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<b>Article:</b>	<b>The Palestinian context of the emergence of the Movement of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement</b>
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### **Abstract**

This study discusses the Palestinian context for the emergence of the *Movement of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions* (BDS), as there are assumptions that the movement is of European and American origin, which coincides with political and theoretical trends that give the northern countries a priority in bringing about change locally. The study argues that, even if the North has a role, the movement cannot be understood without focusing on its Palestinian origin, then it deals with the interactions of the second Palestinian Intifada in and outside Palestinian society, and its impact on the crystallization of the boycott movement, as well as discusses the nature of the Palestinian parties that pushed towards the formation of the movement: Who is it, and why were these parties the most impulsive of the boycott movement, and what effect does this have on the boycott? It ends with a question about the connection of the Palestinian context to the regional and global contexts of the movement.

Keywords: BDS, Boycott, Struggle, Israel, Palestine, sanctions.

## **1.0 Introduction**

The BDS movement is a very important initiative, as it has so far been able to presence globally in several countries and on all continents, it brings together human and Palestinian values (Barghouti, 2010; Greendorfer, 2017). In addition, that it puts Israel on the defensive and threatens it with its moral and ethical weaknesses, as Nadim Rouhana points out, nevertheless, the values aspect is also related to policy questions, and to any alliances and paths, the movement takes (McMahon, 2014; Rouhana, 2016; Black, 2017).

The BDS movement issued its first declaration in the year 2005, which called on the citizens of the world to boycott Israel and put pressure on governments to impose sanctions on it until the Palestinian rights recognized, that identified by the end the Israeli occupation and achieve the right of return and equality are recognized (Bakan & Abu-Laban, 2009). Based on its simulation of the anti-apartheid model in South Africa in declaring many of its literatures, the movement seeks cross-border activity towards besieging Israel internationally, to adhere to Palestinian rights. The movement coincided with its emergence with and benefited from global movements that sought "alter-globalization or anti-war against Iraq at the beginning of the new millennium. The movement has a significant extension in Europe and the United States. Major solidarity with Palestinian rights, in London and Brussels, for example, indicate that they began boycotting before the BDS movement was wiped out (Abdellah, 2013; Okazawa-Rey, 2015). Many of them are surprised when they know that the boycott of Israeli goods and institutions was a widespread tool in the occupied Palestinian territories, especially at the beginning of the second intifada, and they involved historical waves of the boycott. Contrary to what basic literature on cross-border social movements suggests, to understand a movement, we must understand it in its national context as well as global contexts (Naples, 1999). This study focuses on understanding the emergence of the boycott movement in its Palestinian context without neglecting regional and global contexts.

## **Political and theoretical debate**

There is a growing tendency for Palestinian and Arab parties, besides other parts of the world, to give priority to multi-faceted intervention by powerful states in the north, such as the United States, to bring about a fundamental change in a state in the south, such as removing a bloody dictatorial regime or occupation. The Oslo path is a prominent Palestinian example of this tendency among Palestinian elites who have found American mediation as the hope of pressuring the Israeli occupation. Along with the Oslo experience, other Arab experiences were bolstered by an impressive Arab country such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar, one of the most prominent Arab transformations in this context was the policy of the late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, who was famous for his term that 99% of the cards are in the hands of the United States, this before heading to the conclusion of the Camp David treaty (Sadat, 1976; Quandt, 2010).

With the United States dominating the world in the 1990s, literature has emerged approaching this trend, related to cross-border social movements, and *Activists without Borders* book of Keck and Sikkink, are a prime example of this approach by proposing a boomerang model (Keck and Sikkink, 2014). This model suggests that unofficial parties such as civil organizations are unable to bring about a change in their countries related to human rights issues because of the intransigence of the national authority, so these local parties try to network with cross-border pressure networks in order for the pressure on the national state in the south to back up to comply with human rights requirements in the community.

So, does the BDS movement go beyond its Palestinian origin - or the Arab dimension - in its search for a global boycott of Israel, with its repercussions on its values? For example, at the beginning of the research, there were indications from Palestinian activists in the movement about following the movement to the boomerang model, in the direction of the northern countries that it is hoped to put pressure on Israel. The problem of the literature is

not that the parties in the south seek to link to the parties in the north, rather, this is considered a catalyst for change by evoking local pressures alongside regional and international. In one interconnected world, the main problem is that strong community centers prioritize change locally. The paradox that many of the opposite literature criticizing the stationed Europe or postcolonial, this consistent with this prevailing literature in the north, given that the factors in the northern countries are the basis, so it does not give heed to the various parties in the south, but rather focuses on structural factors in the strong global centers (Acharya, 2005; Zwingel, 2012).

Unfortunately, there is little research that discusses, from a critical point of view, "European concentration", and critical literature in this field appears very slowly (Challand, 2010; Dunford, 2017). Among the few critical literatures that have recently emerged, Acharya Amitav, which has attached importance to the role of local / national movements in the relationship with cross-border movements, compared to the prevailing literature, the cooperation of these movements with European organizations, for example, does not necessarily make them the mirror of these organizations. Acharya has suggested that local or national movements not only import global values that are appropriate to them but can also produce and publish their values of action. As for Sean Chabot, he focuses on the influence of the Gandhi values that have inspired it. Zwingen argues that "to suppose the flow of values from the global to the local world, which is implicit in the majority literature of the spread of globalization values, is simplistic." (Zwingel, 2012). It focuses on multiple ways of translating global values by local actors, through instances of women's rights movements. Robert Dunford is also looking at how to adopt the values of food sovereignty, which have been proposed by social movements that have multiple paths in the south, along with grassroots parties rooted in the north. The literature of both Acharya and Dunford does not only focus on translating universal values or making a shift in them, but also on producing

and disseminating values by actors from the south. And this literature is still very limited in this research field, and Acharya, for example, stresses the importance of carrying out studies in this field.

There is remarkable Arab and Iranian literature on social and political movements in the Arab region (Rabab al-Mahdi: Asef Bayat, Hanna Batatu, along with many others). For example, Rabab discussed previous Egyptian protest episodes, such as the Egyptian protests supporting Palestine during the second intifada, or protesting against the Iraq war, as well as the subsequent Egyptian protests (such as the establishment of Kefaya movement, for example), but her research focused on national movements that do not seek to cross borders (Clarke, 2011; Joya, 2012).

### **From Oslo to the second intifada: Challenging the of game's rules**

The BDS boycott movement during its emergence (specifically from the second intifada until its first congress in 2007) did not follow the boomerang model in the direction of the northern countries, but rather wanted, especially the main parties to it, a direct path towards Europe and the United States to pressure Israel. However, this path would not have been possible without the Palestinian interactions and other paths including the Arab paths and paths in the south. This occurred either objectively out of the desire of the actors, or by a direct desire from actors in the movement, or who contributed to its formation directly or indirectly.

The belief in a peaceful settlement has fallen into the intifada among large segments of the Palestinians, and the beginnings of the Oslo era were full of either waiting for hope, or either hesitating to evaluate the settlement process, by accepting some of its axioms and rejecting others (Ahmed, Aman, & Saud, 2018). However, by accepting some of its postulates and rejecting others. The two-state solution has become more popular with Palestinian political elites in Israel, although objections to key aspects of the Oslo agreement

remain as strongly present as not to require stopping settlement activity. But some rejected the Oslo process, whether by Palestinian organizations, or writers, for example, from the beginning, Edward Said considered the Oslo agreement to no avail and a major concession, because the Israeli political spectrum, with his right and left, is not ready to relinquish the issues of settlement and Jerusalem. Important transformations took place during the Oslo era, which imposed the rules of the new game by viewing the United States as a primary mediator in the peace process, meaning that the boomerang game via the northern countries has become the dominant one. This rule, which the influential circles in the Palestinian Authority have attempted to justify, took place in parallel with the formal and informal level, with the transfer of funding to universities and many civic organizations, from Arab and other European sources, and mainly from the North (Aouragh, 2011). This was accompanied by the transformation of the work of many civic organizations to give importance to professionalism, development and state-building at the expense of resisting Israeli colonialism and regulating the methods of this resistance (Azzam, 2014). A fundamental shift occurred in the work of civil organizations, many of which arose within the resistance to the Israeli occupation in the 1980s, especially during the first intifada, as many of them undertook joint projects with the Israeli side, which amounted to about 500 one (Hidalgo, 2016). These organizations were often associated with Palestinian political organizations such as the Fatah movement, the Popular and Democratic Fronts, and the Palestinian Communist Party, for example, the agricultural and medical relief organizations were associated with the Palestinian Communist Party, and they were established in conditions of volunteerism and the struggle against the occupation (Brown, 2003).

The Oslo process pushed for more fragmentation in the Palestinian political field, and the decision-making process in the secret Oslo negotiations was unique to the Palestinian political decision at a defining moment. And the Oslo agreement did not meet with a

balanced Palestinian consensus, but rather reinforced the tension, along with the trying of the nascent Palestinian Authority, that fearing the lack of consensus on the Oslo process, to tighten its security authority and monopolize decisions at the expense of promoting the already weak participation. In addition to the fragmentation with which the Palestinians suffer from the diaspora, what was stipulated in the Oslo stages of separation between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and their division into administrative regions, each of which is subject to a different rule, creates a new political fragmentation. This fragmentation was exacerbated by global and regional polarizations of Palestinian currents, whereas the United States and the European Union (during the second intifada) criminalized dealing with Hamas, the regional polarizations were doing their part, the most prominent of which was to attract what was known as the axis of resistance and moderation. The international financing of civil organizations also contributed to the divergence between civil and political action. However, aspects of the game's rules were challenged, since the early beginnings of the Oslo agreement, the Palestinian public negotiating delegation opposed this agreement, except a few, such as Saeb Erekat, and basic aspects of the Palestinian Authority's performance were opposed by civil organizations such as those related to the suppression of freedoms or finance monopoly. In the last issue, a dispute took place for years to pass a law for civil organizations, a law whose formulation eventually approached from the viewpoint of these organizations (Hidalgo, 2016). This indicates its strength as a Palestinian side historically active in the absence of Palestinian political authority. However, new aspects have emerged, such as a shift in funding, giving the countries and societies of the North more importance, and adopting the principles of development and building the country under occupation.

The field and political developments after the establishment of the Palestinian Authority were pushing towards challenging the new game's rules, even by the leadership of the Palestinian Authority, as happened in the confrontations in the year 1996, then the



confrontations in the year 1998. In such an atmosphere, calls for the reactivation of the Palestinian boycott of Israeli goods began to appear. At the level of civil organizations, the Palestinian Observatory was formed, which called for a boycott of Israeli goods. It included civil organizations and a body in the Palestine Liberation Organization. With the failure of the Camp David negotiations in the year 2000, the second Palestinian Intifada, which marked the beginning of the declaration of the failure of the Oslo process, and the start of a more serious change in the game's rules. At the time, calls to boycott Israeli goods strongly emerged from the intifada's higher coordination body (which includes political forces), and from trade unions, labor, agricultural, and industrial unions, and from civil organizations, while commercial agents were held accountable for importing Israeli goods (Jawdeh, 2006).

Palestinian popular confrontation has been led by groups of Palestinian organizations that have taken root in the necessity of confrontation to obtain Palestinian rights. Marwan Al-Barghouthi, for example, was a supporter of the Oslo process, and built strong relations with Israeli parties in the early years of the Oslo process, but at the same time, he did not indulge in the Palestinian Authority, but remained at a distance from corruption and lack of democracy in it, and he wager on building Youth rules in his organization "Fatah" (Ajaj, 2010). Marwan was one of the active leaders in calling for a popular confrontation, including boycotting Israeli goods, along with other forms of confrontation in which the military one has become prevailed over time.

The creation of a Sarda barrier between Bir Zeit and Ramallah in the year 2001 was one of the prominent events that spurred marches in which thousands of students from Birzeit Universities and civil organizations participated, these marches were a stimulus in the direction of popular protest action on the part of the civil organizations, it break out of the frameworks of the regular civil work programs during the Oslo process (Hamami, 2005). It also considered that, students have great influence on rallies and political participation (Saud,

2020). With the beginning of the construction of the Israeli separation wall, protests began in Palestinian villages that witnessed an escalation of land confiscation and / or construction work of the wall, from that the campaign "Stop the Wall" was formed. However, this trend towards popular protest work was less momentum to the civil organizations compared to the confrontations of political parties, despite the weaknesses and divisions of the political parties.

### **Palestinian interaction with the world community of solidarity**

The boycott prevailed among the various Palestinian groups during the second intifada, each Palestinian side was communicating with its closest to them from outside Palestine (Hamdi, 2018). For example, during the first period of that uprising, the uprising coordination committee went to Arab peoples - in parallel with the summits of Arab countries - to urge them to put pressure on their governments and boycott American and Israeli products (Ananth, 2013), There were large waves of the Arab boycott of these products, or of companies accused of supporting Israel (Jawdeh, 2006), There were also contacts with European parliamentary parties, for example, Marwan Barghouti had strong relations with European parliamentarians. There were large waves of the Arab boycott of these products, or of companies accused of supporting Israel. During the Israeli invasion of the Palestinian territories in April 2002, the European Union recommended boycotting the Israeli colonies' goods and imposing an arms embargo on Israel and the Palestinian Authority, which were not recommendations made by the European executive authorities, these recommendations have not been addressed by European executive bodies.

Likewise, there was communication between Palestinian organizations such as "BADIL" (Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee), and Belgian organizations, including a financier of BADIL at the time (Oxfam - Belgium). What is remarkable is that the funding party pushed the funded one to start a boycott campaign for the

goods of the Israeli colonies in Belgium in 2003, this matter is the opposite of what is common that the local parties are affiliated with international financiers. Despite this, the effect of funding on Palestinian parties cannot be overlooked, as the research shows, but not through conspiracy theory (dependency) that does not see the subjectivity of the different actors. Although the Zionist pressure managed to stop the campaign in Belgium (Dreesen, 2014), however, various boycott campaigns have been pursued later specifically since 2006, by Belgian parties less devoted to the social, political and financial hierarchy of a dedicated organization like Oxfam, or even by other Belgian organizations, this is another subject of research. For example, Intal launched a boycott campaign in 2008 against the Belgian Dexia Bank for its links to Israeli colonies. The Palestinian boycott began to interact with initiatives outside Palestine, and various Palestinian parties have benefited from the global protest community. The United Nations conference in Durban, South Africa, against racism, and the parallel conference for civic organizations, in August and September 2001, were important to forming the Boycott Israel movement BDS.

In the preparatory process for the Durban Conference, and global echo that reflected due to the differences in the issue of slavery and Palestine, various Palestinian parties were encouraged to metaphor the South African experience and apply it to Israeli colonialism, which considered an apartheid regime. For example, in May 2001, Mahmoud Darwish wrote an article on the anniversary of the Nakba in which he said: “The Intifada, yesterday, today and tomorrow, is the natural and legitimate expression of the resistance to slavery which represented by the occupation that characterized by the most heinous forms of racial discrimination (Sa’di, 2002). BADIL has published articles on its website since the beginning of 2001, in which it talks about the similarities between the South African experience and the Israeli apartheid regime, it republished Darwish's article. Ameer Makhoul, who was director of "Ittijah" (Coalition of Palestinian Associations in the Territories of 1948), was active in the

identification between the Zionist state and the apartheid regime, he was active in the preparatory process for the Durban Conference, and refused to cooperate with Israeli organizations, he worked, on the other hand, within the Arab umbrella led by the Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian land of 1948, which caused American funding agencies (such as Ford) to stop supporting an alliance Associations (Makhoul, 2010).

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