Trinity College Dublin

Sociology Department Research Seminar

Palestine Solidarity Movement and Political Advocacy Online

Shadi Abu-Ayyash
Huston School of Film & Digital Media, NUI Galway

Dublin
26 March 2014
Presentation Sections

A. Theoretical Concepts:
   1- Networked Movements
   2- Online Activism
   3- Online Media and Framing

B. Palestine Solidarity Movement in Ireland & the UK
   1- Networking
   2- Online Presence
   3- Cyber Connectivity

D. Cases:
   1- EU Guidelines
   2- Palestinian Prisoner Hunger Strike 2013
   3- War on Gaza 2012
   4- BDS Digitalised
Networked Social Movements & ICTs (Castells)

- Autonomous Horizontal Networks
- Connectivity, Sharing, Togetherness
- Enable Mobilising, Organising, Deciding
- Maintain Communication Channels

Embeddedness in Networks (Diani)

- Collective Action
- Coalitions
- Ties

Social Tools (Shirky)

- Group Collaboration
- Collective Action

Transnational Advocacy Networks (Keck & Sikkink)

- Shared Values
- Common Discourse
- Exchange of Information

Transnational Social Movements (Smith)

- It is cost effective to join transnational coalitions
- Conflict in the global political realm
- Operate in more than two states

National University of Ireland, Galway
@shadi3000
Palestine Solidarity Movement

• Smith (1997, p. 42) defines transnational social movements (TSMOs) as “subset of social movement organisation operating in more than two states.

• Keck and Sikkink (1999) suggest that “transnational advocacy network includes those actors working internationally on an issue, bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchange of information and services”

• 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 name “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).

• For Smith (2002) 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), is also that it is cost effective and provides access to greater resources when transnational social movements join transnational coalitions.

Working definition: Palestine Solidarity Movement is a form of transnational advocacy networks, formed by multiple organisations in different countries that adopt the solidarity with Palestine as a main mission; it is a combination of local, national, regional and international groups, societies and activists led by local citizens, who are active in and outside local universities, with a similar goals of raising awareness among local citizens about the living conditions of the Palestinian people under the Israeli military occupation rule, defending and advocating the Palestinian narrative, implementing campaigns that aim at changing the current situation in Palestine through lobbying local decision makers and members of parliaments as well through endorsing and engaging in the BDS (boycott, sanctions and divestments against Israel) movement.
The leading groups that work on national levels can be classified into active working networks that are operating in the two countries. In the UK there are the Palestine solidarity camping UK (PSC) with its local affiliating groups in many cities in England and Cardiff of Wales, the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign (SPSC) and its local breaches all over Scotland, the Irish Friends of Palestine, formally known by Derry friends of Palestine, a highly active group in Northern Ireland, and the students network, which is made up of all Palestine societies that are active in English and Scottish universities. In Ireland the most wide spread organisation is Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign (IPSC).
**Modes of Action**

**Regular On-going campaigns**

- **Advocating the BDS call**
  - On-Ground: 1. Encouraging shoppers to boycott products of Israeli settlements 2. Supporting BDS motions at campuses and unions
  - Online: 1. Posting news about BDS success stories 2. Lobbying actors, bands & singers not to perform in Israel

- **Raising awareness of the Palestine cause**
  - On-Ground: 1. Encouraging shoppers to boycott products of Israeli settlements 2. Supporting BDS motions at campuses and unions
  - Online: 1. Posting news about BDS success stories 2. Lobbying actors, bands & singers not to perform in Israel
  - On the Internet (groups pages on SMS) Stories about Palestinians living conditions/Israeli military actions in Palestine

**Responding to major events in Palestine (war on Gaza, prisoners hunger strike)**

- **Online:**
  1. Increase in activity on SMS (posting frequently news about the conflict)
  2. Increase of online debate with pro-Israel activists

- **Offline:**
  1. Condemnation of the Israeli actions
  2. Contacting local MPs
  3. Local media (press releases)
  4. Organising demonstrations and protests with allies

National University of Ireland, Galway
@shadi3000
Networks and Movements

- Mellucci argues that movements 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).

- For Diani (2011), “embeddedness in networks affects people’s decisions to engage in collective action....the emergence of collective actors result of coalitions and, more broadly, purposively built ties.” (p, 223)

- 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.

- Castells (2013) argues that networks inside and among movements are formed online and offline, while these networks are formed during offline actions.

- Raine & Wellman (2012) debate that rise of social media changed the media environment; arguing that “networked individuals have new powers to create media and project their voices to more extended audiences that became part of their social worlds.” (p. 13)
Solidarity Movement, Allies and Collaboration

The Solidarity movement has managed to build alliances with similar groups and local social and political movements and lefty groups. However, collaboration between groups is not a daily affair and is not always noticeable. Indeed, major actions take place in response to significant events in Palestine, such as military escalation, or specific seasonal events, such as the UK parliament’s members lobbying day, when many groups joined their efforts into a collective action.

1- Primary Nerve/Major National Campaigns
IPSC, PSC UK, SPSC and their local branches along with the students solidarity network are the most widely spread nationally and constantly active.

2- Sister Groups/Second Layer of Allies
Other groups that are active in field of solidarity and support of Palestine on local levels. They are less equipped, more focused on specific fields of support such as health, education..etc

3- External Allies/ Supporting Actors
Anti-war movement activists and major unions show support to solidarity groups during major events and work as a supporting environment.
Online Activism

• Joyce (2010) defines Digital Activism as an ‘expanding use of digital technologies—mobile phones and Internet-enabled devices, in campaigning for bringing about social and political change.

• Shirky (2008) highlights the significance of “social tools” for collective action and group collaboration: Social tools provide a third alternative: action by loosely structured groups, operating without managerial direction and outside the profit motive.

• For Tarrow (2011) the internet has become a tool for organisers, a message transmitting vehicle, while Shirky (2008) believes that anything that changes the methods by which groups implement things and make them happen will have an impact on the whole of society.

• Castells (2005) argues convincingly that the advancement of ICTs influenced the transformation process of social structure over recent decades. Nevertheless, he suggests that society shapes technology based on its needs and not the opposite.

• Raine & Wellman (2012) sees of the rise of ICTs an opportunity for networked individuals to reach wider audience; using internet and mobile phones they can provide an alternative source of information.

• Kavada (2013) summarises the useful characteristics of the internet for social and political movements in its nature as a transnational, cost effective tool, that provide activists opportunities to broadcast, diffuse information about their causes, avoid reliance on mainstream media, communities building and establishing ties among themselves.

• della Porta, (2013) “...the use of new technology by social movement activists is permeated by specific values related to democratic, high quality, horizontal communication. For this reason it is important to consider the relationships between activists and media as not just instrumental” (p.34)
Online Activism in the Palestinian Context

• In the Palestinian youth context, Aouragh (2008) notes “that internet usage do not only generate local/grassroots political participation, but also generate regional and transnational activism and mobilization”.

• 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.

• “Internet technologies serve as part of the general Palestinian tools, repertoires and tactics of protest. Dissemination of alternative information is one of the most important tools in the competition over audiences (their potential support, to be more precise). Independent journalism gives participants more democratic control over content and representation of news; activists have erected new online sources like Indymedia and blogs.” Aouragh (2008, p.258)

• In his research on peace camp use of the internet and the US Mid-East policy, Marmura (2008) argues that “although the internet technology has clearly became essential to this mobilisation efforts of this project identity, care should be taken not to conflate the Internet's usefulness to Arab/Israeli peaces activists with its potential to alter the American political status quo in their favor.” p. 31
Websites Connectivity
Crawling websites of 20 major groups in Ireland, England and Scotland, using SocSciBot Web crawler & Gephi

National groups are linked to most of local groups websites; while England and Ireland based groups are not linked to each other.
London, Dublin and Edinburgh based groups are in centre of connectivity (being followed) on Twitter
England, Scotland national working groups are highly connected with local groups
On-Campus groups much more active in using Twitter

# Data extracted using NodeXl
Framing and Alternative Narratives

• Tarrow (1998) suggests that “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” (p.112).

• Ó Dochartaigh (2009) concludes 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.” (p. 121)

• From social movements research perspective, in particular, framing processes, Snow and Benford (1988) have argued that movements are active players who are engaged in meaning construction, “movement actors are viewed as signifying agents actively engaged in the production and maintenance of meaning for constituents, antagonists, and bystanders or observers…. collective action frames are action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization (SMO).” (Snow & Benford 2000, p.613-614)

• From media studies 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.” (p.52)
Online Political Discourse

Examining online content of the pro-Palestine groups and their response to:
1) EU guidelines excluding illegal Israeli settlements from EU and member state agreements 2013
2) Palestinians prisoners hunger strike campaign between January and April 2013
3) The Israeli war on Gaza November 2012

- Facebook pages, Twitter accounts, websites
- Nature of content (news, call of on-ground activity, lobbying decision makers)
- Priorities of posted material
- Similarities and differences of used terms and content
- Number of posts related to on-ground /offline activities
- Frequency of used keywords
- Analysis of Language
- Recruitment of image
Language of Solidarity Movement

Landy (2013) writes 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” (p.424).

Hanieh and Ziadah (2010) argue that the Boycott, Divestments and Sanctions –BDS call which adopted an analysis of Israel as an apartheid state, which “had a galvanizing affect on the solidarity movement”, they admit that many North American activists preferred to focus on adopting UN resolutions and international law as a framework of the solidarity movement.

Bakan and Abu-Laban (2009) debate that the effectiveness of such a civil society initiative-BDS-, as a strategy of resistance and cross-border solidarity, can be usefully framed as an anti-racist movement that contests a post-second world war hegemonic construction of state ideology, in which Zionism plays a central role and serves to enforce a racial contract that hides the apartheid-like character of the state of Israel.
Framing Analysis

(Matthes and Kohring, 2008) “Altogether, a frame consists of several frame elements, and each frame element consists of several content analytical variables.”

* Problem definition refers to the variables identifying relevant actors and topics (Bowe et al., 2012)

* Causal attribution describes the causes and reasons given for a problem (Bowe et al., 2012)

* Moral evaluation “refers to a problem’s moral classification (Entman et al., 2009), which can be established explicitly by using evaluative words and terms”. (Ruhrmann et al., 2013)

* Treatment recommendation is a complex element based on how journalists formulate solutions to the problems that they identify (Entman et al., 2009)
Comments on EU new guidelines that exclude illegal Israeli settlements from EU and member state agreements

EU decision on agreements with Israel welcome, but doesn’t go far enough

The National Palestine Solidarity Campaign Ireland warmly welcomed the EU decision reached yesterday that from 2014 any future agreements between Israel and the EU will not cover 'settlements' at ‘peace talks’ cost. Furthermore, according to a senior official quoted in reports, such agreements will not be subject to Israeli qualifications, in writing that the new text that fixed annexed settlements are not part of any:

IPSC Chairman Pat O’Grady said, ‘It’s a good day for all peace-loving nations. The London-based Palestinian Solidarity Campaign Ireland’s rebels love to love peace, and we will push for the rigorous implementation of, and continuous enforcement of, these new guidelines to ensure adherence to them. They cannot be allowed to become simply another set of guidelines that are ignored by both Israel and the EU in the interests of trade and cooperation.’

‘It’s a very good time for the EU to walk the walk when it comes to cracking down on illegal settlement construction in Palestine. They are illegal under international law and there is a very strong case to be made to the European Convention on Human Rights and an EU decision on BDS is a simple way to illustrate how the EU can act against illegal construction and this is not just a matter of EU Goals. It is a matter of EU Goals. It is a matter of EU Goals.

IPSC Chairman Pat O’Grady continued, ‘This is a very good day for all peace-loving nations. The London-based Palestinian Solidarity Campaign Ireland’s rebels love to love peace, and we will push for the rigorous implementation of, and continuous enforcement of, these new guidelines to ensure adherence to them. They cannot be allowed to become simply another set of guidelines that are ignored by both Israel and the EU in the interests of trade and cooperation.’

PSC encourages state-owned companies and included in trade agreements with EU to support BDS. BDS and BDS are BDS and BDS and BDS are BDS and BDS are BDS and BDS are BDS and BDS are BDS and BDS are BDS and BDS are BDS and BDS

BDS focus calling for actions against settlements building Criticism of Israeli policies of building settlements Details of the EU position BDS on BDS PSC lobbying against aiding businesses that operate in Palestine Welcomes new EU action on Israeli settlements

Dublin based group-IPSC

London based group-PSC

National University of Ireland, Galway
@shadi3000
IPSC on EU Guidelines

The Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign tentatively welcomed the EU decision reported yesterday that from 2014 any future agreements between Israel and the European Union will have "unequivocally and explicitly indicate their inapplicability to the territories occupied by Israel in 1967". Furthermore, according to an Israeli official quoted in Haaretz, such agreements will be consequent on Israel recognising "in writing that the West Bank (and East Jerusalem) settlements are not part of Israel".

IPSC Chairperson Martin O’Quigley said, that “after an initial reading of the guidelines, The Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign tentatively welcomes this decision. We sincerely hope, and will push for, the rigorous implementation of, and continuous investigation of compliance with, these new guidelines to ensure Israel adheres to them. They cannot be allowed to become simply another set of guidelines that are ignored by both Israel and the EU in the interests of trade and cooperation.

"It is now past time for the EU to walk the walk when it comes to cracking down on Israel’s settlement colonies in Palestine. They are illegal under international law and their very existence is a war crime under the the Geneva Convention," Mr. O’Quigley said.

Mr. O’Quigley continued: “At the same time, the IPSC recognises that these new rules do not go far enough. It is our understanding that it would theoretically be possible for a company that operates both in the illegal settlements and inside the state of Israel to receive EU funding once it ‘promised’ not to use the funding in the occupied territories. Rather than risk EU funding fraudulently slipping into the settlements, all companies and institutions that operate in the illegal settlements should be excluded from any future agreements with Israel, as they are complicit in ongoing war crimes.”

Mr. O’Quigley drew attention to the Palestinian call for a campaign of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel until it abides by international law. “Indeed, these guidelines raise much larger questions about why any Israeli institutions or companies receive EU funding in the first place. For decades Israel has conducted a brutal military occupation of Palestine, and is responsible for gross human rights abuses and war crimes against the Palestinian people, including the ongoing siege of Gaza.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frame elements</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem definition</td>
<td>Topic: The European Union Decision</td>
<td>EU excluding settlements based projects from funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Topic: Israeli Occupation of the Palestinian Land</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual attribution</td>
<td>Israeli Settlements</td>
<td>Reason behind the EU decision is that settlements building in the West Bank is against international law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral evaluation</td>
<td>Good step, but.. These guidelines” do not go far enough”</td>
<td>This decision is not strong enough</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Treatment recommendation | 1. Rigorous implementation  
                          | 2. Investigation of compliance  
                          | 3. Endorsing BDS               | Strict implementation coupled with observation Should not be ignored by both Israel and the EU |
The Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) welcomes news of new EU guidelines excluding illegal Israeli settlements from EU and member state agreements.

The EU has taken action to limit financial cooperation with illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank. According to press reports, the guidelines set out that cooperation and contracts between the EU, member states and Israel must explicitly exclude Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territory.

Palestine Solidarity Campaign welcomed the news. Sarah Colborne, PSC Director, stated:

“Repeated statements from the EU condemning Israel’s settlement building, and restating their illegality, have simply been thrown into the waste paper bin by Israeli officials.

Palestine Solidarity Campaign has campaigned for years for the European Union to turn their words into policy actions. A year ago last summer, thousands of our members and supporters wrote to their MEP’s demanding that EU programmes stop benefiting Israeli businesses which operate illegally in occupied Palestinian territory.

For example, Ahava – an Israeli company which illegally exploits Palestinian resources – has benefited from EU research funding.

In January this year our members and supporters sent thousands more letters to Catherine Ashton and William Hague, pressing them to ban all financial transactions that support the illegal settlements. It appears that the EU has gone some way into meeting those demands.

For too long the European Union has been all talk and no action. We’ve seen countless statements condemning Israeli settlement expansion as illegal, but then continued financial cooperation at both state and EU level which has financially benefited illegal Israeli settlements.

This guidance is a welcome step, but needs to go much further. It is essential that this is guidance is binding, rather than advisory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frame elements</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem definition</td>
<td>Topic: The European Union Decision</td>
<td>EU excluding settlements based projects from funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Topic: Israeli Occupation of the Palestinian Land</td>
<td>Reason behind the EU decision is that settlements building in the West Bank is against international law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual attribution</td>
<td>Israeli Settlements</td>
<td>For too long the European Union has been all talk and no action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral evaluation</td>
<td>This guidance is a welcome step, but...</td>
<td>For too long the European Union has been all talk and no action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment recommendation</td>
<td>Much further actions needed</td>
<td>- The guidance should be binding, rather than advisory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Strict measurements on complicit companies</td>
<td>- Companies should be excluded from receiving funding if they operate and/or are based there.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity of Groups on SMS during War on Gaza (2012)

- Data were extracted from the selected groups’ Facebook pages and Twitter accounts using NVivo 10 software.

- Material posted only by the group admins were analysed, excluding other content posted by group members/page fans.

- Studied groups are local, national and university based groups, and non-active groups online were excluded form the analysis.

- FB posts were classified into several categories, while analysis of Twitter accounts is based on related hashtags.

- Gaza war case posts were coded and classified into categories: Gaza news, local activities, regular solidarity campaigns.
Content of Ten Solidarity Groups FB Pages During the War on Gaza

Lobbying Media & MPs
- Ireland: 6
- England: 80
- Other: 10

On-Ground Activities (meetings & protests)
- Ireland: 25
- England: 147
- Other: 16

Palestine (Gaza) News
- Ireland: 92
- England: 62
- Scotland: 47

Other Regular Campaigns (BDS, Settlements)
- Ireland: 9
- England: 12
- Other: 1

Legend:
- Ireland
- England
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
Irish and English Groups Activity on Twitter During the War

- Gaza news related tweets
- Tweeting about local events
- Other solidarity campaigns & activities

National University of Ireland, Galway
@shadi3000
Ireland based groups tweeting in support of the Palestinian prisoners hunger strike, using #PalHunger April 2013

Tweets were coded and classified into categories: violation of prisoners rights (human rights); illegality of their imprisonment; political perspective (against the Israeli occupation); call for solidarity activities; or sharing news about the hunger strikers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>IPSC HQ</th>
<th>IPSC Cork</th>
<th>Sadaka</th>
<th>Limerick IPSC</th>
<th>Act for Palestine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prisoners News</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights Violations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-ground Activities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Action</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Advocacy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal Detention</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ireland based groups: Content of Facebook pages during the Palestinian prisoners hunger strike between January and April 2013
Use of image on social media platforms: Palestine news, local activities, sister groups activities, cartoons and informative images
In other words...

1. Networking:
   A. National groups are centre of online connections, they are followed and linked by local groups
   B. Connectivity among same country groups is stronger
   C. Major/National level working groups are much more active online, and the smaller the group, the more it shows interest in organising demos/protests within its local area

2. Language and use of online media:
   A. Groups websites as well as accounts on social media sites are used to narrate the Palestinian side of the story, commenting on events related to the Palestine cause.
   B. Similarities in discourse (similarity in use of text, images that are used online show news of Palestine, local solidarity activities and sister groups activities)

3. Use of Social Media Sites:
   A. FB & Twitter sites are used mainly for sharing news about the central point of attention (Palestine/Gaza/prisoners/settlements)
   B. Second priority comes announcing local events and sharing other (sister) groups activities
   C. Similar language and terms: (attack, occupation, solidarity, human rights, violation of international law)

4. Campaigning:
   A. Level of effort put on lobbying decision makers and local media advocacy is less than other areas of activities; ex: no evidence of organising online campaigns (petitions...)
   B. The online activity level (volume of materials posted) does not represent the effort carried out offline/on-ground
Thank You 😊

Shadi Abu–Ayyash
Huston School of Film & Digital Media,
NUI Galway
shadi.abu–ayyash@nuigalway.ie
http://actdigital.wordpress.com/

@shadi3000