on donations to finance ... activities ... unaligned with any Palestinian factions and support the right of the Palestinian people as a whole to self-determination’.¹¹ Similarly to the PSC UK, which has branches all over England and Wales, the SPSC has branches and groups of supporters in several Scottish cities and regions: Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Argyll and Bute, the Borders, Berwick, Dundee, Moray and Fife (see map 4.2)

The SPSC’s framework is similar to that of the PSC, but it is noticeable that the SPSC is more focused on advocating the BDS-oriented actions. The group is very active in all areas of advocating boycotts, including educational, sports and cultural boycotts; it is also active in creating educational activities around Palestine as well as sending delegations to Palestine, and in calling on supporters to lobby their MPs on the issue.

¹¹ The Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign, *What We Stand For*, viewed 8 December 2013, <http://www.scottishpsc.org.uk/index.php/about-spsc/what-we-stand-for>



Map 4.2 SPSC branches; the red mark represents the main branch

Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign

In the Republic of Ireland, the main active group is the Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign (IPSC), formed in 2001 with its main office based in Dublin.¹²

The group is dedicated to lobbying the Irish government and the EU on the issue of Palestine and developing political, social and cultural relations between Palestinian and Irish organisations and institutions.¹³

¹²IPSC aims ‘to build solidarity and mutual understanding between the people on the island of Ireland and the Palestinian people; to raise awareness in Ireland of the illegal occupation of Palestinian land, the plight of Palestinian refugees and the struggle of Palestinian citizens of Israel for full equality and civil rights; to participate in international efforts to put pressure on the Israeli state to cease its oppression of the Palestinian people.’ The Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign, *Aims of the IPSC*, viewed 8 December 2013, <http://www.ipsc.ie/about/aims>.

¹³ The IPSC works on promoting ‘engagement by the Irish Government, the political institutions in the North and the European Union for a just and equitable settlement based on the full and unequivocal implementation of international law; to develop and co-ordinate support for Palestinian rights among political parties north and south, churches, local authorities, trade unions, non-governmental organisations, and the general public; to foster links between Palestinian and Irish institutions and organizations in the areas of health, education, sport, culture, local government, workers’ rights, the global economy, and the promotion of human and civil rights; to foster links with Israeli individuals and organisations supportive of full Palestinian rights; and to build the IPSC as an effective organisation to carry out such campaigning, educational, media and other activities as will serve the preceding aims.’

The IPSC has branches all around the country (illustrated in map 4.3), including in Cork, Galway, Limerick and Sligo. It is active in BDS campaigns as well as other activities such as lobbying MPs, organising talks and cultural activities about Palestine.

Irish Friends of Palestine

Previously known as the Derry Friends of Palestine, the Irish Friends of Palestine is the most active group in the north of Ireland. It is based in Derry and formed in 2008. The group's aims include funding of:

projects or events in Ireland or Palestine which will help the people of Palestine through either raising awareness of certain issues, making cultural links or humanitarian aid and assistance. [It] believes the people of Ireland can make a difference in the lives of people in Gaza.¹⁴



Map 4.3 (IPSC branches; the red mark represents the main branch; in the north of Ireland Irish Friends of Palestine is the most active group with a small working branch in Belfast)

The Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign, *Aims of the IPSC*, viewed 8 December 2013, <http://www.ipsc.ie/about/aims>.

¹⁴ Irish Friends of Palestine, *WE HAVE CHANGED*, viewed 8 December 2013, <http://www.derryfriendsofpalestine.org/>.

Local and Sectoral Groups

Although the four major groups selected for analysis create the main element, or core nerve, of the movement's network in the two countries because of their constant highly impactful actions, their associated branches, their geographic distribution, and their activity on the web, other active groups are worth mentioning in the solidarity scene.

Some groups are active locally, or in specialised areas, focusing, for example, on providing medical aid to Palestinians, such as the UK-based Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP)¹⁵ and the Irish Medical Aid for Palestinians.¹⁶ Other active groups also exist, such as Friends of Al-Aqsa,¹⁷ and some that are associated with political parties such as the Liberal Democratic Friends of Palestine and the Labour Friends of Palestine and the Middle East.

In the UK, pro-Palestinian organisations include Palestinian community groups, such as the UK branch of the General Union of Palestinian Students and the Association of the Palestinian Community in the UK, student groups, Jewish groups (such as Jews for Justice for Palestinians), Muslim associations and trade unions (such as UNISON and NAFTHE) (Loddo, 2005). Jews for Justice for Palestinians formed in 2002 and has attracted about 1600 signatories, while Independent Jewish Voices formed in 2006 with around 650 signatories (Landy, 2013). Another group is the Britain Palestine Twinning Network, and a further two distinguished global campaigns with an active presence in Britain are the BDS campaign and ISM.

In Scotland, there are also local active groups that are not part of the SPCS, such as the Glasgow Palestine Human Rights Campaign, the Scottish Friends of Palestine and the Scottish Palestinian Forum. In Ireland, groups other than the IPSC are limited in number, but they include Sadaka – the Ireland Palestine Alliance – a lobbying, research

¹⁵ MAP, which has offices in Beirut, Ramallah, Jerusalem and Gaza, 'delivers health and medical care to those worst affected by conflict, occupation and displacement'. Medical Aid for Palestinians. What we do, <http://www.map-uk.org/what-we-do/what-we-do> (Accessed 18 September 2015).

¹⁶ The Irish MAP aims to provide 'the necessary help and support to the Palestinian people to protect, maintain and improve their health.' Irish Medical Aid for Palestinians. 2014. About us, <http://www.irishmap.ie/about.html> (Accessed 18 September, 2015).

¹⁷ A UK-based group 'concerned with defending the human rights of Palestinians and protecting the sacred al-Aqsa Sanctuary in Jerusalem'. Friends of Al-Aqsa. 2011. About, <http://www.foa.org.uk/about> (Accessed 18 September, 2015).

and politically focused group based in Dublin, which is less active at a grassroots level, but active in producing research papers and studies. Act for Palestine is also a Dublin-based group, made up of a number of activists that is highly active on the street, including protesting in front of the Israeli embassy.

Groups that represent sectors of society, such as academics or trade unionists, are also established within the two countries, among them Academics for Palestine in Ireland, and Trade Union Friends of Palestine.

Students' Network

The UK-based students network is made up of Palestine societies from many universities across Wales, Scotland and England. The network is organised on an internal level and is active both on campus and online. Palestine societies are found in the major universities in the UK, but less so in Irish universities. Table 4.1 shows the most active groups, connected to each other through online networking and annual face to face meetings.

The student groups' activities on campus are similar and take the form of talks and cultural events about Palestine. Other events are coordinated during the annual general meeting, when representatives from all the societies meet to discuss unified campaigns. A BDS campaign, for example, targeted companies who had engaged in business with Israeli authorities and factories based in the settlements or worked in the occupied Palestinian territories and had signed contracts with their universities. Examples include the Eden Springs water company and the G4S security company.

	Country	University	Name of Society
1	England	Birmingham	Students For Justice In Palestine
2	England	Bradford	Bradford United 4 Palestine
3	England	Bristol	Friends of Palestine Society
4	England	Brunel	Friends of Palestine Society
5	England	Cambridge	Palestine Society
6	England	City University London	Palestine Society

7	England	De Montfort	Palestine Solidarity Society
8	England	Durham	Friends of Palestine Society
9	England	East London	Friends of Palestine
10	England	Essex	Palestine Solidarity Campaign
11	England	Exeter	Friends of Palestine
12	England	Goldsmiths College	Palestine Campaign
13	England	Imperial College London	Palestinian Society
14	England	Kent	Palestine Solidarity Group
15	England	King's College London	KCL Action Palestine
16	England	Leeds	Palestine Solidarity Group
17	England	Leicester	Palestine Solidarity Campaign
18	England	Lincoln	Solidarity Campaign Society
19	England	Liverpool	Friends of Palestine
20	England	London School of Economics	Palestine Society
21	England	Manchester	Action Palestine Society
22	England	Manchester Metropolitan	Action Palestine Society
23	England	Middlesex	Free Palestine Society
24	England	Newcastle	Friends Of Palestine Society
25	England	Northampton	Palestine Solidarity Society
26	England	Northumbria	Friends of Palestine Society
27	England	Nottingham	Palestinian Society
28	England	Oxford	Oxford Students' Palestine Society
29	England	Queen Mary University of London	Palestine Solidarity Society
30	England	Sheffield	Palestine Society
31	England	Sussex	Friends of Palestine
32	England	SOAS	Palestine Society
33	England	Southampton	Students for Palestine
34	England	University College London	Friends of Palestine Society
35	England	Warwick	Friends of Palestine Society
36	England	Westminster	Palestinian Solidarity Society

37	England	York	Palestinian Solidarity Society
38	N.Ireland	Queen's University Belfast	Palestine Solidarity Society
39	Scotland	Dundee	Action Palestine
40	Scotland	Edinburgh	Students for Justice in Palestine
41	Scotland	Glasgow Caledonian	Students For Palestinian Rights
42	Scotland	Glasgow	Palestine Society
43	Scotland	Strathclyde	Students for Justice in Palestine
44	Wales	Cardiff	Palestine Society

(Table 4.1: Names of active Palestine solidarity groups in the UK universities)

4.4 Areas of Activism

The missions of most groups in the movement can be classified into three main areas: advocacy, including raising awareness, lobbying and advocating BDS.

In general, regular advocacy and associated actions, both online or offline, is mainly targeting British and Irish citizens, and is accompanied by encouragement to adopt the BDS call, including boycotting Israeli settlement-produced products that are being sold in British and Irish shops and markets, as well as ending cultural and academic collaboration with Israeli entities complicit with the occupation policies. Solidarity campaigns are also active in encouraging the national/local media to provide balanced coverage that takes into consideration the Palestinian narrative. In this regard, media monitoring, in which analysis of the coverage by major media outlets of the conflict comes under scrutiny, resulting in organised efforts of challenging this coverage via the Internet and protests.¹⁸

The priorities of the action taking place on the ground in whatever form, be it lobbying, informing the public, cultural activities or street protesting, can vary due to external factors. The most common external factor is escalation in Palestine. This research identified a clear trend whereby organised forms of collective solidarity for Palestinians'

¹⁸ Challenging the mainstream media on coverage of the conflict has become a priority of the UK-based groups, mainly the PSC UK, during the last few years. Such organised challenge comes in form of online petitioning, complaint writing and protesting in front of the BBC offices on several occasions.

rights take place shortly after Israel offensives, confrontations or when a new Intifada breaks out.

As diagram 4.1 indicates, the groups have two forms of organised collective action: regular activities, which consist of ongoing BDS-advocating campaigns, awareness raising, informing the public, and hosting talks and meetings that discuss the situation in Palestine; and forms of activities in response to political or military developments in Palestine.

When events take place in Palestine, the active behaviour of the solidarity groups is very noticeable, especially the increase in publishing content online. As the next three chapters show, solidarity groups usually increase their presence and interactivity with the online audience through publishing follow-up, constant daily news and reports about the situation in Palestine from the Palestinian perspective. The time that it takes the leading groups to discuss, mobilise and organise supporting actions, in the form of vigils in city centre, large protests and sit-in, is less during these very politically sensitive periods than at other times.

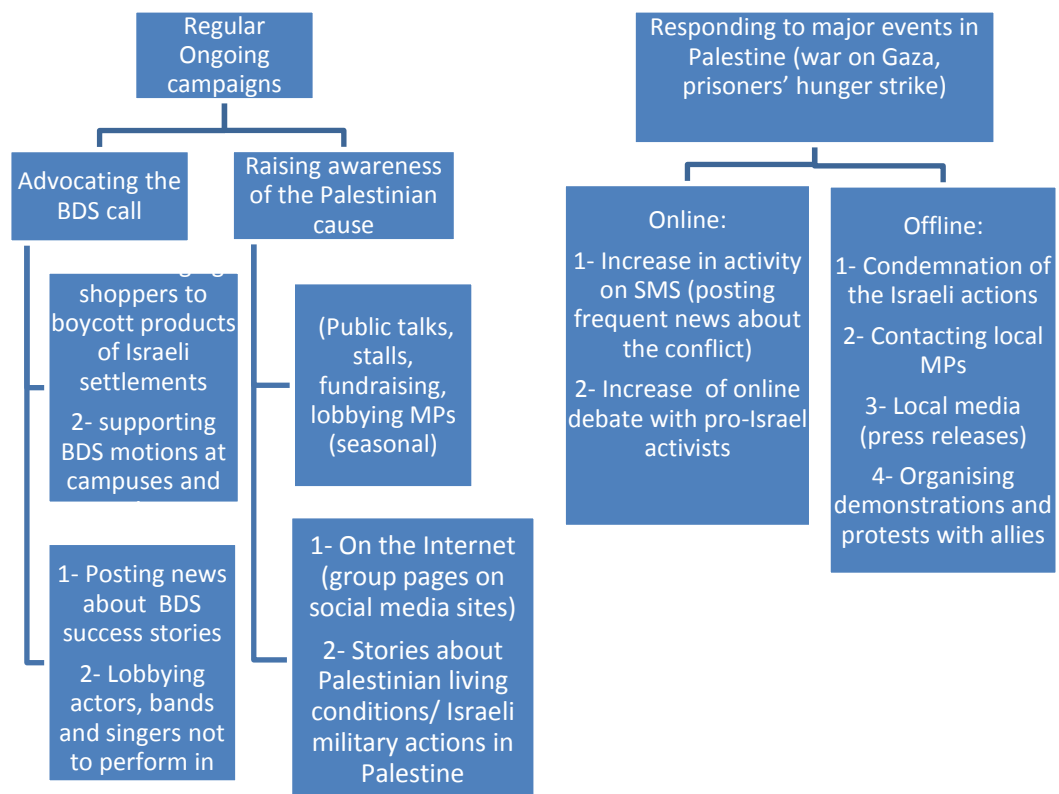


Diagram 4.1 Areas of Activism. The two forms of action used by active groups: regular, and responsive to the situation in Palestine.

4.5 Layers of the Movement

Organised solidarity structures in the UK and Ireland are classified based on their present role in organising, alliance building and participating. This classification is presented in three layers, namely: the core groups, the second layer groups and the allies. Networking between the first two layers, who are solely dedicated to advocating the Palestine cause, varies. Networking with external allies is limited to the leaders of the groups.

4.5.1 Core Layer

The four major active groups and the students' network are the most vibrant and active nodes within this network and can be thought of as the core layer. These are the most vibrant, active, well-spread organisations within their local areas and nationally. Their ability to coordinate their activities with their branches and with their surrounding allies, as well as their constant presence on the ground through activities, demonstrates their ability to maintain local collective action and their centrality in the network.

The core layer is an extended, loosely connected network. It is not noticeably active in terms of extensive coordination, mutual activities, or organising regular collective action. As the following sections in this chapter shows, there is a modest level of internal coordination among the groups of the core layer.

4.5.2 Second Layer

Local groups active in one geographical place and with no national branches are similar to the main groups in their shared goals of implementing campaigns in support of Palestinian rights, and make up the second layer of the movement. However, some are less focused on grassroots activities and more on lobbying and media advocacy, while others are interested in local activities on the ground. In either case, the ability of such groups to mobilise large masses and build coalitions at a national and regional level is less than that of the major national groups.

Nonetheless, they become active within the network through joining similar local and national groups in joint activities. In other words, groups of the second layer of the

network, the local, independent and non-affiliated groups, work independently on issues of their own focus or area of interest, yet collaborate on big initiatives and take part in joint efforts and actions associated with major events or actions.

4.5.3 Third Layer

Allies make up the third layer of the movement's network. These organisations have main missions focused on internal matters in their countries and join Palestine solidarity groups in joint campaigns, increasingly supporting BDS, and taking part in mass demonstrations on a seasonal basis. Unions and anti-war movements are among the allies.

In the UK, the PSC has been actively building ties and alliances with the major unions. As indicated in the group's websites, the organisation:

works closely with trade unions and the largest trade unions in the UK are affiliated to PSC – while a growing number of trade union branches and regions are affiliating to the campaign. PSC recognises the importance of working with trade unions which have a long history of supporting international causes such as the anti-Apartheid movement in South Africa.¹⁹

While the IPSC of Ireland alliance building with Irish unions is advancing, the PSC has a noticeably strong working relationship with UK unions. The group states in its website that it is affiliated with the following unions:²⁰

- ASLEF – Train Drivers Union
- BFAWU – Bakers
- Food and Allied Workers Union
- BECTU – Broadcasting Entertainment Cinematography and Theatre Union
- Connect – Union for Professionals in Communications
- CWU – Communication Workers Union
- FBU – Fire Brigades Union
- GMB – Britain's General Union
- NUM – National Union of Miners
- NUT – National Union of Teachers

¹⁹ Palestine Solidarity Campaign, *Trade Unions & Palestine*, (viewed 8 December 2013), <http://www.palestinecampaign.org/get-involved/trade-unions/>.

²⁰ Palestine Solidarity Campaign, *Affiliated trade unions*, (viewed 8 December 2013), <http://www.palestinecampaign.org/information/other-organisations/affiliated-trade-unions/>.

- PCS – Public and Commercial Services Union
- RMT – Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers Union
- TSSA – Transport Salaried Staffs Association
- UCATT – Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians
- UCU – University and College Union
- UNISON– The public service union
- UNITE – Industry
- USDAW – Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers

The group also works closely with many institutions and organisations in Britain with interests in the Palestinian and Arab region. Such groups include local solidarity groups in Britain, as described earlier, as well as UK-based groups with areas of focus other than solidarity activities. The PSC website lists these groups as UK-based charities and campaign organisations including:²¹

- Palestinian Diplomatic Mission to the UK – the Ambassador for Palestine to the UK
- Amos Trust, Association of the Palestinian Community in the UK
- British Committee for Universities in Palestine
- Conservative Middle East Council
- Council for the Advancement of Arab–British Understanding
- Friends of al Aqsa, Friends of Birzeit
- Friends of Sabeel
- FQMS – Foundation for al Quds University Medical School
- Glasgow Palestine Human Rights Campaign
- Hoping Foundation
- International Solidarity Movement – London
- International Solidarity Movement – Scotland
- Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions UK
- Jews for Justice for Palestinians
- Kairos Palestine
- Labour Friends of Palestine and the Middle East
- Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights
- Liberal Democrats Friends of Palestine
- Medical Aid for Palestinians
- Middle East Monitor
- Muslim Council of Britain
- Palestinian Forum of Britain

²¹Palestine Solidarity Campaign, *UK based charities & campaign organisations*, (viewed 8 December 2013), <http://www.palestinecampaign.org/information/other-organisations/uk-based-charities-campaign-organisations/>.

- Palestinian Return Centre
- Qattan Foundation Charitable Foundation
- Stop the War
- Scottish Friends of Palestine
- Scottish Palestinian Forum
- Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign
- War on Want

4.6 National Collaboration, Transnational Coordination and Networking with Allies

One cannot generalise from an understanding of the solidarity movement in the UK and Ireland to solidarity groups around the globe, as each organisation is affected by local factors, sometimes working in favour of their activities and sometimes against. Cassanos (2010)'s examination of the solidarity movement in the USA, for example, suggests that in that country the movement only weakly connects local groups into a decentralised network, and the challenges that movement activists face have an impact on their ability to seize political opportunities.

In the UK and Ireland, the main groups in the core layer form natural alliances with similar groups and local grassroots movements, civil society organisations, as well as with unions and anti-war movements. However, collaboration with these partners is not a daily affair and is not always noticeable among the general membership. Meanwhile, cross-border collaboration among leading groups in Ireland and the UK is not as vibrant as was expected.

4.6.1 Internal Collaboration at National Level

One mode of collaboration and networking among the leading national groups and the students' network is done online, including through emails. Meanwhile the annual general meetings are an opportunity for exchanging ideas, and setting the long-term agenda of activism, as well as for electing executive members.

In Ireland, for example, Kevin Squires, the national coordinator of the IPSC, says that his group communicates with other branches through emails and phone calls, and provides logistical support when needed and possible; nevertheless, branches are autonomous in their work. Collaboration with other pro-Palestine groups in Dublin is limited, pointing to the different areas of focus for these groups, as well the limited

number of core activists for IPSC, Sadaka or Act for Palestine (Interview, 30 October 2013).

On the other hand, collaboration among the students' network components is highly noticeable, including through the Internet. Student and university societies have a higher level of coordination among themselves through annual meetings and through interactive Internet-mediated platforms, mainly closed groups on Facebook, which they use to exchange information, resources, ideas and experiences.

4.6.2 Limited Cross-Border Coordination

The examination of the relationships and observation of the activities of the solidarity groups in Ireland and the UK suggests that bilateral coordination is limited at best. Even the expected collaboration between the two major groups –the PSC UK and the SPSC – appears to be less than might be expected. More collaboration takes place across groups within the same city or country.

The solidarity groups in the UK and Ireland have a limited level of collaboration: the interviews conducted and the observation throughout the research lead to the conclusion that transnational UK–Irish coordination is not a priority. Cross-border collaboration among the countries of the UK and with Ireland has not been identified extensively during the period of the study; there have only been limited occasions in which they have collaborated through the European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine, which coordinates efforts among all Europe-based solidarity groups, as indicated by the analysis in Chapter 6.

Squires admits that there is no high-level coordination between the IPSC and the PSC or SPSC: 'there are no issues dividing us with them, but we do not have joined-up campaigns. We coordinate on a European level through European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine' (Interview, 30 October 2013).

This limited cross-national collaboration cannot be due to the lack of available communication technologies: there are massive interactive Internet-based and digital communications available that would facilitate any cross-national collaboration. For those reasons, in addition to the close geographical locations of the studied groups, it

was assumed prior to engaging in the research that considerable and regular collaboration would be found among these geographically close groups.

It seems that the priority of empowering the movement locally, including building and capitalising on alliances, still guides the collaboration strategies of the movement's leading groups. The existing communication technologies, close geographical location, lack of language barrier and shared goals of the Ireland and UK groups provide unique opportunities for them to increase the level of collaboration not only between leaders but also among activists: this could have a positive impact on coordinated collective actions.

4.6.3 The Internet Factor on Campus

Unlike in the IPS, SPSC and PSC, where the coordination and collaboration is not consistent and active, the student network groups are highly active in collaborating with each other. However, among the challenges they face is the need to recruit new members. After members graduate from university, their activities with the societies end, and therefore new replacement members are always needed to keep the societies alive.

On campus, the available interactive social media are used on three fronts, explained Catherine Vera Harris, former head of the Palestine Society at the University of Glasgow. They are first used for informing the online audience who follow the group accounts on social media, including the group's Facebook page, about current events and developments in Palestine, as well as about the group's local activities, including meetings, on campus and in Glasgow city (Interview, 8 September 2012).

She reaffirms what the analysis and interviews conducted with solidarity activists as part of this research have indicated, namely that social media site platforms are constantly used on several fronts, mainly for informing and mobilising followers (Interview, 8 September 2012).

Catherine also explained that the Glasgow University Palestine Society opened two accounts on Facebook, with the first being used primarily for posting information about the current situation in Palestine, and the society's on-campus and local activities, while

the second was used entirely by the society's members to discuss and organise future activities.

James, the former leading activist in the Palestine society at Goldsmiths, University of London, emphasised (Interview, 3 September, 2012) the importance of the use of social media sites by solidarity activists for informing, organising and mobilising within the campus. He differentiates between the use of each platform, with Facebook, for example, used more for organising activities, such as the annual general meeting, and Twitter more for advocacy and awareness-raising.

Similarly, the two active members of the King's College of London Palestine Society asserted the importance of the Internet as a communication resource that contributes to expanding the movement, as they see it as a visual element which thus has more impact. For their group, the Internet is a powerful tool for raising awareness about any cause. They explain that most of their group's activities within the campus are organised offline before they announce them online, pointing to the group's page on Facebook and its mailing list as a means of communicating with followers, group members and interested students (personal interview, October 2013).

The student network's reliance on Internet-based platforms for collaboration, informing the online audiences and their followers and organising activities is very high. Almost every Palestine society in UK and Ireland universities has a presence on the Internet, through a blog, websites, and particularly Facebook and Twitter. The student network works differently: individual groups are not officially part of a national group, as they are only active within a specific campus. However, sharing experiences and implementing similar activities and campaigns are part of the whole approach to student networking.

A good example of cross-campus collaboration among the UK-based university societies is Israeli Apartheid Week, an annual global activity, especially on campuses. It consists of a series of activities and lectures that aim to show the apartheid nature of Israeli policies in Palestine. The 2013 version of Israeli Apartheid Week was jointly organised by several London-based university societies (UCL Palestine Society, SOAS

Palestine Society, KCL Action Palestine, Goldsmith's Palestine Society, UEL Palestine Liberation Society, LSE Palestine Society, City University Palestine Society, Kingston University Palestine Society and QMUL Palestine Society), and several Palestinian speakers toured the campuses to deliver lectures, under the theme: 'Voices from Palestine: resisting racism and apartheid'.

4.6.4 Networking with Allies

On relations with civil society, Squires explains that the IPSC has a good working relationship with the unions.²² He mentions that the group is open to work with all civil society organisations and parties in Ireland, including political parties, if they are willing to work with a similar perspective.

While networking with local allies is maintained, there is weak bilateral engagement with these allies at member level and this is particularly apparent online. The content found on the movement's platforms on the web seldom addresses issues that are of interest to the solidarity movement's allies, except perhaps to individuals in their personal capacity. Furthermore, interactions with the social bases of allies are not so evident, including on online.

This limited networking between allies and the movement at the grassroots level is reflected in weak participation from non-solidarity associated activists in most local activities organised by the movement. The exception is the massive protests and rallies that are well organised with allies during crisis times in Palestine, such as during the Israeli wars on Gaza 2008–09 and 2014. This also explains why the organising of collective action through the web is usually limited to individuals associated with the movement, with very limited online exchange of information and organising with other social change groups at national or local level.

4.6.5 Relations with the Palestinian National Movement

Within the solidarity movement, there is a specific sensitivity about getting involved in internal Palestinian politics, and commenting on the path that the Palestinian national movement should follow. Landy (2014) explains that the focus of the solidarity

²² An updated feedback from Squires in 2014 post the War on Gaza, which is the centre of Chapter 7, indicates a stronger stance from several Irish unions against the Israeli attack on Gaza.

movement has been on Israeli actions rather than supporting Palestinian actions, due to internal Palestinian conflicts. That is also due to the way Palestinians are seen by groups in the solidarity movement as politically independent, with the movement showing solidarity rather than interfering.

I argue that solidarity groups, in the case of Palestine, deal with problems by ‘hiding behind the flag’ – that is, they support an uncomplicated Palestinian nationalism which sees ‘the Palestinians’ as unitary and which refuses to get involved in Palestinian politics. Groups do so for very good reasons. This refusal is a way of understanding Palestinians as autonomous political subjects with whom one is in solidarity, rather than objects to be manipulated to serve the political aspirations of activists.

(2014, p. 131)

The official stance of most of the solidarity groups reaffirms continually that they do not take sides in internal disputes, particularly that between Fatah, the ruling party of the Palestinian National Authority-PNA, and Hamas, the de facto ruling power of the Gaza strip. However, the policies of the PNA and President Mahmoud Abbas on relations with the USA and troubling political relations with Israel including security coordination are not supported by many of the solidarity activists.

Indirect, and in many cases direct, criticism of the Abbas policies of engagement in talks with Israel and maintaining security coordination with it are common on many of the social media accounts of solidarity activists. Articles that accuse the Palestinian leadership of the PLO and the PNA of collaboration with Israel and acts of treason to the Palestinian cause, rather than seeing them as part of the political obligations for Palestinian–Israeli relations as set by the Oslo Accords, are shared on Twitter and Facebook accounts.

An active leader in the Glasgow Caledonian University group has pointed to the importance of embracing solidarity as a means of supporting and following the Palestinian lead (personal communication, 2013). A good example of this concept of ‘following the Palestinian lead’ is the BDS campaigns. The BDS, which is gaining

momentum globally, including in European and US campuses, is a result of the BDS call that was issued in 2005 by the Palestinian civil society organisation, which consists of representatives of the whole spectrum of Palestinian political and civil society.

4.7 Discussion

This part of the thesis provides a working definition of the Palestine solidarity movement, introduces the main actors, and their presence on the web, and identifies forms of collective action. It aims to provide an understanding of the movement's collaboration, coordination and networking structures on several fronts: internally, with other affiliated on-campus and off-campus groups and their branches, and externally with local and national groups engaged in collective action and social justice, and with grassroots movements and unions. It also examines the limited relations with the Palestinian mainstream political institutions and parties that are main components of the national movement.

The distinct presence of the solidarity organisations on the Internet through websites, social media accounts and other online interactive channels, has been found to be active throughout the year, and to be more active in terms of providing contents in all forms – text, image and moving images – especially during crises in Palestine.

Internet-based interactive platforms have positively contributed to making activists' opinions widely heard and presented online, in addition to enabling them to instantly report events and news, and mobilise and organise collective solidarity actions. This presence not only contributes to the goals of awareness raising, and advocating the Palestinian narrative, but also keeps solidarity organisations in constant contact with followers, associates, activists and potential participants in future mobilising and organising efforts.

Forms of collective action are classified into two categories: regular and urgent/non-regular activities. While both forms of activity are implemented similarly on both the streets and the web, particularly Twitter and Facebook, they differ in terms of the amount of content shared, and the speed of organising and mobilising. Regular activities consist of three areas of action: mobilising, advocacy, and lobbying. These forms of

daily activity become more extensive and are accompanied by significant street-based action in the form of protests and vigils whenever a new wave of escalation takes place in Palestine.

These responsive solidarity actions serve two purposes for activists and supporters of Palestinians rights. On the one hand, they send a message to the Palestinians that they are not alone in their struggle, and this means a good deal symbolically to them. On the other hand, escalation in Palestine can receive great coverage in the news, which is an opportunity for creating supportive public opinion and better informing the public. The higher the tension and escalation in Palestine, the quicker these groups become active on the web, and speed up their level of organising, galvanising, and implementing solidarity actions on the streets.

That is to say, escalation in Palestine provides an opportunity not only for supporting the Palestinians and condemning the Israeli aggression, but also for intensifying action at the three levels of activism: informing, advocating and lobbying. Escalation in Palestine is found to be an opportunity for the solidarity movement to further advocate the need for adoption of BDS by civil society organisations and to engage in strengthening alliances with local organisations.

Looking at the relation between the intensification of advocacy efforts and new waves of Israeli escalation against Palestinians from the perspective of the political opportunity that Tarrow (1996) discusses leads one to look at the movement's activism as a form of collective action that aims to change not the political system, but rather public opinion towards the Palestinian cause. In other words, seizing political opportunities may not necessarily come in the form of opportunities for implementing changes in political structure, but they also can be seen as opportunities to address public opinion. The challenges can also be tackled through pushing forward a preferred narrative through media platforms, including online media. Through seizing the opportunity of the news coverage of events in Palestine during a crisis, the movement can engage in responsive actions to defend the Palestinian narrative as a priority.

In relation to the second point of analysis that this chapter addresses which is the inter-organisational collaboration among solidarity groups, it is evident that the strong online presence of the solidarity organisations has not been a strong contributor to an inter-organisational collaboration among different solidarity organisations. While it is understandable that each organisation operates independently and autonomously, and each has its own priorities in networking and advocating, increasing the level of coordination, which is now very feasible with the availability of new media technologies, advances the whole movement's advocacy efforts at the national level. The student network clearly benefits from the available online platforms in enhancing inter-societies collaboration, the organising of activities, the exchanging of ideas and planning.

Diani (2015b)'s 'resource allocation' and 'boundary definition' logic of understanding modes of coordination within the realm of civil society is very relevant to this chapter. While he differentiates between movements and coalitions as they both are structured on different 'modes of coordination', Diani (2015b) points to their different approaches to resource allocation and boundary definition.²³ In that, he argues that resource allocation in both cases is not limited to one organisation, but rather to a sets of actors engaged in networks of exchanges. Meanwhile movements have stronger levels of boundary definition that consist of solidarities, identities and long term commitment to specific projects.

Organisations that are part of a larger umbrella organisation, such as the solidarity movement, can benefit from each other's resources during the processes of inter-organisational collaboration. These resources, within the arena of the internet, can come in the form of exchanges of information, collaborative strategic planning, tasks division, joint efforts and more. Stronger coalitional networking among solidarity actors would have a strategic impact on the movement and could contribute to its growth and to building a larger coalition for the Palestinian Cause.

²³ Diani (2015a) defines the mechanism of resource allocation as 'the criteria through which decisions are taken about the allocation of scarce resources [while the mechanism of boundary definition is] the processes through which statements are (implicitly) made about what bonds together certain actors rather than others' (p. 201).

Leading solidarity groups who share similar missions and are committed to the same project are able to advance their mission through increased collaboration within a better networked movement. Such effort may be a preliminary step towards a large coalition of Irish and British civil society organisations.

Looking at the third level of coordinating, collaborating and networking leads us to the organisational networking that the leading groups are engaged in with Irish and UK allies, in particular social change organisations, movements and the wider civil society. As this chapter shows, solidarity groups are focused on establishing such collaborative networking relations mainly at the leadership level, leaving most members uninvolved, except through seasonal organised collective actions when the movement and their allies join forces in protests or demonstrations for Palestine. Although many activists are engaged in other social change campaigns, beyond solidarity with Palestine, the unintentional separation between the memberships means that there is modest impact from this potential networking for both parties.

Robinson (2005) studied the alliance between Hamas and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine that aimed at opposing Fatah and PLO engagement in political negotiations with Israel in the early 1990s. The analysis of the alliance, as Robinson (2005) (cited by Diani 2015a) indicates, is that the two political parties engaged in the coalition for organisational reasons and, because of that, limited their alliance to the leadership, ignoring the idea of strengthening it through merging forces. Furthermore, the opposing ideologies would have been a major challenge to any inter-organisational efforts to merge. (Diani, 2015a) explains that active organisational rather than social movement modes were implemented in this case.

To sum up discussion of this point, the argument here is that, regardless of the active presence on the Internet social media platforms, in which online interactions among same country solidarity groups mostly takes place, the extent of collaboration between them on the ground (off-line) is modest. On the other hand, the increasing level of coordination and alliance building between solidarity groups and local civil society organisations remains at the leadership level, and this collaboration is not transformed into online collaboration among the grass-roots and social bases of these organisations.

Thus, as this chapter argues, limiting collaboration to the leadership level without engaging social bases, negatively affects the opportunities to transform such collaboration into a larger mainstream social movement that is concerned with the question of Palestine.

Before moving to the next chapter, the discussion will end with addressing the observed limited engagement with Palestinian political actors. As the previous section shows, mainstream solidarity groups clearly argue that they are neutral in relation to the PNA/PLO and Hamas. By adopting this position, however, the movement misses an important and sensitive matter within the Palestinian national movement politics – the issue of representation. Hamas is one of many Palestinian factions, whereas the PLO is recognised by the Palestinians and by the international community as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people inside Palestine and in exile. It consists of almost all national factions, except Hamas and the Islamic Jihad movement.

Furthermore, that preferred position of maintaining non-involvement in internal Palestinian politics is questionable, and impossible. That is because the solidarity movement is not an external player in the Palestinian struggle; it is an important player in the global arena, in which it provides a voice for the Palestinian people. Therefore, solidarity organisations are partners in the Palestinian struggle and in the larger liberation movement, and thus the movement has the right to be clearly and openly involved through declaring what it believes should and could be done for Palestine, from their perspective as partners in the struggle.

Those partners, i.e. the global solidarity movement active groups, face, as PAPPÉ (2015) writes, paradoxes that are challenging. The first of these challenges is the:

gap between the dramatic change in world public opinion on the issue of Palestine, on the one hand, and the continued support from political and economic elites in the West for the Jewish state on the other (and hence the lack of any impact of that change on the reality on the ground).

(2015, p. 11)

The other three paradoxes consist of the negative image of Israel globally at the same time as Jewish society has a very positive image of it; the focus on criticising Israeli policies in the absence of challenging the very basic nature of Israel and the Zionism ideology; and the Israeli success in framing the conflict as ‘complex’, while it is simply a story of colonialism and dispossession.

The question remains, how these challenges can be discussed separately from a much wider discussion within the Palestinian national movement which the global solidarity movement should be part of. Separating the discussion among the global solidarity actors from the internal Palestinian strategic discussion that continues to take place in many political and social circles in Palestine and among Palestinians in exile, especially in this crucial period in the life of the cause, can have little effect.

From another perspective, the noticeably cold relations between the leadership of the Palestinian national movement is influenced by Palestinian politics post the Oslo Accord (1993). The approach to world politics which the PLO and subsequently the PNA adopted post and during the so-called ‘peace process’ was based on improving relations with world governments through strengthening diplomatic ties, and shaped by the desire to gain diplomatic recognition of Palestine as a country.

This shift of Palestinian external relations post the Oslo Accord has clearly affected the national movement’s relations with traditional allies, including global grassroots movements. The limited coordination between the PLO and the BDS movement that comprises active solidarity groups is a clear example of this cold relationship.

Global activists and their perspectives can contribute insight to the national struggle. The BDS, which is a call issued by a wide range of Palestinian civil society organisations and has been adopted by global solidarity organisations, is a good example of what can be achieved when there is close collaboration between Palestinian entities and solidarity organisations.

That is because the solidarity movement is not an external player in the Palestinian struggle; it is an important player in the global arena, in which it provides a voice for the Palestinian people

Therefore, solidarity organisations are partners in the Palestinian struggle and in the larger liberation movement, and thus the movement has the right to be clearly and openly involved through declaring what it believes should and could be done for Palestine, from their perspective as partners in the struggle. This ought to be done through deliberate and direct discussion with both political parties and civil society organisations in Palestine.

That is to say, the solidarity movement should think beyond situating itself in the traditional position of solidarity with the Palestinians but avoiding any involvement in internal Palestinian politics. Practising partnership in the Palestinian struggle requires further involvement through discussions and deliberation with the components of the Palestinian national movement and the civil society organisations: that would lead to better collaboration and coordination.

Chapter 5: The Prisoners' Hunger Strike Campaign 2012

5.1 Introduction

Similar to other issues related to the Palestinian struggle, the case of the political prisoners in Israel prisons has always been on the solidarity campaigners' agenda. In recent years, many campaigns have taken place in Ireland, UK and the rest of the world to show the stories of the Palestinian political prisoners, and the inhumane conditions they are subjected to, and many activities have been organised in support of them. In 2012, a campaign in support of the Palestinian administrative prisoners who went on hunger strike that year took place in Scotland and was organised by several solidarity societies on campus.

The significance of this campaign, which is the concern of this chapter, lies in its character as a joint collective action implemented by Scotland-based components of the UK students' solidarity network, and also for the way the campaign framed the political prisoners hunger strike as a form of resistance.

This campaign was chosen to be examined, because it provides us with an understanding of contemporary collective action on the issue of Palestine on Scotland's campuses. Even more, the 'We Are All Hana Shalabi' differs from other campaigns in its clear advancement of the resistance frame, which has rarely been seen as a distinct component in the contemporary solidarity movement literature in the last two decades.

The examination of the campaign's online content analyses the emergence of the resistance frame within its context, and its relevance to the larger Palestinian cause. The examination applies a framing analysis, in particular identifying the discursive process elements (Benford and Snow, 2000) namely: frame articulation and frame amplification/punctuation. In this process, analyses of the frame components is offered through applying the matrix model of Gamson and Modigliani (1989), which facilitates the identification of the framing and reasoning devices.

The text in this chapter is divided into several sections. It first provides an overview of the case of administrative detainees, followed by a short description of the context of the

Palestinian political prisoners' hunger strike in 2012. Then a detailed interpretation of the data collected on the campaign is presented. Through these results, the elements and themes of the resistance frame are highlighted.

The chapter's debate is centred on two points: the interactive space that the Internet offers, and the nature of the campaign that produced this frame. It argues that the higher level of interactivity that activists enjoy online contributes to the rise of non-traditional frames. This therefore simplifies – for observers and researchers – the process of identifying the different frames deployed by different actors within the movement.

The text argues that the rise of the resistance frame was supported by the students who do not seem to be committed to the mainstream language of the movement, which prefers to highlight other Palestinian rights over the right of resistance. The chapter also shows that the resistance frame, which had not been apparent after the Oslo Accords in the solidarity movement's campaigning language, re-emerges in this case because of internal, regional and local Palestinian factors.

The chapter puts forward the argument that a wider dialogue within the Palestinian national movement, which the solidarity movement should engage with, aimed at strategically re-framing its role as a bridge between Palestinians and civil society organizations in the west.

5.2 Administrative Detention and the Hunger Strike of 2012

Among the many policies of the Israeli occupation that have had a severe impact on the daily lives of individuals and families in Palestine is the policy of detention and imprisonment directed against Palestinian political activists – men, women and children alike. One of the direct implications of the Israeli military control of the rest of Palestine (the West Bank, including Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip) after the 1967 war has been the imprisonment of Palestinians in Israeli military jails (estimated at over 6,000 in October 2014).²⁴

²⁴ Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, 'Fact Sheet: Families and Family Visits'. (2014). <http://www.addameer.org/etemplate.php?id=728>. (Accessed: 22 April 2015).

Along with other long-running issues, such as the return of the Palestinian refugees, sovereignty over Jerusalem, borders, water rights and settlements, the freedom of the Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli jails is a topic that has been at the centre of Palestinian–Israeli political talks since the early 1990s.

Administrative detention is a form of violation in which detainees are held without any trial, based on alleged ‘secret information’, which the Israeli military authorities will not share with the detainees or their defence.

Administrative detention is a procedure that allows the Israeli military to hold prisoners indefinitely on secret information without charging them or allowing them to stand trial. Palestinians have been subjected to administrative detention since the beginning of the Israeli Occupation in 1967 and before that time, under the British Mandate. The frequency of the use of administrative detention has fluctuated throughout Israel’s occupation, and has been steadily rising since the outbreak of the second intifada in September 2000.²⁵

Throughout the years of occupation, administrative detention had been an Israeli tool for oppressing the Palestinians, silencing them, and combatting their national movement and political activism for independence. Political activists, including the researcher’s father, as well as members of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), have been subject to Israeli administrative detention policies since 1967. Currently, there are fourteen PLC members in Israeli prisons, eight of whom are held under administrative detention, and it was reported in May 2014 that there were around 192 administrative detainees in total.²⁶

The Hunger Strike of 2012

In 2012, around 2000 Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails announced collective participation in a hunger strike in protest over their imprisonment conditions. This organised act of protest which began on 17 April – the Palestinian Prisoners’ Day –

²⁵ Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, ‘Key Issues: Administrative Detainees’. (2014) <http://www.addameer.org/etemplate.php?id=342>. (Accessed: 22 April, 2015).

²⁶ Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, ‘Administrative Detention in Numbers’. (2014). <http://www.addameer.org/etemplate.php?id=342>. (Accessed 22 April, 2015).

received support from the entire Palestinian political spectrum, and many supporting activities took place in Palestinian cities.

The massive open-ended hunger strike came after several administrative detainees went on hunger strike in protest against their illegal imprisonment. Among them were Tha'er Halahleh and Bilal Diab, whose hunger strike lasted for 77 days; Khader Adnan who stayed 66 days on hunger strike; and Hana Shalabi²⁷ who was released and deported to Gaza after a 43-day hunger strike.

The 28-day massive strike ended after an agreement between the Palestinian Higher Committee for Prisoners and the Israeli Prison Service, mediated by Egypt. The agreement, which Israel unsurprisingly violated afterwards, states that Israel should meet the prisoners demands, which consisted of termination of solitary confinement; halting the renewal of administrative detention; allowing visits of first-degree relatives of prisoners from the Gaza Strip; allowing telephone communications between prisoners and their families; and improving the living conditions of prisoners.

While the world mainstream media were criticised for the lack of coverage of this massive hunger strike campaign, many supporting solidarity efforts were identified around the world, including in Ireland and the UK, among which was the initiative led by the Palestine societies in Scottish universities^{28, 29}.

5.3 We Are All Hana Shalabi Campaign

Solidarity activists from several Scottish universities, including Edinburgh, Dundee, Glasgow Caledonian, Glasgow, Strathclyde and Heriot-Watt, coordinated their actions and collaborated in their efforts over a supporting campaign that aimed at raising the issue of the prisoners' conditions in Israeli prisons on campus and beyond.

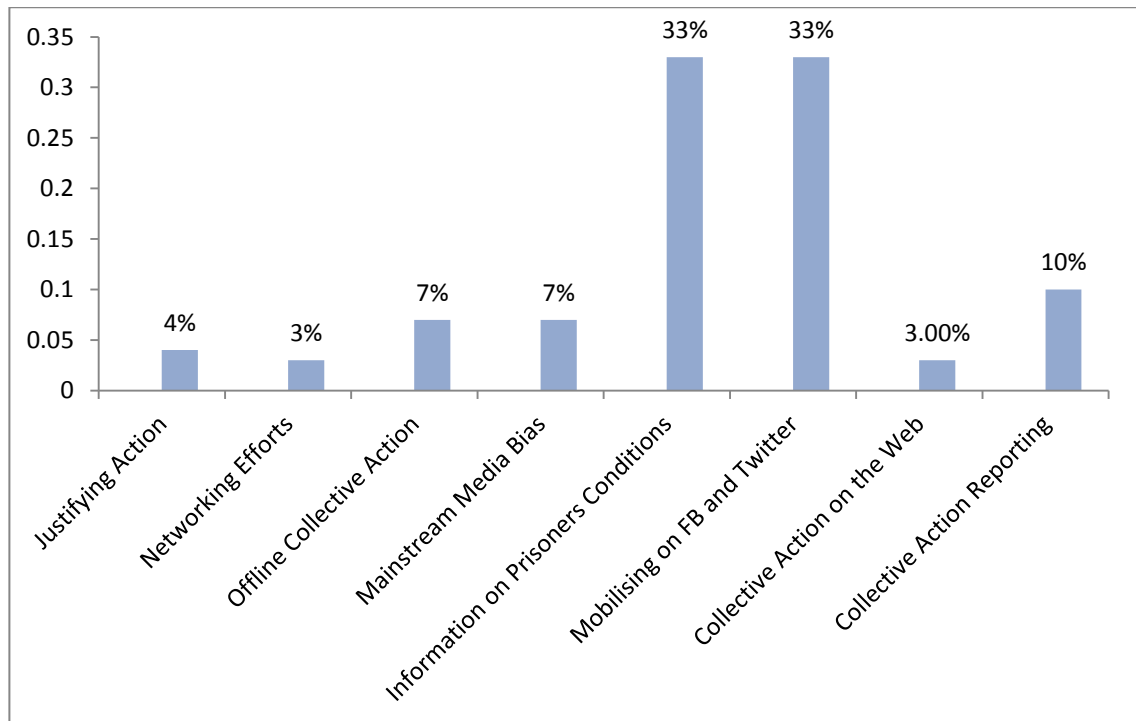
²⁷ Hana Shalabi, a Palestinian woman in her early thirties who had been arrested by the Israeli occupation forces in her home in the city of Jenin, north of the West Bank, and held in administrative detention from February 2012 until she was released and deported to Gaza after a 43-day hunger strike.

²⁸ FALK, R. 2012. Palestinian Hunger Strikes: Media Missing in Action. Aljazeera. Available: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/05/2012551069467110.html>. (Accessed 3 February 2015).

²⁹ SALEEM, A. 2012. BBC Challenged for Ignoring Plight of Palestinian Prisoners. The Electronic Intifada. Available: <https://electronicintifada.net/content/bbc-challenged-ignoring-plight-palestinian-prisoners/11206> (Accessed 3 February 2015).

Although the activists organised action in support of all the hunger strikers, Hana Shalabi was chosen to be the face, name and icon of the campaign. ‘We Are All Hana Shalabi’ was the name given to the campaign, and a designated blog, Facebook page and account on Twitter carried this motto. The blog and the social media accounts were used for three purposes: informing audiences about the latest news and information regarding the prisoners, particularly those who were on hunger strike at that time, including Shalabi; informing possible participants about local actions; and reporting those actions in the form of text and images.

As graph 5.1 indicates, information about the Palestine-based subject matter – in this case the prisoners on hunger strike – represented the highest percentage of the movement’s online content, followed by updated content on local activities. The main priorities were informing audiences about the cause and then about the supporting actions. Sharing news of solidarity activities in the form of text, images and moving images was the third priority, in terms of the content posted on the analysed blog and social media accounts.



Graph 5.1 Classification of content in the ‘We Are All Hana Shalabi’ campaign in support of the Palestinian political prisoners’ hunger strike in 2012

The Scottish students' joint campaign clearly sets out its principles and aims in the blog that was created. The descriptive text suggests several ideas that characterise it, with the purpose, action and morality of the actions very prominent. The campaign description revolved around three main messages, tied to concepts of dignity, morality and active involvement.

We Are All Hana Shalabi emerged to campaign for Palestinian political prisoners in Scotland after the victorious 66-day hunger strike of Khader Adnan³⁰ from an existing network of student Palestine activists and societies at universities in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee.³¹

5.4 Results

The analysis focused on a period of two months that included the 43 days in which Shalabi went on hunger strike in an Israeli prison. The analysis is therefore limited to the period from 16 February to 17 April 2012, which is the annual day for solidarity with the Palestinian political prisoners.

The coded data consisted of content (text and images), with 70 text references and 13 images collected from the campaign that Palestine societies in selected participating universities created through a specific blog and accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Flickr, in addition to input from specially arranged interviews with relevant activists.

The analysis centred around how the campaign activists understand the hunger strike, and how they present their campaign and its accompanying activities in the light of this understanding. Codes were classified into two main themes: the struggle against oppression and the morality of supporting hunger strikers.

5.4.1 The Campaign Presence Online

The blog that was created and named after the campaign, along with an image of Hana Shalabi, was soon followed by creating a page on Facebook and an account on Twitter

³⁰ Khader Adnan was a Palestinian political prisoner who went on hunger strike for over 66 days in protest at his detention, before his defence reached a deal in which the Israeli occupation authorities agreed to free him. His experience was an inspiration to the Scottish student solidarity movement that was translated into collective networked action within campuses in Scottish universities.

³¹ About We Are All Hana Shalabi Campaign, We Are All Hana Shalabi Blog. 2012. <https://weareallhanashalabi.wordpress.com/about/> Accessed: 3 May 2015.

that carried the same name. More content was posted on the two social media platforms than on the blog. This reinforces the notion that the movement, including the student-led campaigns, fully understands the importance of being present on these two social media platforms for interacting with followers and potential participants and informing them of future collective action (see images 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3).

The campaign clearly stated its purpose and aim – that is, supporting the Palestinian prisoners in their hunger strike – on the three platforms: the blog, Facebook page and Twitter account. As well as indicating that the campaign was a starting point for the establishment of a student solidarity movement in Scotland, the platforms expressed commitment to the global BDS campaign.

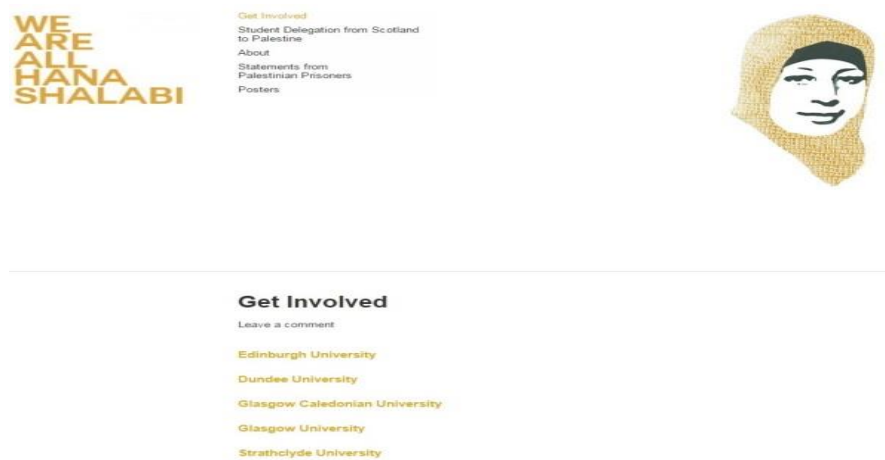


Image 5.1: We Are All Hana Shalabi Campaign blog

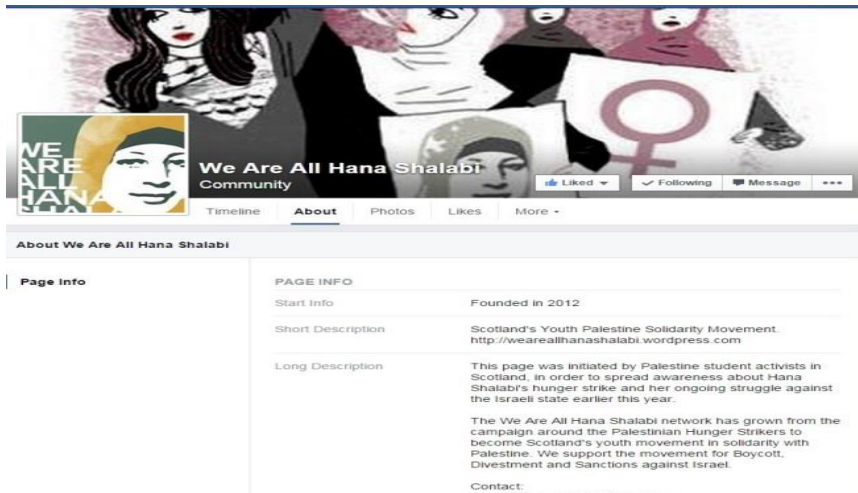


Image 5.2: We Are All Hana Shalabi Campaign page on Facebook

On Twitter, for example, in the campaign account which carried the same motto ‘We Are All Hana’, the biography included a description of the movement that had been created and clearly stated its support for the BDS:

@ WeAreAllHanaShalabi Scotland’s student movement for Palestine, formed to lead solidarity in Scotland with Palestinian political prisoners on hunger strike. Active in #BDS movement.



Image 5.3: We Are All Hana Shalabi Campaign account on Twitter

A substantial amount of the analysed contents were found to be updated information about the condition of the prisoners on hunger strike, their news, the number of participants in the hunger strike, followed by updated news on support activities in Palestine and around the globe, including Scotland.

This information came in the shape of text, articles and analysis from favourable news publications; such materials were posted on the campaign's blog, but more appeared on its Facebook page and were later tweeted through the Twitter account of the campaign.

As with many solidarity campaigns or major events in Palestine,³² the use of specific hashtags was present here in two forms. The first was the use of the general hashtag #HungryforJustice, which was used in material posted and shared both on the Facebook page and on the Twitter account. Other specific hashtags carried the names of prisoners who went on hunger strike, and received wide coverage, mainly on social media sites, including #HanaShalabi, as well as #KhaderAdnan, #BilalDiab and #ThairHalahla.

5.4.2 Dynamics of Mobilising the Campaign Online

A considerable amount –almost a third – of the online published contents, as Graph 5.1 shows, was dedicated to the call for the mobilisation of participants. Announcements of upcoming solidarity events, whether in universities or in Scottish city streets (mainly in Glasgow, where a great number of active members of this campaign are attending its three universities), came in the form of images that included the picture of one of the prisoners, accompanied by the time, date and venue of the proposed action (see image 5.4).

³² Popular hashtags are widely used by pro-Palestine activists both in Palestine and around the globe, as for example during the war in Gaza, when the hashtag #GazaUnderAttack was used extremely often and accompanied most of the tweets on the war.



Image 5.4: One of the campaign invitations to participate in the march that took place in Glasgow city and proceeded towards the BBC Glasgow buildings in protest over the corporation's lack of coverage of the prisoners' hunger strike. It is in the form of an image of Thair Halaleh, who is one of the hunger strikers, accompanied by the date and time of the protest.

Mobilising through social media is not limited to collective action within the local context, but also takes place in global online campaigns. The options that the Facebook site provides, such as creating events and inviting users to attend them, were also used during this campaign. Image 5.5, for example, is a screen shot of an event that the campaigners invited their friends and acquaintances on Facebook and Twitter to participate in.

Accounts on Twitter and Facebook were not only widely used for their advantages as platforms that enable organisers to keep in direct contact with followers, but also had additional importance in this case because the targeted audiences were mainly university students, whom the campaigners wanted to encourage to attend their organised actions. Those students were already present on social media sites. In other words, the target audience of young college students are familiar with Facebook and Twitter, and are present on these interactive platforms, so the platforms are seen by the campaigners as ideal venues for interacting with students.

The screenshot shows a Facebook event page. At the top, it says 'APR 17 #Hungry4Justice - Global Fast in Solidarity with Palestinian Prisoners'. Below this, it indicates the event is 'Public' and hosted by 'We Are All Hana Shalabi'. There are buttons for 'Join', 'Maybe', and '...'. The event details show it is on 'Tuesday, 17 April 2012 at 07:00–19:00', 'More than a year ago', and is 'Worldwide'. On the right, statistics show '364 went', '51 maybe', and '3.3k invited'. Below the statistics is a 'SUGGESTED EVENTS' section with three items: 'Darkness Into Light Galway City', 'Galway Simon Kick Assphalt ...', and 'March for Marriage Equality'. The main text of the event post reads: '*Please invite friends and comrades and share... Help this go viral in order to raise awareness!*' followed by a URL 'http://weareallhanashalabi.wordpress.com/'. The text continues: 'This Tuesday 17th April is Palestinian Prisoners Day. The solidarity network We Are All Hana Shalabi are calling for a co-ordinated fast everywhere from 7am to 7pm in solidarity with all Palestinian prisoners, and specifically those currently on hunger strike.' and 'Ta'ir Halale and Bilal Diyab will be entering the 50th day of their open-ended hunger strikes in protest to the violent and degrading treatment meted out by Israeli forces during the process of their arrests and administrative detention.' followed by another URL and 'See More'.

Image 5.5: Screenshot of an event created by the campaign. The post encourages invitees to participate in the 17 April solidarity day with the Palestinian political prisoners. The invitation used the popular global hashtag for solidarity with the prisoners, #Hungry4Justice.

5.4.3 Visual Reporting of Collective Action

Informing followers of the actions that had taken place takes several forms, including sharing images and moving images of the campaign activists at the event through platforms such as YouTube.

The campaign in support of the hunger strikers reported the solidarity activities on its blog and its social media accounts in the form of text, images and moving images. It also went beyond its Facebook page and Twitter accounts to create an account on the photo-sharing platform Flickr. Many images, including of the march to the BBC offices in Glasgow, were posted and shared on Flickr (see Image 5.7).



Image 5.6: Screenshot of a video clip that the campaign published on YouTube, that shows the march it organised on the BBC building in Glasgow.

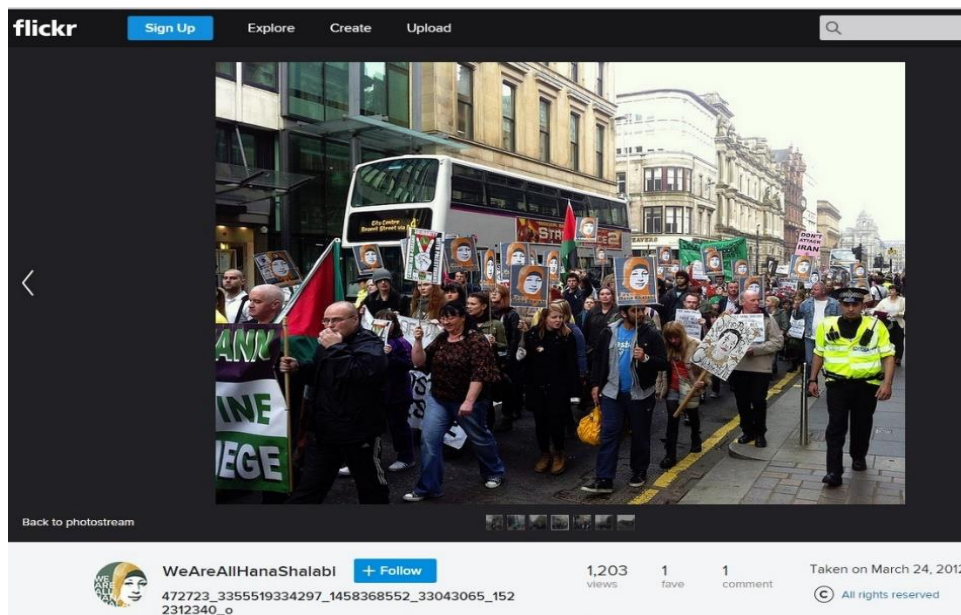


Image 5.7: Part of the 17 April march in Glasgow, posted on a new account that carried the name of the campaign on the image oriented, specialised platform Flickr.

Most of the shared images consisted of visual reporting of the campaigners' on-the-ground actions in the local Scottish context, with participants carrying the Palestine flag and banners that called for solidarity with prisoners, along with pictures of the campaign icon Hana Shalabi. There were, however, also images of solidarity actions and activities

in Palestinian cities on the campaign accounts on social media sites (see Image 5.8). The contexts of the images used are very similar to the contexts of the text.



Image 5.8: Picture posted on the campaign's Facebook page that shows an example of solidarity activities with the prisoners that took place in Palestinian cities.

5.5 Presenting a New Frame, Online

5.5.1 Online Interactivity and the Production of New Frames

Two main connected points sum up the results of this chapter's case study: the practice of interactivity in the activists relations online, and the consequent deployment of non-traditional frames.

Interactivity can be thought of as a relational process among author–text–audience, in which the lines are blurred between author and audience in an attempt to control the text and its argument (Cover, 2006). The notion, from another perspective, can also be understood as a process that provides further space for the interacting audience to become contributors of new texts and new ideas.

The notion of interactivity that allows networked individuals, as Rainie and Wellman (2012) argue, to interact with new media content, including social media platforms, to make their voices heard widely, can be seen very clearly in this case.

Activists of the ‘We Are All Hana Shalabi’ campaign practised a very basic form of interaction through narrating the hunger strike as another phase of the Palestinian struggle, in which resistance is a natural and accepted notion. In this process, they contributed to the discussion surrounding the hunger strike of 2012 through developing and advocating their perception of the cause. Their perception, which was reflected in offering a ‘new’ frame, differs from other off-campus groups who traditionally prefer to frame the hunger strike, in the same way as other matters related to the Palestinian struggle, as a result of Israeli oppression and legal and human rights violations.

Framing the hunger strike in this campaign as a kind of welcomed resistance is also a natural result of the autonomous nature of relations among the different components of the wider solidarity movement. Because of that, it is not surprising to identify different approaches, frames and conceptions of the hunger strike among the loosely connected groups of the movement.

However, the limit to which such a frame can be brought again to the movement’s mainstream advocacy campaigning, and thus become dominate in the movement’s discourse, does not rely solely on available opportunities for telling the story through interacting with the content on the Internet. Rather, it depends on the existence of a larger discussion among the movement’s components on a global scale, and with the Palestinian national movement. Such discussion, with the re-positing of the conflict as the struggle between coloniser and colonised people, in which resistance is needed and welcomed, may contribute to a de-marginalising of the resistance frame.

5.5.2 Re- Emergence of Resistance Frame

Before embarking on identifying and analysing themes related to the resistance frame, it is important to clarify the use of the term ‘new’ frame in this chapter.

The notion of resistance within the Palestinian national struggle is not new at all; the term has always been part of the Palestinian national movement’s identity and is extensively found in its literature. The Palestinians have been practising resistance throughout their contemporary history. Be it armed, military, civil, violent or non-violent, resistance has been present during the Palestinian revolutions against the

colonial British Mandate in first half of last century, during and after the colonising of Palestine in 1948, and throughout the contemporary history of the national movement including the first Intifada of 1987.

Resistance took a variety of forms through the history of the contemporary national movement. Until the late 1980s, the PLO in exile thought of military struggle as the way to liberate Palestine. The non-military popular resistance that marked the first Intifada in 1987, which masses of the younger generation of Palestinians inside Palestine participated in, contributed in redefining the notion and emphasised non-violent and non-military resistance within the Palestinian context.

Yet, during every new Israeli escalation, the word ‘resistance’ would appear again as necessary to counter the Israeli actions. However, the notion post the 1987 Intifada and the Oslo Accords of 1993 took different forms to include all forms of resistance and not only the armed form that was associated with the PLO, the Fatah movement and all other parts of the national movement through the 1950s to the 1980s.

Even in the literature of the contemporary solidarity movement, the word ‘resistance’ often appears, but is limited to the civil non-violent form of resistance that many ISM activists in Palestine take part in when participating in popular demonstrations and protests in the Palestinian cities, mainly in the West Bank.

Nevertheless, for the global solidarity movement, presenting resistance as a legitimate right has always been a marginalised part of the movement’s advocacy efforts. That position highlights the reasons behind the traditional victim frame that has been shaping the movement’s mainstream discourse.

However, students in this particular campaign were very open and vocal in their support of resistance as a legitimate right for the Palestinians. In that, they challenged these traditional public concepts that portray indigenous resistance negatively and do not welcome it.

The term ‘new’ in this chapter refers to the use of the resistance frame as a contemporary frame that had rarely been highlighted within the literature of the

contemporary solidarity movement in comparison to other rights-dominated frames that had shaped the movement's perception of the Palestinian rights.

Components of the Resistance Frame

Publicly shared frames may not only be vital for the movement on a tactical basis (mainly for resonating with potential collective action participants), but may also strategically affect the activists' perception of the cause. This concept of affecting followers' perceptions of the cause has been described by Gamson (1992), who argues that media discourse can be found in many movements' publications, be they books, newspapers, TV, movies etc. He further explains that a 'wide variety of media messages can act as teachers of values, ideologies, and beliefs and provide images for interpreting the world, whether or not the designers are conscious of this intent' (1992b, p. 24).

The campaign under examination in this chapter frames the hunger strike as a form of resistance, as well as presenting its solidarity actions as a moral response to the Palestinian resistance. In other words, there are two connected elements in the resistance frame construction: the hunger strike as the campaign's centre of concern; and the morality of the students' campaign that is highlighted as a justified collective action, which aims at encouraging potential participants to join it.

Following Gamson and Modigliani (1989)'s method in identifying framing and reasoning devices, a signature matrix (see table 5.1) was introduced. The matrix consists of the four framing devices – depictions, exemplars, catchphrases, and visual images – and the three reasoning devices, which are roots or causal factors, consequences, and appeals to principle or moral claims.

Framing Devices	Resistance Frame
Depictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We stand in solidarity with all the Arab peoples in their struggle for freedom, democracy and liberation from the forces of imperialism - Highlighting the steadfastness of Palestinian resistance to occupation
Exemplars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - [Bobby] Sands’s death unleashed a wave of international solidarity with the Irish Republican cause
Catchphrases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Your fight is our fight - [Hana] This is your victory
Visual images	Images of prisoners on hunger strike (see throughout the chapter)
Reasoning Devices	
Roots/Causal Factors	Khader Adnan’s victory, Hana Shalabi’s bravery and the mass Karamah hunger strike has led to a new generation of youth in Scotland becoming active in our modest supporting role in the Palestinian resistance.
Consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A cohesive international solidarity network exists, and in the aftermath of the Arab revolutions Israel is desperate to deny a new generation of Palestinians any fresh iconic symbols of resistance - The Palestinian resistance has entered a new phase and it enjoys almost unparalleled popular support and international solidarity - The potential of a new Palestinian movement, directly challenging the Israeli occupation, is now foreseeable
Principle/Moral Claims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Everyone who stands against injustice and supports resistance must salute her (Shalabi’s) bravery

Table 5.1: Signature matrix of We Are All Hana Shalabi online campaign; it consists of both framing and reasoning devices.

The language structure of the campaign contents shows that the resistance frame was dominant throughout the campaign publications. First, the campaign provides its understanding of hunger strikes through positioning them within a larger context, and referring to the solidarity activists role in this regard. Here, the concept of struggle against imperialism and oppression towards freedom and democracy is seen as the main factor that shapes the Arab popular movements that were taking place in the Arab world in 2012. Within this notion of struggling against oppression, the Palestinian prisoners’ hunger strike is presented as part of the larger regional struggles against ‘forces of imperialism’, and the role of solidarity activists, therefore, is seen as a natural supporter of these struggles.

To further reflect the relation between the Palestinian struggle – in this case the hunger strike – and the global solidarity role, the campaign used an example from the Irish context. It referred to Bobby Sands’s hunger strike and death, which triggered global solidarity with the Irish Republican cause.

Furthermore, the campaign used the slogan/catchphrase ‘Your fight is our fight’ to connect the concepts of resistance and solidarity. By presenting the hunger strike as a form of fight against oppression, and the solidarity activists’ participation in this fight through providing the moral support, the campaign justifies its work and further encourages university students to participate in it.

5.5.3 Discursive Processes

Frame Articulation

To better understand how this frame is generated, it helps to analyse it within what (Benford and Snow, 2000b) call ‘Discursive Processes’ which refer to ‘the talk and conversations – the speech acts – and written communications of movement members that occur primarily in the context of, or in relation to, movement activities’ (p. 623). The construction of frames takes place within two discursive interactive processes: frame articulation and frame amplification or punctuation. While *frame articulation* ‘involves the connection and alignment of events and experiences so that they hang together in a relatively unified and compelling fashion’ (p. 623), *frame amplification*, on the other hand, ‘involves accenting and highlighting some issues, events, or beliefs as being more salient than others’ (p. 623).

Looking at the rise of the resistance frame in its historical context provides a better understanding of the reasons behind its development in this particular campaign. Those reasons are related to the political developments of the Arab region at that time.

The reference to the Arab ‘revolutions’ in the campaign is an attempt to link the Palestinian prisoners’ way of resisting through hunger strike to the regional political changes that were taking place at that time, which many frame as forms of resisting oppression. The Arab grassroots movements, which dominated the political scene in the region including in 2012, have been heavily analysed from several perspectives,

including the school of thought that considered them as a form of resistance to corrupt and tyrannical regimes. This analysis was very popular, as it led to the positioning of the Palestinian struggle, and particularly the prisoners' form of resistance, within the regional political context, which was dominated by the notion of the Arab nations' desire to fight for freedom to achieve an oppression-free life.

Thus, the campaign linked the Palestinian struggle in Israeli jails to other political movements in the region, arguing that the hunger strike and the 'Arab Spring' share the same moral attributes and goals of fighting for freedom and liberty. Therefore, the campaigners attempt to clarify their position, arguing that as much as the Arab movements are being supported around the world, Palestinian hunger strikers should receive similar support. The campaigners attempted to assert that the hunger strike specifically, and the Palestinian struggle in general, were part of the regional popular movements that had been framed as struggles against tyrannical regimes.

Other elements may have contributed to and facilitated the emergence of the resistance frame in this campaign. The form of resistance and the protest in support of it are in this case strictly passive, and thus may not have adverse implications for the western audience. Supporting political prisoners on hunger strike would, most probably, attract more sympathy from the public than supporting other forms of resistance, such as military action, for example.

Also, the political prisoners' case is highly sensitive and attracts extreme solidarity and sympathy from Palestinian society and parties, as well as from the solidarity movement's activists around the globe. Therefore, there would be consensus and support over the prisoners' right to protest and resist the Israeli authorities through refusing food. The campaign was clearly affected by the perception of the hunger strike within Palestinian society, which supported the prisoners' actions and perceived them as part of the national struggle and resistance.

The students proved in this campaign that they were less inclined to adhere to the traditional framing strategies that the solidarity movement had followed, which focused on the Israeli violations and thus the victim frame.

The student activists' discourse highlighting resistance was not greatly influenced by the dominant voices in the mainstream social and political circles in the West that tend to negatively associate resistance with terrorism, particularly in post 9/11 politics.

Frame Amplification

The campaign contents included reference to the aggressive treatment of the Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails and the illegal nature of the Israeli imprisonment policies applied against Palestinian political activists, including the administrative detention policy. However, the prisoners' response to these policies through declaring an open-ended hunger strike is presented as a welcomed way to fight the oppressor. This form of self-sacrificing non-violent resistance by the prisoners is seen by the campaign as an appropriate response to the Israeli policies. While the campaign does not ignore these illegal policies implemented against political prisoners, it chose to amplify the prisoners' revolt against them, through adopting the resistance and not the victim frame.

This new frame was much more prominent than any other themes in this campaign – it was a frame that looked at the prisoners' hunger strike from a different perspective. That is to say, *We Are All Hana Shalabi* highlighted the prisoners' response to the Israeli violations of their rights, rather than the traditional approach of highlighting the Israeli violations.

Another factor that made amplifying the resistance frame in the debate very possible was the use of the Internet, which made it possible to identify the new messages in what was a structured space. Cyberspace is a main venue for the process of making a contentious frame in the post-9/11 era, and examining this space can reveal much about the changing language for portraying the Palestinian cause. Nevertheless, what is also true in this case is that the Internet's presence as an interactive space facilitates the process of making non-mainstream frames, as more activists can contribute to the making of them within one space.

The argument supports the notion that individuals, including organised activists, can express their political views with less censorship online as opposed to through limited airtime on the mainstream media. The relatively free space that the web provides for

freedom of expression contributes to advocating any message, including the resistance message.

5.6 Discussion

This chapter examined the Scotland-based campaign in solidarity with the Palestinian political prisoners' hunger strike in 2012. The campaign, which was organised by several Palestine societies in Scottish universities, provides an interesting case for examination as it helps us better understand the organised pro-Palestine collective action on campus. The campaign's other significance lies in the campaigners' efforts to positively frame the hunger strike as an acceptable form of resistance.

The chapter described the case of Palestinian administrative detainees in Israeli jails, the hunger strike of 2012, before laying out a detailed description of how the campaign was executed online through the campaign blogs, and accounts on Twitter, Facebook and Flickr.

The case study in this chapter provides noteworthy conclusions relevant to the movement's use of the internet as part of its framing efforts. The chapter claims that the political developments in the Arab region in 2012 and the interactive nature of the social media sites played distinctive roles in shaping the campaign's framing efforts, resulting in the explicit appearance of the resistance frame within the materials disseminated on the web – a frame that had rarely appeared in the contemporary solidarity movement's discourse.

The analysis of the data was conducted through three levels. The process of interpreting the data started with identifying the main themes and coding the materials accordingly. The themes were the Palestinian response to the Israeli violations of the prisoners' rights in the form of an open-ended hunger strike, and the support of global activists, including in Scotland's universities. The second level of analysis was concerned with the components of the resistance frame, which were examined by classifying the analysed texts and images by using Gamson and Modigliani (1989)'s signature matrix to identify the framing and reasoning devices. The third level consisted of analysing frame articulation and amplification.

Starting with the framing devices that contributed to the construction of the resistance frame, the description of the campaign goal consisted of a clear reference to the campaigners' aim of standing with the Arabs, including the Palestinians, in their fight against oppression. The use of examples, which framing devices usually contain, was clear in the reference to the Irish hunger strike of 1981. The campaign referred to similarities between the case of Bobby Sands and the Palestinian hunger strikers in that both cases attracted international solidarity. The third framing device was the slogan/catchphrase used in this campaign, 'Your Fight is Our Fight', which implies both themes: the hunger strike as form of fighting, and the solidarity activists' support of it. Visual contribution to the frame building consisted of images and posters carrying images of Hana Shalabi and other hunger strikers.

The visual contribution to the frame building consisted of images and posters of Hana Shalabi and other hunger strikers.

Photos of hunger strikers were printed on posters and carried by protesters in the streets, and were published in campaign online platforms. They helped to reinforce the resistance frame through iconising individual cases.

That is to say, the resistance frame which the campaign developed as a result of the activists' understanding of the hunger strike as a form of resisting occupation was supported not only by text, but also by the use of the names and images of individual prisoners, who became icons of the resistance in this campaign.

By providing the faces and names of individual prisoners to represent Palestinian political prisoners as a whole, the campaign not only managed to relate the concept of resistance to prisoners generally, but also highlighted their personal stories. Publicly adopting the case of Hana Shalabi and the other hunger strikers further highlighted the case of the political prisoners as a whole.

Reasoning devices of the resistance frame included the causal factors that triggered the campaign in Scotland and other parts of the world. The Palestinian hunger strikers' announcement of starting an open-ended hunger strike, which is described as brave step, is considered to be the action that inspired the campaigners. The consequences of the

hunger strike are understood by the campaigners as another phase within the Palestinian resistance, which is now supported in Palestine and attracting international solidarity. The moral claim, which is the third of the frame's reasoning devices in this chapter, was that it was important to stand against injustice and support the resistance of the hunger strikers.

The resistance frame was articulated through the basic idea of linking the Palestinian hunger strike to the regional developments that took place in the Arab region, known as the 'Arab Spring'. In that, the campaign did not position the hunger strike as part of the Arab movements of 2012, but it saw both events as similar forms of fighting for liberty, independence, and democracy. Thus, the appearance of the resistance frame within this campaign should not be seen as a strategic shift in the solidarity movement as a whole's perception and presentation of the conflict, in which it replaces the victim frame with the resistance frame in advocating Palestinian rights.

While the campaign has not neglected reference to the Israeli violations of prisoners' rights and how the occupation policies endanger prisoners' lives, the focus and attention was given more to the prisoners' response to these violations through passive resistance.

Other factors related to the nature of this passive resistance, and the progressive position of students towards the conflict, in which they do not hesitate to support the Palestinian resistance openly, contributed to the rise of the resistance frame. Furthermore, such a non-traditional frame that associates Palestine with resistance demonstrates the differences between the approaches of the varied solidarity organisations, societies and campaigns in presenting Palestine on online media space. In addition, the examination of the framing of this campaign requires looking at the role of the medium used and its possible contribution to the framing process as a whole. The Internet's interactive nature, which provides activist students with online tools that enable them to directly produce publishable content that represents their understanding of the cause, facilitates the rise of non-traditional marginalised frames.

In other words, the desire of the campaigners to highlight the Palestinian resistance, coupled with the extensive level of interactivity that the Internet allowed them to freely

produce and interact with online materials, contributed to the production of the resistance frame.

Furthermore, the distinct appearance of the campaign, in which the students presented the hunger strike as a form of resistance, points to a larger debate concerning the framing of the Palestinian struggle and the broad Palestinian–Israeli conflict. Reframing the Palestinian cause to its original nature, as a conflict between indigenous people and colonisers, an approach that PAPPÉ (2015) considers to be one of the contemporary paradoxes that the solidarity movement faces, would change the approach of global solidarity into one in which the Palestinian resistance of the coloniser would be openly defended and supported. However, such a strategic change in advocacy approach cannot be developed before a collaborative dialogue takes place involving the main components of the Palestinian struggle: the national movement and the global non-state solidarity activists.

In a recent work, Saba (2015) questioned the lack of critique of the armed Palestinian resistance within the solidarity movement. The question of which form of resistance the Palestinians should adopt in fighting the occupation has always been a cause of heated debate among the Palestinians and their different political streams. It is very legitimate for the national and solidarity movements to assess the best way to move forward in the Palestinian struggle. However, the context in which this debate takes place is much more important than the debate itself. The political deadlock in Palestine, the development in the region and the absence of the Palestinian cause on the global political agenda, may not be addressed solely by discussions among actors in the solidarity movement; rather they should be part of a wider dialogue within the national movement, in which solidarity actors should take part.

Chapter 6: Lobbying via the World Wide Web

6.1 Introduction

The media-saturated environment that the solidarity movement operates within is demonstrated by its full use of media tools in many of its activities, including lobbying. The movement's lobbying campaigns directed at legislatures and decision makers, which form this chapter's case study, have two interconnected forms: face-to-face interaction and online participation.

This chapter introduces the movement's approach to engaging online with political and parliamentary institutions on the question of Palestine through examining three particular campaigns: lobbying the European Parliament candidates for the elections of 2014, the annual lobbying days on Palestine in the British Parliament, and lobbying on the European Union guidelines of 2013.

Subjecting the movement's use of interactive media tools in its lobbying campaigns to scrutiny sheds light on a different level of interaction within the movement's political contexts: that of interaction directly with the legislative bodies – as a whole through e-lobbying and individually through organised visits to the Parliament.

The particular feature of the case study in this chapter is the wider approach the solidarity groups bring to Palestine as an issue for debate within legislative bodies in Ireland, Britain and the EU. The incorporation of the interactive online platforms that enable citizens to contact their MPs, TDs, MEPs, and candidates directly and check their stance on Palestinian rights enhances the non-traditional process of lobbying for Palestine. It also contributes to balancing out the limited financial resources of the movement compared to the financial resources of the pro-Israel lobby in Europe and the US.

This part of the thesis consists of an explanation of the online dynamics of three lobbying campaigns that the solidarity groups organised and implemented in 2013 and 2014. The focus on the EU guidelines of 2013 offers an explanation of how this particular campaign transferred the Israeli–European relations theme into the campaign frame 'aiding the occupation'.

The analysis follows Entman (1993)'s definition of framing in discussing the four elements of the aiding the occupation frame, namely: problem definition, causal attribution, moral evaluation and treatment recommendation.

This chapter's case study shows a gradual development of the active groups' approach to lobbying for Palestine in Ireland and Britain. Solidarity groups engage their supporters in the lobbying process and activate their role as citizens concerned about global politics, particularly the Palestinian question. In doing so, the movement overcomes the limitations of conducting traditional lobbying, in which a limited number of well-financed lobbyists and interest groups usually engage in lobbying parliamentarians.

This chapter argues that new forms of digitally enabled engagement with members of Parliaments may not have an immediate effect on parliamentarians' positions towards the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, but they contribute to two points: bringing Palestine into the political debate, including during elections, and galvanising political supporters in this process.

The argument put forward in this part of the thesis in relation to the movement itself sees the increased lobbying efforts incorporating online platforms as a factor that enhances the position of the solidarity organisations within the realm of political parliamentary institutions and civil society as a legitimate voice for Palestine.

6.2 Lobbying Campaigns

6.2.1 The UK: National Lobby of Parliament for Palestine

The process used for organising demonstrations, in which solidarity groups provide information, organise and report on collective action on Internet platforms, is also followed for lobbying activities, which are equally created and partially implemented online. In this form of activity, however, both online and offline actions take place. The Internet is thus being utilised for lobbying in two ways: as a venue for participation in the process, and as a means of informing followers about plans to contact and meet with Members of Parliament.

The first way, which is increasingly becoming the normal method of e-participation used by the PSC UK, is illustrated particularly by the annual lobbying day for Palestine organised by the group. Followers are encouraged to participate in the lobbying day by contacting their local Member of Parliament or parliamentary candidates on Palestine. By directing users to other Internet-based platforms that are dedicated to contacting local politicians, the PSC UK encourages e-participation through steps that do not require much time or effort.³³



Image 6.1: British citizens are encouraged by the PSC UK to contact their MPs through e-participation and approaching their MPs on the lobbying day in the Parliament.

While contacting politicians through dedicated websites is highlighted in the PSC UK website, participating in the annual day of lobbying by being present in the UK Parliament is also encouraged and organised in advance. The lobbying day is usually organised collectively by several groups led by the PSC, including through content dissemination on the web. The PSC coordinated the annual lobbying day on Palestine on 27 June 2013, in collaboration with local and national solidarity groups and regular allies, including affiliated unions.

³³ Write to Them, a website created by MySociety, a UK-based not-for-profit, that enables citizens to write to their local and national politicians through providing their UK postcode. <https://www.writetothem.com>

Aiding participants in lobbying activity consisted of providing them with guidelines on how to contact their MPs before the day, as well as providing a briefing for them on Palestine-related issues to discuss with the contacted MPs.³⁴ Those groups campaigned about several issues related to Palestine – challenging Israeli atrocities, ethnic cleansing and discriminatory policies, banning settlement goods, calling for respect for Palestinian prisoners’ rights and an end to Israel’s illegal treatment of them, including of children, and calling for an end to the siege of Gaza.



Image 6.2: A meeting at the UK parliament during the National Lobby of Parliament for Palestine.³⁵

The event, which the researcher witnessed first-hand, was a good example of a joint effort among the movement’s groups and their allies at national level. It was a practical interpretation of the inter-organisational coordination that Sarah Colborne, Director of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign UK, described. She explains that her organisation is

³⁴ PSC UK, 2015. National Lobby of Parliament for Palestine, Your briefing. Viewed 28 August 2015. <http://www.palestinecampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/final-document-for-lobbyists-version-1.pdf>.

³⁵ Palestine Solidarity Campaign UK, 2013, images of National Lobby of Parliament for Palestine, viewed 9 December 2013, <http://www.palestinecampaign.org/campaign/lobby/>.

active in organising joint activities, including ‘meetings with other groups involved in working on Palestine. All the trade unions care about the issue of Palestine. In Britain we try to bring all these groups together’ (Interview, 9 October 2013).

The event is also an illustration of e-participation, with web-based platforms used for contacting policymakers, a process which is increasingly becoming part of the movement’s methods of activism. Through use of available online resources and platforms, involved activists and lobbyists are incorporate e-participation in the movement’s lobbying and communication practices.

Arguably, the incorporation of advanced communication technologies in the political participation process facilitates citizens’ participation in policymaking. In describing ‘e-democracy initiatives’, Macintosh (2004) proposes three levels of participation that can be used to characterise the term, namely: E-enabling, which is the use of advanced technology to enable those who lack access to the Internet to use the available information; E-engaging, which is concerned with engaging citizens through wider consultation to achieve broad contributions on policies; and E-empowering, which ‘is concerned with supporting active participation and facilitating bottom-up ideas to influence the political agenda’ (p. 3). It could be argued that the development of these levels depends on the technological resources available, the political contexts, and the existence of informed active citizens.

The e-participation identified in this case study consists of two levels of engagement: formulation of briefings and fact sheets about the current situation in Palestine; and actively encouraging followers and supporters to participate in the process of lobbying. There is little doubt that the solidarity movement’s growing lobbying strategy, in which it combines the lobbying tactics of interests groups and at the same time engages grassroots activists in the process, has been facilitated and encouraged by the advanced communication technologies available.

One dimension of engaging members and supporters can be seen in the possible influence of making the question of Palestine an issue of concern for voters and MPs. Constituents are encouraged by active solidarity groups in their country to examine their

MP's position on Palestinian rights. By lobbying their representatives on Palestine, they expand the local political debate to include global causes. The position of Members of Parliament, on the other hand, may be subject to a variety of influences, including their party's position, pressure from lobbyists and interest groups, and their constituency's needs. Therefore, one might argue that collective online lobbying in which members, supporters of the solidarity movement, and concerned citizens use all available means, including online resources, to lobby their MPs could result in making Palestine an issue of debate in the UK Parliament.

In addition to any immediate change of government policy that lobbied MPs may consider when discussing the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, such lobbying contributes to the solidarity movement's efforts to make the Palestinian cause relevant to internal British politics.

6.2.2 Lobbying the EU Parliament Candidates

The Internet-based platforms that facilitate citizen interaction with their representatives is also taking place at the European level. The web has been used for lobbying European parliamentarians on the issue of Palestine with leading groups asking their supporters to contact their candidates for the European Parliament elections and ask them about their position on Palestine and on EU–Israel relations.



Image 6.3: The PSC UK calls for web-based actions to contact European Parliament candidates

Using the Internet to provide followers with advice on issues to question and discuss with EU Parliamentary candidates is a method that was used by the IPSC, the PSC UK and other Europe-based solidarity organisations during the European Parliament Elections of 2014. The two leading organisations in Ireland and the UK used similar techniques and messages on their websites for recruiting followers as lobbyists.

The European Parliament Elections of 2014 not only showed the increasing use of e-lobbying efforts, but also an increasing level of Europe-based transnational coordination via the Internet by solidarity groups. The organised campaigns encouraging followers to contact their EU Parliamentary candidates and inquire about their position on the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, including EU–Israeli relations, were organised through the European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine (ECCP), a group that is involved in the coordination of the work of solidarity organisations at a European level.

The screenshot shows the website for the Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign (IPSC). The header includes the organization's name and a navigation menu with links for Home, News, About Us, Get Involved with the IPSC, The Issues, Campaigns, Events, IPSC Store, Contact the IPSC, Resources, and Get Our Newsletter. Below the header, there are several sections:

- GET INVOLVED:** Includes buttons for "Find your local activist group...", "Subscribe to our newsletter...", and "Join or donate to the IPSC...". There are also social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube.
- UPCOMING IPSC EVENTS:** Features a poster for the "WEST BANK TRIP" and a list of events:
 - [Palestine] 2015 Trip to the West Bank (WestBankTrips.com), Fri. 4 September 2015, 12:00AM - Sat. 12 September 2015 (West Bank, Palestine)
 - IDublin1 Gaza One Year
- Action Item: Question your candidates for the European Elections about EU-Israel relations:**
 - Hold your candidates to account during the European Elections, and help gather information which will help Palestine supporters decide how to vote.**
 - Challenging local, regional, and national politicians on their position on EU relations with Israel: is a very important ongoing activity. Particularly in the run-up to elections, engaging candidates and parties in EU-Israel relations related questions can have an impact.
 - Any time is good to ask your candidates about the EU-Israel relations but the run up to elections provides a particularly good opportunity as more attention is paid to the policies, intentions and promises of politicians and their parties.
 - How to act:**
 1. Identify your candidates in the European Parliament elections and send them the **questionnaire** by email, post, or both.
 2. Let the ECCP know when you've received an answer so that they can raise awareness about it. They want to publish the results on their website.
 - European elections 2014 – Questionnaire
 - The EU – a major player in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict
 - While 2013 was marked by the revival of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process under the aegis of the United States, the situation in Israel / Palestine has continued to deteriorate.
 - Between March and November 2013, the Israeli government has announced the construction of 8,943 new housing units in Israeli illegal settlements. The same year more than 399 settler attacks were directed at Palestinians. The living conditions of the population in the Gaza Strip deteriorated significantly. Human rights are also endangered in Israel: the Prager Plan announced by the Israeli government (currently suspended) will displace 30 000 – 40 000 Bedouin living in the Negev desert if implemented.

Image 6.4: The IPSC encourages calls for lobbying EU Parliamentary candidates on Palestine

Strategically, the effort put in by the movement at large and the leading groups specifically in directing the engagement of supporters with parliamentarians contributes to more than facilitating and implementing lobbying activities. It positions the movement as an active connecting force between legislators and Irish and UK citizens

concerned about Palestine and their governments' stances on the Palestinian–Israeli conflict. Although Palestine enjoys diplomatic relations with the UK and Ireland in the form of diplomatic missions based in London and Dublin, the activities of Palestinian diplomats are limited to diplomacy. That being said, organised lobbying efforts in the UK and Ireland could not be carried out by diplomats.

The presence of the movement in the social–political scene, particularly at the level of organised collective action including contacting decision makers and legislators, involves it in defending Palestinian interests. The agency role that the movement takes on its shoulders enables it to be an actor recognised by both activists and MPs in relation to the Palestinian cause within the Irish and UK political and grassroots arenas. Systematic use of the online web to facilitate this position through organising and connecting activists with representatives in the Parliaments enforces this unique position. This advocacy could not be carried out solely through the diplomatic relations that the PLO enjoys with Britain or Ireland. Thus, the solidarity organisations are constructing and implementing a form of lobbying that Palestinian diplomacy is not capable of. This notion reaffirms the argument of this thesis that the global solidarity movement should not be examined independently from the larger Palestinian national movements, but rather as a component of the larger Palestinian struggle.

6.3 The European Union Guidelines 2013

The third case study in relation to the movement's lobbying is concerned with cross-border collaboration on the EU guidelines in 2013. This section sheds light on how lobbying via the Internet takes shape as a constructed transnational campaign.

On 19 July 2013, the European Commission issued guidelines which prevented any Israeli entities engaged in business in the occupied Arab and Palestinian lands in the West Bank from enjoying financial grants and funding from the EU. The guidelines, which were published in a detailed document in the Official Journal of the European Union, were to be applied to EU-funded programmes from 2014 onwards.³⁶ The

³⁶ Official Journal of the European Union, Volume 56. 'Guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial

guidelines do not apply to bilateral funding relations between Israel and EU member states individually, but only to funding from the EU itself.

What have been known since then as the ‘EU Guidelines on Israeli Settlements’ set out measures through which the European Commission would provide awards, grants and financial assistance to any Israeli entities. In this document, the EU clearly states that it does not recognise Israeli sovereignty over the occupied lands of 1967 and does not consider them as part of Israel, a position Europe adopted decades ago. Therefore, any Israeli entities that are active within these territories will not benefit from any EU-funded projects, grants, prizes, loans, awards or financial assistance.

The guidelines are seen as a significant change of EU policy towards Israel, in which the European institution resets its relations with Israel based on legal measures. As described by Voltolini (2015):

this new policy puts limits to the EU’s engagement with Israel, in line with a new legal paradigm. Instead of privileging the maintenance of good relations with Israel, the EU now bases its policies on a legal frame founded on the correct application of EU and international law in its bilateral relations with Israel.

(2015, p. 6)

The Guardian’s Middle East editor Ian Black has pointed out that the new European policy sends several messages. It reinstates the European position on the Jewish settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory that are not part of the State of Israel according to international law. The guidelines, wrote Black, remind Israel that there can be consequences to defying United Nations resolutions and international laws (Black, 2013).

But was the EU’s intention to provoke a dispute and disagreement with Israel over the issue of Jewish settlements in the West Bank? Israeli journalist Noam Sheizaf sees in the guidelines evidence that Europe wanted to continue working with Israel, but at the same

instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards’. Accessed on 18 November 2014 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2013.205.01.0009.01.ENG

time to distance itself from the settlements (Sheizaf, 2013). Despite the seeming conflict between the EU and Israel over these guidelines, two months after their announcement, they had reached a compromise deal that allowed Israel to join the European research programme Horizon 2020, reported Reuters news agency.³⁷

Implementation of the Guidelines

Although the new guidelines were clear in their description and goals, there was scepticism about the EU's seriousness in applying them, following their announcement. On one side, the Palestinians and their supporters urged the EU to commit to their new guidelines; on the other side, Israel criticised the EU decision, while the USA urged Europe to halt implementation. Meanwhile, academics, former politicians and artists signed a number of letters urging the EU to stand firm behind implementing the guidelines.

A recent study that examined the framing processes that non-state actors engage in to influence EU policies, particularly EU–Israel relations, suggests that ‘changes in EU foreign policy are the result of interactions among a frame entrepreneur, often played by an NSA [non-state actor], and policy-makers in situations of cognitive uncertainty and when a policy window opens’ (Voltolini, 2015, p. 1). Several actors involved in lobbying the EU on the matter of Israeli settlement-produced goods, including the MATTIN group, according to Voltolini (2015), succeeded in proposing a legal frame that suggested that the EU is in conflict with its own legal position that considers these settlements illegal.

A couple of months after the guidelines issued, the Israeli daily newspaper *Haaretz* reported that fifteen former senior European officials had written to Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy at that time, and to all EU foreign ministers, urging them to adhere to the guidelines and avoid any delay in implementing them. They argued that such delay might have an adverse effect on the Palestinians' trust in the peace negotiations.³⁸ At the same time, 51

³⁷ Rabinovitch, Ari, Reuters 2013. ‘Israel, EU reach research deal, finessing settlement issue’. Accessed on 28 January 2015. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/11/26/us-israel-eu-idUSBRE9AP15R20131126>.

³⁸ Ravid, Barak, *Haaretz*, 2013. ‘Former EU leaders to Ashton: Stand firm on settlement guidelines’. Accessed on 14 January 2015. <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/.premium-1.547188>.

members of the European Parliament, in a signed letter to Ashton, asked for full implementation of the guidelines.³⁹ The ECCP also published on its website in September 2013 a letter signed by more than 600 Israeli academics, artists and intellectuals in support of these new guidelines.⁴⁰

Similarly, over 40 Palestinian civil society organisations issued a statement in which they criticised US Secretary of State John Kerry's endeavour to convince the EU foreign ministers to delay the implementation of the guidelines. The statement called on the EU to 'resist US pressure and meet obligations under international law; take further steps to end complicity with Israeli apartheid, colonialism and occupation'.⁴¹

Reuters news agency reported that Kerry 'urged the European Union to postpone a planned ban on EU financial assistance to Israeli organizations in the occupied Palestinian territories'.⁴² Israel has criticised the guidelines, with the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu saying they would hamper peace talks with the Palestinians.⁴³ Meanwhile, the Israel Allies Foundation hired a new lobbyist in Brussels to lobby the EU on this matter and to 'promote cooperation and coordination with the Jewish state', reported the *Jerusalem Post*.⁴⁴

³⁹ ECCP - European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine, 2013. '51 MEPs call Ashton to implement guidelines'. Accessed 14 January 2015. <http://www.eccpalestine.org/51-meps-call-ashton-to-implement-guidelines/>.

⁴⁰ ECCP - European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine, 2013. 'Israeli petition supporting EU guidelines on funding of Israeli entities'. Accessed 14 January, 2015.

<http://www.eccpalestine.org/israeli-petition-supporting-eu-guidelines-on-funding-of-israeli-entities/>

⁴¹ BDS Movement, 2013. 'European Union must not bow to US pressure to disregard human rights'. Accessed 14 January 2015. <http://www.bdsmovement.net/2013/eu-must-not-bow-to-us-pressure-to-disregard-human-rights-11315>.

⁴² Mohammed, Arshad, Reuters. 2013. 'Kerry urges EU to postpone funding ban in Israeli-occupied territories'. Accessed 14 January 2015. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/07/us-palestinians-israel-usa-europe-idUSBRE98609U20130907>.

⁴³ EU Business, 2013. 'Netanyahu: EU settlement guidelines "in way" of peace'. Accessed 14 January, 2015. <http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/israel-palestinians.q6m>.

⁴⁴ *The Jerusalem Post*, 2013. 'In response to the recent anti-Israel directives of the European Union, Israel Allies Foundation announces new director'. <http://www.jpost.com/International/EU-veteran-to-lobby-for-Israel-in-Brussels-321288>. (Accessed 14 January, 2015)

6.4 European Groups Combining Efforts

For their part, the Ireland and UK-based solidarity groups joined their counterparts in the rest of Europe in lobbying the EU on this matter. The collective lobbying campaign organised by the ECCP aimed at two goals: to push forward a strict implementation of the guidelines, and to counter joint Israeli–American lobbying efforts to halt such implementation.

The British and Irish groups were active in this campaign on two levels. Similar to the previous national lobbying for Palestine, they used their websites to facilitate supporters contacting their Members of the European Parliament on the matter. They also activated national lobbying efforts, in which they asked supporters to engage with their MPs and TDs on the issue. A good example of this action is what the IPSC did when it directed its organised efforts on lobbying Irish TDs (members of the Irish Parliament). On 11 October 2013, the group sent out a call to its associates to ask their TDs to support the European Commission’s new guidelines, which do not allow any Israeli project operating in Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian lands to benefit from any European financial support.

While the movement counted on new technology, in particular Internet platforms, to facilitate supporters’ connection with their European and national parliamentarians, it deployed an aggressive frame which revolved around a critique of the Israeli–European relations.

6.4.1 Coding Procedure

The material for analysis in this chapter consists of all the collected press releases, articles and news updates published on the websites of the eight leading solidarity groups over a period of six months. The search was limited to material dated from July 2013 (the month the EU guidelines were announced) to February 2014. Thirty pieces were found, including press releases, articles, briefings, calls for action, and news pieces that related to the EU guidelines.

The materials were published on the websites of the ECCP, PSC UK, IPSC, the Queen’s University Belfast Palestine Society, the Leeds Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Sadaka –

the Ireland Palestine Alliance, BRICUP – the British Committee for Universities of Palestine, and the Palestinian BDS National Committee.

These groups were selected to be examined in this case for their involvement in the organised campaign coordinated by the ECCP in response to the EU guidelines announcement through their issuing and publishing of position papers, articles, analysis and press releases. The IPSC and PSC were also active in calling their supporters to engage in contacting the MEPs electronically.

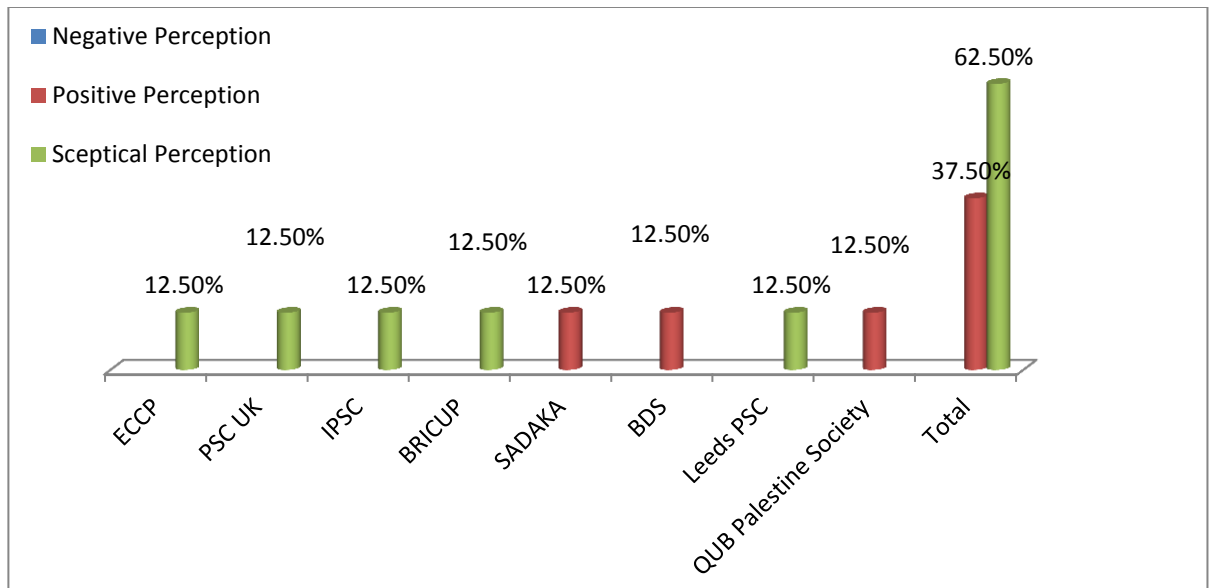
Data was classified into three categories, depending on whether it took a positive, negative or sceptical position towards the newly announced guidelines. The analysed texts were also classified by type: press release, news story, article or call for action. The main themes found in this campaign were: Israeli–European relations, the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian lands, and economic factors.

Each of the 30 pieces of text – whether it was a press release, news story, briefing, article or letter – was considered as one unit of analysis, and each paragraph was given the relevant code.

6.4.2 Results

After classifying the analysed data into the three groups that describe the group's general perception of the new EU policies, it is safe to say that the reaction of the majority of the groups studied has been scepticism about the seriousness of the EU official move.

As graph 6.1 indicates, 62.5 per cent of press releases, articles and news pieces were in general sceptical, while 37.5 per cent were positive. None showed complete negativity towards the idea of the new EU policy. However, that is not to say that the solidarity groups were divided over the issue of the guidelines. Most of them, including the groups that seemed to be more welcoming of the EU announcement, demanded that further actions be taken to force Israel to adhere to international law, in particular the seizing of its settlement building and expansion activities in the occupied Palestinian lands of 1967.



Graph 6.1: Solidarity groups' perception of the EU guidelines

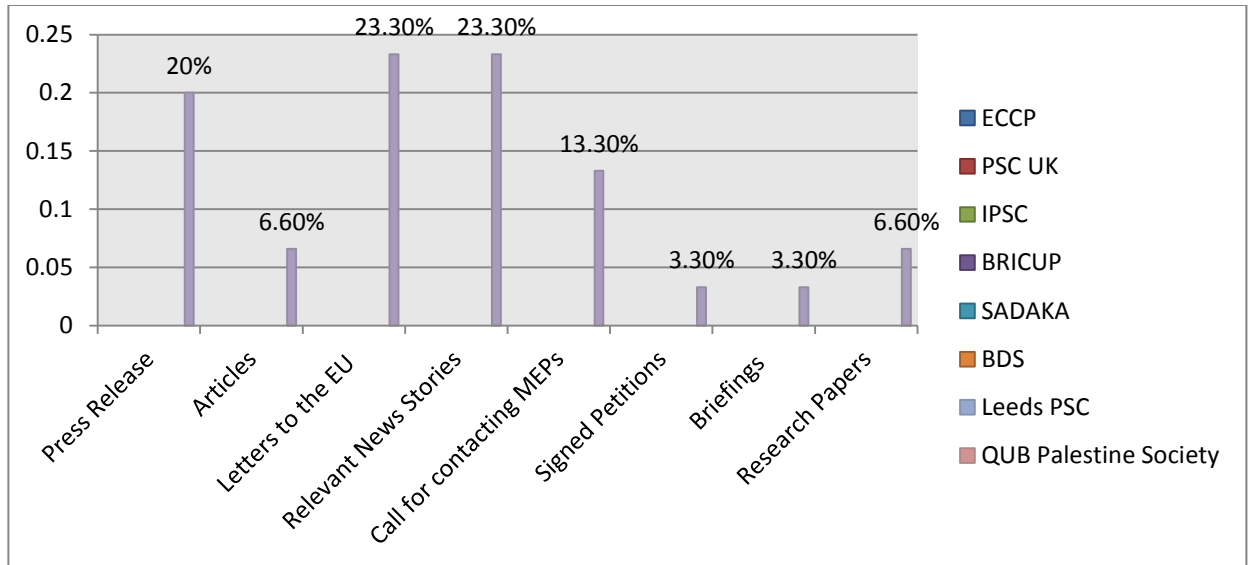
6.4.2a Forms of Published Materials

The contents show how the organisations understood the political dimensions of the EU move and how they framed it in line with the movement's positions towards EU relations with Israel in relation to the conflict.

As graph 6.2 shows, the highest percentage of contents from the leading solidarity groups related to the new EU guidelines were news stories and letters sent to European Commission officials. Press releases made up 20 per cent of the content, while the rest of the analysed content was around 13 per cent calling for supporters to contact members of the European Parliament (MEPs), nearly 7 per cent each for articles and for research papers, and around 3 per cent each for signing petitions and for briefings.

The noticeable calls for contacting MEPs and sending letters to senior officials in EU institutions suggest that the movement did not fully trust that the new guidelines would be implemented. This move comes in the light of news reports suggesting that the EU had been subject to US and Israeli pressure to 'water down' these new guidelines, as *The Financial Times* had reported.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ John Reed and Hugh Carnegy, *The Financial Times*, 2013. 'EU under pressure over funding in Israel settlements'. Accessed 2 February 2015. <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/b28e4dd0-1880-11e3-83b9-00144feab7de.html#axzz3QbRks7Bs>.



Graph 6.2: Classification of analysed content from studied groups' websites.

Furthermore, the focus on lobbying MEPs and officials in the EU was because the movement had seen the guidelines as an opportunity for lobbying and directly contacting parliament members and officials, in particular Catherine Ashton, the EU foreign policy chief at that time. It considered this as an effective move that would contribute to producing positive outcomes that would secure the serious implementation of the guidelines.

6.4.2b Themes and Frames

Three themes were often incorporated into press releases, news stories, and letters sent to EU institutions and MEPs. The analysis suggests that each of these themes served as an independent frame, although many elements of each theme overlapped with the others.

The themes of the Israeli control of occupied Palestinian lands, 'Occupation Frame', and the Israeli-US pressure on the EU, 'Lobbying and Pressuring the EU', were present by implication in the content. However, among the three frames identified, the 'Aiding the Occupation' frame stands out as the most prominent in the analysed content, and is to be the centre of the following analysis.

6.5 Frames in Lobbying Campaigns

While other NGOs, such as the MATTIN group, deployed a legal frame to assert the notion that the EU guidelines comply with its legal frames in relation with Israel (Voltolini (2015), solidarity groups constructed a frame that criticized the European–Israeli bilateral relations, presenting them as a problem that contributes to continuity of the occupation of Palestine. Thus, the movement framed this relation as a form of European complicity with the Israeli occupation policies. This aggressive frame is critical of the EU and sees the guidelines as a needed step to positively adjust this relation. Thus, lack of strict implementation of the guidelines would be seen as European aid to the occupation.

6.5.1 ‘Aiding the Occupation’ Frame

The framing elements from Entman (1993) definition are identified and analysed in this last section. It addresses lobbying on the EU guidelines in which the aiding the occupation frame was presented as a substitute for the European–Israeli relations theme. The following text discusses these frame elements, which are problem definition, causal attribution, moral evaluation and treatment recommendation.

From the political communication perspective, Entman (1993) argues that framing:

essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.

(1993, p. 52)

He argues that there are four elements in the communication process – the communicator, the receiver, the message and the culture – and that all four are based on selecting and highlighting. In this case study, framing from a political communication perspective is found to be essential to better understand how to communicate the movement’s perspective of the Israeli–EU relations, use this perspective to build a particular frame and communicate it to its online supporters.

While Entman (1993) finds that framing provides a route to explain the power of a communicated text, he emphasises that ‘analysis of frames illuminates the precise way in which influence over a human consciousness is exerted by the transfer (or communication) of information from one location – such as a speech, utterance, news report, or novel – to that consciousness’ (p. 51).

The movement’s scepticism towards the EU and its willingness to implement the new guidelines firmly can be explained by the long history of cooperation between Israel and Europe. The aid that Israel has been receiving since its creation as a result of this cooperation, and the limited effective political pressure that Europe has put on Israel to halt its settlement building policies in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, throughout the history of the conflict, justify the scepticism towards implementing the guidelines.

The long history of European aid to Israel goes back to the beginning of the conflict. It has been suggested that the EU has always contributed to the way that the Israeli economy benefits from controlling Palestine:

The European Union and its governments have allowed themselves to be seduced by Israeli politicians and have happily embraced Israeli firms that are intimately involved in and profiting from the occupation. Rather than contributing to a solution, the European Union has allowed itself to become part of the problem.

(Cronin, 2011, p. 161).

The European aid to the Zionism movement and later to the state of Israel was provided for many reasons, among them the European school of thought that found the creation of Israel in Palestine would be an extension of Europe, a notion that the first generation of Zionist leaders were fully aware of. Massad (2005) emphasises that ‘Israel’s packaging itself as an extension of Europe is what accounts for much of the support the settler-colony has received from Europe and America over the past century’ (2005, p. 16).

Within this campaign, the solidarity movement has shed considerable light on the economic and financial factors that connect Israel and the EU by making its point clear

about how the EU and its Member States are complicit in aiding Israel by allowing Israeli entities to use European taxpayers' money in maintaining their control over the Palestinians.

Although the main focus of the movement's message remains that the new guidelines should be implemented as a step towards ending Israel's benefiting from the occupation, the movement has also portrayed the EU's long-term economic support to Israel as a problem which shows how Europe is complicit in the occupation (see Table 6.1).

Problem Definition

The Israeli–EU relationship, in particular its economic and financial aspects through which Israel has been receiving considerable financial aid from the EU, is framed as the problem. The problem is not the relationship per se, but the Israeli use of this aid in supporting its occupation project, including the expansion and building of settlements. Such relationship is portrayed as a negative element that extends not just to one particular kind of cooperation but also to all areas of science, technology and transportation.

Furthermore, the privilege from the EU aid and cooperation that Israel has been enjoying without being held accountable for its oppressive policies not only strengthens its ability to continue with these policies, but also contributes to maintaining its control over the Palestinians and their land.

For the campaign, the guidelines are one way to make sure that Israel does not benefit any more from European funds in its attempts to perpetuate the occupation. They are also seen as measures through which the European official institutions acknowledge their problematic position of having aided the occupation and the opportunity to amend their funding policies.

Causal Attribution

The second frame element is concerned with the causal factors that created and remain main contributors to the problem for both Israel and Europe. The aiding the occupation frame description implies that the EU is manipulative because, on the one hand, it criticises Israel for its violations of international law, while, on the other hand, it

continues to aid Israel financially and even imports products from its settlements. Israeli entities, particularly businesses, are also accused of being manipulative, as they try to hide their business activities taking place in the Palestinian lands occupied in 1967.

Moral Evaluation

The economic Israeli–EU relationship – portrayed as EU aid to the Israeli occupation project – is also evaluated from a legal point of view. The movement’s aim behind this frame consistently focuses on the legal dimension, in particular the Israeli violations of international law and EU complicity with these violations.

While the campaign covers the EU’s morality in allowing Israel to enjoy European financial support regardless of its record of abusing the Palestinians rights, Israel’s legal violations in the occupied Palestinian territory whilst it remains a receiver of European aid is the main moral perspective focused on in this frame.

This evaluation that pushes forward the legal aspect of the problem resonates with other NGO efforts to lobby the EU institutions on this matter. These focus on the legal frame that suggests that the EU would be violating its own legal framework if continued to disregard the fact that the Israeli occupation benefits from European funds (Votolini (2015)).

Treatment Recommendation

All the recommended measures which are seen as a solution to EU involvement in aiding the Israeli occupation project are focused on how the EU should implement the guidelines. The recommendations call for a strict implementation of the guidelines, including demanding a declaration from Israeli companies that they have no activities in the occupied lands, as that will force these companies to consider the cost-effectiveness of their work there. Other suggestions are that the EU should issue advice to companies that they should not have any business relations with Israeli companies that are working in the occupied territories.

Frame Element	Variables	Description
Problem Definition	The EU financial and economic support to Israel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EIB (European Investment Bank) has provided finance amounting to almost €1 billion to Israeli entities since 1981. EU cooperates with Israel in various fields such as science and technology, transportation (Common Aviation Area), agriculture, satellite navigation (Galileo) and police services (EUROPOL).
Causal Attribution	The EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite many statements condemning Israel's violations of international law, the EU continues to cooperate with Israel. Despite such decisions and the long-held position on the illegality of settlements, the EU continues to import products from Israeli settlements.
	Israeli companies that are active in the occupied Palestinian lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ambiguity is a well-known tactic used by companies to disguise their activities in general, specifically in the occupied territories. Israeli businesses benefiting from EU grants are active in the occupied territories.
Moral Evaluation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not only do the EU guidelines do very little to affect the occupation economy, they may also bestow legitimacy on commercial activities that, despite supposedly taking place within the Green Line, yield huge occupation-born profits. Granting such explicit support despite numerous and internationally recognised Israeli violations of international law, the EU finds itself complicit in those violations.
Treatment Recommendation	Strict EU implementations of its guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The only thing that could expose companies for what they are is that the EU demand that they officially declare zero activities in the occupied territories. New guidelines should ensure that companies and institutions based in illegal Israeli settlements cannot receive EU research grants and that Israeli entities with operations in settlements cannot be awarded loans by the European Investment Bank.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the EU pursues this path, Israeli companies will be forced to consider the cost-effectiveness of maintaining their operations in the occupied territories. • The EU and its member states should issue guidelines advising companies not to maintain economic relationships with Israeli entities that are located or operating in the OPT. • The European taxpayer should not support activities in territories that are illegally occupied and settled. • We feel strongly that Israeli settlements should not benefit from European taxpayers' money.
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Table 6.1: Elements of the 'EU Aiding the Occupation' frame.

6.6 Discussion

This chapter studies the movement's engagement with Irish, British and European parliamentarians on the issue of Palestine, through looking at its lobbying campaigns, which took place electronically as part of national and transnational organised efforts. The specific campaigns that are studied in this part of the thesis, which were implemented at the national and larger European levels, are the collective lobbying campaigns in the UK Parliament in 2013, the European Parliament elections in 2014 and the EU guidelines on funding Israeli projects in the occupied Palestinian land in 2013.

Studying the cases in this chapter offers an understanding of the dynamics of the solidarity movement's lobbying efforts undertaken by the movement's organisations nationally and transnationally, in which Internet-dedicated platforms were created and utilised. Furthermore, examination of the lobbying provides an insight into the effect of contemporary Internet-aided lobbying efforts on the Palestinian question within the European parliamentary and political debate. In addition, scrutiny of these organised lobbying actions contributes to a better understanding of their effect on the perception of the solidarity organisations as relevant spokespeople on the question of Palestine within western contexts.

The text explains how these three campaigns were implemented through organised collective actions nationally, among leading groups and associates, counterparts and allies, and transnationally with other Europe-based solidarity groups. In the process, the chapter shows how the groups' supporters were involved in the process, either through organised visit to the UK Parliament, or contacting European Parliament candidates and MEPs on the EU guidelines via Internet websites. In relation to the lobbying on the EU guidelines, the chapter further examines the deployed frame of aiding the occupation, its elements and components, to better understand how the movement transformed one theme of Israeli–European relations, namely economic relations, into the main frame of their campaign.

Results suggest two forms of lobbying were implemented: direct contact via dedicated Internet platforms, and face-to-face discussion. Direct requests from the main solidarity groups to their followers and online readers via their websites to contact their representatives show how these websites are used for organising and exercising lobbying as much as they are used as tools for informing and constructing frames that guide the lobbied message. Thus, the more that dedicated, organised and specialised Internet-based platforms are created to facilitate e-participation, the more the movements are keen to incorporate them in their activism.

In contrast to the UK-based pro-Israel organisations, which are heavily involved in influencing decision makers' positions, the solidarity movement's founders dedicate much more of their efforts to addressing public opinion. The Britain–Israel Communications and Research Centre –BICOM, for example, is found to be very active on media and communication levels; it aims to address the political elite rather than public opinion.⁴⁶

The implication that parliamentarians and political institutions are being asked by their constituents to respond and act on the question of Palestine is reflected on two levels. On the one hand, it reinforces the movement's position within the Irish and UK contexts

⁴⁶ MILLS, T., MILLER, D., GRIFFIN, T. & AKED, H. 2013. The Britain–Israel Communications and Research Centre: Giving peace a chance? UK: Public Interest Investigations. Available at: <http://www.spinwatch.org/index.php/about/bookstore>.

as a main actor in relation to policies towards the Palestinian–Israeli conflict. On the other hand, the continuous lobbying efforts contribute to keeping the question of Palestine and the agony of the Palestinians under Israeli rule a topic of debate in social and political circles which can also be seen as an added value to the movement’s advocacy efforts. That is to say, by pioneering the defence of the Palestinians’ interests and rights in both grassroots movements and parliamentary circles, the movement is perceived as a demotic representative of the cause. In that, the Internet platforms that facilitate the movement’s coordinating and practising of lobbying are aiding the movement in exercising this position.

Another relevant key point this chapter suggests is related to the cross-border collaboration in executing campaigns at the European level. The importance of the movement’s involvement in transnational lobbying lies in its direct relation to one of the main questions of this research project – how the Internet is affecting the transnationalism of the solidarity movement.

Such organised effort in contacting the EU institutions and MEPs by Europe-based groups serves two purposes. It engages active players from across the continent in defending Palestinian interests at the European level, which has a greater impact on policies related to the conflicted approach adopted by the EU. And, as national lobbying does, it also reinforces the position of the movement in the larger geographical context as an involved player in relation to EU–Palestine relations, specifically those relations related to the EU position on the development of the conflict.

Within this notion, we find Tarrow’s (2011) analysis of the role of the Internet in organising cross-border solidarity activities very relevant. That also echoes Omer’s (2009) explanation of how the global solidarity movement responded to the Israeli war on Gaza in 2008, in which the Internet became a place for coordinating efforts and activities for Palestine solidarity groups with a wide geographical distribution.

To analyse further, the chapter examined the frame deployed by the movement in its lobbying of the EU institutions. In the case of the EU guidelines, the findings suggest that EU–Israel economic relations was the most salient and noticeable frame that guided

the lobbying. By portraying the EU's economic involvement in the conflict negatively, the movement pointed to Israeli–EU economic relations as a significant part of the problem, suggesting the correcting of this relationship on the basis of strict implementation of the EU guidelines.

This concept of linking the problem and solution in the frame has been suggested by McGrath (2007). 'An important reason why lobbyists take care to construct the most advantageous issue frames is that the frame itself can define not only the problem, but also the solution' (2007, p. 267). This echoes Zald's suggestion that 'frames help interpret problems, define problems for action and suggest action pathways to remedy the problem' (1996, p. 265).

In relation to the EU guidelines, although the solidarity groups studied in Ireland and the UK were part of a larger effort that many pro-Palestine non-state actors contributed to, their approach complied with their growing lobbying strategy that relies on supporters, the Internet and the deployment of frames. The recent study of Voltolini (2015) emphasised the role that 'frame entrepreneurs', including non-governmental organisations, businesses, solidarity groups and think tanks, play in formulating and developing new frames to successfully influence the EU policy makers' understanding of a subject.

The influence of the growth of the current lobbying strategy that uses online platforms, including specialised websites for petitions and for contacting MPs, TDs and MEPs is under studied. However, the findings of this research indicate that the movement is starting to move beyond the traditional form of activism that focused on street-protest-type actions to include attempts to change policy through organised campaigns to lobby parliamentarians.

These campaigns differ from those of interest groups or traditional well-resourced lobbyists, in that they rely on a grassroots form of engagement with legislators via the Internet.

Should these campaigns that aim to bring the issue of Palestine into the deliberations of national parliaments and seek a change of policies towards Palestine continue, change

may potentially take place. However, the scope of governmental policy change towards the question of Palestine as the result of solidarity lobbying campaigns depends on the number of engaged citizens, parties and civil society organisations.

While the lobbying campaigns of this case study varied in their targeted parliamentarians and official institutions, they share the dynamic of combining more than one element in the process. Three combined components contributed to the execution of this campaign, namely the national and transnational solidarity groups' collaboration and the use of the Internet to serve as the medium for implementation of the lobbying process. It may be a relatively new phenomenon to see such organised lobbying efforts by pro-Palestine civil society organisations. It is the long-term construction of this type of organised effort that remains modest. That is to say, these lobbying cases reaffirm the notion that cross-border collaboration on solidarity still depends on particular cases and has not been translated into an on-going strategic approach.

Chapter 7: The War on Gaza: Mediating Palestine in Times of Crisis

7.1 Introduction

Much analysis of the Israeli war on Gaza in the summer 2014 from the media perspective highlighted the role the Internet played in providing news of Gaza from local social media users, thus providing a close view from the field of the living conditions of the Palestinians in Gaza during the war.

Mediation of Palestine and its news coverage via traditional media are not new phenomena; however, the influence of new media on many social and political communication aspects of contemporary societies arguably has implications for mediating the Palestinian struggle in a way in which Internet media platforms can contribute to producing and presenting Palestine.

This chapter analyses how Palestine is narrated, presented and mediated through text, image and action. It does so through a case study of the use of Twitter and Facebook by solidarity groups in Ireland and Britain during the war on Gaza in 2014.

The war has been the subject of recent studies, including (Siapera et al., 2015), work that examined Twitter as one element of a communicative ecosystem – as a tool of social awareness and a source of news. This chapter's case study, however, looks at the two popular social media sites as venues through which Palestine is mediated by global supporters. It identifies three framing tasks employed on the web in the process of mediating Palestine and the Palestinians during the war,.

The chapter examines how the Palestinian question, in particular the war and its victims, is presented and narrated on the web by the movement's leading groups during the war. The aim is to better understand what representation(s) of the Palestinians dominated the movement's online contents, and how these contributed to mediating Palestine online.

This chapter, an earlier version of which appeared in a peer-reviewed journal,⁴⁷ starts by providing a brief explanation of the ramifications of the war at the global level, including on the Internet. A working definition of the concept of mediation from a

⁴⁷ Abu-Ayyash, S. 2015. The Palestine Solidarity Movement, Human Rights and Twitter. *Networking Knowledge*, 8. Available: <http://www.ojs.meccsa.org.uk/index.php/netknow/article/view/370>.

communication studies perspective follows. The chapter then offers a detailed data analysis of the online contents of the movement's Facebook and Twitter accounts, including the frames used, and how these relate to collective action in the major cities of Ireland and the UK during the war.

The chapter's findings acknowledge that the presentation of the Palestinians as victims remains dominant in the movement discourse, especially during crisis. Yet, crisis also provide opportunities for the movement to aggressively challenge mainstream media, and call for global participation through clear endorsement and advocacy of BDS as a democratic, non-violent approach in which citizens around the world can participate in.

7.2 The War on Gaza

On 8 July 2014, Israeli forces launched a military operation against the Gaza strip, south of Palestine. The war on Gaza, which was named by the Israeli government as Operation 'Protective Edge', left more than 2,000 Palestinians dead and another 11,000 injured.⁴⁸ The Israeli airstrikes and the land invasion of most of the Gaza strip were received with outrage on social media platforms and on the streets of Ireland, the UK and around the globe.

The war lasted over a month, until a long-term ceasefire was brokered on 26 August. It triggered massive demonstrations around the world that showed global solidarity with the people of Palestine and in particular with the citizens of the Gaza strip. The Palestinians and their supporters accused the western mainstream media of being biased in favour of the Israeli narrative of the war. Internet-mediated platforms were, however, widely used by Palestinian supporters around the globe to counter this bias through providing the Internet audience with the Palestinian side of the story.

7.2.1 Reflections in Cyber Space

Similarly to all cycles of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, the Israeli offensive on Gaza attracted responses at political and grassroots levels worldwide. Arab, European, American and world governments expressed their positions in relation to the events.

⁴⁸ Palestinian Ministry of Health, 'Emergency Operation Room Sitrep on Gaza, August 31. (2014). <http://www.moh.ps/attach/761.pdf>. (Accessed 16 September 2014).

While the official positions of the Arab and Islamic countries condemned the Israeli offensive and considered it as another phase of the Israeli occupation and aggression towards the Palestinian people, many European governments used the traditional vague diplomatic language that called for a truce and the end to violence, and appeared even-handed between the oppressor and the victim. Unsurprisingly, the US administration supported Israel and blamed the Palestinian side, in particular the Hamas movement, for starting a new cycle of violence. That is the traditional position that shapes the US official position towards the conflict, and represents the unconditional political protection that the USA provides for Israel.

The war stirred the social media sites, Twitter and Facebook, into arenas for debate, discussion and disagreement over who was responsible for the new phase of the conflict. Pro-Palestine and pro-Israel Internet users (including the Hasbara members) strongly expressed their arguments on these sites.⁴⁹ The stronger and more terrifying the images and news of Palestinian women and children that came from Gaza, the more the Palestine activists and supporters shared these stories on their Twitter accounts and Facebook pages.

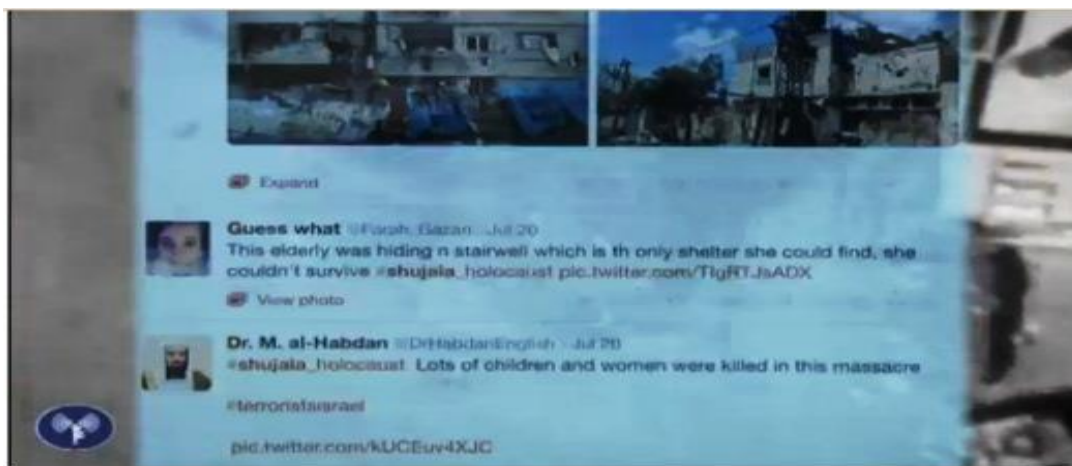
The reflection of the war in cyberspace, along with the role that social media played in informing the western public about the war, was noted by many journalists and commentators.

Paul Mason, economics editor at the British Channel 4 News, showed an example of how social media sites, such as Twitter, become an increasing source of information that provide alternative stories to those the mainstream media were broadcasting. He argued that Israel had lost what he called the ‘social media war over Gaza’, for several reasons, including the great number of images that were circulated among Twitter users who followed the events in Gaza.

⁴⁹ Hasbara refers to organised Israeli propaganda to counter the Palestinian narrative, especially on the web. It is ‘a form of propaganda aimed at an international audience, primarily, but not exclusively, in western countries. It is meant to influence the conversation in a way that positively portrays Israeli political moves and policies, including actions undertaken by Israel in the past. Often, Hasbara efforts include a negative portrayal of the Arabs and especially of Palestinians’. Sheizaf, Noam 2011. *Hasbara: Why does the world fail to understand us?*. +972. Accessed 15 November, 2015 <http://972mag.com/hasbara-why-does-the-world-fail-to-understand-us/27551/>.

Anybody following the Gaza conflict from both sides would have seen tens of independently shot images and accounts of civilian death and the destruction of housing and civilian infrastructure. The incident [the Israeli attack on the Shuja'iyya neighbourhood east of Gaza city on 20 July 2014] shows who is winning the social media war over Gaza. It is evidence of a massive change in the balance of power between social media and the old, hierarchical media channels we used to rely on to understand wars.

(Mason, 2014)



An activist on the ground I follow tweeted: “people running out of Shujaiya, bodies lying on ground”.

Soon after, Mohammed Omer - an award-winning Palestinian journalist who tweets as @Mogaza - reported:



Not long after that, numerous western TV journalists stationed alongside Palestinian ambulance crews, including my colleague, Jonathan Miller, reported the same things. There was immediacy, corroboration and - with pictures - evidence.

Mason's report refers to Twitter as a source of news and provides images from the ground.

Similar analysis was put forward by Patrick Cockburn, the *Independent's* Middle East correspondent, who suggested that the Israeli propaganda strategy had not been successful during the war on Gaza. He was commenting on a leaked booklet produced by Frank Luntz in 2009 that is full of advice to Israeli spokespeople on the best way of manipulating western public opinion. Images and news of hundreds of Palestinian victims killed by Israeli fire made the task for the Israeli spokespeople and PR machine harder:

A problem here is that propaganda that works in a short war comes back to haunt you in a longer one. This is now happening in Gaza. Israeli air and artillery strikes and Hamas mortars and rockets are often presented as if they balanced each other out in terms of lethality. But the most important statistic here is that some 1,100 Palestinians have been killed as opposed to three civilians in Israel.

Cockburn (2014)

While this is not the first military assault that the Israeli government has executed against the besieged Gaza Strip, at the media and information level, something had changed, as Israel has been struggling to win over western public opinion.

Deepa Kumar of Rutgers University has summed up several elements that played out in favour of the Palestinian side in the media angles on the war. She suggests that alternative media, social media and on-the-ground activists challenging the mainstream media and the presence of international journalists in Gaza were variables that prevented Israel from winning the media battle:

The dynamic at work is as follows. First, independent media have played a crucial role in countering Israeli propaganda and offering alternative accounts. Second, social media have provided a forum from which independent journalism, as well as first-hand reports from Palestinian people in Gaza, are circulated. Third, in these spaces Israel is losing the propaganda war, despite its vast resources of trolls and misinformation experts. Fourth, grassroots activists using social media have been able to bring pressure to bear on the establishment

media. Fifth, this climate has enabled establishment journalists on the ground to be more forthcoming about the horrors of what is happening in Gaza.

(Kumar, 2014)

Massive participation in the protests over the Israeli offensive in eastern and western capitals, including London and Dublin, has also been highlighted by news media.⁵⁰ The increasing number of people joining the solidarity campaigns and the images of global protests in solidarity with Gaza have been seen by many journalists as signs of success for the solidarity movement. The online English version of the Lebanese newspaper *Al Akhbar* published an article by Asa Winstanley that discussed the ‘growth of the Palestine solidarity movement in Europe’, in which he appreciates the ‘decades of slow and steady movement-building’ that enabled the movement to mobilise massive protests in the streets of Europe. ‘There is currently a huge influx of new recruits to the movement. This provides a huge opportunity and a big challenge’ (Winstanley, 2014).

The use of social media platforms has always been part of the movement’s communication strategy, and the recent war on Gaza was no exception. Kajsa Anckarstrom of the Manchester Palestine Solidarity Campaign explains that using Internet-mediated platforms, mainly social media sites, is popular among pro-Palestine activists for many reasons, including keeping in contact with the people of Palestine and raising awareness about life in Palestine under the Israeli military occupation among online audiences:

Yes, on many online campaigns we have many Palestinians leading the way; be it petitions, hashtag campaigns, raising funds for projects, [the] Palestine Solidarity Campaign liaises with Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank in regards to projects and inviting Palestinians over for talks which are open to the public to increase awareness.

⁵⁰ Al Jazeera, Europe News, World 'day of rage' over Israel's war on Gaza. From London to Paris, and Tehran to Cape Town, demonstrators take to the streets to demand an end to Israeli offensive. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2014/08/world-day-rage-over-israel-war-gaza-2014891856325123.html> (accessed 26 October 2014)

(Written communication, 5 December 2013)

The war may have had implications not only for public opinion, but at the level of civil society as well. In explaining the stronger stance that Irish unions took during the war, Kevin Squires, the national coordinator of the IPSC, explained how relations between his groups and the unions changed after the war on Gaza. He stated:

During Operation Protective Edge several unions took strong stances against the attack, and in particular Mandate (the retail workers union) began an online petition calling on all Irish retailers to stop stocking Israeli products, while the Communications Workers' Union issued a pamphlet called 'The Case for Palestine' to all its members which recommended support for the BDS movement. The ICTU is about to move forward with its consumer boycott campaign. Speakers from ICTU, Mandate, SIPTU and Unite addressed crowds at the IPSC-organised demonstrations in Dublin during the Protective Edge operation.

(Personal communication, 28 October 2014)

7.3 Mediation: Working Definition

This chapter conceptualises mediation as the means of representation, communication and dissemination of Palestine through the Internet, in particular those which include frames. Mediating Palestine is analysed in the light of the solidarity movement's attempts to provide alternative representation and narration that can compete with the dominant presentations of the Palestinians by the traditional institutionalised media, better known as the mainstream media.

Here, mediation is examined in the light of the extensive use of social media platforms as live venues for informing, connecting and galvanising participation in the many collective actions that took place during the crisis in major cities in Ireland and the UK.

A key aspect of the mediation process is the construction of meaningfulness and values in a transformative process (Silverstone, 2002). Mediation, for him, is a ‘dialectical process in which institutionalized media of communication (the press, broadcast radio and television, and increasingly the World Wide Web) are involved in the general circulation of symbols in social life’ (p. 762).

Another perception that associates mediation with the process of communicating and its social aspects is found in Livingstone’s (2009) approach:

[mediation] highlights the artefacts and practices used to communicate, it more readily invites analysis of the social and organizational arrangements through which mediation is instituted (i.e., the micro- and macro conditions in which otherwise separated parties become interrelated), and it urges a critical focus on the expression of what is unexpressed or suppressed in those interrelations.

A more profound conceptualisation of the process and its communication origins is found in Barbero’s (1993) work. While the scholar offers several perspectives on mediation, he provides a distinct link between the process and cultural transformations that ‘start with or flow from the media but in which they play an important role, especially after 1920’ (p. 139). In the light of this notion, Barbero (1993) also defends Walter Benjamin’s role in understanding the roots of the process of mediation, which identifies relations between conditions of production and changes in culture.

In a relevant definition of the term in relation to this case study, Barbero’s (1993) points to the roles of social movements in being one element in the processes of articulation with the media:

Because communication is the meeting point of so many new conflicting and integrating forces, the centre of the debate has shifted from media to mediations. Here, mediations refer especially to the articulations between communication practices and social movements and the articulation of different tempos of development with the plurality of cultural matrices.

(p. 187)

Following Siapera (2010a) conceptualisation, the theory of mediation ‘needs a dynamic account of representation, an account that shows clearly the role played by representation in containing, controlling, and dominating cultural difference, but which also allows room for the subversion, questioning, and rejection of representations’ (p. 127). Thus, representation remains a key principle in the process of mediation. While representation is a main aspect of the process, Siapera (2010a) also acknowledges the roles of discourse, language and the frames used.

From Silverstone’s (1999) perspective, the term ‘mediation’ is the process through which meaning is circulated:

Mediation involves the movement of meaning from one text to another, from one discourse to another, from one event to another. It involves the constant transformation of meanings, both large scale and small, significant and insignificant, as media texts and texts about media, circulate in writing, in speech and audiovisual forms, and as we, individually and collectively, directly and indirectly, contribute to the production.

(1999, p. 13)

In the Palestinian context, mediation of Palestine, in particular through Twitter, has been addressed by Siapera (2014) in the context of Palestinian internal politics, in particular the efforts of Palestinian youth to protest over political divisions between the Fatah and Hamas parties. Her findings indicate that dissemination of news and information on Palestine is growing, yet Palestine is still mediated through personalised perspectives:

This mediation leads to a subjective, positioned co-construction of an affective Palestine. This kind of mediation further involves a redistribution of power from fact-based hard news and information produced by mainstream, branded media to diffused networks of news producers, who tweet during real time events as they witness or participate in them, or who tweet their opinions and reactions to the events.

(2014, p. 553)

To that end, the analysis of this chapter's case study will take into consideration the interaction-oriented digital environment that shapes contemporary activism, with the mediation of Palestine taking place via Internet-based platforms. It will mainly address two particular notions related to the Palestinians and their struggle: representation and framing the war.

Mediation as conceptualised and analysed in this part of the thesis is particularly concerned with the content generated, disseminated and shared in solidarity groups' webpages and social media accounts. The vitality of this analysis lies in its importance in providing an insight into the representation of Palestine and its framing within the specific crisis period of the Gaza war. It leads to a deep understanding of how Palestine, both as a geographical place and as a global symbol of struggle, is being presented, produced and reproduced by its global supporters via new communication technologies.

Coding Procedure

A considerable amount of data was provided by the high level of activity from solidarity groups on their social media accounts and webpages in responding to the Israeli narrative during the Israeli war on Gaza in the summer of 2014. In addition, data was obtained from the on-the-ground activities that took place around the world, including in Irish and British cities, interviews with activists and researcher observation.

Examining the content of social media sites, in particular Facebook and Twitter, was crucial for understanding how Palestinian victim stories that dominated the solidarity movement's accounts were circulated within Internet-mediated communication platforms. As this thesis has shown, the main reasons behind solidarity activists' use of social media sites were keeping in contact with Palestinians, following up events in Palestine, raising awareness among global audiences and informing supporters about local solidarity activities.

The content of text, image and moving image on Facebook pages and Twitter accounts was selected from three different weeks of the war. The time frame of the war – from 8 July to 26 August 2014 – was divided into weeks, and content was collected from the first week (8 to 15 July), the fourth week (29 July to 3 August) and the last week (20 to 26 August). This was coded, classified and analysed. Two hundred and sixty (260)

posts, of which 155 were from Facebook pages and 105 were Twitter tweets, were coded and analysed in terms of themes and subthemes.

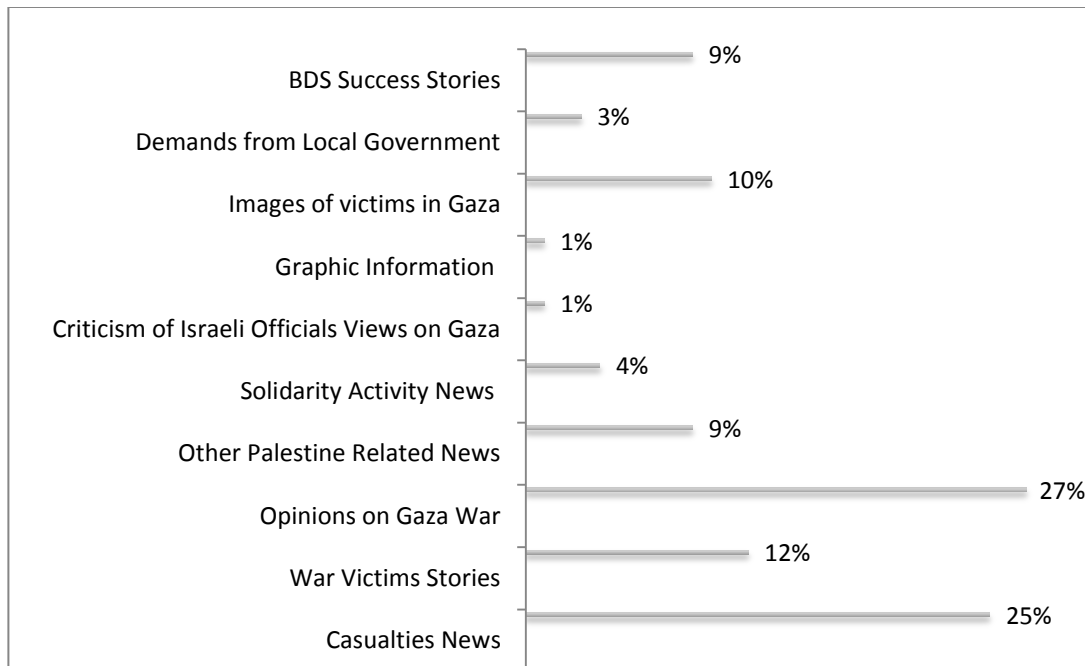
7.4 Results

7.4.1 Content of Solidarity Groups' Facebook Pages

Looking at the contents of thirteen groups' Facebook pages, clearly the subjects addressed were diverse. However, two particular themes dominated most of the content subjects: Palestine/Gaza war news, and group activities. In addition, there were sub-themes emerging from these two themes. The Palestine/Gaza war news sub-themes were civilian victims and the destruction of Gaza, while the sub-themes for group activities were solidarity themes and BDS successes.

Results show that 90 per cent of the content of these pages was related to Palestine events, mainly the war events in Gaza. As graph 7.1 indicates, more than half of the contents which solidarity groups posted on their public pages was dedicated to showing current stories, news and opinions on the Israeli offensive in Gaza, while the remaining contents were divided between stories about BDS achievements and news of group activities.

Images of Palestinian victims of the war made up almost 10 per cent of the analysed content. Opinions, which formed the largest element of the circulated text at 27 per cent, came in the form of articles and interviews that were critical of the Israeli military invasion of Gaza, while the second largest element of text was news and news stories about current war events, mainly the number of Palestinian casualties every day of the war.



Graph 7.1: Contents of solidarity groups' Facebook pages during the war on Gaza 2014

War News

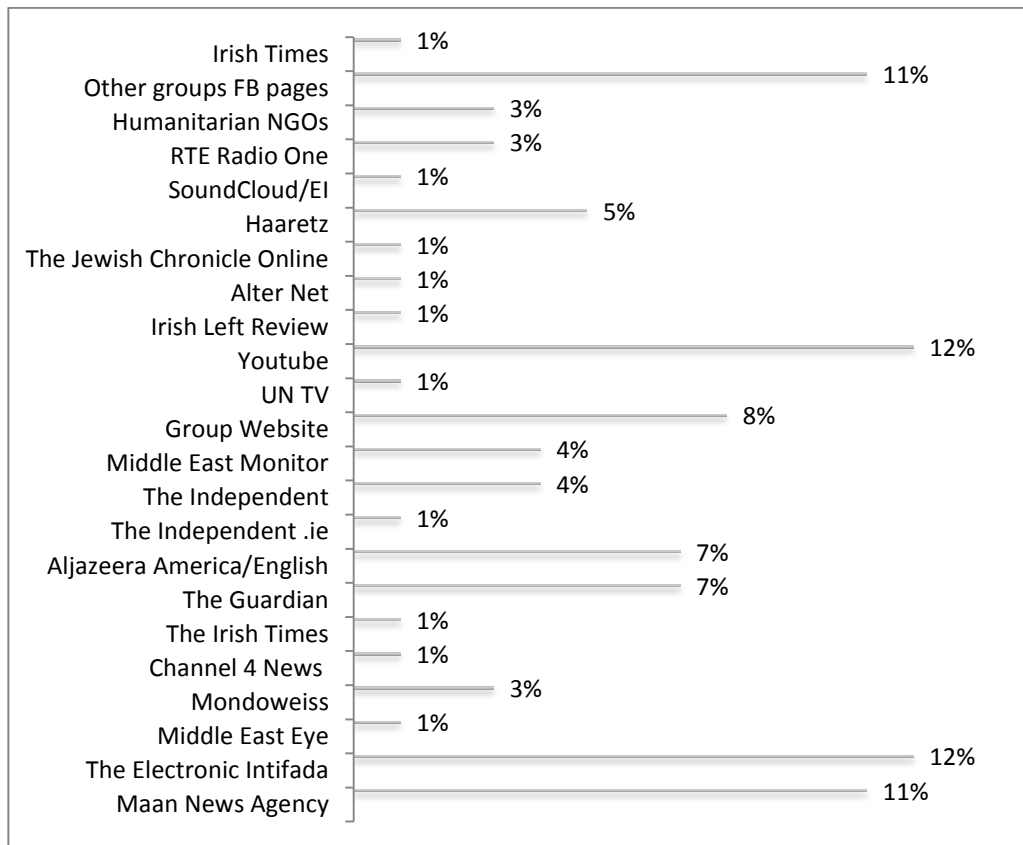
The news sources that online activists used were mainly alternative media/non-media stream sources. News stories published by Palestine-based and other pro-Palestine publications and news agencies were highly used on Facebook pages, and clips that showed the destruction of Gaza by Israeli forces on YouTube were also widely published on social media sites.

As graph 7.2 shows, the Palestine-based Maan news agency⁵¹ along with the Electronic Intifada, which is an online news publication that covers the Palestinian–Israeli conflict from the Palestinian perspective, were the popular news sources that solidarity activists used as sources of information on the war on Gaza. Meanwhile news stories from *Al Jazeera-English* and *The Guardian* were also widely shared online by activists.

Since Palestine is the centre of the focus, work and activities of the solidarity groups, it is logical that most of the content published online by these groups in this period was about developments related to the war in Gaza.

⁵¹ Maan News Agency, About us, (Accessed 11 October 2014) <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewContent.aspx?PAGE=AboutUs>.

The high number of civilian victims and the considerable destruction of Gaza by Israeli airstrikes forced the solidarity movement in the UK and Ireland to focus its online content on disseminating information on events related to the development of the war on the ground. This was in contrast to the Palestinian activists actually in Palestine, who widely celebrated the improved performance of the resistance in Gaza throughout their activity on social media sites during the war.



Graph 7.2: Sources of news used by solidarity groups on Facebook

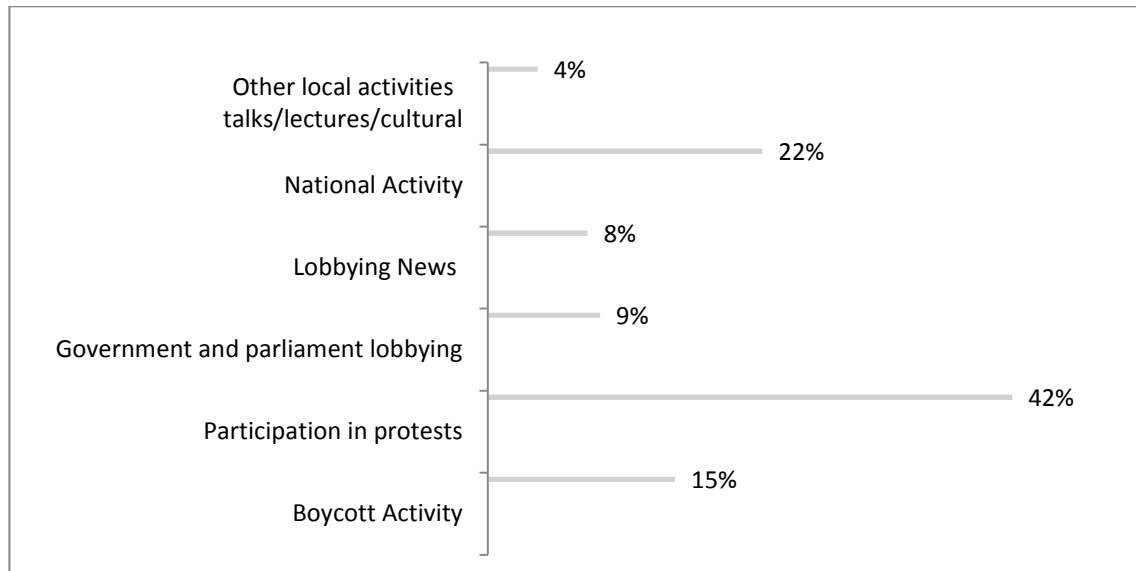
Mediating Solidarity Collective Action

The sub-themes that content on group activities was coded into were classified into three categories: type of activity, online activity, and information about other/sister groups' activities.

Calls for participation in upcoming demonstrations made up 34 per cent of the content related to group activities; 17 per cent of the content was feedback and news about how those activities had gone; and 13 per cent was images about the solidarity group's

protests. Information about other solidarity groups' activities and calls for signing online petitions made up 21 and 15 per cent respectively.

Most of the published information about group activities, as graph 7.3 indicates, (around 42 per cent) was related to news about protests and demonstrations that had taken place, either in a local city or at a national level, mainly in Dublin and London. In the information about national activities, IPSC and PSC UK, their branches and their local allies asked their activists and UK and Irish citizens to join them in protesting in London and Dublin over the Israeli offensive in Gaza. Other activities, related to the boycott campaigns and lobbying decision makers in Ireland and the UK, were less represented in the content on the groups' activities.



Graph 7.3: Solidarity activities announced on Facebook group pages during the War

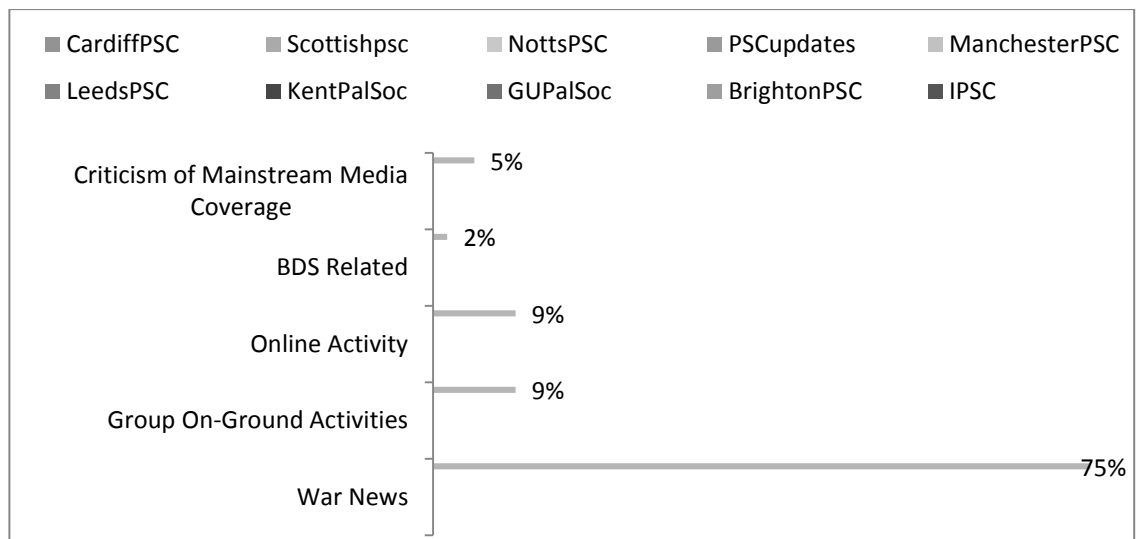
7.4.2 Content of Solidarity Groups' Twitter Accounts

On Twitter, the tweets from 20 groups, including the three major groups in Ireland (IPSC), Scotland (SPSC) and England (PSC UK), during the war were classified into eight themes. The content of these tweets included news, updates on war events, opinions on current events in Palestine and the groups' activities. Similarly to Facebook content, tweets were categorised as follows: war news and news sources, on-the-ground activity and language/popular hashtags used.

Results show that most of the Twitter content during the period analysed was dedicated to sharing information and news updates about the war in Gaza, mainly on the victims of the Israeli military operation. As shown in graph 7.4, 75 per cent of the solidarity groups' Twitter account feeds was about war news, followed by information about the groups' on-the-ground activities with 9 per cent mostly about street demonstrations, and then content related to its online activities, which was mostly calling followers to participate in signing online petitions.

During the war, there was increasing activity on Twitter from solidarity groups, with information on demonstrations, vigils and protests seen daily. Every local, national or university-based solidarity group in Ireland and the UK organised demonstrations in solidarity with Gaza during the war, in coalition with local and national social movements, organisations such as unions and anti-war movements.

Many of the solidarity groups studied who were active on Twitter during the timeframe of the analysis provided information on their local solidarity activities – in advance, as it happened, and after it had happened. Results indicate that the majority of the tweets in relation to group activities were calling for participation in these activities.



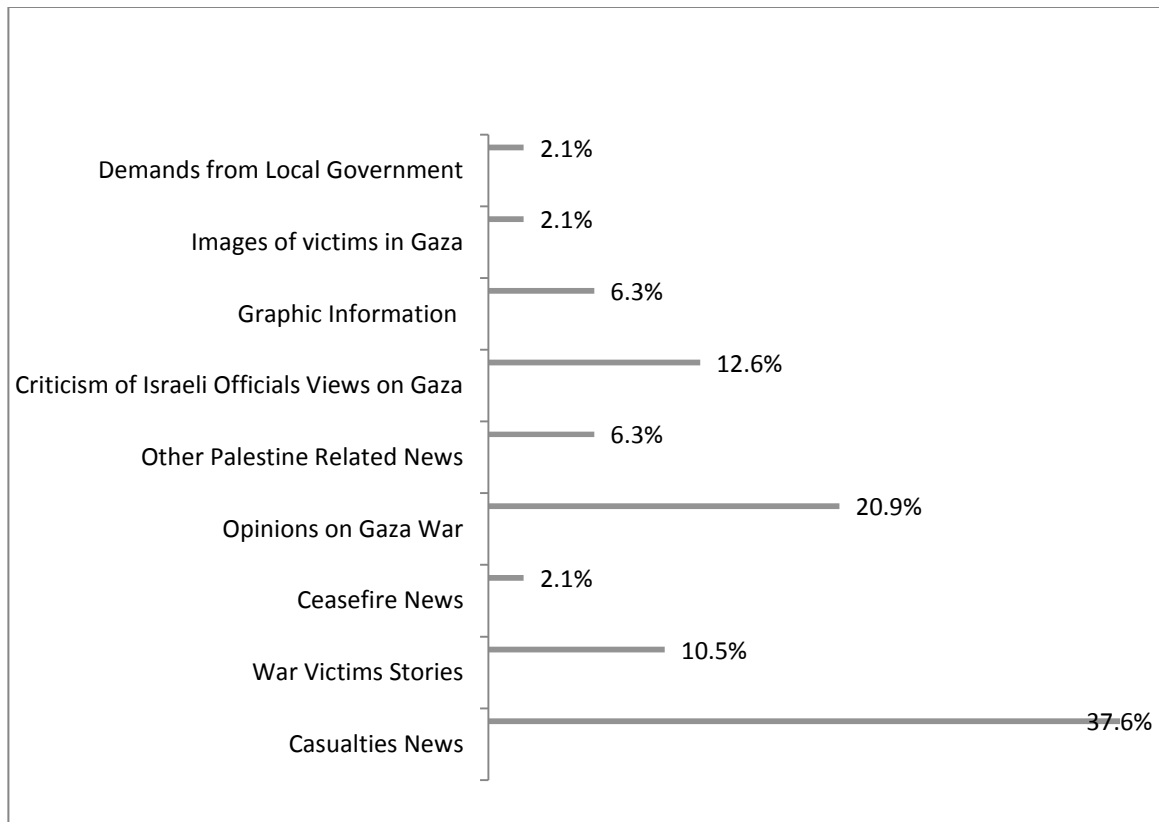
Graph 7.4: Themes of solidarity groups' Twitter account feeds

War News on Twitter

Hourly news updates about the situation in Gaza during the Israeli military operation topped the content of the solidarity groups' Twitter content. The results (see graph 7.5) show that almost 38 per cent of the war news updates were about casualties and death toll numbers. Solidarity groups' Twitter accounts tweeted opinions from officials, celebrities, and writers; they also sent tweets that included analysis and articles that criticised the Israeli government and its officials.

Along with news stories, critical opinions of the Israeli military operation against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip were also widely disseminated via Twitter. Opinions made up around 21 per cent of the content, as graph 7.5 shows, and came in the form of articles, interviews and commentary written and delivered by renowned global politicians, analysts, journalists and even celebrities.

Sharing analysis of the war that criticised the Israeli military operation served three purposes. First, it provided additional and deeper understanding of the political motivations behind the Israeli operation, which would be an added encouragement for activist and online followers to challenge Israeli policies through participation in solidarity activities. Second, it showed Palestinians and their supporting activists in the west that they were not alone in their struggle against the Israeli occupation policies in the occupied Palestinian lands. Third, these comments would help the solidarity movement's constant framing of the conflict as being between Israel, the military occupying power, and the unarmed Palestinian people.



Graph 7.5: Classification of contents of Twitter accounts during the war

#Gaza War Hashtags

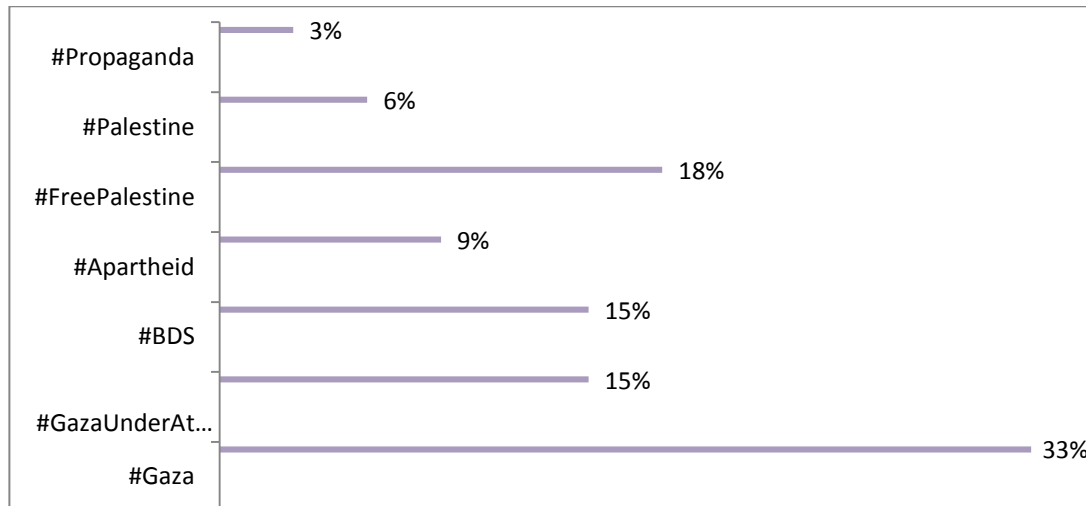
The hashtags used on the Twitter platform by solidarity groups in the UK during the war on Gaza also varied (see graph 7.6). #Gaza and #GazaUnderAttack were the most popular, since most of the tweets' content was addressing the daily news about the Israeli offensive in Gaza. These hashtags were accompanied by text and images of the war.

Activists invited the Twitter audience to participate in the 9 August 2014 demonstration that took place in central London, at which the Stop the War coalition estimated the number of participants to be around 15,000 persons,⁵² and set up a special hashtag (#GazaA9) for this demonstration that was very popular on Twitter before and during the demonstration. The demonstration was not only a success story in relation to using

⁵² Stop The War coalition, '9 August 2014: The biggest ever UK demonstration for Gaza', <http://stopwar.org.uk/resources/reports/9-august-2014-the-biggest-ever-uk-demonstration-for-gaza>, (accessed 12 October 2014).

social media for on-the-ground activity, but also an example of how UK-based solidarity groups organised activities with their local allies such as unions and the anti-war movement.

The use of Twitter hashtags for a particular organised event shows how social media sites are not only used for informing followers/online communities about international causes, but also for organising and reaching possible local participants in an easy, quick, and low-cost manner. Using a particular hashtag for a particular event also unites the online efforts of all parties involved in organising a national grassroots activity. Such methods facilitate access to information, including updates and images about the particular activity, both in the preparation phase and while it is actually taking place.



Graph 7.6: Tweets from the following groups' Twitter accounts during the war: @Scottishpsc, @Pscupdates, @Ipsc, @Nottspsc, @Manchesterpsc, @Leedspsc, @Kentpalsoc, and @Gupalsoc.

Images and Moving Images

Images, including moving images, have had a heavy presence on the Internet, including social media sites, during the war, and shocking images of Palestinian victims were circulated on Twitter and Facebook. Other related images that were disseminated widely showed acts of solidarity around the globe, including pictures of the protesters who marched in the streets of Ireland and the UK.

Still Images – Themes

Palestine solidarity activists had been using images online during the war in a similar way to their use of text. As we have seen earlier in this chapter, the majority of published text represented news updates from Gaza and critical opinion of the Israeli offensive, with news about local solidarity activities coming second in terms of size of content.

The use of images has been similar in focusing in the first place on the war on Gaza, using mainly images of Palestinian victims and the destruction of the strip by Israeli fire, and secondly on solidarity protests round the world, mainly in the west. Both text and images were used to show Israeli violations of the Palestinian people’s human rights and therefore to encourage Irish and UK citizens to participate in the activities that the solidarity movement organised. Images followed two themes: Palestinian victims and strong global solidarity with the Palestinians.

7.5 Dominant Themes

7.5.1 Civilian Victims Theme

A great number of images were used on social media sites; the sources of these images varied from local and global news agencies, to independent photographers, to the local citizens of Gaza who managed to post images of the war online that were later used by solidarity groups. Most of these images were focused on the human crisis of Palestinians suffering from the Israeli assault. For example, image 7.1 shows the tragedy of a young man who lost his younger brother in an Israeli airstrike. The image shows strong feelings and tears, while the image caption provides more information about the story of this grieving young man. The caption narrates the story tragically and frames it in a humanitarian perspective.



Image 7.1: Derry based group, Irish Friends of Palestine, shared this image on its Facebook page on 30 July. The caption of the image says: 'This young man is the older brother of a child who was killed yesterday in the park. He is saying: 'You don't understand! He can't be dead... I was just brushing his hair and he went to buy sweets ... moments ago!'

Pictures of dead and wounded Palestinians are also among the many still images that have been circulated online. Although the use of strong images of wounded civilians covered in blood was controversial among Palestinians, and particularly among journalists, during the second Palestinian intifada of 2000 and the other Israeli offensives against the Gaza strip, such images are still used widely. Image 7.2 is an example of a shocking picture in which blood is a noticeable element. The image shows pain and tragedy and serves the aim of showing how tragic the war is for Palestinian civilians.



Image 7.2: Cardiff PSC published this image on its Facebook page on 11 July. The image caption states: 'End collective punishment! Join us tomorrow, Saturday 12 July p.m., Aneurin Bevan Statue, Queen Street, Cardiff. Photo is documenting the July 2014 attack on Gaza sent to us by Palestinian photographer

Abdel Jawaad Hussain. Please be warned that some of these images are graphic and you may find them upsetting: <http://ow.ly/z3M8B>.

7.5.2 Strong Solidarity Theme

The other theme for which activists used images was the strong solidarity theme. That refers to all the images of the solidarity activities that took place in UK and Irish cities and throughout the world. Most of these images of activities showed a great number of protesters demonstrating in the streets and holding Palestinian flags. The use of such images was classified under the ‘strong solidarity’ theme, because most of these images showed the great number of participants at these demonstrations. Image 7.3 shows an example of the kind of image used on social media sites during the war, showing great numbers of demonstrators protesting against the Israeli offensive in Gaza.

The picture shows thousands of participants in the demonstration that the PSC and its UK-based allies organised in protest over the Israeli offensive in Gaza. PSC estimated the number of participants at more than 150,000, one of the greatest numbers of participants in a protest in solidarity with the Palestinians in Britain.



Image 7.3: Solidarity protest in London 9 August 2014.

Within the strong solidarity theme, the use of invitations in the form of images on national solidarity activities was also popular during the war. Image 7.4 was used by the

IPSC as a call to invite online followers, in particular Ireland-based activists, to participate in local and national activities.



Image 7.4: a call for participation in protests and rallies in solidarity with the Palestinian people in Gaza was posted on the IPSC Facebook page in the first week of the Israeli offensive.

7.5.3 YouTube as a Source of Information

The contents of many video clips, mainly on YouTube, show recorded actions of the Israeli military in Gaza, mainly airstrikes, and the solidarity activities that took place in response to the Israeli war on Gaza, or other critical responses that took place during interviews with the media or in public places. Video 7.1 is an example of a clip that was widely circulated on many of the solidarity groups' Facebook pages and Twitter accounts in the first week of the war. It shows a famous Palestinian–American writer Susan Abu Alhawa in an interview on the Sky News channel on 9 July 2014, in which she criticised the Israeli operation against the Gaza strip.

Similarly, comments by politicians and parliamentarians in support of the Palestinian people and critical of the Israeli strikes on Gaza were also among widely used videos on YouTube. Video 7.2 was broadcast by the Irish political party Sinn Féin's YouTube account and was also circulated by many Ireland-based solidarity groups. It shows Sinn Féin Deputy Leader Mary Lou McDonald TD speaking in the Dáil and criticising the Israeli operation. The description of the clip as published by the party's YouTube

account on 10 July 2014, a few days after the start of the war, was very critical of the Israeli government's actions, and called for the Irish Government 'to use its full diplomatic strength to force the Government of Israel to comply with international law and end the collective punishment against the people of Gaza'.



Video 7.1: Sky News interview of Susan Abu-Alhawa, Palestinian-American author, was among the many YouTube clips that were used intensively in many solidarity groups' social media site accounts. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mofl9iQvZts&feature=youtu.be>



Video 7.2: Video clip of the Sinn Féin Deputy Leader Mary Lou McDonald TD addressing the Dáil over Israeli offensive in Gaza.

7.6 Identified Framing Tasks

I now move from the explanation of the data to the execution of the victim frame through the websites in which specific images, representing the Palestinians, are salient in the movement's web content.

7.6.1 Diagnostic Frame

The language used to describe the Israeli military offensive in Gaza fell into two main categories: critical descriptive language about the Israeli behaviour, which can be further divided into political, legal and human rights discourses; and propositional language on actions to counteract this behaviour. As table 7.1 indicates, most of the phrases used on Twitter accounts from the groups are critical of the Israeli military offensive in Gaza; words and phrases that focus on the Israeli violation of human rights and international law are very noticeable in the solidarity movement's discourse on the Internet.

Pejorative political phrases such as 'coloniser', 'occupation' and 'invasion' were used to describe the nature of the Israeli colonial project, while violations of human rights and international law are widely used to frame the Israeli actions against the Palestinians. Terms such as 'apartheid', 'outlaw state', 'ethnic cleansing', 'war crimes' and 'humanitarian crisis' are popular descriptive terms of Israeli actions. In this context, solidarity groups frame Israel as a colonising occupying power and as a violator of human rights, while the solidarity movement activists see themselves as human rights defenders whose focus is on showing solidarity and support to the people of Palestine in their struggle against the foreign occupier of their lands.

The movement often defined the problem using the diagnostic frame. The solidarity movement considers the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Jerusalem and the control of the Gaza Strip as the main reason for the long-lasting Palestinian–Israeli conflict. They assert that such struggle inspired the creation of the movement in the hope of confronting the occupation and joining the Palestinian people's struggle against it.

Political		Human Rights Violations	
Language	Legal Language	Language	What Can Be Done
	International		
Coloniser	Humanitarian Law	Civilians	Boycott
Invasion	Apartheid State	Humanitarian crisis	Solidarity
Zionism	Outlaw State	Violent Attack	
Occupation	Ethnic Cleansing	Onslaught	
Resistance	Collective Punishment	Brutality	
		Racism	
		War crimes	
		Oppressor	
		Slaughter	
		Death Machine	

Table 7.1: Classification of phrases used by activists on social media sites

The role of regional or global actors in the conflict has not been found in the diagnostic analysis to the same extent in this particular case. While Israel and its actions are presented as responsible for the outbreak of the war and the human crisis that followed it, there was unusually limited framing of global political actors as partners with Israeli in its oppression policies. Previous studies that had analysed Moroccan social movements and their framing of the 2009 Gaza conflict (Ben Moussa, 2013) suggested that there were two frames that positioned the war within the larger global context: the ‘war on Islam’ frame, which Islamic-oriented websites adopted, and the ‘global imperialism’ frame enforced by leftist groups’ websites.

The absence of traditional frames that indicated the global political powers’ complicity with Israeli policies is not due to a change in the movement’s perception of the conflict, which is that the unconditional support of Israel from the official west, and particularly the USA, is among the many reasons why Israel continues to oppress the Palestinians. Rather, it is due to the tendency of the movement to introduce contextual frames that focus on the particular crisis of the time, so that strategic framing is overshadowed by time and context framing in which human loss is highlighted.

7.6.2 Prognostic Frame

Calls for adopting BDS are growing among mainstream solidarity groups globally, including UK- and Ireland-based groups. BDS is seen by the solidarity movement as an effective response to Israel and as a practical measure through which sympathisers and pro-Palestinian activists around the globe can contribute to the Palestinian struggle for independence.

Pro-Palestine activists see BDS as a useful measure to pressurise Israel to end the occupation of Palestinian land and comply with international laws, as well as a method that can be applied by the public, without having to wait for official political governmental actions. Raymond Deane, a Dublin-based artist and activist who is affiliated to the IPSC, has stressed the importance of showing ‘the complicity of our own politicians in perpetuating the Israeli occupation and the Importance of BDS’ (Written communication 2 March, 2014).

Although news and descriptions of Israeli actions against the Palestinians occupy the majority of the solidarity movement’s online content, chart 7.1 shows that the proposed responses to such acts by activists occupy a quarter. BDS, along with other forms of regular solidarity activities, is the main proposed response to Israeli policies. As the situation on the ground escalated, solidarity groups’ Twitter feeds were shown to advocate BDS as a necessary response. The BDS is therefore the current prognostic frame through which the movement aims at expanding nationally on all levels.

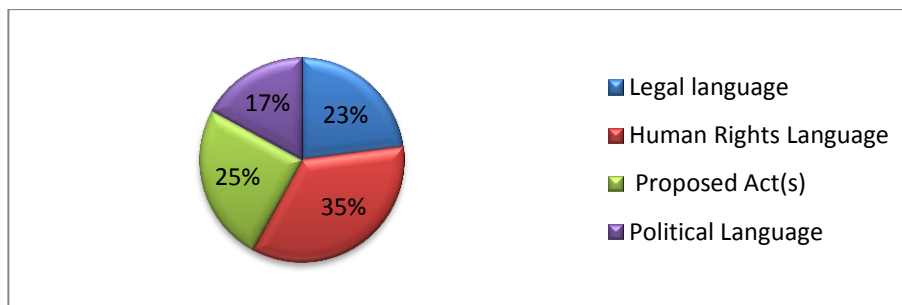


Chart 7.1: Human rights language, political and legal terms make up 75 per cent of the solidarity movement’s online discourse, while proposed solidarity actions such as BDS make up 25 per cent of the content.

7.6.3 Motivational Frame

Terms used in framing the conflict in general, including daily stories during the war, suggest that solidarity activists remain adherents to the human rights discourse.

Although most of the content sampled during the selected periods was dedicated to informing followers about the situation in Gaza, a great deal of content was also aimed at informing audiences about Israeli violations of human rights and asking them to join solidarity events. The massive demonstration which took place in London on 9 August 2014, for example, was a clear example of motivational framing, with solidarity groups asking followers and supporters to participate in organised activities, in collaboration with other local grassroots movements, on the basis of the human rights cause.

The adoption of a human rights discourse, rather than a religious or ethnically driven discourse, serves two purposes. First, by adopting a language that criticises Israeli policies as violating the Palestinian people's human rights, the solidarity movement would be able to draw more attention to this cause in the Irish and UK context, since the human rights element receives more attention from the public.

Second, defending the human rights of the Palestinian people is an acceptable motive for activists' involvement in the solidarity campaigns. Landy (2013) suggests that:

in view of the ubiquity of human rights arguments by the wider Palestine Solidarity Movement, and similar forces operating on this movement (the need to speak to the public in an 'acceptable language', to frame movement enemies, to justify one's own involvement, etc.), it appears that a similar process of construction and contention may obtain for these activists as well.

(2013, p. 424)

An emphasis on the human rights of the Palestinians that the movement is defending is a shared one, and resonates among involved activists and groups. The Manchester-based pro-Palestine activist Kajsa emphasises that 'freedom, justice and human rights for Palestine: activism is a way to achieve that by applying pressure on our governments

and advocating the right message' is the main goal of solidarity groups (Written communication, 5 December 2013).

Framing the conflict only as a human rights matter, without clearly focusing on the political rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of resisting the Israeli occupation, may have adverse implications on the foreign public's understanding of the conflict. Nevertheless, focusing on framing the conflict through the human rights issue is important for alliance-building purposes.

For the solidarity movement's leaders, it is crucial to engage in collaboration with local social and political actors to build a supportive front for the Palestinian cause in the UK and Ireland. In that effort, having a widely appealing discourse such as the human rights discourse would encourage those actors, such as unions, the anti-war movement etc., to join the efforts of the solidarity movement and adopt their strategies, including supporting the BDS call.

That is not to dismiss the notion that suggests that self-determination, independence and living in security are not human rights in the larger definition of these rights. The supportive discourse for Palestine that appears highly framed on the web highlights the Israeli violations more than the Palestinian political resistance and rebellion in the face of these violations.

Based on this, it is suggested here that the solidarity movement's strategy of adopting human rights discourse as a main pillar would serve alliance-building purposes well, and that adhering to a human rights discourse should be seen as a motivational frame for the movement's activists and supporters, as well as for other local allies.

7.7 Discussion

This chapter provides an explanation of the major solidarity groups' approach to mediating Palestine during the Israeli assault on the Gaza Strip in the summer of 2014. Examination of the chapter's case study is centred on elements of mediating Palestine on the web during crisis, in particular modes of representation through text and image, and associated frames. In doing so, the inquiry specifies particular ways of representing Palestinian victimhood online which is better understood through studying how the victim frame is reinforced by the movement's contents online.

This chapter provides an understanding of the solidarity movement's online advocacy that attempts to counter the mainstream media outlets mediation of the conflict and the biased coverage of the war that this provides. The study sheds light on the movement's engagement in wider online global communities that produce narratives from a Palestinian perspective, and a different perception of the Palestinian resistance during the war from the Palestinian popular voices on the web.

The work bridges two fields of analysis – media and communication, through mediation, and social movements, through framing tasks analysis. The justification of combining two seemingly unrelated analytical approaches lies in the nature of the socially structured case study. The solidarity movement is analysed as a collective action movement, and an examination of frame building was essential to better understand the mediation process.

The chapter starts by laying out a brief summary of the war, particularly its reflections on the web, before proceeding to provide a working definition of the mediation process that is utilised in the analysis. The contents of solidarity groups' Facebook pages and Twitter accounts are examined separately, followed by the three frames.

Contemporary media that create channels which social movements can use to communicate, as well as for organising and mobilising (Gerbaudo, 2012), are found to serve the solidarity movement locally and globally. New media, particularly online media, assist the movement's leading coordinators locally in the process of coordinating and galvanising collective action. They also contribute to the movement's engagement with wider international solidarity groups in producing, sharing and advocating contents

that narrate the conflict, the war and the Palestinian sufferings. More than that, the online media provide a stage for creating an information balance, in that they facilitate challenges to mass media misrepresentation and biased coverage.

In their recent work, Trottier and Fuchs (2015) provide a broader argument, in which they consider social media as an arena for the demonstration of contradictory powers. They argue that social movements that rely on knowledge and communication use alternative media as a necessity to overcome their limited access to the traditional state-run and corporate media that portray and frame social movements negatively.

What can be learned from this case is that new media, particularly the Internet and its social media sites, represent a sizable weapon for political grassroots movements that is being used in a continuous struggle over narration dominance and information power.

The second level of analysis provided in this chapter addresses the mediation of a Palestinian narrative. The analysed mediated contents in this chapter indicate that the priority of solidarity groups was to provide alternative sources of information about the war to those of the mainstream media. The news sources that the solidarity groups referred to narrated the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, in particular the recent war on Gaza, in a way that contrasted with the western mainstream media narrative.

Not only did news about Gaza and solidarity actions occupy a huge percentage of the online content that addressed the war – in particular the groups’ websites and alternative news websites that cover the conflict (see graphs 7.4 and 7.5) – but the increasing activity online also resulted in widely promoting the issue of mainstream media bias and contributed to organising online noise around this issue. It was not surprising to see the victim frame, constituted of language on human rights and international law, putting the conflict into the category of human made tragedy, and also justifying actions to challenge the Israeli approach through advocating the BDS as acceptable, democratic and non-violent response.

In this chapter case study, the solidarity groups’ diagnostic framing of the Israeli offensive in Gaza presents it as a violation of international laws. This supports the movement’s strategy of exposing Israeli violations of human rights and presenting them

to the public from an international law perspective. The active advocacy of the BDS is seen as a responsive and effective strategy. The analysis suggests that, in crisis, solidarity activists increase their calls for both a long-term strategy to counter Israeli actions through the BDS and short-term action in the form of demonstrations as a direct response to Israeli military action in Palestine.

There is a direct correlation between the language used, in this case, on human rights, and the motivational task which is to motivate participants – mainly the online audience – through presenting the conflict as one in which indigenous victims are being oppressed and are in need of global solidarity and urgent action.

Representation of the vulnerability of the unarmed Palestinians in Gaza who are being subjected to Israeli military attacks complies with the movement's traditional representation of Palestinians as victims, in that it focuses on presenting the Israeli policies as violating Palestinians human rights and seeing BDS as an effective response that the citizens of the world should endorse.

Promoting the victim frame during crisis not only contributes to providing an alternative narrative to the one the mainstream media adopts, and promotes alliance building in local contexts, but can also easily appeal to western public opinion. Landy (2013) discussed the solidarity movement's human rights discourse as an 'acceptable language'.

However, to have too great a focus on the human rights angle of the conflict, without considering the political context of the struggle, could have implications for limiting the presentation of the conflict by using one angle within a sole frame. That is to say, the solidarity movement's online content exposed the Israeli violations of the Palestinian people's human rights, yet it stopped short of re-framing it as a political struggle for independence and self-determination, in which resistance would be a legitimate tool for the Palestinians to use to achieve their goal.

In this matter, the different perceptions of resistance from the Palestinian factions in Gaza between popular Palestinians voices, especially the youth online, and the West-based solidarity groups was very noticeable. While the former openly supported

resistance, despite its modest effect, the latter chose to focus solely on the human tragedy in Gaza and avoided any glorifying of this resistance. This was for many reasons, including the desire to avoid misrepresenting the conflict to non-familiar audiences as a struggle between two equally equipped parties.

Chapter 8: Discussion and Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

In its broader dimension, this research project studied the Palestine Solidarity Movement from the perspectives of communication and collective action in relation to the influences of online media on the movement's activism in Ireland and the UK. It is concerned with three of the elements of the communication process, namely the sender, the message and the medium, and their relation to the movement's collective actions. The inquiry studied the movement's use of online tools, through examining it in relation to internal networking and collaborative relations with allies, the rise in the use of non-traditional frames that provided the different perspectives of solidarity actors on the web, collaborative lobbying campaigns and mediating Palestine through the movement's online activism in times of crisis.

In its analytical approach, this thesis captures the solidarity movement from several perspectives. First it covers the social movement aspect through analysis of the networks of collaboration that depend extensively on networking with similar groups and their branches in the same geographical context, and also collaboration with allies to enlarge alliance circles. It also touches on the actual forms of activism that take place on the Internet and how the technology-generated online world affects the structure of social actors' organisations.

The research also addresses the rise of the resistance frame within a movement that traditionally focused on the victim frame in its approach to presenting the Palestinian case for Western contexts, and the reasons that contributed to it. Importantly, the research covered the mediation of Palestine, and its representation on the World Wide Web by the growing solidarity movement in Ireland and the UK.

This enquiry departed from existing research that had studied the impact of new media communication on the collective action of contemporary grassroots and social movements. With a particular focus on the use of Facebook and Twitter, partially in chapters four to seven, the research examined the movement as a unique case study that

had not been sufficiently studied in the media, social movement and Palestinian studies research fields.

Among debates on the new media's impact on the dynamics of collective action, particularly in the domains of organising and mobilising, two points of view can be noted. The debate is divided between those who see a positive influence of new media on the organising and mobilising strategies of movements (Castells 2012; Shirky 2008), and those who minimise the impact of social media on mobilising, political participation and informing (Gladwell 2010; Chomsky 2015).

This research looks at this subject differently. It acknowledges the role the Internet plays in influencing methods of communication for advocating, organising and mobilising, as well as for informing. However, it goes beyond identifying the positive or negative aspects of such utilisation of new media in fostering contemporary collective action and participation, as it studies the Internet as a place for mediating favourable narratives, a venue for reinforcing networks that were established face-to-face and a means of engaging the constituency through online lobbying.

This chapter summarises the main discussion of the thesis, including the main reported findings, analysis and argument. It consists of two sections: the first contains a general discussion of the findings and constructs the argument; the second consists of conclusions and recommendations for further research.

The thesis is in two main sections. The theoretical, methodological and historical contexts are explained in the first three chapters. Chapters four to seven provided an empirical examination of the movement's incorporation of the Internet in internal networking and collaboration with allies in civil society, the production and deployment of adopted frames, the executing of lobbying campaigns and the mediating of Palestine in times of military escalation. To demonstrate this, the movement's campaigns were examined through three cases: the supportive campaign for the Palestinian prisoners' hunger strike in 2012, national and transnational lobbying collaboration in 2013 and the Israeli war in Gaza in 2014.

The dissertation's analysis and argument respond to the main research question which is centred around the influence of the Internet and social media on the movement's structure of communication for advocacy, awareness-raising, mobilising, maintaining collective action, and creating local and transnational networks and on how Palestine is mediated online by the movement. It consists of detailed explanation, reporting and analysis of the findings and the thesis arguments that respond to the research questions.

8.2 Discussion

8.2.1 The Movement's Online Activism

Contribution of the Presence on the Internet

The movement's presence on the Internet, especially on Facebook and Twitter, is increasingly being developed and maintained for the purposes of informing and organising, and these interactive online platforms proved to be well used by the movement's main actors in their daily activism for Palestine. They are mainly used for sharing political news from Palestinian perspectives to support the movement's mission of countering the Israeli narratives, challenging mainstream media coverage and producing favourable narratives. The use of social media also serves the movement's organisation, mainly through informing potential activists about collective actions, and reporting back successful solidarity activities, including BDS campaign successes locally and internationally.

One of the strategic advantages of the use of Internet-mediated platforms is their ability to constantly connect solidarity groups with their associates and active members. Also, the movement's presence on the Internet supports its communication goals of bringing about changes in public opinion towards the conflict, through the daily sharing of news about political developments in Palestine.

However, the nature of these social media sites – which are constructed through the interests of online users and a minor level of networking with other social and political movements in cyberspace, as will be demonstrated later – contributes to limiting the movement's online activists from reaching wider audiences. That is to say that, although content is continually published online, it is read, shared and consumed by a semi-closed

circle of already supportive familiar users, who follow the groups' accounts on social media because of their existing interest in the solidarity movement's work and the conflict. It does not reach a new audience.

Nevertheless, the growing number of active solidarity groups that have a presence on the web contributes to a growth in the global solidarity movement. This results in the construction of online communities in which pro-Palestinian online users from different parts of the world and from different parts of the spectrum of society engage in the exchange of information, ideas, news, opinions and other online contents related to the Palestinian struggle.

These vibrant online communities often combine efforts on the web in two main areas: first, shedding light on contemporary issues related to Palestinian living conditions under Israeli policies; second, challenging mainstream media coverage through organised and non-organised campaigns of criticism of their news coverage of the conflict.

Through the constant publishing of stories from popular alternative media and non-mainstream media publications that focus on the hardships of Palestinian families and on children, women and men as victims of Israeli policies and military actions, and are accompanied by images that clearly show Palestinians as victimised, that the solidarity movement hopes to convey the message that the mainstream media coverage of the conflict does not show the reality of living under Israeli occupation.

As a result, systematic but limited work is being done to show the limitation of the approach of the large media corporations to covering the conflict. Leading solidarity groups are now encouraging their online followers to contact local and national media outlets in the UK to complain about their coverage of the conflict. Other online initiatives are dedicated to confronting the suggested media bias by regularly analysing the BBC news, for example, and publishing reports online that point out areas of bias.

Criticism of the mainstream media centres of their lack of a provision of the historical context when covering the news of the conflict (Philo and Berry, 2011). They are accused of largely undermining the reality of the occupation and portraying the struggle

as a conflict between two equally equipped powers, or framing the Palestinian resistance to the Israeli military occupation as a form of terrorism. Internet platforms, in this regard, provide an arena for the movement's supporters to use for disseminating pro-Palestinian narratives that challenge mainstream media narratives.

Another important contribution of the movement's online presence is being engaged with Palestinians living in Palestine or in exile. The Internet not only facilitates building connections among Palestinians and their supporters around the globe, but it also introduced many local Palestinian voices and activists to the external world, including international solidarity activists.

Despite the modest Palestinian involvement in the organised solidarity structure, the presence of Palestinians at conferences, lectures, and public speaking events organised by solidarity groups is growing. It is hardly credible now for any conference, public speaking event, or meeting organised to discuss the cause not to include a Palestinian speaker. The lack of Palestinian representation in the organisation of solidarity actions had been among the criticisms of the movement's leadership. This is changing now, and more Palestinians, young people, professionals, intellectuals, and academics, as well as the very effective component of Palestinians in exile are participating in collective actions, and their voices are being presented on the web.

This leads to another dimension, in that online media contribute to globalising local Palestinian voices. In this process, the organised presence of solidarity groups on social media sites constantly contribute to the dissemination of Palestinian narratives online through writing and sharing articles, news, images and other visual materials that explain daily life under Israeli control from the Palestinian perspective. In this regard, the data supporting this thesis show in every case – particularly in the case of the hunger strike campaign, and war on Gaza – that the news and analysis appearing on groups' social media accounts carry the Palestinian perspective and narrative. Furthermore, solidarity activists' social media accounts replicate mainstream media news sources from local Palestinian activists; Gazan activists' Twitter accounts were followed and considered as a source of news (Siapera *et al.*, 2015).

Philo and Berry (2011) data came from a survey of British, American and German university students' understanding of the conflict, which showed that traditional media was a main source of news. However, the field research and surveys were conducted in 2001, since when we could detect a shift in which social media competes with traditional media in being a trusted news source.

Another aspect is that online media that comes directly from street activists and witnesses onto social media platforms do not go through the same processes of journalistic news production that takes place in TV stations, newspapers and other traditional media editing rooms. Philo and Berry (2011) argue in their explanation of factors that affect the production and structuring of news of the conflict that:

there is in general a dearth of in-depth, analytic and explanatory material included in news reports. Journalists in our focus groups pointed to the problem in producing a constant flow of news items and to pressure of time. Newsroom discussions do not focus very often on issues of audience comprehension or the overall effect of news programming on public understanding.

(2011, p. 319)

It is not possible to say that social media sites have entirely replaced mainstream media, particularly TV news, as such a conclusion would require further research based on a media comparison approach. However, this should not negate the fact that social media has proved – in this research – to be a viable alternative source of news in which the Palestinian narratives can be found, compared with the limited appearances of the Palestinian story in the mainstream media.

What has been identified here is that the movement's presence on popular interactive online platforms, including high levels of activity on social media sites, is seen as a crucial contribution on two ways. It enables solidarity groups to constantly engage with their supporters, affiliated activists, and larger online communities, for the purposes of informing, organising and mobilising. It contributes to the movement's goal of voicing the Palestinian narrative, and it also facilitates the presentation of the question of

Palestine to large segments of the audience, which traditional offline/on-the-ground activism could not achieve.

Despite this noticeable incorporation of online media in the movement's communication strategies, solidarity groups are still dedicated to information campaigns through traditional face-to-face communication. This usually takes place in the streets of major Irish and UK cities, in the form of weekly – mostly on Saturdays – stalls in city centres or standing near shops that sell Israeli-settlement products to inform shoppers about these products and encourage them to boycott them. Most solidarity groups still act on the ground and consider the Internet as another tool of communication, and not a replacement for direct action.

Pattern of Mobilising Online

The pattern that could be noticed in every day activism for Palestine, particularly during major events and crises, comprises of five steps that characterise online and later offline organising. These five stages are:

- Informing the online audience about the particular crisis or event;
- the formation and publicising of a narrative that usually counters the Israeli narrative, often accompanied by a call for action to respond to the matter;
- informing online followers about the proposed on-the-ground solidarity actions, which are usually organised offline through face-to-face interactions or through private online communication means such as emails;
- the on/offline action itself;
- reporting the action for online followers in the form of news, stories or images in many cases.

The first step consists of updating websites and social media accounts with information, stories, articles and news about the development of events in Palestine, through sharing news stories from alternative online media outlets, i.e. Palestinian, pro-Palestinian or left-oriented online publications. These stories are usually accompanied by comments from the groups' moderators that enforce frame that the Palestinians are victims of Israeli actions.

The second step, which usually takes place very soon afterwards, depending on the development of events in Palestine, points out the importance of taking action to show support for the Palestinian victims and to condemn the Israeli actions.

The third step, which is the process of organising the action, takes place usually in private communication, through emails, phone and face-to-face communications. Except for rare cases, such as the organising annual group meetings or reporting of on-campus activities, which take place within closed groups on Facebook, this crucial step is less noticeable on websites and social media accounts.

The other two phases, the action itself and its reporting online, take up a noticeable proportion of the online content, yet not as significant a proportion as that of reporting and sharing news about the development of events in Palestine. The growth of the mobile phone is enabling street activists to combine action on the street and reporting it on social media. A great number of images of the demonstrations, stalls and vigils that took place during the Israeli war on Gaza in summer 2014 were uploaded and posted on Twitter, for example, directly and live from the action venues.

The role of the Internet has been found to be essential throughout, in particular in the first two stages. Informing and producing a narrative that dismisses the Israeli story and emphasises particular frames that usually consist of the injustice that the Palestinian victims are subjected to are essential for justifying collective action. Once the narrative is adopted and disseminated, it is usual that the next step is the call for action.

That is to say, the stage in which collective action takes place, whether solely on the internet or on the ground, is usually preceded by two stages: informing and calling for action. The speed of going through these stages to reach the actual action varies, depending on external variables. These are related mainly to the impact of the crisis and the development of events in Palestine and usually have to do with the increasing number of victims of an Israeli action.

8.2.2 Structure of Networking and Collaboration with Allies

The examination of the solidarity movement in this thesis, mainly in chapter four, pays considerable attention to the nature, structure and dynamics of networking between different solidarity groups at national and regional levels. It also addresses how collaboration with allies from civil society organisations is constructed, in addition to studying how this form of collaborative activism is reflected on social media sites. It continues the analysis to cover the cold relations of coordination with the Palestinian national movement. In other words, three aspects of collaboration have been discussed within the networking that the movements are engaged with: internal networking among various solidarity organisations and their branches at national levels; alliance building; and relations with the Palestinians.

Before it looks at how solidarity groups rely on Internet-based platforms for establishing and maintaining connections, chapter four introduced the movement as a collective action structure, its main leading players, areas of interest and forms of implemented collective actions.

On internal networking levels, the research findings suggest that networking relations with leading groups in the UK and Ireland are limited to an extent that contradicted the researcher's initial predictions. With campus-based groups, particularly Palestine societies in universities in Scotland and England, there is a constant and close coordination, joint actions, and use of social media for coordinating and mobilising. The non-university groups in the UK and Ireland do not, however, use the high potential of social media for coordinating efforts at regional level.

The ECCP is among the seemingly few channels through which these groups come together in coordination and collective action. This is the body responsible for coordinating the efforts of all Europe-based solidarity groups. Cross-border transnational coordination among main UK- and Ireland-based solidarity actors occurs in a relatively limited number of cases, such as over the EU guidelines on funding Israeli projects within the occupied lands of 1967. Such coordination is organised through the ECCP.

Preference is given to independence in activism work, and internal politics may play a role in limiting coordination among leading groups. Increasing coordination between the leading groups in Ireland and the UK, however, would aid the main solidarity movement's mission to raise awareness and bring about governmental policy change towards Palestine. Such coordination can be brought about through increasing levels of communication, including online, for the coordination of regional lobbying efforts and the production of joint collective actions. This would result in cross borders interaction among British and Irish activists in which each group's activities could be introduced to the online audiences of the others.

The research found that relations with allies from civil society organisations, including unions and academic circles, is still developing. While the leading groups of the movement have good working relations with allies, the cross-organisational collaboration at grass roots levels and among supporters of both parties has yet to improve. The examination of the movement's relations with allies both on-the-ground and on the web suggests that the construction of a broader coalition between the social bases of the movement and those of their allies has not been fully developed, and that is reinforced by the evidence of modest levels of interaction on the Internet.

Although the movement's use of the Internet, including social media sites, is constantly increasing and is noticeably being applied in its daily awareness-raising and mobilising efforts, it has not been able to reach a wider audience through online media, due to lack of cross-movement networking at member level. Throughout the study of campaigns in this research, the absence of participation from other civil society organisations and the very limited joint actions between solidarity groups and allies on the issue of Palestine is very noticeable.

Success in building alliances with local non-state actors and social movements occurs through offline coordination and not through the Internet. Although there is a considerable rise in alliance building with local unions, anti-war groups, non-governmental organisations and civil society on the issue of Palestine, there are noticeable limitations to online networking between solidarity activists and the social bases of their allies.

These limitations are caused by the nature of organisational relations between the movement and its allies. Modest inter-organisational base-level collaboration is reflected in weak networking and online collaboration between the memberships of the solidarity movement and its allies. That is not to say that there is no interaction and interrelations between solidarity groups and other movements' activists. In practice, many activists are engaged in more than one social justice campaign, including the Palestine solidarity movement groups. Alliance building is mainly done at the leadership level, however, which leaves activists not actively engaged in networks of allies.

The same is true of engagement with the movement's contents on the web. Solidarity groups have been focusing mostly on raising awareness among their existing followers and users of their sites. The great bulk of these users are already aware of the conflict's background and details to an extent, as they follow these accounts because they are interested in the work of the solidarity groups in their local area, country or region. Therefore, achieving the goal of reaching uninformed online audiences who are not familiar with the conflict and have been exposed only to the mainstream media perspectives is not very likely to be achieved, in the absence of a wider collaboration with the membership of allies.

For the question of Palestine to be advanced progressively in public opinion and so that more voices would call for different western government approaches in favour of acknowledging the Palestinians' rights of liberation and self-determination a bottom-up movement is vital. Grassroots engagement in changing policies towards Palestine through lobbying and creating pressure on decision makers in the West can be attained through enlarging the number of civil society organisations involved in the solidarity movement.

While social movements, students' groups, political parties, unions and other society components have their own priorities, more engagement with their members would not only create a stronger network of engaged activists for Palestine, but would link the struggle for a free Palestine with other global social justice and equality causes. That would contribute to repositioning Palestine as a symbol for such causes. Further, a better engagement with the membership of civil society organisations would lead to an

improved outcome for the movement's online networking and reach larger social circles in western societies.

Being introduced to other groups' online audiences through networking on social media sites adds value both to spreading knowledge about Palestine and to mobilising for collective action. Raising awareness in Ireland and the UK through reaching new and unfamiliar online audiences would have a large impact on the number of potential participants in future solidarity actions, especially if physical networking also took place. This would have a positive impact on maintaining and increasing the number of the movement's active participants, which would contribute to laying the ground for the visible and sustained social movement that is needed in order to create change in public opinion and in official policies towards Palestine.

While BDS is attracting diverse social groups, mainly on campus and among academic and cultural circles, for it to advance and be able to push towards changing policies towards the conflict, a larger cross-organisational collaboration between the solidarity movement's actors and components of civil society is needed.

The third component examined in relation to the movement's networking and collaborating efforts is the cold relationship with the Palestinian national movement, in particular the PLO. The approach of this thesis took into consideration the context in which the solidarity movement operates and created its networking, collaboration and alliance-building relations. Thus, an understanding of the movement's relationship with the Palestinians and their national movement is an important factor of analysis that sheds light on how the movement perceives the struggle, frames it and therefore mediates Palestine.

Although many solidarity online activists are in constant contact with Palestine-based activists, increasing online connectivity with Palestine-based organisations that are active in a variety of cultural, political, factional, and educational domains is also needed. Many within the solidarity movement question the issue of the modest

Palestinian participation in it, while others argue that the Palestinians should be in charge of the movement.

One of the main forces behind the successes of the BDS call is that it was issued by representatives and organisations of the entire Palestinian civil society. While this represents a close collaboration between the Palestinians and the global solidarity movement, a closer form of relationship that consists of open discussion, coordination, and collaboration is essential for both the national and solidarity movements alike, as well as for the advancement of the Palestinian question internationally.

In principle, by positioning itself as part of the Palestinian national movement not only as a solidarity component but as a partner in the struggle, the solidarity movement would be a vital player that would facilitate the Palestinian national movement by engaging and explaining Palestine to many civil society actors in the West. One of the possible consequences of that would lead the solidarity movement to reposition itself from speaking for the Palestinians to also introducing the Palestinians and assisting their voices to be heard in western societies including in civil society organisations.

On the other hand, the Palestinian national movement, particularly the political leadership, has many problems, among them its lack of interest in re-building bridges with global grassroots movements. As the Palestinian politics shifted after the Oslo Accords towards improving diplomatic relations with as many countries as possible, it slowly moved away from strong relationships with many political, social and liberation movements around the world. However, should the national movement reform itself, and redefine its relations with state and non-state actors, a higher level of collaboration with the solidarity movement would positively contribute to a potential change in the public perception of Palestine.

That is to say, should the PLO re-evaluate its political approach in light of the clear failure of the US-sponsored peace building path, a great deal of attention ought to be allocated to enhancing relations with global grassroots movements, including the global solidarity movement. In this regard, the solidarity movement can play a significant role

in rebuilding and strengthening connections between the national movement and global civil society and grass roots movements.

The more social groups are introduced to the Palestinian narrative and hear Palestinian voices, the more public opinion more widely would be open to realising how Israel has been enjoying support from Western governments despite its constant violation of Palestinian rights.

8.2.3 Framing the Conflict

This inquiry paid considerable attention to the movement's strategic framing through examining the frames deployed during the prisoners' hunger strike campaign, the lobbying on the EU guidelines and the war on Gaza. It identifies both the framing tasks, namely diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framings, and the discursive processes, in particular frame articulation and amplification.

Identifying and examining the framing process of the movement is very relevant to the process of mediation, which is dependent on the movement's perception of the conflict and therefore how it should be represented and framed.

As it stands, solidarity activists pay special attention to highlighting the human rights violations in Palestine, structured through selection and highlighting the victim frame in the process of representing the Palestinians and their cause through texts, images and moving images. Thus these representations are at the heart of a human-rights-oriented discourse that justifies calls for solidarity actions, presented as moral actions in response to injustice.

The findings of this research reaffirm those of previous studies that addressed how the solidarity movement's discourse adhered to the language of human rights, with an emphasis on Israeli violation of international laws and international humanitarian laws, and the implications of these violations for Palestinian human rights. Yet this research has concluded that there are additional purposes in focusing on this aspect of the conflict, which are related to maintaining harmony within the movement; as such human-rights-focused language creates the necessary consensus to attract potential local allies and activists from different political, social and ethnic backgrounds.

The heavily used and embedded language of human rights also plays a major role in the movement's framing process, in particular in putting forward the argument that the Israeli policies are implemented against the Palestinians in violation of international laws, denying the human rights that the Palestinians should enjoy, that is the cause of the problem. By the constant use of this frame, the movement is justifying its call for collective solidarity action.

To emphasise again, among the three components of collective action frames (Gamson, 1992b), injustice is found to be the central concept that is most widely used by pro-Palestine activists as a broad motivational concept to justify and thus promote offline on-the-ground action, including calls for adopting BDS. Constant reference to the unjust life that Palestinians live as a result of Israeli occupation policies has been widely incorporated in the solidarity movement's online language. This frame and its human-rights-associated language serve as the motivational power behind the galvanising of activism efforts.

However, exclusively framing the Palestine cause as a human rights issue without accompanying that with a larger political focus that affirms the Palestinians' aspirations, which are national and political in their nature, could be misinterpreted by audiences who are not familiar with the roots of the cause. It is true that the Palestinians' human rights are violated by the Israeli occupation authorities in all aspects of their lives, and also true that the Palestinians are seeking improvement in their living conditions, but they are looking for this within a political solution that restores their political and national rights of independence and self-determination. To achieve these goals, they have the right, according to international law, to use all means of resistance, be it legal, political, grassroots or military. This concept of focusing on the Palestinians' right to use all forms of resistance is noticeably absent from solidarity movement discourse – except from certain student-led campaigns, as shown in the case of solidarity with political prisoners in Scotland – because of the reasons mentioned before, which are mainly to do with attracting allies and maintaining consensus among all involved activists.

Construction of Non-Traditional Frames

The theme of partnership with the prisoners' struggle was dominant in the student-led campaign in Scotland in solidarity with the Palestinian political prisoners' hunger strike in 2012. This theme served the campaign mission of advocating the prisoners' right to resist their oppressors, resulting in deployment of a 'resistance frame'. Non-traditional frames, such as the resistance frame, appeared and have been largely highlighted during the Scottish student-led campaign in support of the Palestinian political prisoners' hunger strike, examined in chapter five.

Relating the prisoners' hunger strike to the larger resistance environment that characterised the Arab popular movements in the region in 2012, better known as the 'Arab Spring' or 'Arab Revolutions', facilitated the building of a frame that focused on the Palestinians' right of resistance. In doing so, the movement found the regional popular developments as relevant to the prisoners' hunger strike, with both framed as a form of revolt against systems of oppression.

In addition, the nature of hunger strikes as a passive form of resistance, which is welcomed and supported by the Palestinians and their supporters around the globe, contributes to the promoting of this frame on the web. Thus, the use of such a frame in a particular campaign should not be seen as a strategic shift in the movement's discourse towards openly presenting the Palestinians not only as victims but also as resisters.

Other factors that contributed to constructing a resistance frame in this particular campaign are related to the seemingly autonomous campaigning environment that the movement's groups operate within and the nature of open online media that contributes to revealing particular frames in particular ways. Unlike the traditional media which grassroots movements used to voice their messages, such as newspapers, flyers and other printed or broadcast materials, new technologies have provided activists with media for voicing their own messages and perceptions of issues that may not necessarily comply with the traditional lines of the movement that they are part of. Ideas, opinions and points of view on contentious issues are now more available for activists, readers and researchers to read and examine. This means that non-traditional frames were not

absent before, but were not much exposed to the public. With the advancement of ICTs they became more publicly apparent.

The result of the space given to components of larger movements can be seen in this campaign. While the solidarity groups, including those on campus, are working independently, in many cases most of these groups present the question of Palestine as a human rights issue rather than a political one that would consist of presenting the Palestinians as fighters for liberty. The students' campaign in Scotland focused on the suffering of the prisoners as much as it did on their right to resist.

The independence they enjoy, and the available online platforms that enable them to disseminate their message online in any direction they wish, all contributed to building a campaign that praised the Palestinian resistance and connected it to the larger Arab spring, a concept that was absent in the other three cases examined in this research.

8.2.4 Online Lobbying Campaigns

The approach of directly contacting mainstream media, decision makers and parliamentarians on the issue of Palestine is a growing part of the movement's online activism. The Internet is used for lobbying and policy-changing purposes in the form of organised national and transnational lobbying campaigns, contacting parliamentary candidates on the issue of Palestine and collecting signatures on online petitions that address the cause.

As reported and examined in chapter six, the movement's leading groups and supporting activists are increasingly calling for their online audience to engage in action that consists of signing on-line petitions to protest about actions that harm the Palestinian people. Organised parliamentary lobbying campaigns at the UK and European levels were organised and implemented through collaboration among several leading groups.

Chapter six addressed the growing use of online platforms for political participation, advocating the Palestinian cause at parliamentary levels. It analyses three different campaigns: lobbying the European Parliament candidates in the elections of 2014, the annual lobbying days on Palestine in the British Parliament, and lobbying on the European Union guidelines of 2013.

These campaigns by their nature have two important effects on the movement's leading groups and on the Palestinian cause. First, they strengthen the leading solidarity groups' positions as sources of organising, and their mandates as defenders of Palestinian interests. Second, raising the cause of Palestine in parliaments contributes to keeping the cause on the agendas of the representatives of Irish and UK society, especially given the rising political conflicts that are affecting the Middle East and leading to the downgrading of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict on the world's political agenda.

While face-to-face contact with parliamentarians is still part of the leading groups' advocacy efforts, utilising online platforms to complement offline efforts also has an important effect on the number of participating supporters. Through online lobbying actions, the movement is able to galvanise British and Irish citizens who are supportive of the Palestinians' rights, and would be interested in contacting their MPs on Palestine. Thus, providing easy to carry out Internet-based actions to voice their concerns on the living conditions of the Palestinians under Israeli control would facilitate citizens' participation in the lobbying process.

8.2.5 Mediating Palestine

In times of crisis, established online communities that consist of Palestinians and their supporters around the globe become much more dynamic and active than at other times. It is safe to conclude that one of the indirect broad impacts of the heavy use of social media sites is its contribution to building extended cross-border non-organised English-speaking online solidarity communities around the globe in which ideas, news and conversations on Palestine-related matters take place.

The rise of these communities, which can be noticed on social media sites, including Facebook and Twitter, shows that a different approach to mediating Palestine is taking place online, which differs from what the mainstream media provide.

Chapter seven examined the notion of the mediation of Palestine online, through looking at the forms of representation that the movement produced online during the Israeli assault on Gaza in 2014. Through this examination, the chapter looked at how Palestine is presented by its global supporters, and further studies how the mainstream media

narrative is challenged and substituted by a pro-Palestine narrative on the web. The movement in this chapter's case study is analysed from the perspectives of both media and collective action through applying mediation and framing analysis.

Members of emerging and constantly growing online solidarity communities that consist of Palestine-based activists, solidarity activists, journalists and academics are active, especially in times of crisis, in exchanging similar Palestine-related news, pro-Palestine articles, news resources and opinions which are supportive of the Palestinian people. Gaza activists manage to use social media during the war, and alternative media sources; Palestine-based news sources, such as the English version of the Palestine based Maan News agency, as well as the Electronic Intifada publication, have been reliable sources of news for online activists.

Online media not only enriched the structure of the online solidarity communities, but provides interested activists with news from the Palestinian perspective, which they used to disseminate the Palestinian narrative and challenge the opposing narratives.

The Internet, which produced the online activism that is increasingly shaping the organisation of the movement's collective action, is not limited to facilitating internal mobilisation. It advances the movement's position within the information–power equation in relation to the Palestinians' struggle in global arenas. In addition, the steadily growing efforts to confront the Israeli narrative and challenge the bias of the mainstream media is no less of an important influence on the movement's online activism.

However, the tendency to focus on the conflict only from a human rights perspective has led to limited presentation of the political and social differences of Palestinian society. Influenced by one angle of representation that adheres to the oppressor vs. victim doctrine, the movement avoids addressing the different voices within Palestinian society. The lack of presentation of the Palestinian youth's support for resisting the Israeli military during the war on Gaza is a good example of that.

Although it is viable and understandable, the approaches based on advocacy of human rights have implications for mediating Palestine. Among these is the modest

representation of Palestinian cultural identity. Content and material that addresses cultural aspects of Palestine and its people is limited at best. Increasing the proportion of Palestinian cultural content could contribute to the movement's mission to be a voice for the Palestinians in the Irish and UK contexts, and provide the public with the wider understanding of Palestinian society, heritage and culture that is usually absent from mainstream media coverage.

Bridging the gap in presenting Palestine and its people from a cultural perspective will require a better and deeper cooperation and collaboration between Palestinian civil society, including political parties and cultural institutions, and the global solidarity movement.

8.3 Conclusions

In conclusion, the Palestine solidarity movement's communication strategies in the Republic of Ireland and the UK are distinctly dependent on the Internet both internally and externally. As a result, a highly active presence on interactive online platforms is maintained to maintain interaction among activists and supporters, and to facilitate organising, mobilising and implementing solidarity-oriented collective actions. As a result, there are a growing number of online communities in which solidarity activists are active on the web. Their numbers are emerging, and creating connections and activism on the issue of Palestine.

Within this ongoing communication process, which relies on advanced technologies, new opportunities for a wider political engagement are created for many social actors, among them activists of the Palestine solidarity movement in Ireland and the UK. Engaging with parliamentarians through organised lobbying campaigns in which online platforms are used, and similar e-campaigns directed at challenging the coverage by popular media outlets of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict would not only re-affirm the movement's position as a relevant actor on the question of Palestine, but would energise supporters in an effective manner.

The embedding of online communication by collective action movements such as the solidarity movement creates symbolic yet practical advantages. These advantages go

beyond the feasibility of free and cost-effective communication, repositioning these movements within their political contexts as active elements who are in a position of providing information and different perspective on their cause. By that, movements involved in information not only become a noticeable source of information on news, opinions and actions related to the cause, but they also gradually become perceived as credible players, influencing public opinion about the matter under debate. In this regard, one of the achievements of the solidarity movement which the Internet has contributed to is that it is now very much associated with speaking about Palestine in Ireland and Britain.

Despite the importance of the medium within the communication process, the message that defines the movement's purpose and its end-goals remain influential to motivating political participation. For that, the continuous building of favourable motivationally driven frames is among the first noticeable factors when analysing the movement's communication structures.

Just as the Internet-mediated frames provide material for social movement research, they also reveal differences between the various groups within the same movement. The differences in points of view within the movement can now be clearly seen by looking at each campaign separately. But they also point to the changes the Internet has made to the studying of movements. As this study revealed, the affordable free access interactive social media sites not only allow independent groups within a larger movement to execute campaigns that use non-traditional language, as the resistance frame was articulated and amplified by the Scottish students-led campaign, but enable researchers to examine differences in approach and in the approaches of groups from the same movement.

Studying Internet-based communication provides new areas for studying social movements, in particular the collaboration at ordinary member level among allied movements. The existence of networking, collaboration and alliance-building among movement leaders is not enough: such networking has to be reflected online among ordinary members. This member-level collaboration on the web would not only be likely to have a positive influence on each of the causes of the movements involved but

would facilitate the production of a practical master frame that would attract more interested allies.

In a broader sense, the communication practices aided by new technology provide added value to the solidarity movement in its endeavour to create a context for a broader movement which would include local allies and broader civil society to push for change in government policies and change in public opinion towards Palestine and the Palestinian–Israeli political conflict.

8.4 Recommendations

The recommendations in this thesis are centred on suggested areas of research related to the Palestinian cause in relation to advanced ICTs.

Among the several ideas the research considered examining before choosing the solidarity movement as the topic was mediating BDS on the web. The potential influences of communication on the BDS call, its associated campaigns and the debate about it on the Internet is a much needed area of research. Such research would contribute to understanding mediation and advocacy in contemporary cross-border campaigns.

Another angle of study to examine the movement is the question of the resources. Social movement scholars acknowledge that the examination of resources, as well as cultural and political opportunities determine their directions. A study that looks at the movement in comparison of the Israeli State lobbying efforts and PR resources, in particular the Hasbara team remains a viable area of study in this regards.

A new area to extend this enquiry the researcher intends to address in future research work, is the influence that the high consumption of digital media has on political participation, debate and the mediation of ideas among Palestinian youth.

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Appendices

Appendix A Participant Information Sheet

Appendix B Participant Consent Form

Appendix C Interview Questions

Appendix D List of Interviewed Organisations

Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet



Information Sheet

Date:

Title of Project: **Activists' Internet Communities and Cyber Activism: A Study of Constructing Collective Online/Offline Actions and Public Discourse of the Palestine Solidarity Movement in Ireland and UK.'**

Name of Researcher: Shadi Abu-Ayyash

This study aims to explore the political activists' internet communities, and the nature of the political message advocated, online and offline. It also aims to explore the nature of and the similarities between the public discourses of the various Palestine Solidarity Groups.

The study will be carried out through interviews with activists, including university students who are enrolled in organised groups and societies that are active within the Palestine Solidarity Movement in Ireland and UK. It seeks to provide additional knowledge on the methods by which social movements use the internet as a tool for advocacy and lobbying. In particular, the study seeks to provide additional knowledge regarding the transnational pro-Palestine groups' mechanism of activism.

Participation in this interview is voluntary; the participants may decline at any stage and are free to withdraw from the interview at any time without giving a reason and without incurring displeasure or penalty.

The data provided during the recorded interview will be used by the researcher for academic purposes only, which include: publications, exhibitions, publishing on the World Wide Web, and presentations. Nevertheless, if the participant wishes to be anonymous, his/her anonymity will be maintained, as none of the data that will be used from the interview will identify him/her to a third party.

The participant will be given a copy of this information sheet and a signed consent form.

Should you need further details please do not hesitate to contact me at s.abu-ayyash1@nuigalway.ie

Yours,

Shadi Abu-Ayyash

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form



Date:

Consent Form

Title of Project: *Activists' Internet Communities and Cyber Activism: A Study of Constructing Collective Online/Offline Actions and Public Discourse of the Palestine Solidarity Groups in Ireland and Britain.'*

Name of Researcher: Shadi Abu-Ayyash

Please

tick the boxes

- 1. I confirm that I have read the information sheet dated..... for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- 2. I am satisfied that I understand the information provided and have had enough time to consider the information.
- 3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, without my legal rights being affected.
- 4. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant.....Date..... Signature.....

Researcher.....
Signature.....

Date.....

Appendix C: Interview Questions

Interview Questions

Name:

City:

Solidarity group affiliated with:

A- Involvement:

- 1- How did you first know about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?
- 2- Why did you get involved in a solidarity group?
- 3- Do you consider yourself active in solidarity campaigns with Palestinians on a constant basis?

B- Offline Activity:

- 1- Are you aware of any pro-Palestine groups in your local area or your university?
- 2- What type of solidarity activities you or your groups take part of, or organise?
- 3- Do you usually engage in online debate over the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?
- 4- What message(s) you think should the solidarity movement be advocate for on local levels.
- 5- What do you define solidarity groups: social movements, transnational social movements, international advocacy groups...etc.?

C- Online Activity:

- 1- Is your group active on using internet ? have an official website, accounts on social media sites (Facebook, twitter, google+..etc.) YouTube channel?
- 2- Are you aware of any specific discussion forums, Facebook group or other online platforms that is most popular among pro-Palestine activists in Ireland and Britain?
- 3- Does your organisation focus on using internet platform for, contacting activists, or online audience more?
- 4- How useful is the internet in contacting your organisation members, and similar groups? What medium you use the most for this purpose, email or social media sites?

D- Online Content:

- 1- Is there any specific message you or your group uses the internet to advocate. What messages usually your organization online content carry?
- 2- Does the group activity offline affects the online content?
- 3- When posting material on websites, social media pages, do you focus mainly on text, or image or videos?

E- Relations with local, national, and regional organizations:

- 1- Are you aware of any similar local or regional groups?
- 2- How close your relations and coordination with these groups? Do you usually organise activities with other groups?
- 3- How does the internet play a role in strengthening this relation? Or is the offline relation is strong already.

F- Networking internally and externally:

- 1- How do you usually communicate with your group activists (phone, emails, social media)?
- 2- Your allies, local social movements, international?
- 3- How is your Ireland based group relation in terms of networking with the England and Scotland based solidarity groups? Do you have strong, weak relations?
- 4- Do you create your own space of communication? Or follow what's trending? i.e. why use Facebook?

G - Shared Views:

- 1- What do you think the permanent solution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict should be? i.e. do you stand with the one state or two states solutions?
- 2- Do you think that all, most or few of the pro-Palestine solidarity groups that you are involved in or aware of, share same point of views towards the permanent solution?
- 3- Does it matter to you to work with other pro-Palestine activists who have different point of views than yours? Elaborate if you wish.

Appendix D: List of Interviewed Organisations

- In Ireland
 - 1- Dublin-Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign-IPSC-(Face to Face Interview)
2 Interviewees
 - 2- Dublin- Act For Palestine-(Face to Face Interview)
 - 3- Cork- Cork IPSC -(Face to Face Interview)
 - 4- Limerick- Limerick IPSC -(Face to Face Interview)
- In Northern Ireland
 - 1- Derry- Irish/Derry Friends of Palestine- (Face to Face Interview) 2
Interviewees
- In Scotland
 - 2- Edinburgh -Edinburgh University- Edinburgh Students for Justice in
Palestine- SJP -(Face to Face Interview)
 - 3- Glasgow -Glasgow Caledonian University- Students for Palestinian Rights
(Face to Face Interview)
 - 4- Glasgow -Glasgow University Palestine Society-(Face to Face Interview)
- In England
 - 5- London- Palestine Solidarity Campaign UK- (Face to Face Interview)
 - 6- London- King's College London Action Palestine- (Face to Face Interview) 2
Interviewees
 - 7- London- University of Westminster Palestinian Solidarity Society - (Face to
Face Interview)
 - 8- London- Goldsmiths Palestine Campaign- (Face to Face Interview)

- 9- Leeds- Leeds Palestine Solidarity Campaign- (Face to Face Interview) 4 Interviewees
- 10- Manchester - Manchester Palestine Solidarity Campaign (Written Communication through email)
- 11- Brighton - Sussex University Friends of Palestine Society- (Face to Face Interview) 2 Interviewees
- In Wales:
 - 12- Cardiff- Cardiff Palestine Solidarity Campaign- (Face to Face Interview)