

Palestinian Artists and the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Movement
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Acknowledgements

I found myself in the West Bank-Palestine in May 2010 with a flute and a summer ahead of me, and immediately began searching for a way to spend my time and share my interest in music. I remember entering the parking lot of Edward Said's Music Conservatory in Ramallah and knocking on the door only to find no one on the other side. I began walking back to the main road defeated, when I heard the voice of a woman call out, "May I help you?" She was an instructor at the Music Conservatory, and I cannot recall her name. But I would genuinely like to thank this woman; I would not be writing this study, years later, without her.

The next day, I was in a large yellow van weaving through the congested streets of Ramallah on my way to Birzeit, to begin my first day at the Music Conservatory's summer camp. The Conservatory holds weeklong music camps several times a year, and I was late. The camp was already in day 3 when I arrived but I was welcomed into the group with curious smiles nonetheless. Our instructors mostly came from Europe, and I recall mine in particular being Italian because he threw in Italian between Arabic and English while he ushered us into the room for our afternoon rehearsals. I was placed in the jazz band, where I learned how to improvise and watched as Arabic music instruments like the *oud* and *kanoun* magically weaved between the clarinet and the piano. It was there that I met young and immensely talented Palestinian musicians from all over the Middle East, some of whom I still speak with today and many of whom still continue to produce beautiful music.

My experience at Edward Said's National Music Conservatory summer camp ignited my interest in the ways in which music could be used in Palestine. Two years later, I applied for the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship at the University of North Carolina to research the role and impact of the Arts in the West Bank. I interviewed nearly 50 Palestinian artists all across the West bank and in Jerusalem, and produced a short film based on my research. After that summer, I spent most of my free time listening to the latest songs and keeping up with the newest art exhibition, film screening or theatre show from artists in Palestine and all over the Middle East. With the emergence of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement in recent years, I wanted to delve more into my prior research while learning about the new movement. I returned to Palestine in the summer of 2014 to begin this research for my honors thesis.

This study would not have been possible without the support of many different people. First, I would like to thank my mother, father and brothers. They have always supported my interests and received my ideas with excitement and eagerness to help. I would also like to thank my uncle and his family in the West Bank, for welcoming me on my research trips abroad, helping me navigate through the checkpoints and roadways in the area, and showing me the best places for knafeh in town. To my friends, thank you for having faith in me and urging me to continue. Thank you to Dr. Erica Johnson for your support in the Global Studies thesis course, and to my fellow thesis writers (especially my "thesis buddy", Fareeda Zikry) in the senior class for your help in editing and your continuous enthusiasm and willingness to listen.

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I would also like to thank the Office of Undergraduate Research and Honors Carolina for funding my research trips, and Donna Bickford from the Office of Undergraduate Research for believing in my ideas.

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Any contribution this research makes to the field of Palestinian studies is testament to the support, guidance, and hope I have received from you all.

Introduction

On April 12, 2014, a large crowd shuffled into *Al Kasaba* theatre in the heart of downtown Ramallah, the de facto capital of the occupied West Bank, to welcome an Indian Dance Troupe to occupied Palestine. Leading Palestinian Authority figures, the mayor of Ramallah, and the district governorate of Al-Bireh were among those in the audience waiting for the show to begin when Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement activist Zaid Shuaibi stood up in the theatre and claimed that the show was a violation of the cultural boycott. The dance group had performed in Tel Aviv the previous day, and Zaid argued that the show was therefore a form of normalization. According to BDS activists, Palestinian security forces then beat and arrested Zaid and three other BDS activists. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Culture and the Palestinian Authority, the activists provoked the crowd and incited violence. The incident triggered widespread response from a majority of Palestinian human rights organizations in the occupied territories, as well as statements from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

This event illustrates the varied opinions among Palestinians towards artists coming to perform in Israel (a key component of the boycott movement), and highlights the diversity in opinion regarding the boycott movement in the occupied territories. The question of whether artists asked to perform in Israel through official Israeli state or cultural institution invitation should (a) come to Israel proper and perform in front of Israelis or Israelis and Palestinians and (b) after finishing a performance in Israel, should come to the West Bank, is not simply a meticulous question about preference, but rather invites important questions about representation, location, and the structural positioning/

‘identity’ of Palestinians in Israel and the West Bank. By analyzing the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, I argue that how Palestinian artists follow or do not follow the guidelines of the movement in their cultural production, and how they think others should act towards it, is contingent on several highly political factors related to their geography, their structural positioning within the area surrounding them, and their relation to the Israeli state. These differences in what it means to be Palestinian play out artistically, as I show through the decisions these artists make in regard to the cultural boycott movement. For Palestinian artists, in obvious or indirect ways, the political and cultural aspects of their life do not operate in separate spheres. On the contrary, I show through the lens of the BDS movement that the choices they make in the production and post-production of their art and their thoughts on how they view the art of others is dependent on the politics of their daily lives. In this way, I also show the importance of culture in Palestinian society.

This type of cultural-political synthesis is not an exception for Palestinian resistance. This intersection of the cultural and the political was evident in the Civil Rights movement, when cultural production became a way of creating and solidifying personal and communal identities. Artists articulated new definitions of nation, equality, race and social justice through cultural production-from art exhibitions, to film screenings, theatrical performances, poetry and even fashion choice. For many involved in the civil rights movement, cultural production was fundamental to their movement. Through that cultural production, activists both showed how their identity had been informed by the discriminatory policies of the state, and signified how local racism and disempowerment could be connected to global themes of colonialism and discrimination.

Cultural production became a means of which Civil Rights activists used to assert a political and social identity shared by like-minded people all over the world. The clearest example of this is in the case of the Hospital Workers Union. In 1932, the groups started out as the Pharmacists' Union of Greater New York. Until the late 1950s, the group's members were mostly white. When the union leaders began to focus their attention on service and maintenance workers inside New York City's hospitals, they found a majority black, Caribbean and female workforce that was segregated in dining and recreational sectors and poorly paid. The task of uniting that workforce of black, Caribbean, and Jewish workers to create one of the most powerful unions in the postwar era was achieved not only through emphasizing the commonalities they shared as members of the workforce, but also through cultural production. Activists developed a common culture around activities that included the Negro history and Salute to Freedom celebrations, the union newspaper, 1199 News, soul and salsa dances, union sponsored film(including Madeline Anderson's "I am Somebody" (1969), the first feature-length documentary directed by a black woman) , and the "Gallery 1199", an exhibition space for union workers' art. These cultural activities emphasized that union rights were also civil rights. The union frequently hosted anticolonial writers like South African Dennis Brutus, and featured visits from Martin Luther King, Jr, who linked the situation of union workers to a larger global movement against racism. Art was also a way to access a sense of well-being, as artists from Noah Purifoy in California to Lygia Clark in Brazil understood art as a way to enhance the social/mental ease of their supporters. Creativity and beauty through cultural production thus encouraged a feeling of self-love and individual satisfaction. With the rise of alternative spaces, community exhibitions, and

homegrown galleries, activists brought art to ordinary people without market imperatives, giving them a sense of agency and entitlement over their own narratives. Parallel movements of protest called for black artist access to major museums, to ensure that African Americans were treated equitably and to not only insist that these institutions incorporate black voices, but that they also stop practices that discriminate against them. Although there are important distinctions in the context of both of these resistance movements, at the fundamental level, both groups have been able to utilize art in political ways and must often think of art through a political lens.¹ Art is also central in creating an individual and collective identity in Palestine, and is vital to the representation of Palestine on both local and global levels. The local pressures and influences Palestinian artists have-whether in the West Bank or Israel proper- is therefore evident in the choices they make while producing art and their views on the cultural boycott movement.

The case of Palestinian artists in Israel and the West Bank and the boycott movement answers wider questions about the agency of artists, the power structures in play when determining representation for an occupied people on an international scale, the structural positioning of minority groups in discriminatory states, and the ways in which those minority groups express themselves and the politics of their environment through the decisions they make.

A central component of this study is also understanding the performativity of resistance, or how Palestinian artists resist the forces of discrimination surrounding them through both their art and the decisions they make regarding it. For many of the artists

¹ Carbone, Teresa A. *Witness : Art and Civil Rights in the Sixties*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Brooklyn Museum ;, 2014. Print.

interviewed, their understanding of Palestine is communicated through their art and the choices they make regarding that art on a daily basis. I argue that the decisions Palestinians artists make in the cultural sphere in regard to the cultural boycott are intrinsically tied to the politics of their lives.

Performativity is a term first introduced by Foucault, and applied by Judith Butler to understand how identities are produced and performed. In her theory on gender performativity, Butler characterizes gender as “real only to the extent that it is performed”; in other words, Butler thinks gender is constructed through a series of repetitive acts.² The Palestinian ‘identity’ is created through small actions and moments that determine how a Palestinian views him or herself: the walk through a checkpoint, the scanning of a hand, the subtle or blatant moments of discrimination. The creation of this identity then manifests itself in how a Palestinian makes decisions in the cultural sphere and in regards to the cultural boycott movement.

One example of this is in the challenges Palestinian artists in the West Bank must face. Although this study mostly focuses on Palestinian artists in Israel, Palestinian artists living in the West Bank face their own unique set of challenges. The ability of artists to travel to exhibitions, film festivals, or shows abroad is unpredictable. Khaled Jarrar, a Palestinian artist based in Ramallah, was invited to present his work at the exhibition ‘Here and Elsewhere’, shown at the New Museum in New York City in Fall 2014. Jarrar submitted his award-winning film *Infiltrators* to the exhibit, which follows the challenges Palestinians face attempting to enter Jerusalem from the West Bank. As he made his way from Ramallah to cross into Amman, Jordan for his flight to New York City, Israeli

² Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990. Print.

military forces stopped Jarrar who and told him he would not be able to cross due to ‘security reasons’. Palestinian Artists in the West Bank certainly have the luxury of being able boycott more easily, as they do not face pressures of normalization or funding from Israel. The majority of artists in the West Bank receive funding from European arts organizations or transnational groups, including the United Nations. They do however, as is evident in Jarrar’s case, face constrictions in movement. Furthermore, most Palestinian cultural organizations in the West Bank do support the cultural boycott movement, including the Popular Arts Center in Al Bireh and the Freedom Theatre in Jenin.

In Foucault’s last essays, he goes in detail into what he calls the aesthetics of existence. One of the observations of Foucault’s analytical scheme, along with the idea that identity is produced through material force relations (power), and that individuals are able to resist disciplinary norms, is that the purpose of resistance is found in the pursuit of aesthetic renovation and self-creation. When discussing the role that writing can play in resistance, Foucault writes “[I]t seems to me, that the so-called literature of the self-private diaries, narratives of the self, and so on-cannot be understood unless it is put into the general and very rich framework of these practices of the self”.³ As Nicholas Dungey argues in *Power, Resistance, and the Art of Self-Creation*, Foucault views the use of art as a tool of resistance against the actions of a disciplinary society, and therefore sees writing, critique, and art as weapons the individual uses when engaging with disciplinary power. Scholar Lila Abu-Lughod takes another approach and states that there is a tendency to romanticize resistance, to

³ Dungey, Nicholas. *Franz Kafka and Michel Foucault : Power, Resistance, and the Art of Self-creation*. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2014. Print.

Read all forms of resistance as signs of ineffectiveness of systems of power and of the resilience and creativity of the human spirit in its refusal to be dominated. By reading resistance in this way, we collapse distinctions between forms of resistance and foreclose certain questions about the workings of power.⁴

Abu-Lughod continues in noting that resistance is a “diagnostic of power”, or a way to map social relations and understand the complicated systems of power. Rather than simply interpreting resistance as solely a reaction to the dominant forms of power, acts of resistance, including cultural resistance, should be interpreted as characteristic of the particular historically changing power structures. This moves the discussion beyond ideas of resistance simply being a reaction to the powerful, and of those who resist as simply defining themselves based on those who occupy or exert power over them. As David McDonald argues in his ethnographic account of Palestinian music, *My Voice Is My Weapon*, “if we are to fully move beyond the tendency to romanticize these expressive practices as resistance, it is essential to understand each performative act, each song, poem, dance, gesture, as a tool for understanding the dynamics of power from which it arose”.⁵ In the same way, each decision a Palestinian artist living in Israel or the West Bank makes in accordance with cultural production is inherently tied to the politics and power relations he or she must face. When making decisions regarding the cultural boycott, Palestinian artists in the West Bank and Gaza do not house their opinions in a vacuum. Rather, the decisions they make are evidence of the power structures they are

⁴ Abu-Lughod, Lila. "The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power Through Bedouin Women." *American Ethnologist* (1990): 41-55. *JSTOR*. Web. 3 Mar. 2015.

⁵ McDonald, David A. *My Voice Is My Weapon : Music, Nationalism, and the Poetics of Palestinian Resistance*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013. Print.

coping with in their everyday lives; their art as a resistance tactic arises within particular dynamics of power and structure. Furthermore, how the Israel state through their Brand Israel campaign, the Palestinian Authority, and the BDS movement ‘sell’ their images on a local and global level are also examples of the power structures they must face as representations of different peoples.

Most importantly, all of the themes in the introduction must therefore be analyzed through the battle of *structure vs agency*. What power structures must Palestinian artists cope with-ranging from the Palestinian Authority, Israel, and the BDS movement-that determine how they create their art? In what ways can they enforce their agency as artists? Through exploring the battle between structure vs agency, the centrality of Arts becomes evident in Palestinian artists’ self identity, in their resistance as Palestinians to occupation or discrimination, and to representation of Palestine on the international stage.

For example, the Pittsburgh Mattress Factory was planning the release of the exhibit *Sites of Passage: Walls, Borders & Citizenship* in May 2014, designed as a cultural exchange among Palestinian, Israeli, and American artists. The exhibit was canceled after a social media campaign that accused the three Palestinian artists of violating the normalization guideline in the cultural boycott. Bashar Alhroub, one of the three Palestinian artists in the exhibit told the Pittsburgh City Paper: "The main goal behind our presence and participation in the exhibit was to focus on the rights of the Palestinians, and to expose Israeli racism, occupation, and human-rights violations".⁶ Alhroub went on to say that he withdrew from the exhibit because of a statement on the Mattress Factory website announcing the show that “gave the exhibit a normalizing

⁶ O'Driscoll, Bill. "Art Exhibit Canceled after Dispute over Boycott of Israel." *Pittsburgh City Paper*. Pittsburgh City Paper, 11 June 2014. Web. 18 Apr. 2015.

character, and had no relationship to the basic idea of the exhibit”.⁷ Tavia LaFollete, the curator of the exhibit said to the Pittsburgh City paper that some of the Palestinian artists she initially approached to participate in the exhibit turned her down, with one artist telling her: "You're never going to find anybody." She went on to say that the boycott is "all that they have left. ... They're holding tight to it." Initially, the three Palestinian artists-Bashar Alhroub, Manal Mahamid, and Mohammed Musallem, agreed to participate only because the Israeli and American artists expressed their support of Palestinian rights. Because the Israeli and American artists did express their support, the Palestinian participation in the exhibit would not have been in violation of the cultural boycott. However, when the Mattress Factory released a statement on their website (that Alhroub referenced), indicating a normalizing tone to the exhibit, the artists began to receive pressure to withdraw. Alhroub said to the City Paper that the Mattress Factory statement "could have ruined my reputation in my country, where I am well known as an artist who opposes the position of normalization”.⁸ This example brings up the main question in this study regarding structure vs agency. Of course, I do not bring up this example to imply that the BDS movement is in any way equivalent to the Israeli state as a structure of power in restricting Palestinian artists. Clearly, the goals of the Israeli state and the BDS movement are vastly different. I bring this case up as an example of central theme in this study of the struggle between structures and agency for Palestinian artists. The ways in which Palestinian artists face pressures from various structures reinforce the

⁷ O'Driscoll, Bill. "Art Exhibit Canceled after Dispute over Boycott of Israel." *Pittsburgh City Paper*. Pittsburgh City Paper, 11 June 2014. Web. 18 Apr. 2015.

⁸ Ibid.

centrality of their Art in their individual and collective identity, and in their resistance tactics as Palestinians.

This study is therefore not simply an analysis of what Palestinians think of the guidelines of the BDS movement, but also involves questions about how representation, political geography, and the structural positioning or identity of Palestinians living both in Israel proper and the West Bank affect the decisions those artists make on a daily basis. It is not simply a way to understand decision-making tendencies of Palestinian artists in Israel and the West Bank or their opinions regarding the BDS movement, but also a look into how various socio-political structures and power relations influence artist agency regarding cultural production. As exhibited in multiple interviews conducted with Palestinian artists in the West Bank and Israel, what it means to not only be Palestinian but also to ‘resist’ through art are dependent on particular structures of power, consequence, and unique experience. The voices in this study aim to dispel any notion of a single Palestinian identity, instead presenting their unique viewpoints refracted through the prisms of geography, experience, community relations and local/global power. The very notion of Palestinian must therefore be drastically reconsidered in order to house their stories.

This study also aims to constructively criticize aspects of the BDS movement, not out of disagreement with the goals of the movement, but to analyze the guidelines and procedures in the cultural boycott movement in particular.

Just as the decisions artists make are constituted within a particular environment, the nation itself, Palestine as a place, is a product of “a performativity of ideation framed

within discourses of power and agency”.⁹ The study of cultural production must therefore be analyzed through the similar analytics of studying nationalism: in the same way that the nation is a product of discourses of power and agency, cultural production is made manifest in the interaction and articulation of artists within a particular environment.

⁹ McDonald, David A. *My Voice Is My Weapon : Music, Nationalism, and the Poetics of Palestinian Resistance*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013. Print.

Chapter 1

Methods

The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement was launched and endorsed in 2005 by a majority of Palestinian civil society unions, organizations and political parties. The BDS movement has three main goals: to end Israel's racial discrimination against its Palestinian citizens, to lift the 1967 military occupation of Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem, and to allow for the United Nations-sanctioned right of return to all Palestinians refugees. BDS leaders say that both the larger Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, and the related Cultural and Academic boycott, have been suggested by Palestinian civil society as a nonviolent global effort to alter the status quo.¹⁰

I spent six weeks in the West Bank during summer 2014 interviewing more than thirty Palestinian artists and cultural workers for this study. For all Palestinian artists living in the West Bank, I conducted an in-person interview. Because I hold a Palestinian passport, I was unable to travel to Israel and I conducted all interviews with Palestinian artists living in Israel proper via e-mail, Skype call, or telephone. Interviews in the West Bank became increasingly difficult throughout the summer as well due to the heightened presence of Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) after three Israeli teenagers were allegedly kidnapped and killed by Palestinians in Hebron. Every so often the entire city of Ramallah would be closed down in strike due to the death of a Palestinian in a nearby town or refugee camp. I asked artists to explain their reaction to the initial call for the

¹⁰ Barghouti, Omar. *BDS: Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions: The Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket, 2011. Print.

cultural boycott, then asked if they follow particular guidelines from the cultural boycott (including if they would perform with an Israeli artist, if they have accepted funding from the Israeli state or an Israeli cultural institution, and if they think international artists invited by the Israeli state to perform should be boycotted). A general list of questions is in the appendix. I use pseudonyms for some of the artists' included in this study to protect their identities.

Follow-up questions varied based on responses given by artists. Questions also slightly varied depending on whether the artist interviewed is in charge of a cultural organization or in a position of power, the type of art produced, and the location of the artist (West Bank or Israel).

The BDS campaign operates on two levels: a local level that urges Palestinians in the occupied territories to follow the guidelines of the movement, and an international level whereby Palestinian civil society provides support to solidarity groups who are boycotting Israeli products and academic or cultural institutions tied to the Israeli state.¹¹ This study is mainly focused on the former category of Palestinians living in the West Bank and Israel.

History of the Boycott

There is an extensive history of Palestinians using a cultural and economic boycott in order to resist occupation. Although Palestinian resistance is known in the West for its tactics of armed resistance, the Palestinian Liberation Organization officially rejected armed resistance in 1988 in the process of attempting to form a Palestinian state. Even before that, however, non-violent tactics were an important part of Palestinian

¹¹ "Introducing the BDS Movement." *BDSmovement.net*. N.p., n.d. Web. 08 Oct. 2014.

struggle. One of the longest strikes in Palestinian history is the 1936 general strike, protesting the British Mandate's support for increased Jewish immigration to Palestine. Palestinians specifically boycotted Zionist goods, as opposed to Jewish goods, because Zionists were seen as foreign occupiers who saw the inhabitants as backward, and displaced the local population. On the other hand, Arab Jews had previously lived peacefully in the Ottoman Empire with Arab Christians and Muslims.¹²

During the first Palestinian *intifada* (uprising) from 1987-1993, a general boycott of Israeli goods was enacted, and Palestinians focused on cultivating their own gardens and economics of the home. Local village committees organized in order to provide Palestinians alternative services to the services provided by Israel. Beit Sahour, along with other Palestinian villages, stopped paying taxes to the Israeli state, and the Palestinian Liberation Organization called for government-administrated boycotts by other Arab countries. This boycott also applied to the artistic realm. Before the first intifada, Palestinian artists used Israeli products in their work, buying oil and canvas from Israel. After the first months of the intifada, there was a general call to boycott Israeli products that was not only limited to things that could be bought at grocery stores. Artists started searching for Palestinian products and natural materials to work with, from leather to henna, and even mud.¹³

The intifada lasted until the Oslo Accords were signed in 1993. This agreement led to the recognition of the Palestinian Liberation Organization as the legitimate

¹² Hallward, Maia Carter. *Transnational Activism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. First ed. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

¹³Lakoff, Aaron. "Aaron's Reports." *Cracked and Shrinking Maps: An Interview with Palestinian Artist Suleiman Mansour*. N.p., n.d. Web. 08 Oct. 2014.

governmental representation of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian Liberation organization officially recognized Israel, and although there was an increase in “normalization” of Palestinian-Israeli relations, there was no discussion of the Palestinian refugee right to return, the status of Jerusalem, or the rights of the Palestinian citizens of Israel.¹⁴

The second Palestinian *intifada* began in September 2000 as frustration among Palestinians reached new heights, especially with the failure of the Camp David negotiations in July of the same year. Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza also endured unprecedented levels of violence from the Israeli state in combating the second intifada, and began formulating a new approach to pressuring Israel through non-violent methods.

During the second *intifada*, Palestinians were subjected to tighter restrictions in movement, and Palestinian farmers in particular lost access to their agricultural land with the construction of the Israeli separation barrier. The beginning of construction on the Israeli separation barrier in 2002, and the failure of the international community to halt its expansion despite the issue of the International Court of Justice *Advisory Opinion* gave the boycott movement more momentum. The “Palestinian Call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel” begins with, “One year after the historic Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) which found Israel’s Wall built on occupied

¹⁴ Coleman, Daniel. *Countering Displacements : the Creativity and Resilience of Indigenous and Refugee-ed Peoples*. 1st ed. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2012. Print.

Palestinian territory to be illegal, Israel continues its construction of the colonial Wall with total disregard to the Court's decision."¹⁵

Early calls for a boycott began to appear in 2002 and 2003, and in 2004, an attempt to coordinate these efforts led to the creation of the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI), which issued the call for boycott in 2004. However, an important point to keep in mind, as shown in this section, is that Arabs and Palestinians had been applying boycott methods for decades before the 'official' call for BDS began. A key distinction between the contemporary BDS movement and the efforts of Arab states to boycott Israel from 1948 until the Oslo Process is that the boycott is undertaken by civil society actors, not governments. The current call to boycott Israel was mainly from academics and intellectuals and directed towards boycotting Israeli academic and cultural institutions worldwide.¹⁶ The BDS call was a clear break from the violence of the second *intifada* (Palestinian uprising), and instead affirmed the nonviolent methods of village committees during the first *intifada*. The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee was formed in November 2007 at the first BDS conference in Ramallah in order to better coordinate the campaign.

The Cultural Boycott

In April 2004, The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) called for intellectuals and academics globally to boycott all Israeli

¹⁵ "Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS." *BDSmovement.net*. Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Movement, 9 July 2005. Web. 08 Oct. 2014.

¹⁶ Coleman, Daniel. *Countering Displacements : the Creativity and Resilience of Indigenous and Refugee-ed Peoples*. 1st ed. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2012. Print.

academic and cultural institutions as a way to contribute to the end to the Israeli occupation.

The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) has outlined guidelines for the cultural boycott since that initial call to boycott. The guidelines begin by stating that cultural institutions

“are part and parcel of the ideological and institutional scaffolding of Israel’s regime of occupation, settler-colonialism and apartheid against the Palestinian people. Israeli cultural institutions (including performing art companies, music groups, film organizations, writers’ unions and festivals) have cast their lot with the hegemonic Zionist establishment in Israel, and notwithstanding the efforts of a handful of principled individual artists, writers and filmmakers, these institutions are clearly implicated in supporting, justifying and whitewashing Israel’s occupation and systematic denial of Palestinian rights.”¹⁷

This initial statement charges Israeli cultural institutions with intentionally covering up or ‘whitewashing’ injustices committed by the Israeli state through art. PACBI states that the cultural boycott is not against Israeli artists in particular, but against Israeli cultural groups or institutions funded by the state of Israel and therefore directly tied to the military occupation. Artists who receive state funding are under contract obliged to conform to and oftentimes promote state policies. In an article in the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, the contract between the state and Israeli artists who receive funding from the state was revealed:

¹⁷ "PACBI Guidelines for the International Cultural Boycott of Israel (Revised July 2014)." *Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel*. PACBI, 31 July 2014. Web. 8 Oct. 2014.

“The service provider [in this case, the Israeli artist receiving funding from the state of Israel], undertakes to act faithfully, responsibly and tirelessly to provide the Ministry with the highest professional services. The service provider is aware that the purpose of ordering services from him is to promote the policy interests of the State of Israel via culture and art, including contributing to creating a positive image for Israel.”¹⁸

In other words, the Israeli state, in exchange for the complete funding of trips to cultural and literary events (including round-trip flight, hotel accommodations, food and beverage, land travel in the destination country, and all publicizing for the artist in advance of the performance), expects the artist to comply in contributing to creating an image of Israel consistent with the government’s own portrayal. The cultural sphere and the *hasbara*/propaganda techniques of the state are inextricably tied through the contract and the subsequent Brand Israel campaign. The Israeli government too recognizes the importance of linking the cultural and the political, and launched their campaign shortly after the launch of the BDS movement. The centrality of Arts is patent here as well in how the Israeli state uses dance, music, and visual art of all sorts to portray itself as a flourishing modern democracy.

Brand Israel

The Harold Hartog School of Government and Policy at Tel Aviv University commissioned a ninety-page analysis in 2008 titled ‘The Israel Brand: Nation Marketing Under Constant Conflict’. The author of the paper, Rommey Hassman, introduces three

¹⁸ Laor, Yitzhak. "Putting out a Contract on Art." *Haaretz.com*. Haaretz, 25 July 2008. Web. 08 Oct. 2014.

main steps with which the Israeli government can brand itself: market the nation, create a national communications council, and establish a communications division with the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).¹⁹ The first step was implemented with Israel's 2005 Brand Israel campaign.

In 2009, Arye Mekel, deputy director general for cultural affairs in the Israeli Foreign Affairs Ministry said concerning the Brand Israel Campaign: "We will send well-known novelists and writers overseas, theater companies, exhibits. This way you show Israel's prettier face, so we are not thought of purely in the context of war."²⁰ The Brand Israel campaign was launched in the summer of 2005 when the Prime Minister's Office, the Israeli ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Israeli Ministry of Finance concluded three years of intensive consultation with American marketing executives. Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni appointed Ido Aharoni in charge of the brand-management office and gave him a budget of \$4 million, along with the \$3 million established for *hasbara* (propaganda) and \$11 million for the Ministry of Tourism's promotional efforts in the United States. The Israeli financial daily *Globes* reported in 2010 that the Israeli foreign ministry had allocated one hundred million shekels, or \$26 million to Brand Israel during the coming years. The main goal of Brand Israel was to depict Israel as a haven, a beautiful, fun oasis and technological achievement. The Israeli foreign ministry offered free trips to Israel for architectural writers, as well as food and wine writers. The goal of

¹⁹ Hassman, Rommey. *The Israel Brand: Nation Marketing Under Constant Conflict*. Rep. Tel Aviv University: Harold Hartog School of Government and Policy, 2008. Print.

²⁰ Bronner, Ethan. "Israel Confronts Deeper Isolation In Gaza's Wake." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 18 Mar. 2009. Web. 13 Apr. 2014.

these efforts was to ‘show Americans that there was another Israel behind the gloomy headlines’, as Gary Rosenblatt of *Jewish Week* added.²¹

The Israeli government also recruited commercial Israeli television to seek alternative messengers for the new idea of Israel through a new reality show called *The Ambassador*. The winner of the thirteen-week elimination contest won a job with ‘Israel at Heart’ a Zionist advocacy group. Furthermore, the Ministry of Tourism took Brand Israel one step further in 2009 when it produced maps of a border-free Israel without lines designating a separate Gaza, West Bank, or Syria’s former Golan Heights.²²

In Peter Beinart’s 2010 article in *New York Review of Books*, he attributed the distancing of Jews in the United States from Israel to not wanting to be identified with the policies of Israeli occupation.²³ The Jewish Agency for Israel in alliance with the think tank the Reut Institute continued to push the Brand Israel Campaign through 2010, when local Israeli academics were recruited in the effort. Bar-Ilan University joined the initiative first, and Tel Aviv University was recruited after. The main role for the academy in the campaign was to explain why Israel was still delegitimized in 2010. Previous heads of security services and ex-generals now working in academia or in semi-academic institutions were the first to produce answers. The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center stated that anti-Zionists and anti-Semites in conjunction with radical Islam are behind the negative perceptions of Israel on a global level. The

²¹ Schulman, Sarah. A Documentary Guide to “Brand Israel” and the Art of Pinkwashing’, Mondoweiss. 30 November 2011.

²² Pappé, Ilan. *The Idea of Israel : a History of Power and Knowledge*. London ;New York: Verso, 2014. Print.

²³ Beinart, Peter. "The Failure of the American Jewish Establishment by Peter Beinart." *The Failure of the American Jewish Establishment by Peter Beinart*. The New York Review of Books, 10 June 2010. Web. 08 Apr. 2014.

Israeli deputy foreign minister called for a 'counter web made of Jewish and non-Jewish NGOs and academic institutions that would join forces in the front against the de-legitimization and describe the reality in the world as it really is'.²⁴

By 2011, millions were invested by the Israeli government in sending young high school graduates to market a Western Israel. Bloggers, and Twitter and Facebook users began to work around the clock to respond to BDS supporters.²⁵ Brand Israel was in full swing, and the Israeli government would begin to enlist assistance from the cultural institutions and artists of the State.

In 2010, the Israeli minister of culture and sport Limor Livnat, introduced a national award for Zionist-oriented art. Eligible art for the contest had to be a piece that reflected Zionism, the history of the Zionist movement, Zionist values, or the return of the Jewish people to an ancient homeland. The award would be given in all cultural fields, including performing arts, cinema and plastic arts, the minister said, 'in a bid to make it clear that we are against boycotts and in favor of Zionist culture'. Noa Wertheim, an Israeli choreographer, won the award for her piece titled *The Birth of the Phoenix*. Wertheim highlighted the connections between man and his environment in her piece, a common theme in Zionism. Although Zionism is not the main theme in the piece, the artist was willing to allow the piece to be characterized in this way as she won 50,000 Israeli *shekels* as part of the award.²⁶

²⁴ Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs press report, 21 October 2012, gov.il

²⁵ Dangot, Eitan. 'Strategies for countering Delegitimisation and for Shaping Public Perceptions', panel discussion. Countering Assaults on Israel's Legitimacy, The S. Daniel Abraham Center for Strategic Dialogue, Netanya Academic College, 16 April 2012.

²⁶ Hasson, Nir. "Israel Culture Ministry Offers Prize for 'Zionist-oriented' Art." *Haaretz.com*. Haaretz, 6 Oct. 2011. Web. 09 Apr. 2014.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also asked every Israeli artist, acting and dancing group to include a component of Brand Israel in their shows. The Israeli Batsheva dance tour was openly proclaimed by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs as part of the Brand Israel campaign and the dancers of Batsheva as ‘the best global ambassadors of Israel’.²⁷

Furthermore, in a February 2011 Knesset meeting, Knesset member Ronit Tirosh convened a discussion in the Committee on Education, Culture, and Sport about convincing hesitant artists to perform in Israel. Israeli concert promoter Shuki Weiss was invited to the Knesset Meeting after several last minute concert cancellations from bands scheduled to perform in Israel. Artists like Elvis Costello joining the cultural boycott movement and refusing to perform in Israel meant promoters like Weiss losing thousands of dollars. Weiss called on the state to intervene. Ronit Tirosh suggested that Weiss be compensated with some form of state insurance or supervision. The other idea suggested was to intensify the *hasbara*, or officially sanctioned propaganda, on social media sites to encourage performers to remain committed to performing in Israel.²⁸

International artists are also tied into the Israeli political sphere. For the 2012 Madonna concert in Israel, a spokeswoman from the Tourism ministry Shira Koa said the ministry agreed with concert producers that the event would be used to promote Israel as a peaceful tourism spot. Recognizing that Madonna is internationally known, the ministry authorized an agreement with concert producers stating that they would give the ministry concert video and still footage of the singer during her visits to tourist sites in Israel as

²⁷ Pfeffer, Anshel. "Protesters Disrupt Israel's Batsheva Dance Troupe at Edinburgh Festival, but the Show Goes on." *Haaretz.com*. Haaretz, 31 Aug. 2012. Web. 09 Apr. 2014.

²⁸ Blumenthal, Max. "News from Chelm: Knesset Discusses Ways to Pressure Performers Not to Cancel Concerts in Israel." *Max Blumenthal*. 1 Feb. 2011. Web. 13 Apr. 2014.

well as during her concert to be used in international marketing campaigns. The contract also allowed for four displays at the concert supplied by the ministry that promoted Israel, targeting thousands of tourists coming for the concert.

PACBI Guidelines

From the onset, the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, or PACBI highlighted this connection between the state of Israel and cultural institutions within the state. The Palestinian cultural boycott guidelines apply in the following cases for the international community and for Palestinian artists living in the West Bank²⁹ :

- (1) As a general overriding rule, Israeli cultural institutions, unless proven otherwise, are complicit in maintaining the Israeli occupation and denial of basic Palestinian rights, whether through their silence or actual involvement in justifying, whitewashing or otherwise deliberately diverting attention from Israel's violations of international law and human rights.
- (2) A cultural product is boycottable if it is commissioned by an official Israeli body or non-Israeli institution that serves Brand Israel or similar propaganda purposes
- (3) A cultural event/activity is boycottable if it is partially or fully sponsored by an official Israeli body or a complicit institution
- (4) Normalization Projects are boycottable.
- (5) Fact-finding missions and study tours that receive funding from Israel, its complicit institutions, or its international lobby groups are subject to the boycott.

²⁹ "PACBI Guidelines for the International Cultural Boycott of Israel (Revised July 2014)." *Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel*. PACBI, 31 July 2014. Web. 8 Oct. 2014.

When I asked co-founder of the BDS movement Omar Barghouti about the process in which a cultural boycott against a particular artist or product is launched, he answered by stating that the process happened through discussions and pressure from PACBI. Once PACBI committee members decided a particular event is boycottable, they would elicit the help of the global BDS network to place pressure on an artist, for example, to not perform in Israel. However, among some Palestinians I spoke to on the ground, this strategy of deciding who or what to boycott was met with negativity in that it did not begin from the ground up. Some categorized the BDS movement as an elitist movement that did not take into account the opinions of all Palestinians on the ground when making decisions.

Chapter 2

The *Al Kasaba* Incident

The third guideline of the BDS movement, urging the boycott of events at least partially sponsored by the Israeli government, was publically challenged last year in the West Bank. In the beginning of this report, I referenced an April 2014 Indian dance group performance at *Al-Kasaba* theatre in Ramallah. There are several actors involved in the incident at Al Kasaba, all acting within the framework of their own experiences that afternoon at Al Kasaba and afterword in responding to the event. After a crowd had settled into the *Al-Kasaba* theatre in downtown Ramallah in April 2014 to watch an Indian dance troupe perform, BDS activist and organizer Zaid Shuaibi stood up in the theatre and argued that the show was a form of normalization. Because the dance group had performed in Israel the previous day by invitation from the Israeli government (and therefore violating the call by the BDS movement in regards to the cultural boycott), Shuaibi argues to the crowd that the dance group was perpetuating normalization.

According to the official BDS account of the incident, Palestinian security forces in both civilian clothing and police attire beat four BDS activists. One of the Palestinian BDS activists arrested described the scene:

Some people were listening [to Zaid speak] and some were arguing... You know, people have different opinions about this. Palestinian society is not uniform in its support... So the security services came in, we have different kinds of security services, mix of those were civilian clothes and regular police. So they came in, and they took Zaid , and they took another guy. They led them out, on their way out, on the staircase leading out of the theatre, they started hitting them. So I was

like on the sidelines, I saw them hit Zaid, he's my friend, so I just said, why are you hitting him, and they just started hitting me too. And another BDS activist came along. To cut the story short, they started beating us and they took us to the police station.³⁰

This BDS activist's story highlights the schism between the BDS movement and the Palestinian Authority, represented here in the apparent force of the PA security officers. This schism became a problem on a global level when those unfamiliar with Palestinian politics were unsure of who the 'real' representation of the Palestinian people are, and what the 'real' demands of the population was. When the four BDS activists were taken to jail, Omar Barghouti made the public comment that if they were put on trial, the PA would face repercussions. He said, "...the PA acted outside the law, illegally. Illegal arrests, illegal attacks on peaceful activists. We held the PA accountable and told them if you go ahead with putting them on trial, we will put the PA on trial"³¹ (Barghouti). Individuals critical of the boycott movement highlighted this divide between the PA and BDS. In Jake Wallis Simons editorial, "Why even the Palestinian Authority opposes the boycott of Israel", in the British publication, *The Telegraph*, Simons references the Al Kasaba incident to cement his point that the movement is not even supported by the people it claims to represent. He states, "In truth, however, it has long been clear that many Palestinian officials believe that the BDS movement does not serve the interests of the Palestinian people."³²

³⁰ S, Khalid. Personal Interview. 11 June 2014.

³¹ Barghouti, Omar. Personal Interview. 16 June 2014.

³² Simons, Jake Wallis. "Why Even the Palestinian Authority Opposes the Boycott of Israel – Telegraph Blogs." *The Telegraph*. N.p., 9 June 2014. Web. 09 July 2014.

Iman Hammouri, the director of the Popular Art Center in Al-Bireh and one of the principle advocates for the cultural boycott in the West Bank, insisted the PA was not only complicit but also damaging to the boycott movement:

They're [PA] sometimes doing harm to the BDS because of all the declarations, either in South Africa or here they're really harming. At the same time, the solidarity committees and the BDS committees all over the world, they're very angry because they're [the PA] really undermining our work. Yeah, we're working for you [PA]! So if someone from the leadership comes and says no no, we don't want to harm Israel, we don't want to delegitimize Israel, I mean, no just keep quiet. If you don't support it, at least to keep quiet so as not to harm the BDS movement.

Because the Palestinian Authority is, to the US and Israel, the official government representation of the Palestinian people, BDS movement advocates state the PA is undermining their work and BDS as a strategy of resistance to Israel. Hammouri is not only referencing the incident at Al Kasaba theatre, but also the statement made by PA president Mahmoud Abbas at Nelson Mandela's funeral in South Africa, "No we do not support the boycott of Israel, but we ask everyone to boycott the products of the settlements. Because the settlements are in our territories. It is illegal. ... But we don't ask anyone to boycott Israel itself. We have relations with Israel, we have mutual recognition of Israel."³³

³³ Abunimah, Ali. "In South Africa, Abbas Opposes Boycott of Israel." *The Electronic Intifada*. N.p., 12 Dec. 2013. Web. 09 Apr. 2014.

According to this statement, President Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian Authority do not oppose the BDS movement so long as it only applies to a boycott of settlement products. Because settlements occupy Palestinian territory in the West Bank, Abbas asked for a boycott of products from these settlements. However, Abbas clearly reaffirmed the relations the PA has with Israel, a site for criticism of the PA itself, in stating that his government does not support a full out boycott of the Israeli state. Furthermore, despite international condemnation by groups like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, the Palestinian Authority at the time of the interviews did not drop criminal charges against the four BDS activists arrested. Amnesty International demanded that the Palestinian Authority drop “criminal charges against peaceful activists, investigate police violence”

Amnesty International emphasizes that peaceful expression and protest must never be punished as criminal offences and that imprisonment is always a disproportionate restriction on freedom of expression. Furthermore, the reported treatment of the four men once in custody has undermined their right to a fair trial and raises concerns that they are being punished for their political protest. We urge the PA to drop the criminal charges against them and to ensure an independent and impartial investigation into their allegations of ill-treatment.³⁴

This statement represents the global aspect of the BDS movement in connections and discourse, a benefit to the movement on a global scale but a critique of it on the local level. However, BDS states it is not an official governmental organization or political

³⁴ Abunimah, Ali. "Amnesty Urges Abbas to Drop Criminal Charges against Palestinian Boycott Activists." *The Electronic Intifada*. N.p., 26 May 2014. Web. 09 July 2014.

branch of the Palestinian people, and Barghouti himself that the PLO should be that representation of the Palestinian people despite all it lacks. However, the BDS movement as an international movement is resonating more with the Palestinian diaspora and with non-Palestinians abroad with as the most relevant way in which to support Palestine.

Barghouti explains how the Ministry of Culture initially supported the cultural boycott, but under pressure from the PA who was in turn under pressure from Indian officials, revoked their response and allowed the performance to continue despite officially canceling it. Barghouti, co-founder of the BDS movement, commented on the event at Al Kasaba:

Al Kasaba [theatre] slipped when they allowed the Indian Dance Company to pursue its performance, despite having violated the boycott by performing in Tel Aviv first. That's a clear violation of the boycott. When any artist from outside violates the boycott and plays in Tel Aviv, participates in Israeli boycottable events, we can not receive them here in the occupied territories. And the Indian company did exactly that. Several BDS activists talked to the ministry of culture, and the ministry of culture adopted our position. They said the Indian company played Tel Aviv, we do not welcome them. And they canceled the event, a couple of days before. And then, the Indian officials pressured Palestinian officials, and forced the ministry to go ahead with the event.

However, after the dance troupe performance, the Palestinian Ministry of Culture released their own statement regarding the event, clearly indicative of their view of what BDS advocates call normalization. In Arabic on their website, the Ministry explains how

Zaid Shuaibi began insulting, threatening and inciting violence against the audience members, and security forces needed to remove him from the theatre for public safety reasons. Omar Barghouti later denied the legitimacy of the statement in my interview, stating:

All the lies that came out afterwards, including from the so-called cultural ministry, ministry of culture statement, which had many many fabrications, that they [BDS activists] incited violence, and they attacked the audience, and they encouraged the... none of that happened.

But even George Ibrahim, a prominent Palestinian actor and director of the Al Kasaba theatre, did not approve of BDS movement actions:

I had an incident last month at my theatre, and it became something...the government interfered and the young people didn't understand how to act. They have the right to oppose, they have the right to say their opinion but they don't have the right to come to the theatre and ask the people to go out. It is not their right. And this is what caused all this." He went on to say that Palestinians need the international community to come here and see what is really happening, and if a group comes to Israel, "it is our duty to invite them here." He said in this way, Palestinians "win them as friends, not as enemies.

This event highlights a fundamental difference of opinion in the idea of normalization to the actors highlighted. Was it ok for the Indian dance group to perform in Israel and then come to Palestine? According to the BDS guidelines, international

artists who come to perform in Israel are recognizing the complicity of Israeli cultural institutions:

As in the cultural boycott of South African apartheid, international artists and cultural workers are urged not to extend recognition in any way to Israeli cultural organizations by exhibiting, presenting, and showcasing their work (e.g. films, installations, literary works); lecturing or performing at or in cooperation with complicit Israeli cultural institutions or events, and granting permission for the publication, exhibition or screening of such work by such institutions. Likewise, activities and projects involving individuals *explicitly representing* these complicit institutions should be boycotted.³⁵

The Ministry representative went on to explain their stance in my interview: "Would we work side by side with Israel as if nothing is wrong? No way. But when someone comes to perform here, you want to make friends, not enemies. It's not if they come to Israel then they can't come here. On the contrary, you want people to see the reality, not to be naive. You have to be clever and smart. Your war is a cultural and public opinion war. If you are not aware, you become aware. And the only and the best way to do that is for them to come to us."

However, BDS movement advocates cite the fact that because the Indian Dance Troupe violated the cultural boycott movement in coming to Israel *by official invitation from the Israeli government* to perform in Tel Aviv, they should not be welcomed and permitted to perform in the West Bank. While BDS advocates stress this fact,

³⁵ "PACBI Guidelines for the International Cultural Boycott of Israel (Revised July 2014)." *Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel*. PACBI, 31 July 2014. Web. 8 Oct. 2014.

representatives from the Palestinian authority and Ministry of Culture stress that the Indian Dance troupe should be able to 'see both sides', and decide for themselves who to support in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Chapter 3

Discourse in the BDS Movement

The Al Kasaba incident highlights the importance of discourse in representation of resistance movements and of marginalized groups all over the world. Foucault says discourses are “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak”³⁶. For example, language is a discourse; it produces a position an individual can embrace. It is part of a social practice we engage and perform in and in that way it both enables and constrains the individual. Discourse produces particular types of knowledge, and that knowledge consequently is a weapon of power. Power produces different versions of reality, and in this way, ‘power produces knowledge...power and knowledge directly imply one another...there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations’. But as Foucault elaborates, discourse is not simply about power but also about resistance to it. It is not only about accepting the narrative that is the most powerful but also about creating a ‘point of resistance and a starting point for opposing strategy’³⁷. In the same way that discourse can produce power, it can also undermine it and render it possible to foil. The BDS movement as a global movement is communicating in a language the West can understand through the use of the word ‘apartheid’, and by marketing itself as a ‘Palestinian’ movement.

³⁶ Dungey, Nicholas. *Franz Kafka and Michel Foucault : Power, Resistance, and the Art of Self-creation*. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2014. Print.

³⁷ Dungey, Nicholas. *Franz Kafka and Michel Foucault : Power, Resistance, and the Art of Self-creation*. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2014. Print.

For example, in *Orientalism*, Edward Said explains how a Western discourse on the East, or the 'Orient' has created a knowledge of the region and a set of 'power-knowledge' relations that best serve the interests of the West. Said goes on to elaborate this point and further demonstrates Foucault's claim that the 'truth' in a discourse is more about who is saying it and when or where it is said, than what in content is actually said. The Orient, as Said explains, 'was a European invention'. In other words, 'Orientalism' is the term Said uses to describe the particular relationship between the 'West' and the 'East', and in particular, the way that the Orient has essentially helped to define the West as its contrasting image (and gained power in doing so).³⁸ Implementing a Foucauldian perspective, narratives of power tell us more about the anxieties of the dominant perspective than about the peoples and places under colonization. This approach shifts the focus away from the details of the dominant narrative to the function that narrative serves to its producers and consumers.³⁹ I do not use this example to portray the BDS movement as 'the West', but rather to reinforce the notion that BDS is a movement that is operating within a particular power structure. There are aspects of the movement itself which have evidently been formed with the idea of the West in mind; how to best communicate this movement to an audience beyond Palestine. As mentioned previously, BDS has three main goals: an end to occupation, an end to discrimination, and the right to return for Palestinian refugees. Because Israel has been able to continue its practices with support from corporations and states that operate in the West, the BDS movement is operating within that reality in structuring its guidelines. Any analysis of failure or

³⁸ Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage, 1979.

³⁹ Dungey, Nicholas. *Franz Kafka and Michel Foucault : Power, Resistance, and the Art of Self-creation*. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2014.

success for the BDS movement must therefore be based on the goals of the movement and the ways in which the Israeli state has received financial or political support to prohibit these goals. Perhaps the BDS movement's main audience is not Palestinians, and the ways in which movement organizers frame the discourse surrounding the movement is meant to speak to a Western audience that does have the financial or political power to influence Israel. One example of this is the way in which BDS utilizes the term 'apartheid'.

The Use of 'Apartheid'

The word 'apartheid' is often used by the BDS movement and is certainly understandable to the 'West', but one may argue that the situation can not be directly compared to the conditions of blacks in South Africa. South Africa during the apartheid era was legally, economically, and socially divided along racial lines, with categories including white, African, Indian, and colored. The word apartheid literally means 'separation', which translated to government policies that divided groups with separate living areas. Funding was reserved for white South Africans, while a ban on immigration was put in place for black South Africans. White South Africans were given access to the newest and best hospitals in the country, while all other groups were only permitted entrance into the filthiest ones. Even in prison, whites received larger prison cells and lower prison sentences than black South Africans who committed the same or petty crimes. The South African ministry of Foreign Affairs also recognized separate areas specifically for Africans, known as Bantustans. At the peak of the conflict, black South Africans occupied only 13% of the land. Black South Africans were also forced to carry identity documents, or "pass books", used to control their movement in areas outside the

Bantustans and ensure inequitable access to education, health care and other social services.⁴⁰ In many ways, Palestinians face the same struggles South Africans did in the 20th century, but there are also important distinctions.

The South African Boycott movement was founded in London in June 1959 by a group of South African exiles and anti-apartheid supporters. In December 1958, the All-African People's Conference in Accra initiated the campaign against apartheid when the South African Congress Alliance made an official call for a boycott of South African goods on an international scale. At a meeting organized by the Committee of African Organizations in London in 1959, a boycott committee was formed and soon became the South African Boycott Movement (which changed its name in 1960 to the Anti-Apartheid Movement).⁴¹ Directly equating the struggles in South Africa with those in Palestine by using the word apartheid certainly coincides with narratives familiar in the West, but does not do justice to either South Africans or Palestinians. While co-founder of the BDS movement Omar Barghouti acknowledges that the situation in Palestine is "not identical to South Africa; that it is more complex, more multi-dimensional and even more sinister, in some respects", by using the term apartheid, he and other BDS movement leaders are strategically evoking a sentiment tied to apartheid South Africa.⁴²

⁴⁰ Handmaker, Jeff, Bangani Ngeleza, and Adri Nieuwhof. "Amandla Ngawethu! South Africa and Palestine Compared." *The Electronic Intifada*. N.p., 8 Feb. 2005. Web. 10 Apr. 2014.

⁴¹ Thörn, Håkan. "Anti-Apartheid Movement." *Encyclopedia of Global Studies*. Ed. Helmut K. Anheier, and Mark Juergensmeyer. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2012. 70-71. *SAGE knowledge*. Web. 9 Apr. 2014.

⁴² Barghouti, Omar. "Boycott as Resistance: The Moral Dimension." *The Electronic Intifada*. N.p., 28 Dec. 2014. Web. 09 Apr. 2014.

In the same way, the South African Boycott Movement and the BDS movement linked different groups together in a trans-national network, including student organizations, churches, unions, and solidarity organizations across several continents. A thorough comparison between the BDS movement and the South African Boycott Movement is beyond the scope of this paper. However, I bring up this example only to highlight some of the differences between the two struggles, and the movements attempting to fight on behalf of the people struggling.

As one Palestinian activist said in an interview, “My opinion is that this discourse and apartheid as a word to be used here is also problematic to me. Because this is not only a system of apartheid. It’s a classical European colonial-settler regime with ethnic cleansing features. This is how I see it.”⁴³

The BDS Movement on the Ground

The most prevalent critique of not only the cultural boycott but the general 'BDS movement' in the West Bank and Israel is that it has not become a widespread grassroots movement in Palestine itself. In fact, one interviewee critiqued it as an elitist, academic movement. Even Omar Barghouti could see the truth in this critique. He told me,

Our main challenge is, that despite the fact that the BDS movement is led by the BDS National Committee, the BNC, which is the absolute largest coalition in Palestinian society, the political parties, the NGO networks, the refugee networks, you name it, student groups, women groups, everyone’s in the BNC. Despite this massive participation in the BNC, it has not yet trickled down to the grassroots of these organizations. Which might be a criticism voiced by some. That, you know,

⁴³ S, Khalid. Personal Interview. 11 June 2014

in our village we haven't heard of BDS. In our refugee camp there isn't much BDS going on. And this might be very true. It might be very true. For example, the General Union of Palestinian Workers. It's part of the BDS network. Yet, how much awareness raising have they done with the workers at the grassroots level. Not much. So, a worker in some factory, some construction site, may not have heard of BDS. Although his union, has always been with the BDS movement, since 2005.

BDS advocates have not established support or even awareness of the movement in a broad sense in Palestinian civil society, despite the fact that the *leaders* of 170 Palestinian civil society organizations support the movement. Ordinary Palestinians I spoke with about the research I was conducting while in Palestine immediately thought of the economic boycott when I said I was researching the BDS movement. They asked me, 'What boycott?', because the economic boycott is extremely difficult to advance in the West Bank due to a whole host of socio-psychological and economic reasons, and impossible in Israel. Although the BDS movement has had successes on a global scale, it has not yet reached the very population it claims to represent. Ordinary Palestinians do not yet see the BDS movement as not only they themselves boycotting Israeli products, culture and academic institutions, but also encouraging others outside Palestine to do so as well. This can change with more awareness and publicity of the boycott movement, but it is also important to remember that many of the 170 individuals on the Boycott National Committee also hold full time jobs and work with BDS on a volunteer basis. Even Omar Barghouti works as an engineer for a private engineering company, and the BDS office is a small office in a high rise in downtown Ramallah. Nevertheless, if the

BDS movement really wants to achieve its three main goals of ending occupation in the West Bank and Gaza, ending apartheid in Israel, and allowing for a right of return for refugees, it must gather grassroots support and action from Palestinians in the occupied territories. Now that an understanding of BDS in the occupied territories has been established, I will now transition to the pressures Palestinians in the state of Israel face when considering the boycott of the State.

Chapter 4

Palestinian Citizens of Israel

By the end of the 1948 war between Israel and the Arab states, 150,000 Arabs found themselves within the borders of the newly created state of Israel. These Palestinians became citizens of the new state, while those not in their homes at the end of the conflict were denied the opportunity to return. The Palestinians living in Israel now are descendants of the people that managed to remain within the 1948 armistice lines. The term ‘Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel’ refers both to their status as citizens of Israel and the community’s self-identification as part of the Palestinian people and greater Arab world. Palestinian citizens represent a national, ethnic, and religious minority in Israel, but are members of the Palestinian people. This thesis will use the terms ‘Palestinian citizens of Israel’, and ‘Palestinians in Israel’ all to denote the single term ‘Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel’. However, the Israeli government refers to the community as ‘non-Jews’, ‘the Arab sector’, or ‘Israeli Arabs’.

Nationally, Palestinian citizens of Israel are part of an indigenous group “living in its homeland even before the State was established, when it was the majority group together with the rest of its people.”⁴⁴ Palestinian citizens of Israel deal with this a paradox of identity in their daily lives. Nizzar Hassan, a Palestinian filmmaker in Israel best explains this paradox in an interview with me: “The state is not a homeland, ok? I live in my homeland where the occupier or the one who controls it is the State of Israel. And for me to stay in Palestine I get the Israeli citizenship, which is actually a

⁴⁴ Jabareen, Yousef. *An Equal Constitution for All? On a Constitution and Collective Rights for Arab Citizens in Israel*. Rep. The Mossawa Center, May 2007. Web. 23 Apr. 2014.

contradiction in reality. But if I do not recognize it (Israel), it means I will not have the ability to stay in my homeland.” When he and other Palestinian citizens of Israel express their Palestinian identity they the Israeli state oftentimes reprimands them, yet they do not receive the full benefits of being ‘Israeli citizens’.

Israel has defined itself as both a Jewish and democratic state since its establishment in 1948, as reflected in the 1948 Declaration of Independence, which states: ‘Israel will be open for Jewish immigration’ but also that ‘it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex’.⁴⁵ A main component in the discriminatory nature of the State of Israel is this characterization as an exclusively Jewish state, privileging Jewish Israelis over Palestinian Arabs. The characterization of Israel as Jewish is problematic, however, when 20% of the state population are Palestinian Arabs.⁴⁶ Israeli geographer and social scientist Oren Yiftachel explains that there is ‘a duality in the Israeli state between a democratic façade and a deeper undemocratic regime logic, which facilitates the dispossession, control and peripheralization of groups that do not belong to the dominant ethno-class.’⁴⁷ This is represented by the separation of nationality from citizenship in Israeli law. Under the 1952 Citizenship Law, there is no ‘Israeli’ nationality. Instead, citizens are classed by their particular ethno-nationality: Jews or Arabs. Rights and benefits are therefore not accorded on the basis of being a citizen in the Israeli state as both Jews and Arabs are, but rather on their particular ethno-nationalities. This characterization has resulted in a two-

⁴⁵ "The Avalon Project : Declaration of Israel's Independence 1948." *The Avalon Project : Declaration of Israel's Independence 1948*. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Apr. 2014.

⁴⁶ “Population, by Population Group.” *CBS, STATISTICAL ABSTRACT OF ISRAEL 2013*. 2013. Web. 4 Apr. 2014.

⁴⁷ Yiftachel, Oren. “‘Ethnocracy’ and its Discontents: Minorities, Protests and the Israeli Polity”, *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 26 No. 4 (Summer 2000) 728.

tiered system of certain rights and entitlements in Israeli law, with Palestinian citizens subjected to unequal and second-class status. Furthermore, the Supreme Court of Israel has also dismissed all cases pertaining to the equality of Arab citizens.⁴⁸ These are all laws Palestinian citizens of Israel must live under, and for Palestinian artists, many of them end up moving to the West Bank where at least they are able to practice their work at schools in their own language.

There are also particular laws in Israel that specifically operate to restrict political expression for Palestinian citizens. The March 2011 *Nakba* law authorizes the Israeli Finance Minister to reduce financial support to any institution that plans an activity commemorating the *Nakba*, or “the catastrophe” as Palestinians call the day the state of Israel was created. Arab intellectual Constantin Zureiq calls the *Nakba* ‘the worst catastrophe, in the deepest sense of the word, to have befallen the Arabs in their long and disaster-ridden history.’⁴⁹ This law impacts Arab political, education, and cultural organizations, and stifles the ability of the Palestinian community in Israel to express itself and preserve its collective historical memory. The July 2011 Anti-Boycott law prohibits the promotion of an institutional or economic boycott against Israeli targets, including Israeli businesses and institutions located in illegal settlements in the West Bank.⁵⁰ The Israeli state defines the term boycott as the “‘deliberate avoidance of economic, cultural or academic ties’” that could cause harm to the particular institution, business or individual associated with the State. The law creates a ‘civil wrong’ for all

⁴⁸ Jabareen, Yousef. *Constitutional Protection of Minorities in Comparative Perspective: Palestinians in Israel and African-Americans in the United States*. Diss. Georgetown U Law Center International and Graduate Program, 2003. N.p.: n.p., n.d. 2003. Web. 26 Apr. 2014.

⁴⁹ Constantin Zureiq, *The Meaning of El-Nakba* (Beirut, 1948).

⁵⁰ Law for the Prevention of Damage to the State of Israel through Boycott (2011) (“Anti-Boycott Law”).

boycott activities within Israel, and allows for civil cases to be brought against any citizen of Israel who makes a public call to boycott the State. Even if no actual damage is proven, the court has the power to demand that the party that committed the ‘civil wrong’ pay compensation to the party affected.⁵¹

Under the Anti-Boycott Law, the Finance Minister can also revoke state-sponsored benefits, including tax exemptions from Israeli businesses that attempt to participate in the boycott.⁵² The law prohibits all citizens of Israel from participating in non-violent public protests against Israeli business or products from Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Although a petition against the Anti-boycott law was taken to the Supreme Court, and the Court ordered the Israeli State to explain its justification for the Law, the State argued that ‘the appeal against the law should be rejected on the basis that the issue is not yet ripe for judicial deliberation, given that no civil action had yet been initiated under the law’.

These anti-boycott policies and this law in particular make it more difficult for Palestinian citizens of Israel to participate in the BDS movement, even with the guidelines the movement has in place. The director of an Arab rights group in Israel told me that their organization does not participate in any boycott activities specifically because of this law.

The February 2011 ‘Foreign Government Funding Law’ passed by the Israeli Knesset (parliament) requires Arab non-governmental organizations in Israel to submit

⁵¹ Article 2 of the Law for the Prevention of Damage to the State of Israel through Boycott (2011) (“Anti-Boycott Law”).

⁵² Article 3 of the Law for the Prevention of Damage to the State of Israel through Boycott (2011) (“Anti-Boycott Law”).

quarterly reports to the Israeli Ministry of Justice and the Registrar of Associations, detailing their funding arrangements, undertakings, and obligations with any foreign donors to the Israeli Ministry of Justice and the Registrar of Associations.⁵³ The law specifically targets Arab NGOs, including Arab cultural organizations, that rely almost completely on the foreign funding from the European Union or United States to carry out their activities. This is not the case, for example, with Jewish settler organizations, which are privately funded. The law also specifically exempts organizations like the Jewish Agency, the Jewish National Fund, and The World Zionist Organization from these reporting requirements.⁵⁴ Reporting obligations not only increase the financial burden for Arab NGOs because they often have to employ extra staff to complete these tasks, but also could discourage foreign donors from providing funding to the NGOs. Further demonstrating a pattern in discrimination against Arab NGOs, the Israeli government proposed other bills that would restrict the funding and activities of the organizations. The ‘Bill on Income of NGOs Receiving Funding from Foreign State Entities,’ for example, proposes that NGOs will be subject to for restrictions in foreign funding based depending on their specific relationship with the Israeli State.⁵⁵ If an NGO is classified a ‘political organization,’ it is banned from receiving foreign funds. If it is not classified as a political organization, but does not receive funding from the Israeli government, it is required to pay a 45% tax on foreign funding. However, if an NGO does receive funding

⁵³ Article 2 of the Law on Disclosure Requirements for Recipients of Support from a Foreign State Entity (2011).

⁵⁴ Article 7 of the Law on Disclosure Requirements for Recipients of Support from a Foreign State Entity (2011)

⁵⁵ Bill on Income of Public Institutions Receiving Donations from Foreign State Entity (2011).

from the Israeli state, it is permitted to continue receiving complete funding from any international sources.

All of these laws and regulations create a vastly different living environment for Palestinians living in Israel compared to those Palestinians living in the West Bank. Despite these challenges coming from the state and legal system, in an interview with an administrator at the Mossawa Center in Haifa, Israel, I was told, “Now for cultural organizations, yes they do. Some of them do refuse to take government money. Some of them do refuse to participate in events that are hosted by the government.” In this way, cultural organizations in Israel boycott silently. They are not able to openly call for a boycott at all times, but by silently refusing to take funding of any sort from the Israeli state, they are boycotting within their position in Israel. This form of boycotting should be analyzed through the position of the majority of Arab cultural organizations in the West Bank, which not only receive only 3% of the Israeli budget, but when they do receive a budget (most commonly from a European country) they operate within that budget alone. In other words, once the budget for a certain play or project has been completely utilized, they must find other sources of funding to operate as an organization and continue producing projects.

French philosopher Louis Althusser argues that in order to fully understand a text, one must analyze not only the content in it but also the assumptions which inform it and what is said as much as what is not said. In the real world, Althusser believed we formed imaginary relationship with other people and institutions, and in the practice of that ideology through certain actions, individuals are hailed as true, obvious and concrete subjects. Althusser continues with a Marxist interpretation of the state as a state

apparatus; a state that is a domineering force made up of several public entities, from the police to the legal court system and prison. The Israeli state is no exception; through its police force, legal systems and imprisonments, it enforces a criteria for being a ‘good citizen’ - and a good artist as well. In his article, Althusser presents the Marx’s Repressive State Apparatus, but states that something must be added to this ‘Marxist theory’: the ideological state apparatus (ISA). According to Althusser, the ISA is not simply one entity, but includes the religious ISA, political ISA, communications ISA, and even trade-union ISA, among others. Althusser goes on to distinguish the ISA from the RSA, or Repressive State Apparatus (RSA). He notes how the state-centered RSA publicly functions with repression first and then ideology, while the ISA operates with a plurality of relatively ‘autonomous’ authorities that solely administers the ideology of the ruling class.⁵⁶ In the Israeli context, the legal system is reinforced through the official state media, education, and art of the state. These apparatuses largely leave Palestinian residents ignored or inferior.

Althusser defines ideology as “the system of the ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group”. He explains that “ideology represents the imaginary relationships of individuals to their real conditions of existence”, and gives an example in the form of the Priest who, in telling men that they were obeying God, were instead fooling men to obey the Priests. According to Althusser, ideology operates through practice. For example, an individual who believes in God will attend Church for Mass, to kneel, pray, and confess. An individual who believes in Justice will follow

⁵⁶ Althusser, Louis. *Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001. Print.

another pattern of submission to the rules of Law, and will work to uphold them through signing petitions or participating in demonstrations. In other words, regardless of which or how many ISA's an individual accepts, he/she must act upon those ideas through particular rituals and practices dominant in the ISA. Those who support the BDS movement on a global level are generally able to practice the ideology of boycott through boycotting products that Palestinians do not have the privilege of boycotting for a whole host of economic reasons. Palestinian artists in Israel face the pressures from the Israeli media, law, and education system (as ideological apparatuses), and from the State (as a repressive apparatus) when making decisions in cultural production. Particularly through the lens of the boycott movement and the laws against freedom of expression and practicing the boycott in Israel, Palestinian artists must frame their artistic choices through the eyes of the Israelis. The administrator at the Mossawa Center for Arab Citizens of Israel told me, "When you're bringing politics into it, there's no freedom of speech. So, yes we've had actors who have been taken to court, who have been charged for, like they're being sued by the state. They don't have money, but they're being sued by the state because for something they did that was seen to be anti-semitic. So yes there is limitations, it's a lot freer in the West Bank."

The Boycott National Committee (BNC) set specific guidelines for Palestinian citizens of Israel. Because the situation they live under is so different from Palestinians in the West Bank., the BNC has different guidelines for them. According to Omar Barghouti, the group developed these guidelines over two years with Palestinians living in Israel. One of the guidelines for Palestinian citizens of Israel discusses normalization when collaborating. There are two components of collaboration Palestinian artists in

Israel encounter. Both of these components are restricted by the BDS movement because of their inclinations towards normalization, or the false symmetry between Israelis and Palestinians.

The BDS guideline for the former is the following:

“Cultural activities, projects, events and products involving Palestinians and/or other Arabs on one side and Israelis on the other (whether bi- or multi- lateral) that are based on the false premise of symmetry/parity between the oppressors and the oppressed or that assume that both colonizers and colonized are equally responsible for the “conflict” are intellectually dishonest and morally reprehensible forms of normalization that ought to be boycotted.”⁵⁷

Normalization

For the latter, Omar Barghouti explained that for any relationship between an Israeli side and a Palestinian/Arab side not to be normalization, two conditions must be met.

- 1) The Israeli side must recognize Palestinian rights under international law
- 2) The relationship itself must be a form of co-resistance, instead of coexistence

The BDS guidelines directly speak against any creation of a false symmetry between an Israeli and a Palestinian when such symmetry cannot possibly exist under Israeli laws. This means that Palestinian artists should avoid events intended to bring them together with Israelis to overcome some hatred or so-called psychological barriers. In this case, the only normal relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed is one

⁵⁷ "PACBI Guidelines for the International Cultural Boycott of Israel (Revised July 2014)." *Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel*. PACBI, 31 July 2014. Web. 8 Oct. 2014.

in which the oppressor fully recognizes the rights of those oppressed and fights alongside them to achieve those rights. All of the artists I interviewed followed these guidelines, and were particularly critical of normalization tactics or Art that attempts to bring the ‘two sides together’ for ‘peace’. For example, a member of DAM, the first Palestinian hip hop group, told me that:

We’ve featured Israeli artists, but we always check their background, and check their message, and what they believe in. So if it didn’t match with what I believe in, it would never happen. But if they believe in the Palestinian struggle, if they believe in the right of return, then we become a colleague in the struggle. We become...it’s not about Israelis are people, if he’s Israeli I’m gonna boycott him...if he’s Israeli and if he’s Jewish and he believes that everything that the state of Israel is doing is wrong, if he is willing to be active and to fight against it and be against it, then I don’t have a problem with him.

Particularly for Palestinian artists in Israel, who, for obvious reasons, spoke about collaborating with Israeli artists more than artists in the West Bank, it was seen as something that was not preferable but was acceptable as long as the Israeli artist believed in the full rights of the Palestinians. For Palestinian artists living in the West Bank, who do not interact with Israeli artists on a daily basis, collaborating with Israelis under any circumstances was not always welcome. One Palestinian rapper living in the West Bank city of Ramallah told me, “I’m not willing to work, or perform...it’s not just musical...everything, not just artistically, I’m not willing to do *anything* with a Zionist, with anyone that is against what I exist for. It’s not that way, but I mean...Basically, to me, the existence of the Israeli Zionist means my nonexistence. So I will not work with

anyone who means I won't exist."⁵⁸ These two opinions certainly do not represent all Palestinians living in the West Bank or all Palestinian citizens of Israel, but this example does reflect how the artists' surrounding do reflect the choices they make in terms of cultural production.

Anti-normalization sentiment does not only cover the cultural realm, but is also evident in the concrete politics between Palestinians and Israelis. During the summer of 2013, Palestinians gathered in front of the PLO headquarters in Ramallah in order to protest against meetings between Israeli politicians and PLO officials. Protestors called for a "cleansing" of the PLO of "the generals of normalization with Israel", and chanted "Normalization is destructive!"⁵⁹ The Geneva Initiative Group, a group which states on their website it is "committed to exposing each side's public message of the other" organized the meetings⁶⁰. In this case, the meetings had also drawn criticism from various political factions, and even from members of Mahmoud Abbas's ruling Fatah faction. Critics of normalization argue that initiatives that call for dialogue or joint projects between Israelis and Palestinians work to further the status quo and present an image of two *equal* sides arguing with each other.

Edward Said and Daniel Barenboim's West-East Divan Orchestra has also been criticized for its normalization tendencies. The West-East Divan Orchestra is a youth orchestra based in Seville that brings together Arab, Israeli, and Spanish musicians to perform Western classical music in venues across Europe and parts of the Middle East.

⁵⁸ F, Adam. Personal Interview. 26 May 2014.

⁵⁹ Abu Toameh, Khaled. "Palestinians Protest against Meetings between PLO Officials, Israeli Politicians." *The Jerusalem Post*. N.p., 15 July 2013. Web. 09 Apr. 2014.

⁶⁰ "Geneva Initiative - Yes to an Agreement - Home Page." *Geneva Initiative - Yes to an Agreement*. Geneva Initiative, n.d. Web. 5 Nov. 2014.

Daniel Barenboim, the conductor of the orchestra, has described it as a space where ‘young people from Israel and all the Arab countries can express themselves freely and openly whilst at the same time hearing the narrative of the other.’ Scholar Rachel Beckles Willson observed the orchestra during the 2006 tour season, and wrote that the very constitution of the orchestra opposes the reality of political positions in the Middle East in at least three different ways: deposing the Israeli’s regime’s policies of segregation against Palestinians and Arabs, attempting to speak for Palestinians while ignoring the anti-normalization strategies taken by a majority of Palestinian groups, and breaking the freeze on Israeli-Arab relations between Israel and neighboring Arab states.⁶¹ In this way, the West-East Divan Orchestra sees peace and understanding as a precursor to equality on the ground, rather than consequences of it. Furthermore, it is reflective of other so-called organizations for ‘peace’ between Israelis and Palestinians that skyrocketed in number and funding in the brief post-Oslo accords period of hope and optimism. Another such example is Seeds of Peace, an organization that brings young people from conflict zones, including Israelis and Palestinians, together for a summer camp in Maine.

In regards to Palestinian artists in Israel participating in Israeli cultural events, Barghouti offers this assessment:

A joint artistic project, for instance, that ignores the oppressive colonial reality and calls for people from “both sides” to engage in some artistic endeavor, as if the art were “above politics,” is cynically politicizing art and presenting a deceptive image of normal relations or “coexistence” *despite* oppression. A joint

⁶¹ Beckles Willson, Rachel. "The Parallel Worlds of the WEst-Eastern Divan Orchestra." *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 132.2 (2009): 319-47. *JSTOR*. Web. 27 Apr. 201.

project that satisfies the first condition above and condemns the occupation, advocating in diverse forms for its end, on the other hand, is not normalization. Nothing in the boycott criteria opposes such projects.

When Palestinian citizens of Israel participate in Israeli international festivals, the Israeli state uses them as a sort of fig leaf. They are able to tell the rest of the world that Israel should not be boycotted because even the Palestinians attend their festivals. This type of attendance at Israeli festivals is against the boycott guidelines, but local festivals are not. An artist living in Akka stated that he is willing to perform at the Akka Art Festival, but does not perform at an Israeli national or international festival because of the position his participation would place him as an ‘Arab’ or ‘Palestinian’. He also stated that although he does not take any money from the Israeli government because of the pressures he would feel to represent a particular agenda, he does accept money from city councils as a resident and tax-payer. He said, “But the city councils we take money from them, it’s a business thing, not politics.”⁶² Furthermore, he said that he is “not living in Nazareth” (majority Arab city in Israel proper), and that he lives in a city where there are many Arabs and Jews.⁶³ Recognizing the different demographics of the place, he said he is willing to play in a festival where there are Arabs and Jews and obtain funding from the Akka city council.

Another critique of collaborations that ‘normalize’ is that they maintain, rather than challenge, power unbalances between Israelis and Palestinians. Rather than working to deconstruct discrimination, this type of art instead perpetuates inequality in Israeli society. Artists interviewed in Israel said that Palestinians and Israelis cannot coexist

⁶² R, Zakaria. Personal Interview. 22 June 2014.

⁶³ Ibid.

without first improving the quality of life for Palestinians, and without recognizing the equality between both groups. Without these realizations, ‘coexistence’ efforts encourage a continuation of injustice on the ground.

All of the artists I interviewed either did not accept money at all from Israeli political institutions, or accepted money from Israeli institutions, but only with no political strings attached. One Palestinian singer living in the majority Jewish city of Akka said he does not take any money from the Israeli government. He thought that, if artists take money from the Israeli government, “they [artists who take money from Israel] have to sing songs that the Israeli government wants them to. I don’t take money from the Palestinian or Israeli government, and I sing what I want.”

Palestinian Filmmakers

Palestinian filmmakers in particular face pressures in production and post-production of their films. Palestinian screenwriter Suha Arraf arrived at the Venice film festival in Fall 2014 with her film ‘Villa Touma’. Arraf was screening her film alongside films from all over the world, with films coming from 70 countries in total. The film follows the story of three Palestinian sisters living in Ramallah, who shut themselves off from the outside world in a villa until their niece comes to live with them and shakes their world. Her film, *Arraf decided*, came from Palestine and marketed as such when entering it in the film festival. Arraf is screenwriter and a Palestinian citizen of Israel. She wrote in a *Haaretz* editorial that:

The State of Israel never accepted us as citizens with equal rights. From the day the state was established, we were marked as the enemy and treated with racial discrimination in all areas of life. Why, then, am I expected to represent Israel

with pride? Do I, as a filmmaker, automatically become an employee of the Foreign Ministry's public diplomacy department?⁶⁴

Again, the battle between structure and agency is seen through the pressure Arraf faced in defining her film. Although most of her financing for the film came from the Israeli state, Arraf listed the film as Palestinian. In response, the Israeli Film Council demanded she return over \$500,000 she raised through the national lottery, the Israeli Film Fund, and the Economic Ministry. Eventually Arraf simply designated the film as 'stateless', saying that "Yes, the film is listed as stateless, a "refugee," as best reflects my complex status in this country – a Palestinian with a national identity and citizenship that are neither pertinent nor desired"⁶⁵.

Eitan Levi, the artistic designer of the film, said he did not agree with Arraf's decision. He said, "The film Villa Touma is an Israeli film according to the law, because it received Israeli money, was funded by an Israeli fund, and won a prize at the Haifa festival that is an Israeli festival." However, Arraf received support from 104 Israeli filmmakers who signed a letter stating that she should be able to call the film a Palestinian film. Angelica Berman, the co-producer of the film, also did not agree with Arraf's decision to label the film as Palestinian, stating "I am amazed at how all the advertisements can say the film was produced in Palestine," she said. "Why distort the truth and hide the amazing and professional collaboration between Jews and Arabs that

⁶⁴ Arraf, Suha. "I Am an Arab, Palestinian and Citizen of Israel - I Have the Right to Define My Own Identity - Opinion." *Haaretz.com*. Haaretz, 24 Aug. 2014. Web. 15 Apr. 2015.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

went into this production? The film was produced and shot in Israel, with the support of Israeli public money.”⁶⁶

In this example, the definition of Israel and what a film means to be ‘Israeli’ is based on monetary guidelines. In an interview with the Electronic Intifada, Arraf said that she does not identify as an ‘Israeli Arab’. Rather, she says, “There is no such thing [as Israeli-Arabs], of course... When we say we are Palestinian, we are part of the majority. It scares them. They want to view me as a “good Israeli Arab director” or a “nice Israeli Arab.” The moment you say “Palestinian,” though, you become the enemy.”⁶⁷

For Arraf, her position within the Israeli state as a filmmaker is only accepted if she produces ‘Israeli’ films, if she is, a “nice Israeli Arab”, rather than a Palestinian filmmaker. The decisions she must make are different from the decisions Palestinians living in the West Bank must make because of her structural positioning within Israel. The institutions and laws structuring her life force her to make political decisions in the cultural sphere of her film production and dissemination. After Arraf registered the film as ‘Palestinian’, two major film funds in Israel, the Yuhoshua Rabinovich Foundation for the Arts and the Israel Film Fund inserted changes in their contracts requiring all filmmakers to represent their films as ‘Israeli’ in presentation⁶⁸. When asking Palestinian artists in Israel if they would accept money from the Israeli state, the vast majority of artists said they have a right to accept the money as tax-paying citizens. However, and in

⁶⁶Winer, Stuart. "Culture Ministry Wants Money Back from ‘Palestinian’ Film." *The Times of Israel*. N.p., 30 July 2014. Web. 5 Feb. 2015.

⁶⁷ Strickland, Patrick O. "Suha Arraf on Her "stateless" Palestinian Film." *The Electronic Intifada*. N.p., 9 Oct. 2014. Web. 09 Dec. 2014.

⁶⁸ Anderman, Nirit. "Israeli Film Fund Closes Palestinian Loophole: Creators Must Pledge to Be 'Israeli'" *Haaretz.com*. N.p., 27 Jan. 2015. Web. 09 Mar. 2015.

accordance to BDS guidelines for artists in Israel, they do not accept conditional funding from the state or cultural institutions.

Conclusion

*“We all live in isolated communities. You talk about a ‘Palestinian filmmakers’ union and it’s like nowhere. In a way each of us has to create his or her own agenda, how to deal with things.”*⁶⁹

As one Palestinian filmmaker told me, each artist must ‘create his or her own agenda’. In other words, each artist must develop a way to produce their art within their environment and building upon their experience. They do so through, or despite, the battles they face between structure and agency. The power structures Palestinian artists cope with—ranging from the PA, Israel, and the BDS movement, determine how they create their art. How these artists assert their agency in their cultural production is reflective of their local geography, their structural positioning within the area surrounding them, and their relation to the Israeli state. Furthermore, their Art is not only vital Palestinian self-identity but also to the representation of Palestine, both locally and globally.

This study by no means attempts to classify Palestinian artists living in the West Bank and Israel as two homogeneous categories. On the contrary, I have attempted to show that there is no one distinct Palestinian opinion; that there are a whole host of factors that determine the Palestinian experience. The decisions Palestinian artists in the West Bank and Israel make concerning the cultural boycott movement are contingent on factors relevant to that experience: location, structural positioning within the state, the legal system that they live under. As I have attempted to prove, these differences in

⁶⁹ A, Aameena. Personal Interview. 3 June 2014.

experience play out artistically within the context of the cultural boycott. Palestinian citizens of Israel generally react differently to cultural boycott guidelines than Palestinians living in the West Bank for a whole host of reasons.

Palestinian artists do not necessarily agree with all the boycott guidelines. For example, in regard to the BDS guideline to boycott international artists who come to perform in Israel, many of the Palestinian artists I interviewed that were living in Israel were not in favor of this BDS guideline. One Palestinian visual artist equated this call to boycott international artists from coming to Israel as a boycott of all Palestinian citizens of Israel, stating “Nazareth is inside Israel, but it is a Palestinian city. Why would an artist not come? It’s like a boycott of the Palestinians who are here [in 1948 area].” As to the Indian dance troupe coming to perform in Israel (by invitation from the State), and then in Ramallah, this particular visual artist said she did not see a problem with it as long as the dance troupe was able to see both areas. The artist believes that not allowing artists to come perform in Israel is a blanket boycott of all individuals living there, including Palestinians. However, some Palestinian artists living in Israel even asked international artists not to come, with small successes. For those who agreed that in the end the artist would decide alone, they stated it would be better to encourage the artist to also come to the West Bank to see both areas and compare.

Some Palestinians I spoke to in Israel were upset that I mentioned a boycott, stating that it was impossible for Palestinians in Israel to boycott the State. They stated that Palestinians pay taxes to the Israeli government and therefore should not have to boycott the state (even though BDS has specific guidelines for this that state that Palestinian citizens of Israel can accept non-conditional funding from Israel). This

sentiment reinforces the idea that the BDS movement is not yet a grassroots movement, as some artists are not familiar with the specific guidelines of the cultural boycott. Artists living in the West Bank were more familiar with the guidelines than artists living in Israel.

However, for the Palestinian filmmaker Nizzar Hassan, he said he did not want to be treated differently as a Palestinian citizen of Israel:

“I don't think it's different. It's about how you adjust to the reality that you live. I don't want you to give me sort of a pardon or treat me in a different way because I'm living here it's ok it's ok. No it's not ok. We all have to think that we live in different realities, yet we want the same thing.”

Although there are guidelines for Palestinian citizens of Israel, there again seems to be a misunderstanding or very little knowledge on the guidelines at a grassroots level, as is the case in the West Bank. Palestinian artists in Israel who state it is very difficult or impossible to follow the movement in the state later answer positively when they ask about certain guidelines. As aforementioned, the BDS movement is not a grassroots movement in Palestine. Rather, it is led by a group of individuals and agreed upon by the heads of 170 Palestinian civil society organizations. This organizational framework has been effective in spreading the BDS message abroad, but not in the occupied territories or Israel. As mentioned previously, any critique of the BDS movement comes not from any disagreement of the three fundamental goals of the movement, but is rather an analysis of how Palestinian artists are reacting to the movement on the ground.

Other areas of research to explore could be the ways in which the Palestinian diaspora in a particular location reacts to the BDS movement, or a follow-up study after

the events in Gaza in late summer 2014. This attempt to share the experiences and opinions of Palestinian artists in the West Bank and Israel, who must face political, social and economic challenges from various parties in an attempt to create and share their work, is shown through the lens of the decisions those artists make regarding the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement and their feelings toward it. Regardless of their environment or experiences, Palestinian artists continue to produce beautiful and powerful work despite all odds.

Appendix

GENERAL LIST OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Can you introduce yourself and tell me about the type of art you produce?
- When the official BDS call came out, did you know about it, and if so, what was your first reaction?
- Have you or would you perform with an Israeli artist, or work together on an artistic project with an Israeli artist? If so, under what conditions? What is your relation to them in general?
- Have you accepted any funding from the Israeli state or Israeli cultural institutions to create a piece of art or begin a project? Can you elaborate on why or why not?
- Do you think artists invited by the Israeli state to perform in Israel should be able to do so? Do you think they should be able to come to the West Bank afterwards?
- Do you think the BDS movement is effective as a part of the Palestinian resistance movement?

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