

#FromFerguson2Gaza: A Transnational Movement of Black-Palestinian Solidarity

By

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ABSTRACT

Palestinian and Black activists have shown signs of solidarity and mutual support since the 1960s. With the emergence of low cost international travel and social media, this sense of solidarity has strengthened and expanded. While the Palestinian quest for self-determination and Black power have been extensively examined, the intersections between the two movements have received little scholarly attention. Black and Palestinian communities have a rich history of joint organizing against state-sanctioned violence, which was revived during the summer of 2014 upon the Ferguson protests, when activists increased their collaboration over social media and in demonstrations. This thesis investigates the spaces in which Black and Palestinian activists engage in transnational collaborative resistance efforts to counter American and Israeli political, social, cultural, and economic hegemony. Increasingly, Black and Palestinian activists have organized meetings, co-organized conferences and workshops, and protested in real space, while communicated and provided online support over cyberspace. The key findings suggest that this contemporary wave of solidarity offers new spatialities of organizing for joint liberation, and that physical and virtual organizing spaces are not mutually exclusive, but rather they reinforce each other.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2014, unarmed 18-year-old Michael Brown was shot by police officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri. The death of Michael Brown and Wilson's acquittal of manslaughter and criminal charges led to mass demonstrations across the historically racially divided city (Buchanan et. al, 2015). In recent years, the Black Lives Matter movement has prompted a resurgence in resistance measures against police brutality and the oppression of Black bodies in the United States (Garza, 2016). The shooting of Michael Brown marked one of the many incidences of state-sanctioned racialized crimes against Black Americans, an injustice that has persisted in the U.S. for over four centuries. The emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement, which demands social rights to all Black bodies, has reinvigorated global discussions of anti-Blackness and civic engagement of activists to the political mainstream discourse (Garza, 2016).

Meanwhile, several thousands of kilometres away, Palestinians are engaged in a similar kind of resistance. Israel's offensives in Gaza during Operation Protective Edge (2014) marked the bloodiest attack on Palestinian civilians since 1967 (UN OCHA oPT, 2015). According to the British Broadcasting Corporation (2014), hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were displaced and several thousands were killed. Today, millions of Palestinians continue to live under siege, suffer from the ramifications of illegal settlement expansion, pass through militarized checkpoints, and have limited freedom of movement (Black-Palestinian Solidarity, 2015; Norwegian Refugee Council, 2015).

In immediate response to the Ferguson protests, Gazans tweeted out messages of support with advice on resistance tactics and protest strategies against law enforcement (Bailey, 2015;

Copeland, 2015; Molloy, 2014). Palestinian activists based in St. Louis expressed solidarity with Michael Brown's family, while Black activists mobilized with them, waving Palestinian flags in retaliation to Israel's military aggressions (Black Solidarity with Palestine, 2015; Black-Palestinian Solidarity, 2015). Black activists took to social media to thank Palestinians for their advice on resistance tactics and continued the dialogue in public displays of gratitude after the Ferguson protests. What followed was an unprecedented wave of mutual support and communication between Black activists and Palestinians, renewing a historic movement of Black-Palestinian solidarity that dates back fifty years.

Black and Palestinian activists have a rich history of political and social organizing against state-sanctioned violence in the United States and Palestine. Over the past century, Black liberation movements have played an integral role in shaping the incremental freedoms of Black Americans against segregation and racial discrimination (Davis, 2016). Palestinians, since their exodus during the 1948 Nakba, have resisted through intifadas and boycott movements (Lubin, 2014). Despite recent acts of solidarity between Black and Palestinian activists since the aggressions committed against them in Ferguson and Gaza, Black-Palestinian solidarity is not a new concept. The 1960s and 1970s were an integral period for Black and Palestinian organizing, with prominent freedom fighters and activists expressing solidarity towards each other's anti-imperial and liberation struggle through physical organizing. Black radicals, such as Malcolm X and the Black Panther Party (BPP), were outspoken critics of Israel at a time in which mainstream civil rights activists largely supported the Zionist movement, while Yasser Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) vocally supported Black nationalist movements (Lubin, 2014).

While their histories of oppression are varied, they share various commonalities as

victims of racialized injustice and discrimination. Black Americans and Palestinians suffer from institutional racism, with the most basic provisions of housing rights, education, electricity, and water often denied or strictly controlled by state governments (Davis, 2016). Black and Palestinian youth are mass incarcerated and targeted by the prison industrial complex, and the legal systems in Israel and the U.S. normalize narratives that characterize Black and Palestinian identities as criminal and second-class (Black Solidarity with Palestine, 2015; Davis, 2016). Furthermore, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and U.S. law enforcement have trained together in recent years, and many of the weapons of tear gas and restraint tactics used by police officers and vigilantes have been similarly used against Palestinians and Black civilians (Bailey, 2015; Black Solidarity with Palestine, 2015). In both cases, Black and Palestinian activists have formed national resistance efforts to counter discriminatory practices of the U.S. and Israeli governments, whose political, social, cultural and economic hegemony restricts their freedom and mobility.

In contemporary times, police brutality and state-sanctioned violence against Black and Palestinian bodies have been revealed through video footage and social media, and have sparked protest within Black and Palestinian communities, and calls to support each other's resistance (Black-Palestinian Solidarity, 2015; Black Solidarity for Palestine, 2015). Since the summer of 2014, delegations of journalists, activists, and artists from Black liberation collectives have travelled to Palestine, and university students from the West Bank have travelled to the U.S. in alliance with the Black Lives Matter movement (Bailey, 2015; Black Solidarity with Palestine, 2015). This transnational solidarity movement, which calls for the liberation of Black and Palestinian people, is a movement that reflects many of the relevant and contemporary social issues that permeate U.S., Palestinian, and Israeli society.

1.1 Research Questions

While the history of joint organizing is not new, Black-Palestinian solidarity has re-emerged in different spatialities in the digital age. In examining the evolution of Black-Palestinian transnational solidarity from the most prominent origins of Black and Palestinian organizing during the Black power-PLO era to its current form, I investigate how new spaces of organizing in real space and in cyberspace have transformed the ability to protest for joint liberation. My research explores the spaces in which transnational solidarity between Black and Palestinian activists have taken place since Michael Brown's death in 2014. Specifically, my research investigates the real spaces and cyberspaces in which Black-Palestinian transnational solidarity occur, and the extent to which they facilitate or hinder social organizing and communication between Black and Palestinian activists. In doing so, this thesis contributes to the growing literature in understanding the renewal for Black-Palestinian solidarity in the 21st century and its spatialities.

1.2 Thesis Outline

This thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 2 contextualizes the historical manifestations of Black-Palestinian solidarity in the United States and Palestine by examining scholarly literature. This will provide a framework of past alliances between Black and Palestinian communities from the mid to late 20th century as documented in different academic disciplines. Moreover, this chapter examines the academic literature surrounding the use of social media and cyberspace in the productions and manifestations of new social movements. Lastly, this chapter engages with discussions of Black and Palestinian geographies, by examining their bodies in territorial landscapes and in discourse. In doing so, this chapter will clarify the gaps in literature my thesis will examine, in addressing the lack of academic attention to the spatialities of Black-

Palestinian organizing in the digital age. Chapter 3 discusses the methods used to examine the revitalized movement of transnational solidarity between Black and Palestinian activists. Chapter 4 investigates the physical spaces in which Palestinian and Black grassroots organizers mobilize for joint protest, and the effectiveness and purposes for direct acts of solidarity. Chapter 5 examines the roles of internet communication technologies and activism in cyberspace in the new transnational wave of Black-Palestinian solidarity. Lastly, Chapter 6 concludes that Black-Palestinian solidarity in the digital age offers a reimagining of grassroots organizing through real space and cyberspace by overcoming historical inaccessibilities and barriers to communication.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to understand the modern spatialities of Black and Palestinian joint organizing, it is critical to examine scholarship of Black-Palestinian solidarity, and the spaces in which these transnational efforts historically took place. Furthermore, this chapter examines academic scholarship investigating the use of cyberspace in activism, and the effects to which activists organize in these virtual spaces. I will then examine the ways in which scholars have positioned Black and Palestinian bodies in society, both in discourse and in physical geographies. In understanding the historical and contemporary evaluations of Black and Palestinian bodies in grassroots organizing and in space, my research will fill the gap in literature in examining how the intersections of the Black Lives Matter and Palestinian organizing movements in real space and cyberspace reinforce and uplift each other's movements and allow for a reimagining of Black-Palestinian solidarity.

2.1 Black-Palestinian Organizing

While the visibility of Black-Palestinian solidarity has gained momentum in recent years, the collaboration between the two organizing groups is not a new phenomenon. Scholarship, particularly in the disciplines of Ethnic Studies and History, have traced the initial relationship between Black and Palestinian resistance movements to the late 1950s and has covered the relationship between Black and Palestinian leaders in concordance with the political and historical events of the 1960s and 1970s (Lubin, 2014; Young, 1972). Academics have predominantly focused on the convergence in Black and Palestinian liberation movements as one that existed between Palestinian and Black radicals (Feldman, 2015; Young, 1972). Namely, scholarship has examined the divergence in Black opinion regarding Israel, as one that distinctly

separated Black radicals who supported Palestinian self-determination from mainstream civil rights activists who supported the Zionist movement (Feldman, 2015; Lubin, 2016; Young, 1972).

There is significant scholarship covering historical pre-1967 Black-Zionist alliances, as Zionism was viewed as an emancipation from anti-Semitism, and after years of undergoing persecution and ethnic cleansing, Black-Jewish alliances took precedent over Black-Palestinian alliances in the mainstream discourse (Lubin, 2016; Miller, 1981). However, scholars have also examined the gradual shift in Black narratives from supporting Zionism to later chastising it as a direct consequence of Israel's increasing aggressions in Palestine (Lubin, 2014). In scholarship focusing on Black-Palestinian relations post-1967, many scholars have looked at the collaborations between Black and Palestinian liberation movements at the organization level, particularly the collaborations between SNCC and the BPP, with the PLO (Feldman, 2015).

Despite the extensive literature on the relationship between Black and Palestinian identities during the 1960s and 1970s, there is little scholarship on the organizing relationship and spaces between Black and Palestinian activists from the 1980s to the early 2000s. Contemporarily, there has been a resurgence in scholarship on the new formations in which Black Americans and Palestinians have communicated transnationally in solidarity. Predominantly, scholars have examined the role of social media in easing communication between Black Americans and Palestinians, and the increased joint protests organized by delegations of Black and Palestinian activists (Bailey, 2015; Davis, 2016). The events of Ferguson and Gaza in the summer of 2014 has rejuvenated scholarship in examining the relationship between Black Americans and Palestinians, and the increasing forms of on-the-ground joint protests (Bailey, 2015; Davis, 2016).

However, while the evolution of this transnational solidarity has undoubtedly changed in its strength and visibility over the years, contemporary scholarship has examined how the current and historical forms of Black-Palestinian alliances reverberate a common disconnect between Black progressives and the mainstream over the question of Palestine (Bailey, 2015). Scholars have focused on the grassroots nature of Black-Palestinian solidarity, and how mainstream discourse has consistently ignored it as a fundamentally important political discussion (Bailey, 2015).

Current scholarship has focused on the commonalities of Black and Palestinian bodies as victims of state violence and militarized policing in the Ferguson-Gaza era (Giroux, 2014; Solidarity, 2016). Scholars have cited similar struggles of Black Americans and Palestinians, linking their resistance against state-sanctioned laws that discriminate against them and hinder their access to basic freedoms and social services (Davis, 2016; Feldman, 2015). In the neoliberal age, academics have drawn parallels between the targeting of Black and Palestinian bodies by the prison industrial complex and tear gas weaponry, while geographers have compared the common training practices between American police and the IDF (Davis, 2016; Derickson, 2016; Rickford, 2015).

Scholars have examined this new wave of transnational solidarity by specifically investigating the ways in which Black-Palestinian solidarity has taken on a multimedia apparatus (Davis, 2016). While literature has covered the historical and contemporary examinations of Black-Palestinian solidarity, scholars have only recently begun to examine the manifestations of their transnational alliance in the digital age (Atshan & Moore, 2014; Bailey, 2015).

2.2 Social Media and Cyberactivism

Social media has revolutionized the ways in which individuals share, create, and view

information in a time-sensitive manner. Cyberactivism, though a relatively new phenomenon, has radically changed the ways in which activists organize, communicate, and interact with other individuals. There has been extensive literature, particularly in the field of communications and media studies, written on the effects of interactive online forums and communication technologies in mobilizing populations and disseminating news and information, particularly in the context of social and political movements (Van De Donk, Loader, Nixon, & Rucht, 2004). Grassroots activists have not only used online mediums to strategize about protests, clandestine organizing, and sit-ins, but have used online technology to express reciprocal solidarity with other social justice campaigns and to create transnational alliances with advocacy movements around the world (Gerbaudo, 2012).

In recent years, particularly in the wake of the Arab Spring, scholars have looked at informal journalistic mediums such as blogging and social media blasts as a means for younger digital activists to solicit collective action and voice their concerns and dissent from government policies and regimes (el-Nawawy & Khamis, 2013; el-Tantawy & Wiest, 2011). Scholars have examined how younger generations are using the internet for community building and lobbying purposes, and have been able to facilitate civic engagement and collective action by using these technologies as outreach efforts (el-Tantawy & Wiest, 2011). Furthermore, scholars have focused on the use of blogging and internet communication to articulate dissent from journalism and unfavourable government discourses as a way to avoid facing the repercussions of publicly chastising government policies (Salah Fahmi, 2009). In the discipline of geography, social media and the use of the geoweb has been analyzed in literature as an opportunity to grant marginalized communities a space and platform to pursue their efforts to instill social change (Elwood & Leszczynski, 2013). Scholars within the discipline have argued that the use of new social media

has increased the potential for generations to become aware and participate in movements, and join collective action efforts for social change (Meek, 2012).

Furthermore, recent literature has focused on the extent to which social justice groups are adopting social media and how they contribute to the advancement of their group's objectives (Obar, 2013). While the internet has played an integral role in organizing grassroots events and informing the public with live updates, activists are often selective with the mediums in which they decide to communicate to their audiences. Quantitative results of social media usage reveal that advocacy groups often solicit the participation and support of internet users through specific social media interfaces such as Facebook and Twitter, while avoiding other websites that they deem as less effective (Obar, 2013). As a result, using these social media networks have allowed for an increase in collective action for demographic groups who typically have the most frequent access to the internet, namely youth and well-educated individuals (Valenzuela, 2013). Additionally, recent studies have shown that there is a positive correlation between social media use and political and social participation. Internet communications have been effective in recent years in acting as a source for news and outlet for freedom of expression, and promoting social justice campaigns to solicit the support of politically ambivalent people into joining political and social causes (Valenzuela, 2013).

Since information controlled by mass media is often dictated and heavily influenced by powerful interest groups and state narratives, literature in the discipline of communication studies has examined the ways in which social media has paved the way for marginalized members of society to participate and criticize oppressive regimes, dictatorships, and issues of inequality. Online media serves as an alternative form of independent news and content-sharing that counteracts the political agendas and biases of formal mass media. Organizers and members

of a social justice movement can use online platforms to advance a political movement remotely and in the interests of people (Carty & Onyett, 2006; McCaughey, 2014). While there is still censorship and coordination with intelligence agencies on stifling the voices of activists, social media have allowed for activists to distribute information while bypassing many of the immediate and physical scrutiny that grassroots on-the-ground organizers experience. Social media is harder to regulate with the constant updates and pace of online content-sharing, and decentralizes social justice movements so that there is less of an emphasis on a political and social backing of one leader, but rather an increase in the participation of individuals, unions, and civil societies (Gheytanchi & Moghadam, 2014; McCaughey, 2014). It has altered the way in which individuals conceive of human rights advocacy, and offers activists with contact to communities they could not reach out to previously in a cost-effective manner.

Moreover, recent literature has looked at the significance of social movements in an increasingly globally connected world. The nature of social justice, and the liberation of all marginalized people, stems from the understanding of intersectionality; that the oppression of all people are inherently tied together, and to dismantle it would involve fighting for the liberation of all ostracized members of society (Davis, 2016). Social media has been used to reach out to populations of a large demographic, among which include youth, women, racialized identities, people of lower socioeconomic status, and the LGBTQ community. As a result, social media has facilitated the connecting of social movements and the linking of oppression from one side of the globe to another (Davis, 2016).

Recent literature also suggests that the participatory web has provided younger generations with new avenues for social organizing and information sharing (Valenzuela, Arriagada, & Scherman, 2012). It has connected transnational movements beyond the scope of a

single geographical location and binds together communities who suffer from common discrimination (A. Smith, 2017). The Occupy Wall Street movement rallied together thousands of protesters in cities across the United States, while social media enabled live updates across the Arab world during the revolutions in 2011 (el-Nawawy & Khamis, 2013; Juris, 2012). Cyberactivism allowed for protestors in Egypt to communicate with each other on strategies of group networking, organizing, and advice on how to avoid police arrest (el-Nawawy & Khamis, 2013). Moreover, it created avenues for marginalized people, who lack representation and visibility at the political and national level, to participate vocally in protests against the state (el-Tantawy & Wiest, 2011). Women in the Arab world, used social media as a vehicle to express their distrust of their government, and to advance their own cause of women's rights in the broader push for socio-political change in the Middle East, by communicating with Arab diaspora communities and activists abroad (Gheytaichi & Moghadam, 2014).

However, while social media has been deemed as an effective outlet to encourage social change and efforts towards a more equitable society, scholarship has also focused on the criticisms and relative inefficiency of online communications in political organizing (Christensen, 2011). There has been recent scholarship discussing the potential for slacktivism, where the effects of perceived alliances of individuals and social justice movements are limited to the abstract cyberspace and have little on-the-ground effect for tangible social change (Christensen, 2011; Valenzuela, 2013). Slacktivism raises the concern of the true intentions of self-titled activists and the use of social media to advertise oneself for "feel-good" purposes, instead of translating online mandates into tangible action (Christensen, 2011). Additionally, while social networking sites have created a space for online participation and the dissemination of information transnationally, the effects of content-sharing have been debated (Rotman et al.,

2011). Literature has argued that in order to effectively institute desired changes of activists, an overemphasis of social media and a neglect of physical mobilization can do little to put policy into action (Rotman et al., 2011).

While social media and online communication technologies may spread public consciousness of important social justice issues, it does not always yield the most effective results and desired outcomes. Frequently, organizers on social media have been the target of government censorship and arrest (Casilli & Tubaro, 2012). Particularly surrounding waves of political unrest, efforts to censor internet posts and social media outlets have been undertaken by state governments to stifle activists and to prevent public awareness of protest movements (Casilli & Tubaro, 2012). States have attributed the heightening of riots and protests to social media, and have coordinated with social networking platforms at the political level to increasingly regulate the kinds of communication that takes place over the cybersphere (Casilli & Tubaro, 2012). Tactics such as temporarily shutting down telecommunication interfaces as in the case of the 2011 Egyptian revolution, or countering online social influence with propaganda have been undertaken to respond to outbursts of civil unrest, to curtail involvement in political retaliation and communication with external parties outside the state (Casilli & Tubaro, 2012).

While intelligence agencies and state governments have in some cases effectively censored the information access of social media to its citizens, literature has discussed the ways in which social media has introduced a space where information is quickly accessed through less regulated channels. In many cases, such as in Canadian advocacy efforts to overturn Bill C-30, the use of online media to sway public opinion and mobilize support can apply tremendous pressure to a government or state policies until demands are met (Obar, 2013). Thus, while cyberactivism cannot solely fuel social justice movements, scholarship has discussed the

potential for activists to use social media to distribute information and solicit collective action to ultimately push for social change.

2.3 Black and Palestinian Geographies in Space and Discourse

Many scholars in critical race and postcolonial studies have examined the use of power discourse, wherein many of the identities of the Otherness have been constructed by western-centric analyses of non-white bodies (Said, 1978; Shohat & Stam, 2014). These scholars have discussed the ways in which the global understanding of non-white bodies is constructed by narratives produced by mass media, western knowledge production, and Eurocentric and Americentric modes of thinking (Said, 1978). In order to have proper self-representation of non-white bodies, they call for a decolonization of contemporary and historical narratives and cultural productions (Said, 1978; Shohat & Stam, 2014).

In geographical discourse, scholars have examined how exclusionary geographies have been created by physical demarcations of space, whereas other spaces limiting the presence of marginalized bodies manifest in rhetoric and discourse (Sharp, 2009; Sibley, 1995). In examining Black geographies, scholars in the discipline have investigated how hegemonic sociocultural norms, such as the Jim Crow laws, were ascribed to Black bodies to impose limitations on Black spaces in the United States (Tyner, 2007). Historical and contemporary discourses of “Black-on-Black violence” and Black-white racial binaries mark Black people with misconstrued identities of criminality and violence (Wilson, 2005). In retaliation, resistance measures undertaken by the BPP and Malcolm X looked at the sources of their oppression beyond geographical territories and in doing so, expanded the influence of Black power organizing transnationally (Tyner, 2006, 2007). In examining the spaces of Black resistance, geographers often speak of the historical Black Power and contemporary Black radical

movement as efforts to reimagine space and constructing new and equitable societies through activism (Tyner, 2007).

Meanwhile, Palestinian access to physical and social spaces have been largely examined by postcolonial and Middle Eastern scholars. Edward Said (1992) has often written of the importance of Palestinian territorial space, but also of the theological, cultural, and personal meanings of it. He discusses the ideological framework of Zionism, which has spatially dispossessed the Palestinian people both in discourse and in praxis. Furthermore, he explores how the annexation of Palestinian territory has been wrongfully justified by the invention and construction of geographical landscapes and spaces, known as imaginative geographies (Said, 2000). Moreover, political scientists and historians have examined the creation of Palestinian ghettos, expansion of illegal settlements, and Palestinian restrictions to social provisions such as water and electricity, all of which contribute to the deterritorialization of indigenous Palestinian land and spaces (Chomsky, 1999; Said, 1992). In analyzing Palestinian bodies in space by discursive means, scholars have examined mass media representations that have created discourses in the U.S. that normalize violence against Palestinians and the expropriation of their land and resources (Chomsky, 1999; Finkelstein, 2003).

Within the discipline of geography, geographers have examined the mainstream practices of the Israelization of Palestinian landscapes in an attempt to delegitimize the Palestinian landscapes and identities associated with it (Falah, 1989). Other scholars within the discipline have examined how the expropriation of Palestinian land and erasure of Palestinian bodies in this space was influenced by geographical processes of settlement infiltration and discursive models of colonization (Falah, 1996, 2003). Israeli narratives of Palestinian landscapes as the homeland for the Jewish people and their territorial desire to seize control of Palestinian land enables them

to ascribe imaginary meaning to geographical places to justify occupation and settler-colonialism (Fields, 2012). In the discipline, scholars have largely focused on how Palestinian bodies have been manipulated or expropriated from territorial landscapes as a result of discursive ideologies that delegitimize the Palestinian attachment to physical space (R. J. Smith, 2011).

In contemporary radical discourse, feminist scholars have examined the nature of intersectionality and the tendency for marginalized identities, particularly racialized identities, to spatially organize in social movements as a result of mutual victimization from systems of oppression (A. Smith, 2017)¹. In scholarship, Black thinkers, such as James Baldwin and Angela Davis, have critically spoken against Israeli occupation and the criminalization of the Palestinian people (Davis, 2016; Seidel, 2016). However, while the parallels of ghettoization and victimization of segregationist attitudes can be drawn between Black and Palestinian bodies in the United States and Palestine, respectively, there has been minimal attention to the political and social geographies of joint Black-Palestinian organizing.

2.4 Examining the Gap in Literature

While these two movements share a deep history and various commonalities as marginalized victims, their struggles are still unique to their histories. Although scholars have provided insight on their common narratives and historical alliances, the reason for a resurgence in a unified struggle through both real space and cyberspace has yet to be explored. While scholarship has considered the impacts of online activism, spatial exclusions of Black and Palestinian identities, and the history of Black-Palestinian organizing, there has been little scholarship on the purposes of spatial organizing, in real space and cyberspace, as a means of advancing Black-Palestinian solidarity in the discipline of geography. Particularly, there has

¹ There has been some ongoing controversy about Smith's positionality as to whether she is of Cherokee descent and how this impacts her research. This is an ongoing discussion that has yet to be confirmed or rebuffed.

been little geographical examination in understanding how particular modes of spatial organizing has been used to fulfill activist objectives, while the virtual and physical organizing spaces can also potentially threaten their joint alliance and solidarity.

Furthermore, there has been little examination on the implications of Black-Palestinian spatial organizing on the nature of leadership, joint protest, and reimagining of joint alliance over time. There has been a gap in literature in addressing how contemporary social changes in the way information is shared and communicated since the Malcolm X-PLO era has reimagined Black-Palestinian solidarity in the digital age. While scholarship has examined the bonds that have strengthened Black-Palestinian solidarity at specific moments in time, there has been little examination on the progression and the manifestations of this solidarity in real space versus cyberspace. To fill this gap in literature, my research will delve into the existence of such spaces to study the ways in which joint struggles of Black-Palestinian solidarity have empowered activist movements to increase visibility of the Black and Palestinian struggle to the mainstream political and social discourse. In essence, my research will examine the intersections of real space and cyberspace organizing that have crafted nuanced spaces of Black-Palestinian solidarity in creating resilient and global discourses of Black and Palestinian liberation in the digital age.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

My research fills the current gap in literature in understanding the spatialities of Black-Palestinian solidarity in the digital age. Specifically, since the 2014 mainstream resurfacing of Black-Palestinian solidarity, this thesis investigates how new spaces of organizing in real space and in cyberspace have transformed the ability for Black and Palestinian activists to protest for joint liberation. In order to examine this research question, I required a variety of methods in order to understand the different organizing spaces of Black-Palestinian transnational solidarity.

3.1 Investigating Transnational Solidarity in Real Space and Cyberspace

First in examining Black-Palestinian organizing in real space, I examined academic literature of Black and Palestinian social activism. Scholarship from the past several decades provided a historical context on Black-Palestinian solidarity movements from their inception in the 1960s, from a time when mainstream Black activists largely conformed with the Zionist mandate, to the gradual and contemporary support for Palestinian self-determination. Recent academic literature was obtained to focus on the transition of historical Black-Palestinian organizing to its current arrangement, and the events that led to the resurgence of this alliance to better understand changes in the spaces of social and political organizing.

Given the contemporary and grassroots nature of this new wave of solidarity, virtual data was pertinent in understanding the alternative ways in which activists seek out communication with each other. In particular, the presence of social media platforms provides a solid foundational understanding of transnational social justice campaigns led by the millennial generation, and the spaces in which activists currently organize. Twitter and Facebook posts, hashtags, video campaigns, and photographs were harvested in English, to collect data on the

public forms of communication undertaken by Black and Palestinian activists in cyberspace (See Appendix A and D). Examining this data helped understand the nature of their public displays of solidarity in virtual mediums, but also revealed images of joint protest and on-the-ground demonstrations in real space. In soliciting this data, I sought out the specific reasons and ways in which Black and Palestinian activists have aided each other in their respective social justice campaigns to further understand the temporal, spatial, and contextual patterns of this transnational alliance. Given my own positionality as someone who supports and follows Black and Palestinian activist websites, several of these contemporary transactions of Black-Palestinian solidarity frequently appeared on my social media websites, thereby easing the process of collecting data.

Additionally, I collected relevant primary documents from organizations' websites, including multimedia resources, speeches, newsletters, and petitions, which shed light on the historical foundation between Black and Palestinian activists from the 1960s onwards. Archived photographs, speeches, and newsletters released by civil societies and organizing collectives during the Black Power-PLO era were obtained to supplement current findings to confirm the collaboration and publicized support between Black radical organizations such as the BPP and SNCC, and Yasser Arafat and the PLO. This documentation is purposeful to compare the different methods of collaboration between Black and Palestinian organizers historically in real space and its gradual evolution towards the contemporary state of Black-Palestinian solidarity in the digital age.

3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Moreover, I conducted semi-structured interviews with community members, activists, and scholars from North America and the Middle East involved with Black-Palestinian alliances.

Upon receiving approval from the Research Ethics Board I, 114 emails were sent to community organizers, activists, and scholars involved in Black-Palestinian solidarity movements, requesting for a Skype or email interview on their opinions and involvement in these transnational solidarity movements. 26 individuals responded expressing interest in partaking in the interview process, with 12 participants ultimately undergoing the full interview on Black-Palestinian joint activism. Skype interviews were facilitated to reach a participant pool in several geographical locations, including individuals in Jordan, Canada, and the United States, and email interviews allowed for easier coordination of the interview itself, particularly given the different geographical locations and time differences of the interviewees.

Personal contacts, as well as organizations and individuals who publicly endorsed Black and Palestinian liberation whose email contacts were publicly available, were contacted for an interview. The emails explained the nature of my research, interview details, and a request for an interview through Skype or email correspondence². All interviews were conducted over email or Skype in English, with Skype interviews ranging between 30 to 70 minutes, with the purpose of understanding the reasons for why these organizations partake in Black-Palestinian solidarity and what they hope to achieve from organizing in these activist spaces (See Appendix B). An oral consent form was read aloud over Skype or a document was sent and agreed upon for email interviews before proceeding with the interview questions. Interviewees were ensured that the content of the interview would be kept confidential, their names and identities would be assigned with pseudonyms, and that all information disclosed during the interviews could not be traced to their names (See Appendix C). Furthermore, I did not ask any questions that had the potential to harm participants and ensured that participants had to option to opt-out of the interview at any

² The content of the email was approved by the REB I.

time.

For many of the grassroots organizers that were interviewed, I was able to solicit my participant pool through snowball sampling as well as initial personal contacts I had in my own organizing circles. Although all interviews were audio recorded with the approval of all participants, I recorded observations during the interview for common themes and narratives regarding their involvement in Black-Palestinian solidarity. While all interviews conducted were transcribed and considered for qualitative data analysis, discourse analysis was used to parse out the common reasons and opinions behind participation in Black-Palestinian solidarity and the reasons for why they organize in real space versus cyberspace for protest.

3.3 Limitations of Study

Some limitations arise from the study conducted. First, the small sample size of interviewed participants limits validity and representation of activists involved in Black-Palestinian solidarity, particularly activists living under occupation, whose strictly controlled electricity may prevent access to internet communication throughout the day. Secondly, while my positionality as a non-white identity granted me access to some activist circles, my lack of physical contact with participants and identity as a non-Palestinian nor non-Black activist made it difficult to fully comprehend the testimonials and lived experiences provided by Black and Palestinian organizers. I acknowledge the potential for introspective error as someone who does not identify with either of these identities, and I do not intend to speak on behalf of these communities, rather shed light on an increasingly studied alliance between Black and Palestinian activists.

CHAPTER 4: BLACK-PALESTINIAN SOLIDARITY IN REAL SPACE

Historically and in the present, physical organizing and mobilization in real space has played a fundamental role in social justice and advocacy movements. Particularly in regards to national protest, organized protest in real spaces can send shockwaves to other parts of the world, and inspire local and regional demonstrations of important social issues. These transnational acts of protest amount to a larger collective resistance that reiterate the notion that despite diverse spatial geographies, oppression can be systemic and interrelated in its practices and manifestations. Despite the increasing use of social media for the creation and circulation of activist movements, and the gradual shift to internet communications for advancing advocacy, recent efforts of spatial organizing, such as the Women's March, suggest that the spirit of physical mobilizing is still alive. In regards to joint mobilizing between Black American and Palestinian communities, recent history has proved that the power of mass protest and direct confrontation is not yet lost – when people organize in large numbers, demonstrations have the capacity to effectively form a resistance to a larger institutional power, in discourse and in praxis.

4.1 From the Olive Branch to the Power Fist: Palestine and Black Power

Before the introduction of the internet, organizing in real space was the dominant channel of communication between Black and Palestinian activists. The earliest traces of prominent Black-Palestinian solidarity dates to the 1960s and 1970s, when Malcolm X, SNCC, and the BPP communicated to their supporters about the importance of Palestinian liberation (Brenner & Quest, 2013; Young, 1972). The solidarity existed in the form of organizing in real space, by distributing flyers and newsletters to their communities and delivering speeches advocating for the PLO (Lubin, 2016; Miller, 1981). In the early 1960s, Malcolm X was among the first Black

American leaders to meet and organize with the early leaders of the PLO, as both parties disapproved of and criticized Zionism as a political ideology and imperial strategy of the West (Lubin, 2014). The cooperation between the Palestinian and Afro-Alliance that linked the struggles of Palestinian freedom fighters and Black radicals illuminated an explicit observation about the kinds of individuals involved in joint Black-Palestinian collaboration at the time. While individuals may have expressed dissent from the Zionist political philosophy, much of the organizing and grassroots mobilizing that tied the Black and Palestinian struggle together in real space existed at the organization level, with the Black Muslims, SNCC, and the BPP among the most vocal against Israel's settler-colonial practices (Miller, 1981). Throughout the 1970s, practices of joint organizing continued with Black organizers such as Stokely Carmichael and Huey Newton speaking out to the Black community to encourage them to mobilize against imperialism, and held talks with PLO representatives (Miller, 1981).



Figure 4.1 Malcolm X with early leaders of the PLO in 1964³

³ LiberationNews.Org. (2014). Malcom X with early leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1964. Retrieved from https://www.indybay.org/uploads/2014/03/04/malcolm-x-with-plo-leaders_1_1_1.jpg.



(Left) Figure 4.2⁴ and (Right) Figure 4.3⁵ 1967 SNCC Newsletter condemning Zionism

Prior to 1967, mainstream Black political support for Israel was not viewed as a point of contention (Bailey, 2015). Leaders of the civil rights movement often organized with Zionists and supported Israel's independence until 1967, where the support over Israel diverged into two separate narratives. On one hand, mainstream civil rights activists, including Martin Luther King Jr. and WEB Du Bois, publicly announced their commitment to Israel's security against Palestinian terrorism and the maintaining of a Zionist state (Lubin, 2016). Advertisements in the New York Times contained signatories of well-known Black Americans pledging support for Israel in the 1970s, while the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) and the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) were among several Black organizations to officially pledge support for Israel (Miller, 1981). However, not all Black activists adopted this discourse. In November 1st 1970, a delegation of Black activists signed a document entitled,

⁴ SNCC. (1967, June - July). Third World Round-Up The Palestine Problem: Test Your Knowledge. *SNCC Newsletter*. 4. Retrieved from <http://photos1.blogger.com/blogger/3614/3786/1600/1967.SNCC.defends.Palestine.large.p.1.4.jpg>.

⁵ SNCC. (1967, June - July). Third World Round-Up The Palestine Problem: Test Your Knowledge. *SNCC Newsletter*. 5. Retrieved from http://4.bp.blogspot.com/_Q_cuohbm2B8/Rk0RDDdk82I/AAAAAAAAAAY/ESPntbwPqQk/s1600-h/SNCC.2.jpg.

“An Appeal by Black Americans against United States Support of the Zionist Government of Israel,” condemning Israel’s practices of settler-colonialism and occupation (See Appendix A.1). While many mainstream civil rights activists supported Zionism, Black radicals were heavily critical of the Israeli government. Black radicals viewed Israel as an enabler and product of Western imperialism and systemic racism, and opted to support Palestine as an anticolonial struggle (Lubin, 2016; Miller, 1981).

During my interview with former Black Panther Party member John⁶, he cited the difficulties in acquiring information about the Palestinian struggle outside radical Black circles prior to the Six Day War. He noted that Black activists endorsed the Zionist struggle as Zionism historically “was presented as an anti-colonial struggle and a struggle for a democratic state...in an environment where you had remnants of colonialism,” and the “high level of Jewish involvement in supporting the civil rights movements” as reasons for why so many mainstream civil rights activists supported the Zionist cause (personal communication, October 2, 2016).

Subsequently, radical Black Power groups such as the SNCC began to formally chastise the notion of Zionism and challenge the normative pro-Israel narrative in the United States (Lubin, 2016; Young, 1972). As the Chair of the SNCC, Stokely Carmichael drew the parallels between Israeli and American oppression of Arab and Black bodies, citing “the same Zionists that exploit the Arabs also exploit us in this country.” (Young, 1972, p. 78). Malcolm X in his famous article entitled “Zionist Logic” featured in a 1964 newspaper in The Egyptian Gazette, discussed Israel as a creation by “the ever-scheming European imperialists” developed to “geographically divide the Arab world.” (Liberation Staff, 2017). Since their open disapproval of the Israeli government, more Black radical movements like the BPP took to journalistic mediums

⁶ Pseudonym is used for anonymity

to promote their solidarity with the PLO. Political leaders and parties including Arafat, Al-Fatah, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) published editorials in BPP newsletters, allowing for the Palestinian struggle and occupation to be expressed to the U.S. public, and exposed to most importantly a Black American demographic (Lubin, 2016). This marked a deviation from the mainstream Black political class, who despite the ongoing war crimes committed against Palestinians at the hands of the Israeli state, continued to support Zionist policies.

Moreover, Black radical leaders began to openly express support for the PLO as a rejection of Western imperialism and alluded to the mutual victimhood of Black and Palestinian bodies as targets of persecution, and the systematic racist policies against Arabs and Black Jews living in Israel (Feldman, 2015; Miller, 1981). Petitions, signed letters, and political speeches emerged in this era as a key source of Black-Palestinian solidarity, as Black radicals continued to call upon their allies to advance Palestinian liberation and the pan-African nationalist cause (See Appendix A.1). In the 1980s, alliances between community organizers continued to grow at the political and community level, with delegations of activists from the BPP travelling to the Middle East in 1980, and Yasser Arafat maintaining close contact with Black revolutionaries (Feldman, 2015; Lubin, 2014). However, this act of mobilizing denoted that while Black Americans and Palestinians were organizing in real space and collaborated in direct communication, it was a very small subset of the activist population. As a result, their joint struggles existed far from the mainstream consciousness at this time. Furthermore, the distribution of flyers and newsletters existed only in print mediums, therefore limiting the access of information about joint Black-Palestinian solidarity to an even smaller demographic of literate, accessible populations.

One significant dimension of historical Black-Palestinian organizing related to the physical apparatuses is the nature of leadership within these movements. Whether protests and mobilization tactics take local, regional, or national scales, they often exist in a hierarchal system, wherein physical protests and organized vigils are hosted and coordinated by famous activist leaders, student organizations, and working groups. While in the 1960s through the 1980s, many stakeholders involved in joint organizing took in the form of Black radical organizations and Palestinian political parties, organizing in real space often required the coordination under a centralized leadership.

4.2 Palestinian and Black American Geographies

In the case of the United States and Israel, physical space has been manipulated by both states to isolate Black Americans and Palestinians in small and restricted areas, in their execution of hyper-segregated and bigoted policies. Through these means, social provisions such as housing and transportation are effectively manipulated to minimize their ease of access to spaces occupied by hegemonic powers. Historically, Black Americans and Palestinians were subjected to segregated buses to distance their bodies away from white Americans and Israelis, respectively (Haaretz Editorial, 2015). Many of these forms of discrimination against Black Americans and Palestinians draw parallels, such as both communities' access to water rights, frequent harassment from local and state policing, and spaces of isolation (Davis, 2016). However, while these spaces may resemble racialized oppression, Black and Palestinian activists have changed the use of these spaces to jointly protest and create geographies of resilience and resistance.



(Left) Figure 4.4 Palestinians in Support of Eric Garner⁷
 (Right) Figure 4.5 Delegation of Black activists near Ramallah⁸

In protests captured by photographic images, Palestinians have been photographed holding signs in solidarity with Black victims of police brutality on occupied territory. Meanwhile, Black Lives Matter activists have been photographed with Palestinian *keffiyehs*, the black and white scarf that is a symbol of Palestinian nationalism and solidarity, and flags in many sites of protest across the United States. In the past few years, there has been an increase of delegations of Palestinian-based activists in various American cities coordinating protests with their Black American counterparts in protest of police brutality and racialized violence (Bailey, 2015).

However, while there are many parallels between the Black and Palestinian struggle, the physical restrictions imposed by the Israeli government on Palestinian civilians underscore many of the explicit differences between these communities. First, Palestinians lack national sovereignty and live under occupied territory, one that has been recognized as illegal per the stipulations of international law. Additionally, the ability to physically mobilize in Palestine has been restricted to a degree by the impositions of roadblocks and privatized checkpoints.

⁷ Abu Rahma, H. (n.d.). *I Can't Breathe! Justice for #EricGarner #FromPalestineToFerguson*. Retrieved from <http://masetv.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/palestine-to-ferguson.jpg>.

⁸ telesur. (2016, July 31). Black Lives Matter in Palestine to Protest U.S.-Funded 'Genocide'. *Telesur*. Retrieved from http://www.telesurtv.net/export/1470003085760/sites/telesur/img/news/2016/07/31/black_lives_matter_palestine.jpg_1718483346.jpg.

However, the joint ability for Black and diaspora Palestinian communities to join forces and organize in Black Lives Matter protest in cities across the United States has allowed for Palestinians to advocate for their cause without worry of Israeli-sanctioned measures that attempt to inhibit their freedom of speech and movement.

As the marginalization of Black Americans and Palestinians have been reflected in their access and use of social space, there has been a deliberate attempt to limit the freedoms of Black and Palestinian people by imposing restrictive measures on their mobility. Thus, resistance to this has become particularly important for Black-Palestinian solidarity. While there are differences in their respective struggles, similarly to the disenfranchisement of the Palestinian people, Black people have been systematically targeted under the influences of gentrification, suburbanization, and post-industrial urban planning (Goetz, 2011; Massey & Denton, 1988; Thomas, Ritzdorf, & Hodne, 1997). The class warfare, inequality, military aggressions, and neocolonial efforts that have been waged against both communities has been very much contingent on the institutions and hegemonic powers who produce these anti-Black and anti-Palestinian spaces. Since governments have imposed strict regulations on the range and territorial landscapes in which people can mobilize, modern activists have taken to social media to increase visibility of their geographic-based struggles. As activists increasingly become aware of the positive outcomes of collaboration through these social media channels, individuals who learn about the Black-Palestinian struggle can be encouraged to join efforts for physical mobilize in real space, thus applying more pressure to local police and governments.

4.3 Strategic Organizing and Communication in Real Space in the Ferguson-Gaza Era

The semi-structured interviews conducted with activists involved in Black-Palestinian solidarity revealed many things about the purposes of organizing in real space for transnational

solidarity. Of the most important things that activists delineated as integral to the advancement of Black-Palestinian solidarity, was the importance of relationship building. Activists discussed that despite the importance of social media and internet communications in facilitating alliances between networks of people, there is no substitute for physical organizing and relationship building from direct contact. Oftentimes while initial contact with activists from distant locations may begin with an online introduction and exchange of emails, activists use this platform to expand the opportunity for delegations of Black and Palestinian activists to travel to the United States and Palestine to discuss grassroots organizing strategies.

Moreover, when interviewees were asked about their initial involvement and interest in Black-Palestinian solidarity, all activists discussed the influence of their heritage, or an inner-circle friend or family member who encouraged their participation in the Black-Palestinian transnational cause. Exchanging ideas and forming community bonds with individuals enabled activists to acquire interest in Black-Palestinian mobilizing, thus stressing the importance of physical and direct communication with community members to effectively begin mobilizing in real space. Additionally, it stressed the importance of physical organizing spaces and personal interactions as a reasoning behind why many activists decide to initially join advocacy campaigns.

While social media has helped publicize and circulate social trends, the internet has its faults in failing to capture the attention of the public beyond ephemeral interest. Older activists such as John cited that “one of the problems that frequently happens here in the U.S. is that people don’t pay attention to history...they engage in a level of magical thinking, and so they believe that the current wave of solidarity between Black activists and the Palestinians sort of popped out of nowhere...it’s complicated because it really is rooted in 40 years of work, that was

carried out by groups like the Panthers, the Republic of New Afrika, the African Liberation Support Committee, some of the, what were called at the time, communist groups, a lot of which had substantial African American membership, you had the national Black United Front, you had the role of Reverend Jesse Jackson in '84 and '88 campaigns. So none of this stuff appeared magically.” (personal communication, October 2, 2016). This notion was reiterated by many of the older activists interviewed, reaffirming that much of the activism between Black Americans and Palestinians in real space leading up to the mainstream revival of Black-Palestinian solidarity has been largely unrecognized by mass media. In the quick paced nature of the internet, online technologies often fail to acknowledge the deep-rooted solidarity and underground grassroots organizing that occurs far from the mainstream consciousness, though this form of underground physical organizing has been integral in shaping the relationship between Black and Palestinian activists into its contemporary form.

4.4 Black-Palestinian Solidarity in Real Spaces in the 21st Century

Although online technologies can capture time-sensitive posts, they often lack the ability to recognize local organizing initiatives that occur on a daily basis. Many grassroots campaigns and mobilization efforts go unnoticed by the public, particularly when these advocacy efforts occur on a small scale, and the ability for activists to reach audiences outside those in their immediate periphery is contingent on the coverage granted to them by mass media networks. While the internet exposed many incidents of militarized policing and police brutality against Black and Palestinian bodies, interviewees spoke to the origins of their resistance efforts as movements that work in local spaces to address geography-specific challenges, such as issues of food insecurity, electricity and water shortage, political repression, and state violence.

While many activists, particularly the younger demographics, have adapted to the

accessibilities and use of social media, communication strategies predominately relying on internet-based mediums has raised concerns of cybersurveillance. One beneficial outcome of organizing in real space is the assurance of anonymity and prevention of third-party interference in information transfer. For Black and Palestinian advocacy groups, organizing in real space avoids the risk of blacklisting, identity theft, cyberbullying, and online exchanges of hostility that may impinge upon activists' ability to freely express resistance to political ideologies. Upon conducting the semi-structured interviews, it was noted by some activists that cellphone use and technologies were not permitted into the meeting room due to the secrecy and confidentiality of the discussion. Although one of the major tenets of social organizing is expanding citizens' understanding of marginalized communities, there are also circumstances in which publicity of information and organizing is intentionally avoided, particularly when there are serious repercussions to contesting national governments. Thus, when organizing involves a level of secrecy, mobilizing in physical spaces is a more secure approach for the exchange of ideas.

Moreover, participatory journalism has empowered marginalized people to voice their own political views and construct self-representations of their own communities. This requires however the physical presence of activists to document incidents of police brutality and state violence in the way they see fit. Thus, despite the widespread impacts of social media in advancing Black-Palestinian solidarity, it is heavily dependent on the physical presence of Black and Palestinian activists on-the-ground.

Additionally, cheaper plane tickets and flight frequencies between North America and Palestine have allowed for ordinary grassroots Black and Palestinian activists and citizens to travel to each other's countries and to share stories of occupation, state-sanctioned violence, and policing. Detroit-based activist Kendra was sent to Palestine for nonviolent peaceful justice work

to document observations of Palestinian conditions under occupation and relay information back to her community (personal communication, February 13, 2017). Historically, the cost of international flights restricted the feasibility of travel to a largely upper-class. The introduction of reduced airfare has opened the possibilities for Black American and Palestinian delegations and civil societies to travel to Palestine and the United States respectively, and university campuses to recruit and solicit community activists to speak at speaker series on Black-Palestinian solidarity. Furthermore, protests can sporadically manifest in geographical spaces when individuals confront state actors. When Black and Palestinian individuals are physically encountered by state police, individuals can mobilize surrounding neighbours in immediate response to protest in ways that social media cannot.

4.5 Joint Collaborations on University Campuses

Youth are often the most virtually connected and acquainted with social media and technology. Demographically, they have also been historically and contemporarily at the forefront of social justice movements (Davis, 2016). Thus, the intersection of the two seem to naturally play a role in grassroots movements. Particularly in the age of Black Lives Matter, the ability to record and upload videos of police violence on social media interfaces to incite protests transnationally has introduced a new era of actively mobile Black university students (White, 2016). Of the many spaces that have actively partaken in Black and Palestinian liberation movements, university campuses have played an integral role. Black Student Unions and solidarity groups for Palestinian human rights have frequently collaborated on campus, for instance, participating in motions for privatized prison divestment that mass incarcerate Black and Palestinian bodies. Other times Black and Palestinian activists have cohosted events and speaker panels on transnational solidarity and recently, Black Student Unions have endorsed

motions of BDS on campus (See Appendix D.1).

Having been surrounded by discussions on anti-Blackness and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at McGill, I have witnessed, and been a part of direct interactions with organizers who advocate for joint solidarity. Frequently, McGill student-activists involved in Palestinian human rights organizing have attended events in support of Black liberation, from vigils to support Black lives to supporting Black history month. Meanwhile, the Black Student Network (BSN) endorsed the BDS motion during the Winter 2016 General Assembly in support of an effort initiated by the McGill's BDS Action Network. In March of 2016, the BSN and McGill's Students in Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR) cohosted an event entitled *Black Perspectives on the Question of Palestine*. This event organized a speaker panel in which community organizers from the Dream Defenders and Black Lives Matter-Detroit travelled to Montreal to speak on their experiences in Palestine and drew the similarities between the Black and Palestinian struggle.

This organized talk is one of many that has swept university campuses in North America (See Appendix D.1). Delegations of Palestinian university students, such as the Right2Education, have completed tours around the U.S. to speak about their struggle under occupation and learn the realities of Black people in the U.S. to relay back to their home communities (Black-Palestinian Solidarity, 2015). While many are taking to social media and listservs to promote the existence and visibility of such events, it is the physical presence and gathering of students and community members in real space that facilitate active engagement and exchanging of ideas on protest strategies. The age demographic of this event mostly consisted of university students, with a few attendees coming from nearby areas in Montreal. While this event was a public event and open to all identities, the attendance was predominantly McGill-centered as the event was

advertised within internal McGill networks. This observation suggests that while the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is still a politically contentious issue, more frequently younger generations are mobilizing to draw connections between the Black and Palestinian struggle, and bringing it to the forefront of discussion on university campuses.

4.6 Limitations of Organizing in Real Space

However, there are a few limitations in the use of physical spaces as a means of social organizing. First, state police often use federal discourse to characterize civilian actions as displays of civil disobedience. Activists can be arrested on the scene and pay social consequences even without violating federal laws. Thus, physical organizing reveals an interesting finding in the balance of power. While spaces of demonstrations may be organized by Black and Palestinian activists as spaces of resilience, state authorities and police forces are often able to implement unjustly acts of aggression and threats in the same organizing spaces. Additionally, since physical organizing in the form of vigils and joint protest requires planning and is time-sensitive, protests and demonstrations can be more difficult to organize, particularly as it requires both Black and Palestinian activists to congregate in real space at the same time.

Furthermore, Black people have been subject to movement for 400 years and have been intrinsically manipulated by segregationist policies, ghettoization, and gentrification. Similarly, Palestinians are obliged to live in specific zoning areas, wherein electricity and provisions are regulated by the Israeli government, and illegal settlements have dictated many of the modern-day constraints of Palestinian housing rights. Moreover, much of the Palestinian diaspora community was forcibly expelled at the hands of Israeli state. This physical restriction of space and mobility makes Black and Palestinians communities vulnerable by providing governments with the power to ghettoize and restrict their mobility with infrastructure, militarized

checkpoints, and lack of amenities. Thus, geographical boundaries set up to reduce the mobility and freedoms of Black and Palestinian bodies can make it difficult for individuals to mobilize in real spaces. Additionally, organizing in real space restricts the scale at which protests and demonstrations can occur. Some efforts of self-expression and protest are restricted by government policy, such as the requirement of protest permits and the need to outline the demonstration route in advance. Thus, organizing online, and reaching out to mainstream consciousness of everyday civilians can avoid some of the issues that activists face when engaging in joint efforts of Black-Palestinian solidarity in real space.

4.7 Conclusion

Protest both in cyberspace and real space take on a temporal apparatus. In virtual spaces, once the trendiness of a phenomenological movement loses the interest and attention of the mainstream, it is common for movements to fall into the periphery and lose traction. While the volume and pace of information sharing and dissemination in the digital age has allowed for movements to get buried under other trending issues, the act of physical mobilizing and direct action continues the legacy of Black-Palestinian solidarity. Activist organizing in real space ensures the longevity and continuation of joint alliances and fight for liberation. Thus, rather than to delegitimize and abandon the previous organizing tactics of direct confrontation and on-the-ground protest, it is important to acknowledge the merits of social organizing in real space to maximize the mission of Black-Palestinian solidarity.

CHAPTER 5: BLACK-PALESTINIAN SOLIDARITY IN CYBERSPACE

International solidarity movements for women's suffrage and rights, Occupy Wall Street, and climate change resistance rallies have communicated the ways in which individuals from all corners of the earth have unified under a common struggle. The physical, geographical distance between communities has become increasingly more obsolete with the advent of internet communications, in regards to the ability to share ideas, organize, and express solidarity. Community outreach to individuals and information sharing amongst activists has become a common and popular phenomenon enabled by social media. Scholars who have examined the purpose of social media to advance political and social issues have noted the ways in which social media has the power to solicit and coordinate large and rapid responses to political events and has transcended the opportunities to communicate with distanced communities (Gerbaudo, 2012; Shirky, 2011). Others, have offered more critical perspectives on the use of social media, alluding to the potential for a feel-good culture of slacktivism that produces nontangible results (Rotman et al., 2011). In the case of Palestinian and Black activists, active political and social organizing in virtual space has played an integral role in facilitating modern day activism in their own communities, as well as the increased communication and formed alliance between the two.

Social media is often so viral and quick that it updates users about the transpiration of events in real time. Livestreaming of rallies and immediate press releases can be instantly updated moments after an incident. Consequently, the internet quickly picks up on trending topics and raises issues that gain the most traction to the public eye. Thus, social media has expanded the accessibility and dissemination of information to web users. Before the internet, Black activists predominately sought out print mediums to express their solidarity with the Palestinian struggle. While these newsletters served to educate Black progressives of their

alliance with the PLO and the Palestinian cause, this pact of solidarity rarely transcended beyond the Black radical community. These sources of information were often contained and only sought out by progressive communities, and thus often did not reach the mainstream consciousness. Now with improved technology, it has expanded the spatial ability to organize and communicate with communities that are ideologically and geographically different. With the rapid access to information, distribution of information by way of pamphlets and newsletters have transitioned to information sharing on websites and easily digestible Twitter and Facebook statuses and posts.

In most recent times, online media has communicated to internet users the various incidents of police brutality and murders against Black and Palestinian civilians on tape, though in several of these cases, perpetrators have been exonerated from their crimes. The internet offers a different source of news and opportunities for independent, non-state affiliated news sources to be accessed by web users. These channels of information sharing, allow for individuals to be exposed to a different account of event reporting, which is particularly useful when documenting state sanctioned violence against Black and Palestinian bodies. The use of information sharing in cyberspace has allowed for web users, particularly the younger demographic who frequent these spaces, to move away from the current direction of news networks, which have increasingly become marketed and dictated by private and corporate interests.

Moreover, with the advent of mass media, the nature of news reporting has also changed. News has gradually now shifted to more prevalent uses of live footage reporting, and articles are more frequently accompanied by videos and photography. This introduction of on-the-ground video footage has allowed activists to react to incidents of police brutality and state violence without physically being present, and hold solidarity vigils and rallies in their own local

communities. While media coverage of state violence of the U.S. and Israeli police forces against Palestinians and Black Americans is frequently and intentionally subdued by higher forms of government, it is often video evidence of police aggression towards Black and Palestinian bodies that trigger a response in the international community.

Since the 1992 Los Angeles riots, resistance and direct action in response to media footage has increasingly found its way into the mainstream due to the prevalence of state violence on Black bodies, and the video circulation of it, in the United States. Participatory journalism has allowed citizens to play an active role in the documentation of human rights violations, which offer a legitimate alternative to traditionally state-owned journalistic mediums that may attempt to stifle marginalized voices. Thus, communities in remote locations are able to witness the crimes committed against Eric Garner in New York and Abed al-Fatah a-Shari in Hebron, prompting an awakening of ordinary citizens to the daily aggressions regional and state police pose on Black and Palestinian people. While mass media has often used their platform to pursue orientalist agendas and reify false mischaracterizations of Black men as thugs and Palestinians as terrorists, social media and the ability to attach a profile to an individual, has allowed for people to humanize Black and Palestinian bodies, and challenge the misconceptions that exist in mainstream discourse.

Particularly, citizen engagement in online participatory journalism has been important in providing power and voices to Palestinians and Black Americans, who are able to document and blog their daily struggles online. The virtual spaces of information sharing, which allow for the movement of online petitions, viral videos, and organizing strategies to be rapidly accessible, has transformed activist spaces and the spatial connectedness between communities. For instance,

diaspora Palestinian activists, whose ancestors were displaced during the 1948 Nakba⁹, can reconnect with their national identities by following campaigns spurred by Palestinian nationals and supporting their pursuits transnationally. It has expanded the spatial component of communication to various degrees of connection, wherein activists can gather inspiration from other social movements to advance local causes. The ability to hold remote press conferences and organize multi-location protests as an offensive strategy, has not only changed the imagination of political and social activism, but has also applied increasing pressure on the opposition to respond to faster and more mobile people.

This chapter addresses the ways in which social media and online technologies have facilitated and enabled Black-Palestinian solidarity in the digital age. Specifically, this chapter engages with the use of Twitter, both by Black and Palestinian communities independently, and their use of Twitter to communicate with each other. Additionally, in extrapolating from the semi-structured interviews conducted with 12 activists involved in transnational solidarity, I examine their reasons for organizing in cyberspace versus real space and their purpose and intentions behind mobilizing transnationally. I examine scales of virtual organizing and to what purpose the internet hinders or enables Black-Palestinian solidarity efforts. However, as all social movements have their inherent risks, I examine the concerns and setbacks of organizing in cyberspace and the ways in which activists mitigate situations that threaten their activism.

5.1 Twitter Activism

One of the most prominent organizing spaces between Black and Palestinian activists has taken place on social networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter. Black Lives Matter activists often take to Twitter to mobilize other Black Americans, who comprise over a quarter of

⁹ The Nakba, which translates to “catastrophe” in Arabic, was an exodus of the Palestinian people from their land

all U.S. Twitter users, to join their struggle against institutional racism (Brock, 2012). Black Lives Matter has been tweeted over 30 million times, indicating how a hashtag phenomenon can fuel a larger movement and resistance against racialized violence to international audiences (Wortham, 2016). Black Twitter is a cultural phenomenon that has allowed Black identities to create and connect on a virtual community level. It is through these platforms that Black people can communicate shared experiences and have an outlet for Black cultural expression, much of which has been characterized by political and social events (Brock, 2012; Sharma, 2013). Consequently, hashtag movements such as #ICantBreathe, #IfIDieinPoliceCustody, and #HandsUpDontShoot have circulated around social media interfaces as an expression of anger, social commentary, and political expression of Black identities in response to police brutality. Similarly, Palestinian organizers have often taken to the use of social media to encourage boycott campaigns and connect their struggles to Twitter users abroad (Bailey, 2015; Davis, 2016). Through social media forums like Twitter, Palestinian liberation movements are able to deliver information to supporters while pushing for on-the-ground action by mobilizing Palestinians at the local level (Bailey, 2015).

Twitter activism has been a prominent display in the reimagining of Black-Palestinian activism, particularly in the post-2014 era, starting with the Ferguson protests (Bailey, 2015; Davis, 2016). Upon the shooting of Michael Brown, Palestinians living in Gaza were among the first to tweet out messages of support and advice to protestors in Ferguson on resistance tactics and ploys to deter the police from tear gassing them. These public displays of encouragement were followed by an increased attention within the activist community on the importance of organizing and strategizing between civilians over Twitter (See Appendix D.2). Activists quickly linked the use of the same tear gas canisters used against Palestinian protestors by the Israeli

military as the same manufacturer of tear gas canisters used against Black activists in Ferguson. Black activists quickly responded with reactions and gratitude towards Palestinians, and thus a new resurgence in a public display of online organizing emerged.



Figure 5.1 Tear Gas Comparisons in Ferguson and Gaza¹⁰

The ability for Palestinian youth to communicate with Black Lives Matter protestors over Twitter has transcended the possibilities for communication that had not existed before. Online tweets and messages of solidarity since then have often been exchanged publicly over social media interfaces between Black and Palestinian activists, particularly in the wake of a major event or incident. Despite physical restraints on Palestinian freedom of movement due to checkpoints and Israeli-sanctioned roadblocks, social media has offered an alternative way for Palestinians to communicate their struggle to international audiences, and particularly reach out to Black Americans. Thus, Black activists can receive first-hand accounts of police brutality and life under Israeli occupation through direct online communication with Palestinians, and Palestinians can support and provide advice to protestors at Black Lives Matter rallies and vigils from remote locations.

¹⁰ Barghouti, M. (2014, August 13.) Twitter Post. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/MariamBarghouti/status/499760284907864064>.



Solidarity with #Ferguson. Remember to not touch your face when teargassed or put water on it. Instead use milk or coke!

11:06 PM - 13 Aug 2014

859 333



Milk really does work for tear gas. Thank you #Palestine for the tip #Ferguson

RETWEETS 1,704 LIKES 1,163

2:17 AM - 19 Aug 2014

Follow button and other interaction icons

(Left) Figure 5.2 Palestinian activist advising Ferguson protestors on resistance tactics¹¹
(Right) Figure 5.3 Black Lives Matter activist thanking Palestinian activists for advice¹²

5.2 Social Organizing in Cyberspace

The semi-structured qualitative interviews I conducted with 12 activists from the United States, Middle East, and Canada, aimed to understand the reasons for why activists involved themselves in Black and Palestinian liberation movements and the spaces in which they exhibit their transnational solidarity. The interviews conducted with activists involved in social justice campaigns revealed that organizing, while it has tied communities transnationally, also depends highly on social media to encourage mobilization in more localized, regional areas. By using internet forums and social media networks to advance their local fight against injustice, activists receive feedback and seek output from external communities. Many university campaigns applying pressures on administration to divest from companies complicit in Israeli occupation and mass incarceration often garner the online support from other university campuses in Palestine and in North America. Grassroots organizations working to secure water rights for Black communities in Detroit and Flint correspond with individuals living in Palestine, who frequently suffer from water shortage and resource deprivation themselves. Thus, these activists have used web interfaces to exchange information with Palestinians for strategy-building and joint campaigning on how to tackle issues of systemic government expropriation of local

¹¹ Barghouti, M. (2014, August 13). Twitter Post. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/mariambarghouti/status/499754015983681536>.

¹² Elzie, J. (2014, August 18). Twitter Post. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/nettaaaaaaaa/status/501613887930634240>.

resources. Furthermore, many cases of resource deprivation, such as housing rights, wage theft, water and electricity access, and health care, are pertinent and lacking in both Black and Palestinian communities, and yet are limited in access by larger institutional and state powers. In elucidating their struggles over social media, many of the localized campaigns have caught the eye of international communities, and thus creates an opportunity for transnational collaboration.

Additionally, from many of the responses of the activists who participated in my research, many of them revealed that using avenues of communication to find common issues between Black activists in the U.S. and Palestinians in Palestine is integral in moving forward towards racial parity in their countries. Linking the Black and Palestinian social justice movements that campaign against institutional racism has allowed for an intersectional analysis of racialization and discrimination against their identities. As Kenneth disclosed during his interview, the contemporary spaces of organizing done in activist communities is mostly done online. He emphasized that “this is especially true of communities that are geographically separate...at the height of the Ferguson protests, Palestinians in Palestine and Black people in Ferguson began corresponding with each other on Twitter, sharing experiences and advice on various topics, such as how to recover from being pepper-sprayed or how to avoid the negative medical consequences of tear gas.” (personal communication, February 2, 2017). Like Kenneth’s observations, activists reiterated that many of these online platforms seek to bridge communities by creating organizations that work towards a common goal.

Moreover, one fundamental result revealed by the interviews is that the use of technology for cyberactivism is frequently contingent on age group. Older activists often spoke of physical mobilizing techniques and attending rallies and covert meetings in community centers, but often alluded to youth involvement when speaking about the importance of social media in organizing.

Many of the older activists frequently acknowledge the use of the internet as a useful tool for information acquisition and sharing, but less frequently discussed the potential of the web for organizing purposes. Conversely, the younger demographic acknowledged the importance of historical solidarity between activists, however emphasized online campaigning and protesting. Young activists, particularly students, noted the necessity of social media to publicize university campaigns to solicit the attraction of the student body and to provide outreach to individuals who are not familiar with the history of Palestine and racial discrimination against Black bodies in the United States. Thus, forms of virtual organizing for social justice purposes have been more important in use for certain demographics over others.

However, not all activists, regardless of age, believe that cyberspaces of organizing are the most effective ways of resisting larger institutional structures. In some cases, cyberactivism has been seen as a setback in fulfilling the intentioned mandate of advancing Black and Palestinian causes. For instance, some activists interviewed have been the target of internet campaigns meant to blacklist and intimidate students from expressing their opinions through social media. Fake profiles have been created linking student identities with their LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter profiles, and accuse them with labels of anti-Semitism and anti-American sentiments. Additionally, others activists raised the concern of slacktivism, and the tendency to spend more time committing to stand by other marginalized communities in rhetoric, while doing very little on-the-ground. While these expressions of solidarity communicated online can be effective in delivering symbolic messages of hope and unity, words can easily be buried under the rapid inflow of web posts, and lose traction and meaning in the long course. These issues raise the concern that while social media is particularly important in instilling public consciousness of Black and Palestinian problems, activists cannot solely depend on this form of

organizing.

5.3 Scales of Organizing

Historically, solidarity and social organizing have always occurred at different geographical scales. Local resistance movements such as the March on Washington have spurred national movements for justice, and regional frustrations have prompted intifadas and resistance efforts supported by the nation-state. One interesting finding of my research is that the extent to which individuals actively organize over the web occur at different spatial levels. Many of these activists are involved in on-the-ground organizing work for local, geographic-specific purposes. University students most frequently engage in political and social organizing on university campuses, and NGOs most frequently work to address particular social cause, such as education reform and housing rights within American and Palestinian communities. While the internet lends activists the opportunity to reach out to billions of web users, protestors mostly organize in spaces of activist circles. However, while Black and Palestinian activists may organize in specific realms, the accessibility of public posts by ordinary citizens is mostly unrestricted. Citizens, for the most part, can become aware of the efforts of local, lesser-known communities, regardless of where they live, and can virtually adopt and support grassroots movements from afar. In an interview with a Black scholar-activist, Sally described social media as the tool in which she “primarily connects to other activists and gets informed about causes, events, articles, etc.” and cites internet technologies as the initial medium that enabled her in learning about and later participating in Black-Palestinian activism.

Furthermore, the ability of cyberactivism to extend the spatial imagination of communication and transnational protest has also changed the nature of leadership of social justice movements. For instance, during the civil rights and Black power movements, Black

activists often congregated at churches, universities, and social spaces, and often mobilized under a centralized leadership. Activists organized as members of the PLO, SNCC, BPP, and followed the leadership of organizers such as Yasser Arafat and Malcolm X. Now, with the increased participation of organizers using virtual mediums to obtain and share information, there is less reliance on the direction of a movement from a particular leader. National resistance movements such as BDS and Black Lives Matter have expanded the conception of organizing from the local to the global scale. Individuals, regardless of their physical proximity to other activists, can actively participate in transnational expressions of solidarity by encouraging acts of resistance in their own community. These movements, while they have been spearheaded by individuals, require no spatial headquarter nor do they depend solely on the encouragement of a single resistance leader. Instead, it remains its stronghold and support from thousands of activists transnationally who operate under a decentralized, spatially diverse range of locations. Thus, the impact of spatial organizing as a virtual form has allowed for a change in the nature of organizing, as well as the direction of leadership and power.

5.4 Black-Palestinian Joint Campaigns

While social media has elucidated many of the parallel struggles between both communities and have bonded individuals together, joint campaigns for liberation have also been initiated through technological means. Websites such as Black-Palestinian Solidarity (2015) exist to communicate the parallels between the Black and Palestinian struggle, and to join forces for justice. The website has released a video featuring some of the most prominent Black critics and activists, such as Angela Davis and Cornel West, who draw parallel struggles that plague Black and Palestinian communities (Black-Palestinian Solidarity, 2015). The Black activist solidarity website, Black Solidarity with Palestine, has solicited the signatures of over a thousand Black

activists, artists, scholars, students, and community organizers, all of whom have publicly displayed their name and organization in support of the Palestinian cause (Black Solidarity with Palestine, 2015). Black-Palestinian joint campaigns include multimedia videos, press releases, and signed statements unifying Black and Palestinian activists. Other platforms, such as policy statements and demands released by the Movement for Black Lives, explicitly calls for the support for the BDS movement under a list of demands written by Black Americans to the U.S. government, and alludes to Israel as an apartheid state (The Movement for Black Lives, 2016).



Figure 5.4 Black-Palestinian Solidarity video featuring prominent activists¹³

Moreover, real spaces, such as university campuses, are often a hotspot for Palestinian and Black liberation movements. It is frequently a common practice for university campus groups to release press releases and solidarity statements on Facebook pages, communicating to their local university chapters and student body about their solidarity, typically after national outbreaks of hostility towards Black and Palestinian people (See Appendix A.2). Among those that are most active on social media and technologies, younger generations have been at the forefront of using their access to the internet to pursue social justice movements. Black Student

¹³ Black-Palestinian Solidarity. (2015, October 14). YouTube Video. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xsdpg-9cmSw&t=60s>.

Unions and Palestinian human rights clubs on university campuses have campaigned online for the divestment of university investments in the prison industrial complex, as corporations such as G4S subjugate both Black and Palestinian bodies. Campaign websites have been created under university student group names as joint efforts to pressure universities to comply with their ethics standards, and academic boycotts have been enforced on university campuses through petitions, event hosting, and letters of support (Appendix D.2).

More increasingly, NGOs for Palestinian and Black social justice list the importance of Black-Palestinian solidarity in their website headings, with the notion that without mutual support for liberation, ultimate goals of individual justice will be obsolete. International movements such as divestment campaigns and Black Lives Matter and its organizers, have regularly addressed the need to tackle oppressions that exist in international communities, such as other struggle against imperial and oppressive institutional powers (Black Lives Matter, n.d.). As a result, mainstream and internationally recognized campaigns that have governed most recent efforts to address the conditions of Black and Palestinian people have implemented a bond of solidarity to form a stronger allegiance.

While local riots and cases of civil struggle is often met by resistance efforts by city police, the same type of instant physical reaction cannot be met over the Internet. While there are large doubts over cybersurveillance and restrictions on freedom of the press, cyberspaces of activism are often less regulated in regards to the type of content material, particularly in the ability for institutions to respond in shutting down activists in a timely manner, especially given the vast amount of publications and social media blasts used in transnational campaigns.

Furthermore, while social media has been a space where users are frequently chided for hiding behind technology to express their sentiments, it can also serve as a space for increased

communication and attempt at dialogue between individuals. Organizing virtually has allowed for activists to reach out to communities with ideologically different opinions and to engage in discussion and dialogue with the opposition, with the hope of educating and convincing others to join the protest movement. For instance, while organizing with other activists and daily communication may occur mostly at a regional and national scale, the internet has also played a vital role in attempting to create dialogue and a space for exchange between communities that ideologically differ. Activists interviewed during my research revealed the necessity of reaching out to communities, virtually and physically, to individuals who identify as Zionists or as ring-wing Black theocrats who reject the notion of a Palestinian state. Moreover, they spoke to the various internalized struggles of their own movements, alluding to issues of anti-Blackness in Palestinian communities, and pro-Israel stances in the Black evangelical community, and the need to challenge these notions through dialogue. Oftentimes in activist communities, individuals formulate identities and alliances based on mutual and shared interests. Social media however, has facilitated the ease at which activists can communicate with individuals who think outside the radical progressive box that activists often isolate themselves in.

Finally, another positive outcome of the modes of social organizing in cyberspace is the ability for marginalized communities, such as Black and Palestinian voices, to have a proper space in expressing their opinions and expand their resistance movements. While Black Americans are often underrepresented in government and academia, Palestinians civilians also have very little power in claiming a voice in the international community. It has been a common tendency for governments to repress the opinions of Black and Palestinian civilians and speak over these communities in defining their future. Giving Black Americans and Palestinians the appropriate space to speak against police brutality and state violence empowers them to

challenge and dispel the misconceptions and negative stereotypes of Palestinian and Black people that are perpetuated and reinforced by state actors.

5.5 Surveillance in the Age of Cyberactivism

However, while social media and the web provides activists with a new space to engage in organizing, it also provides the opposition, particularly government surveillance agencies and anti-Black and Zionist individuals, to use the same spatial organizing tactics to intimidate and run opposition campaigns. The paper trail of online statements and social media organizing raises concerns, particularly in regards to issues of surveillance. The reduction of absolute privacy means that linking identities and affiliations of organizing groups and movements to individuals is viable, particularly with the surveillance efforts of governments on social media. Other third parties, such as blacklisting websites that are accessible by web users globally, intend to target mostly young activists of colour, and exist to mark activist identities as criminal and anti-American, with the intention of threatening their chances of future employment. In a testimonial delivered by a Chicago-based student activist, Georgia revealed her challenges with social media citing that while her Palestinian organizing group has “to be careful with technology because so many people are able to get into [their] our messages and stored files,” in the instances she has tried to deactivate her account she realized it was “not plausible with how many people [she has] I have connections with on Facebook” for purposes of her activism. Thus, organizing in cyberspace also welcomes an increased risk in security, particularly as the targeting is often done by powerful entities targeting an already vulnerable group of people.

5.6 Conclusion

Historically and in the present, marginalized communities often protest larger, more powerful oppressive regimes to demand for a more just society. The physical use of mobilizing

and force can be deeply effective in pressuring governments and oppositions from imposing harm on local communities. However, these movements often require large numbers and geographically close communities to travel in one common area to protest civil inequalities. Physical spaces reserved for social justice organizing often exist to claim safe spaces for the vulnerable, and reach access to a particular crowd. However, grassroots movements operating in cyberspace has transcended the opportunity for activists to reach platforms beyond their mainstream left-wing base. Thus, the introduction of virtual organizing as a means of advancing social justice issues has been instrumental in redefining global involvement in human rights issues.

Demographically, youth are often among the most engaged in social media and technology. It is also common for younger individuals to be at the forefront of many social justice movements, and this trend is commonly found amongst Black and Palestinian activists as well. Thus, the intersection of the two is important in understanding why it is particularly pertinent for young Black and Palestinian activists to use social media as a strategic organizing tactic. By organizing online, and reaching out to the mainstream, young activists are able to capitalize on the use and accessibility of social media to update people with the events happening in their life and in their communities in real time. Words of advice and support through the internet have the power to encourage and mobilize people to campaign for Black and Palestinian social justice movements.

Transnational movements can solicit more support and attention of individuals who realize the effectiveness of a global campaign for important causes. What this new space of virtual organizing does offer is for a different and additional space of activism, and has transcended the imagination and opportunities for activists to organize and communicate

amongst themselves and with strangers. Moreover, it has allowed for ordinary citizens, who have been restricted in resources and ability to travel, to communicate their struggle of living under U.S. and Israeli occupation in time-sensitive manners. However, social media campaigns are often flux and timely, and multimedia videos have often reduced decade long struggles to thirty second timeframes. Mainstream interest in social issues are often ephemeral and attention to movements such as Black Lives Matter often exist in reaction to a case of police brutality against Black bodies. In essence, while it is important to consistently keep the momentum of online activism alive, the effectiveness of cyberactivism is not met without its criticisms. Civil society members should continue to find a medium between mobilizing in physical spaces and communicating to internet users online.

CHAPTER 6: VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE

On February 10th 2017, National Football Association (NFL) player of the Seattle Seahawks Michael Bennett issued an open letter on Twitter addressing his decision to decline a state-sponsored invitation to visit Israel with his NFL colleagues. Bennett's decision to reject this offer dismissed Israeli attempts to forge propagandist narratives of Israel's inclusivity and utopia. His decision came a day after an online letter was released, drafted and signed by leading Black activists, scholars, entertainers, and athletes, calling upon the NFL delegation to stand against racism and oppression in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle (Zirin, 2017). Signatories such as Angela Davis and Olympian John Carlos drew the common parallels faced by Palestinians under Israeli policies and the conditions of Black and Brown bodies in the United States, in an attempt to dissuade NFL players from travelling to Israel (Zirin, 2017). This is one of the many contemporary efforts Israel has undertaken in an attempt to restore Israel's image amidst global awakening to the country's war crimes. However, the Brand Israel campaign to solicit professional American athletes, which Israel's head of Strategic Affairs and Public Diplomacy Minister Gilad Erdan deemed as necessary in countering the BDS movement, backfired significantly (Democracy Now!, 2017).

Bennett's tweet sent a ripple effect across the sports world, inciting responses of disapproval and agreement amongst fans, players, and organizations for his political stance. In an interview shortly after denouncing the Israeli government, Bennett cited the internet for enabling him to compare the similarities between the state violence enacted upon Black and Palestinian citizens, and ultimately in influencing his disapprobation of the Hasbara propagandist trip (Democracy Now!, 2017). In his interview with Democracy Now! (2017), Bennett spoke about

his admiration of past Black activists, and his desire to continue the legacy of holding oppressive institutions accountable and advocating for the self-determination of the Palestinian people. Though his political view was contested by many, it quickly prompted for eight more NFL players to opt out of the same trip, in line with their commitment to social justice.

Bennett's resistance is one of many cases where campaigns for social justice and sports have intersected. What seems like an unprecedented political decision from an NFL player is not in fact an isolated incident. Contemporary displays of Black-Palestinian solidarity have been increasingly influenced by stakeholders typically uninvolved in activist organizing. Ordinary citizens to musicians and professional athletes have paved the way for individuals to join the transnational movement for Black-Palestinian solidarity. While Bennett is not the first professional athlete to make such political claims, the process of taking to social media to express his views on the occupation elucidated the new waves of activist organizing, and its efficiency in delivering a message to the mainstream public. This has been one of the central themes of the many new manifestations of transnational solidarity in the digital era.

Thus, there are a few key contributions this thesis has made in examining the spatialities of organized Black-Palestinian protest in real space and cyberspace in the digital age. First, this thesis examined the ease of travel and increased direct organizing in the new age that has reimagined Black-Palestinian protests from the local scale to the global scale. Cheaper airfare and between the U.S. and the Middle East has allowed for increased physical exchanges between Black and Palestinian activists to witness each other's realities and share organizing techniques beyond individuals who belong to political parties and revolutionary groups. Like the Ferguson protests, on-the-ground demonstrations can send shockwaves to other geographical areas of the world, and create national dialogue on racialized violence. With the current conditions of

increasingly affordable rates of travel, the ability to engage in direct has allowed for more frequent engagement between Black and Palestinian organizers.

In North America, the increasing collaboration between Black and Palestinian organizing groups on university campuses has revealed that the modes of spatial organizing have prompted young people to advance the Black-Palestinian cause. The use of social media by younger demographics and the direct protests undertaken by them underscores the shift in mainstream youth discourse on the Israel-Palestine conflict and Black Lives Matter as issues that are becoming increasingly less taboo. Furthermore, in the digital era of joint protests, relationships between Black and Palestinian communities are emboldened by the current social and geopolitical climate. Right-wing governments that continue to systematically deny Black and Palestinian bodies of their humanity have conversely bonded Black and Palestinian communities together in physical spaces of peaceful protests, as their similar oppressions, and their resistance to it, becomes increasingly more apparent and pronounced.

Additionally, this thesis has contributed to understanding the ways in which cyberspace has given Black and Palestinian citizens more autonomy and space to organize and represent themselves. Less regulated spaces like the internet allow activists to express dissent from government policies and mainstream narratives of corporate-owned mass media networks. Historically and contemporarily, Black and Palestinian identities have been crafted by narratives that label them as criminal and less-worthy, and online journalism has been able to challenge these notions. Narratives that previously would not be covered, such as the joint training of U.S. police forces and the IDF, and the role of transnational private security companies in inflicting harm on Black and Palestinian bodies have been communicated to the public through cyberspace.

Moreover, cyberspace has paved the way for marginalized individuals to dictate their own narratives and document incidents of police brutality and violence. This alternative grassroots approach to posting personal political views has also encouraged figures of high visibility of scholars, athletes, and musicians such as singer-songwriter Lauryn Hill to take to social media forums to inform their support for the Palestinian case. Thus, cyberspace in the Ferguson-Gaza era has also allowed for an increased engagement of citizens in participatory journalism and has facilitated a space that binds the relationship between Black and Palestinian struggles at a rapid and constant speed.

Black-Palestinian solidarity in the Ferguson-Gaza era has also enabled for a movement of decentralized leadership, where activists and individuals mobilize under a common goal rather than receiving direction under a centralized figure. When physical organizing is impeded by geopolitical restrictions on freedom of movement, the internet can be used as an alternate mode of communication and outreach from any location. While there are limitations on cybersecurity, communities are inevitably emboldened by knowing the existence of many others who stand in solidarity with their struggle for freedom.

Furthermore, internet communications have opened the possibilities for communities that do not typically communicate to build networks with each other, and to pique the interests of an apathetic but socially mobile population. The use of social media has increasingly destigmatized conversations surrounding the rights of Black and Palestinian identities in the digital age. Consequently, cyberspace organizing has enabled a deeper engagement between Black and Palestinian communities, and has solicited the involvement of individuals without previous exposure to either struggle.

Real time information feeds have reimagined the pace at which activists can organize and

respond to human rights violations, and communicate with activists who live in distant locations. The compression of time and space in cyberspace has enabled Palestinian citizens in remote locations to access and observe the struggles of Black people in the U.S. in nearly real time, and vice versa. Cyberspace has also enabled Black and Palestinian individuals to respond to immediate events remotely through social media channels. Consequently, this has also changed the way in which activists can strategize online to coordinate vigils and peaceful sit-ins in real spaces. This has allowed for a more mobile people, and has allowed for faster reaction time to major political and social events, as well as the ability to coordinate on-the-ground protests quickly.

While Palestinians were forcibly exiled from their lands 69 years ago, Black bodies were forcibly stolen and enslaved during the transatlantic slave trade. Throughout time and space, Black and Palestinian identities have been subjected to the effects of white supremacy and racialized violence. The intersections of the Black and Palestinian liberation movement have allowed for individuals to mobilize under a common goal of resisting institutional racism to liberate Black Americans and Palestinians. While this solidarity dates to the era of Black Power-PLO, this thesis covered the contemporary manifestations of Black-Palestinian solidarity that have allowed for activists to conceive of new ways in which Black and Palestinian bodies can fight for joint freedom. This thesis adds to the geographical scholarship by examining the intersections between the different spatialities of protest in real space and cyberspace to explore new forms of organizing to resist American and Israeli systems of oppression.

While the transnational reach of the internet allows for an increased involvement and awareness of Black-Palestinian advocacy work, it also encourages individuals to mobilize in physical protest through outreach presence. Thus, what this contemporary wave of Black-

Palestinian solidarity communicates is that the modes of physical and virtual organizing are not mutually exclusive. These spatialities of organizing in real space and cyberspace reinforce and work in tandem with each other. While the U.S. and Israel continue to dominate Black and Palestinian bodies by means of militarized policing and imperial dominance, Black-Palestinian solidarity has allowed for a grassroots imagining of resisting systems of oppression and reimagining joint liberation.

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A.1 Solidarity Statement before the Digital Age

[illegible]

CLIP AND RETURN TO
GREATAME

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____
ZIP _____

Organizations listed for
identification purposes only

A.2 Solidarity Statements in the Digital Age



Columbia University Black Students' Organization

March 24, 2015 · 🌐

In light of recent flying campaigns done by Aryeh: Columbia Students Association for Israel (formerly known as LionPAC), in which they use the image and words of Martin Luther King, Jr. in favor of their Zionist views, we as the Columbia University Black Students' Organization, write to condemn their co-optation of Black liberation struggle for the purposes of genocide and oppression and we re-proclaim our unequivocal support of Columbia Students for Justice in Palestine, Jewish Voice for Peace - Columbia/Barnard Chapter, and the people of Palestine in their fight for freedom from Israeli apartheid.

Numerous Black scholars and activists, both contemporary and otherwise, have already connected the Palestinian struggle for liberation with the struggle for Black liberation. The chant "From Ferguson to Gaza" echoed this year is not hyperbole, but a unifying idea against oppressive systems that subjugate Black people and people of color globally and act as a reminder of our tradition of solidarity and support. While we as an organization also acknowledge that Black and Jewish people also share a history of oppression, we understand that Zionism has no place in our solidarity and, thus, we cannot and will not excuse the actions of the Israeli state and their acts of discrimination, segregation, and genocide. This is NOT what Black liberation activists stood for. This is not what we will stand for.

We encourage Aryeh and their supporters to more deeply explore the relationship of Blackness to Palestinian liberation and Israel before they continue to leverage our legacy and heritages in their favor. Until then, from Ferguson (and Harlem and Staten Island and Chicago, and Cleveland, OH, and Port Gibson, Mississippi and...) to Gaza, WE stand on the side of liberation and justice.

764 Likes 161 Comments 132 Shares



Wellesley Students for Justice in Palestine - WSJP shared

Ethos- Wellesley College's post.

November 11, 2015 · 🌐

Wellesley SJP stands in solidarity with Ethos and students of color at Wellesley and the University of Missouri



Ethos- Wellesley College

November 11, 2015 · 🌐

Letter of Solidarity to #ConcernedStudent1950 and Call of Action to Wellesley College

Over the course of this semester, student activism has sprung forth on a number of different college campuses, most recently at the University of Missouri. Student protests and rallies have been conducted at Mizzou, drawing attention to the racism that has historically pervaded the campus. In the wake of particular incidents that have arisen this academic year, a group of 11 students, named Concerned Student 1950 in recognition of the year which the first Black student was accepted to the University of Missouri, drew up a list of demands for the college including a request to hire more Black faculty as well as a call for the resignation of college president Tom Wolfe who had been quiet about addressing student concerns. This week in a victory for this student led movement, Wolfe resigned from his position. However, in the wake of this resignation, Black students at Mizzou have been targeted and threatened for their successful activism.

To #ConcernedStudent1950, in response to your courageous organizing of Black students at the University of Missouri, we, the Black community at Wellesley, extend ourselves in gratitude and solidarity. We recognize and identify with your struggle to cultivate a space of inclusion at an institution that was not built for you, but was built on your backs. Our hearts are heavy with the knowledge that it took Black members of the football team refusal to play, Jonathan Butler compromising his body through a hunger strike, and media attention for the members of the administration to respond to your concerns.

We rejoice at the resignation of Tim Wolfe. We are saddened that the previous organizing and concerns of our Black siblings, specifically the Black queer women of Mizzou, that gave momentum to the demonstrations of Jonathan Butler and the football team were ignored by Mizzou administration. Black bodies should not have to be abused or compromised, be it in the form of a

From the women of Gaza to the women of Flint

MECA staff in Gaza are among the writers and signatories of this letter. We believe this message is an important way to mark International Women's Day.

Dearest Women in Flint,

On International Women's Day, we, the Palestinian women living under Israeli occupation, announce our solidarity and extend our compassion to you. We understand what you are going through because we face similar hardships in Gaza.

Access to clean and healthy water is a basic right according to international law and agreements. But many people are still fighting to achieve this right. For example, we are living in the Gaza Strip and are suffering a lot and struggling to get clean and healthy water. The Israeli occupation steals our water from the aquifers, controls our water resources, and does not allow us to access the clean water in the West Bank or to build water treatment facilities. Sea water, waste water, and other pollutants contaminate our water leading to sickness and death. This forces us to choose to buy clean water at unaffordable prices or to provide other basic necessities for our families. We know you face these impossible choices too.

In Gaza, we survived three brutal wars in six years and we have lived more than 10 years under harsh economic conditions as a result of the Israeli siege imposed on the Gaza Strip. The poverty and unemployment reached unbelievable levels. Because what we have been through, we know and we understand what you are going through. It is sad, it is tough.

1st May 2015 | International Solidarity Movement | Occupied Palestine

We, Palestinians struggling against Israeli Apartheid, stand in solidarity with the residents of Baltimore.

We send our condolences to the family of Freddie Gray and all those murdered in police custody. We add our voices to the demand that the killers be held accountable. We send our solidarity to the families of the prisoners. Those arrested for demanding justice, for being black, brown or poor. We add our voices to the demand for their immediate and unconditional release. We stand in solidarity with those whose homes have been foreclosed, with those who live under the constant watch of surveillance cameras and under the constant threat of being stopped, harassed, arrested and assaulted by a militarized police force in their own streets.

Your struggle for justice, equality and freedom is our struggle.

In solidarity,

University Teachers' Association – Gaza

Palestinian Students' Campaign for the Academic Boycott of Israel (PSCABI)

Bader Campaign for the Boycott of Israeli Goods

Herak Youth Center

One Democratic State Group (ODSG)

Youth Against Settlements (YAS)

The Popular Struggle Coordination Committee (PSCC)

The popular committee of Bil'in against the wall and settlements

The popular committee of Ni'lin

The Jordan Valley Solidarity Campaign (JVS)

Palestine Youth for Peace and Justice (Palyouth)

The Malcolm X Grassroots Movement condemns in the strongest terms the Israeli assault on Gaza and the US governments full political and diplomatic support for this illegal and amoral military operation.

We firmly assert the right of the Palestinian people to resist their ongoing occupation and colonization by the Israeli government and the international forces of Zionism. We also firmly support the Palestinian peoples right to self-determination and statehood, and the unequivocal and irrevocable right to return.

We recognize that this assault comes at a very critical period for the Southwest Asian and North African region. A period where political alignment's are being renegotiated and political maps redrawn by a shifting body of forces, some progressive and some extremely reactionary. In this context we call on the Arab League and all of the Arab governments from Algeria to Iraq, from Saudi Arabia to Sudan, to stand united in solidarity and resistance with the Palestinian people. And to those states that supported regime change in Libya, and are supporting the ongoing regime change operation in Syria, we call on them to provide the Palestinians with the same level of political and economic support for their just cause against the illegitimate Zionist colonial project.

Finally, we call on all people of Afrikan descent within the United States to stand with us in condemning this assault and the ongoing occupation of Palestine. We ask you all to join us in demanding that President Barack Obama condemn this assault, demand that Israel cease its aggression, abide by international law, and by the numerous United Nations resolutions that condemn the occupation, the apartheid system, and the various human rights violations being committed by the Israeli state.

Free the Land!

Monday, November 19, 2012

Solidarity Statement: From Baltimore to Palestine

We, Baltimore-Palestine Solidarity, hear the Palestinian demands for freedom. As we continue to struggle for and demand an end to the criminalization and occupation of the Black community in our city and an end to the militarization of our city streets, we send our heartfelt support and love to the Palestinians who have resisted the institutional violence of occupation, displacement, and racism for decades.

We recognize the current acts of violence being committed against the Palestinian people by the Israeli government as a form of collective punishment, terror, and a tactic for entrenching the occupation. To the current generation of Palestinians rising up against 67 years of brutal settler-colonialism and state terror in your homeland: your struggle is just.

We know that your struggle for justice, equality, and freedom is our struggle. We know that the tactics of oppression in Palestine/Israel, such as mass incarceration and intensified surveillance, are directly linked to and replicated in Baltimore. We know that Israel's power to silence Palestinian voices and amplify their own narrative in the American media directly contributes to the legitimizing of Islamophobia in and around Baltimore City. We know that our city and our state support the ongoing Israeli occupation in Palestine and siege of Gaza through economic, military, political, and symbolic means. We therefore, extend our solidarity from a place of shared struggle and resistance as well as from a place of responsibility.

We understand that the violence and the loss of lives will not end until the occupation ends and the occupation will not end until the U.S. stops funding Israel's human rights abuses. It is with these understandings in mind that we call on our city to stop enabling Israeli Apartheid through programs like the the Ashkelon-Baltimore SisterCity Program, the well documented tactical training and exchange programs between local police departments and the Israeli Occupation Forces, and other initiatives that fund and support the Israeli military and security industrial complex. We condemn local and state officials, such as Senator Cardin, for their unwavering support of the Israeli occupation and their failure to acknowledge the Palestinian struggle for freedom.

We add our voices to the demand that the Israeli occupation of Palestine end; we affirm our solidarity with Palestinian popular resistance; and we assert that the future of equality and freedom we struggle towards in Baltimore includes the equality and freedom of the Palestinian people.

In struggle and with love,

Baltimore-Palestine Solidarity

Viewpoint: In support of SAFE

BY STUDENTS ALLIED FOR FREEDOM AND EQUALITY

Published March 18, 2014

As students at the University of Michigan committed to the self-determination and humanity of all peoples, we, Students Allied for Freedom and Equality, along with the undersigned organizations, call for our University to divest our tuition dollars from all corporations that facilitate violence against human beings. In this solidarity letter, we specifically call ethical attention to the systematic violation of Palestinian livelihood by the Israeli government.

Palestinian suffering is thoroughly documented by [scholars](#), [human rights activists](#), and [world leaders](#). During the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, 750,000 Palestinians were forcibly expelled from their homes. Their land was confiscated as stipulated by Israel's [Absentee Property Law of 1950](#) and they were denied the right to ever return to their homes. Since then, Israel has further continued to expand its control over Palestinian lands, subjecting Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza to an oppressive military occupation.

In clear violation of the [Geneva Convention](#), the Israeli government subsidizes the building of illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank. More than [500,000 settlers](#) currently inhabit the West Bank in more than 100 illegal outposts. Meanwhile in Gaza, Israel maintains a cruel and devastating blockade that enacts collective punishment on all civilians by restricting their access to basic necessities including food and medicine, leaving 61 percent of Gazans [food insecure](#).

Palestinians in the Occupied Territories are subject to a system of discriminatory, humiliating and arbitrary [laws](#). They are forced to use [separate bus systems](#), put up with [checkpoints](#) that physically disrupt their everyday lives while threatening their economic survival, and are routinely imprisoned without charge and due process. Besides the targeting of Palestinians, tens of thousands of African asylum-seekers in Israel are subjected to systematic violence through inhumane [anti-Black policies](#), detaining migrants for up to three years without trial in open-air detention centers in the Negev desert.

Black Solidarity Statement with Palestine

The past year has been one of high-profile growth for Black-Palestinian solidarity. Out of the terror directed against us—from numerous attacks on Black life to Israel's [brutal war on Gaza](#) and chokehold on the West Bank—strengthened resilience and joint-struggle have emerged between our movements. Palestinians on Twitter were [among the first](#) to provide international support for protesters in Ferguson, where St. Louis-based Palestinians [gave support on the ground](#). Last November, a delegation of [Palestinian students visited Black organizers in St. Louis](#). Atlanta, Detroit and more, just months before the Dream Defenders took representatives of Black Lives Matter, Ferguson, and other racial justice groups [to Palestine](#). Throughout the year, Palestinians sent multiple letters of solidarity to us throughout protests in [Ferguson](#), [New York](#), and [Baltimore](#). We offer this statement to continue the conversation between our movements:

On the anniversary of last summer's Gaza massacre, in the 48th year of Israeli occupation, the 67th year of Palestinians' [ongoing Nakba](#) (the Arabic word for Israel's ethnic cleansing)—and in the fourth century of Black oppression in the present-day United States—we, the undersigned Black activists, artists, scholars, writers, and political prisoners offer this letter of reaffirmed solidarity with the Palestinian struggle and commitment to the liberation of Palestine's land and people.

We can neither forgive nor forget last summer's violence. We remain outraged at the brutality Israel unleashed on Gaza through its [siege by land, sea and air](#), and three military offensives in six years. We remain sickened by Israel's targeting of [homes](#), [schools](#), [UN shelters](#), [mosques](#), [ambulances](#), and [hospitals](#). We remain heartbroken and repulsed by the [number of children Israel killed](#) in an operation it called "defensive." We reject Israel's framing of itself as a victim. Anyone who takes an honest look at the destruction to life and property in Gaza can see Israel committed a one-sided slaughter. With [100,000 people still homeless in Gaza](#), the massacre's effects continue to devastate Gaza today and will for years to come.

Israel's injustice and cruelty toward Palestinians is not limited to Gaza and its problem is not with any particular Palestinian party. The oppression of Palestinians extends throughout the occupied territories, [within Israel's 1948 borders](#), and into neighboring countries. The Israeli Occupation Forces [continue to kill protesters](#)—including children—conduct [night raids on civilians](#), hold hundreds of people [under indefinite detention](#), and [demolish homes](#) while expanding illegal [Jewish-only settlements](#). Israeli politicians, [including Benjamin Netanyahu](#), [incite against Palestinian citizens within Israel's recognized borders](#), where [over 50 laws discriminate against non-Jewish people](#).

Our support extends to those living under occupation and siege, Palestinian citizens of Israel, and the [7 million Palestinian refugees](#) exiled in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine. The refugees' right to return to their homeland in present-day Israel is the most important aspect of justice for Palestinians.

Palestinian liberation represents an inherent threat to Israeli settler colonialism and apartheid, an apparatus built and sustained on [ethnic cleansing](#), land theft, and the denial of Palestinian humanity and sovereignty. While we acknowledge that the apartheid configuration in

APPENDIX B: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) When did you first get involved in your activist community, and why?
- 2) When did you first hear about [*insert* Palestinian or Black Lives Matter] activism? What were your initial opinions or reactions?
- 3) Why in your opinion, do you believe this transnational solidarity between Black and Palestinian activists exists, in its current form?
- 4) Why do you support the [*insert* Black Lives Matter or Palestinian] liberation movement?
- 5) Have you ever travelled to [*insert* the United States or Palestine]?
- 6) What are the similarities that you have observed between the Black and Palestinian struggle?
- 7) What are the differences that you have observed between the Black and Palestinian struggle?
- 8) Black-Palestinian solidarity is not a new concept. What do you think is different about this post-Ferguson wave of solidarity and why?
- 9) How has access to social media and online technologies facilitated or hindered your communication with activists within your own community and with Black/Palestinian activists?
- 10) How have [*insert* Black or Palestinian activists] helped your community in your struggle and resistance?
- 11) How have you helped [*insert* Black or Palestinian activists] in their community in their struggle and resistance?
- 12) What is the most important factor in achieving successful alliances between Black and Palestinian communities?
- 13) What do you hope to achieve with this transnational solidarity movement between Black and Palestinian activists?

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Name*	Title	Location	Affiliation to Black-Palestinian Solidarity
Susan	University Student	Greater Boston Area	Involved in Palestinian Student Activism in University
Ryan	University Student	Greater Chicago Area	Involved in Palestinian Student Activism in University
Helen	University Student	Greater Chicago Area	Involved in Palestinian Student Activism in University
Jordan	University Student	Greater Montreal Area	Involved in Palestinian Student Activism in University
Debra	University Student	Greater Montreal Area	Involved in Palestinian Student Activism in University
Kenneth	University Student	Greater Denver Area	Involved in Palestinian Student Activism in University
Georgia	University Student	Greater Chicago Area	Involved in Palestinian Student Activism in University
Sally	Scholar, Activist	Greater Lafayette Area	Black Activist-Academic
John	Full-Time Activist	Greater D.C. Area	Member of Black Panther Party + Black Power Movement
Mark	Scholar, Activist	Greater Bay Area	Civil Rights Activist
Jennifer	Full-Time Activist	Greater Detroit Area	Black Lives Matter Activist
Kendra	Full-Time Activist	Greater Detroit Area	Black Lives Matter Activist

*** Names used here are pseudonyms for confidentiality purposes**

APPENDIX D: SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS ON BLACK-PALESTINIAN SOLIDARITY

SJP: Students for Justice in Palestine

BSA/BSU: Black Student Alliance/Black Student Union

D.1 Joint Black-Palestinian Events and Endorsements



Saint Xavier SJP hosting BLM-Palestine event

U-Texas Palestine Solidarity Committee hosting BLM-Palestine event



Stanford hosting Black/Palestine Solidarity Tour

International Socialist Organizing hosting Black-Palestinian event



Wayne State hosting Black-Palestinian Solidarity event

Spelman College hosting Palestinian students from Birzeit University



Brown University hosting Palestinian students from Birzeit

Columbia University hosting Black-Palestinian Solidarity Tour

Northwestern For Members Only (FMO)



We, the 2014-2015 Executive Board of For Members Only, Northwestern's Black Student Alliance, are writing to express our formal endorsement of NUDivest and the push for Northwestern to Divest from the following corporations: Boeing, Caterpillar, Elbit Systems, Hewlett-Packard, G4S, and Lockheed Martin. As the representative body of Black students on campus, we fight for the protection of civil and human rights against the abuses of racist, oppressive governments who use surveillance, policing, and extreme violence against minority populations within their borders. As activists, we recognize that systems of oppression are linked across oceans and country lines. Therefore, we are unable to ignore the similarities between the struggles of our people here in the U.S. and that of our Palestinian brother and sisters abroad. We vehemently denounce the actions of Israel, and see BDS as an important tactic to force the hand of justice. As such, we ask that Northwestern's Associated Student Government pass the proposed resolution to call for the Divestment from the aforementioned companies that allow this violence to continue.

Northwestern's Black Student Alliance endorsing Northwestern's Motion for BDS

Black Lives Matter co-founder Patrisse Cullors:

"I offer my wholehearted support to students at Stanford University as you vote to divest from multinational corporations that profit from the Occupation of Palestine. This is incredibly important work not only for the liberation of Palestinians, but towards justice for oppressed people around the world who have suffered similar histories of dispossession, discrimination, and dehumanization. Divestment is an action that everyday people of conscience around the world can take to show that we have not abandoned Palestinians, and that cannot ignore their condition regardless of how much the global power structures that represent us have. It as a tactic that we can use - and have used throughout history - as people committed to struggling against injustice. Today Stanford has the opportunity to shift away from an oppressive status quo and I urge you to follow through with your historical imperative."

Black Lives Matter co-founder endorsing BDS at Stanford University

Columbia University Black Students' Organization

As Black students at Columbia and Barnard, we have witnessed the many faces of oppression and we have heard it called by many names. We are aware that our own fight for humanity is not the only that occurs here. We acknowledge the many intersections that lie between the plight of indigenous people worldwide and that of Black communities within the Diaspora. Our struggle is one of many in the larger scheme of global systems of oppression.

Today, The Black Students' Organization stands in firm solidarity with Columbia Students for Justice in Palestine, Columbia/Barnard Jewish Voice for Peace, and Columbia University Apartheid Divest during an active and ongoing struggle to end Columbia University's investment in Israeli Apartheid and, conversely, the mass mistreatment of Palestinians from Palestine to the United States and everywhere in between. We are all too familiar with the pain that accompanies living within an institution that invests in the demise of our own people.

The BSO condemns any co-optation of the Black liberation movement to promote settler-colonialism and a state that perpetuates apartheid. The decision to relate the experiences, past and present, of Black people in the United States in order to further the Zionist movement is, both, misinformed and a blatant subversion of the work that continues to be done in the name of true equity.

We reject the notion that peace may only come at the expense of justice. We refuse to be complicit in institutionalized violence against the people of Palestine. We urge the Columbia community to join us in this stand for justice.

Columbia's Black Students' Organization endorsing BDS at Columbia University

Afrikan Student Union

Students for Justice in Palestine is bringing up a resolution to divest from companies that violate Palestinian human rights Tuesday at 7pm (2/25/14) in Ackerman Grand Ballroom.

As the official political voice of all Afrikan students on UCLA's campus, the Afrikan Student Union at UCLA exists to promote, protect and serve the broad cultural, educational, and professional interests of students of Afrikan descent at UCLA, as well as within the Afrikan Diaspora. On Tuesday, February 4th, 2014, Afrikan Student Union Administrative Staff introduced a resolution to UCLA's Undergraduate Student Association Council (USAC) urging for our student government, the UCLA Foundation, and the UC Regents to divest from corporations that have investments in two major private prison corporations, CCA and GEO Group. Moreover, as black intellectuals and activists, it is important that we recognize the context in which we are situated in at this particular institution of higher education. The University of California has the largest endowment in the world. If we know, via publicly accessible information on the UC Regents, that the UC is investing in corporations such as Wells Fargo, Vanguard Group, Blackrock Fund Advisors, Bank of America, Morgan Stanley, Invesco Finance LTD, and JP Morgan Chase, which contribute to the privatization of prisons and in turn, the enslavement of black, brown and other oppressed communities, it is our collective responsibility to challenge this reality.

UCLA's Afrikan Student Union endorsing divestment from corporations complicit in the occupation

D.2 Interactions of Tweets between Activists



Alexandra Halaby
@iskandrah

#DDPalestine delegation challenging Israeli soldiers at a checkpoint in occupied #Hebron. pic.twitter.com/bhUwrWs5Em MT @aja_monet
10:49 PM - 14 Jan 2015 - Illinois, USA, United States



Rana Nazzal
رنا نازل
@zaytouni_rana

Hamde Abu tells #Ferguson that #Palestine knows what it means to be shot for your ethnicity
3:15 PM - 14 Aug 2014



Abbas Sarsour
@FAlasleen

The oppressed stands with the oppressed. #Palestine stands with #Ferguson.
3:26 AM - 14 Aug 2014



Carolina Bama
@Aekward_Duck

Thank you, Palestine. For everything. Fight! Fight! Viva, Viva, Palestina!
1:23 PM - 11 Jan 2015



Rajai Abukhalil
@Rajaiabukhalil

Don't Keep much distance from the Police, if you're close to them they can't tear Gas. To #Ferguson from #Palestine
12:02 AM - 14 Aug 2014



مریم البرغوثی
@MariamBarghouti

Always make sure to run against the wind /to keep calm when you're teargassed, the pain will pass, don't rub your eyes!
#Ferguson Solidarity
11:07 PM - 13 Aug 2014



Amani Al-Khatahtbeh
@amankhatahtbeh

#Ferguson: "Thanks for the advice, #Palestine."
1,219 748
4:58 PM - 18 Aug 2014



Michael Bennett
@mosesbread72 - Feb 10

Dear World,
I was scheduled to make a visit to Israel with fellow NFL players. I was excited to see this remarkable and historic part of the world with my own eyes. I was not aware, until reading this article about the trip in the Times of Israel, that my itinerary was being constructed by the Israeli government for the purposes of making me, in the words of a government official, an "influencer and opinion-former" who would then be "an ambassador of good will." I will not be used in such a manner. When I do go to Israel – and I do plan to go – it will be to see not only Israel but also the West Bank and Gaza so I can see how the Palestinians, who have called this land home for thousands of years, live their lives.
One of my heroes has always been Muhammad Ali. I know that Ali always stood strongly with the Palestinian people, visiting refugee camps, going to rallies, and always willing to be a "voice for the voiceless." I want to be a "voice for the voiceless," and I cannot do that by going on this kind of trip to Israel.
I know that this will anger some people and inspire others. But please know that I did this not for you, but to be in accord with my own values and my own conscience. Like 1968 Olympian John Carlos always says, "There is no partial commitment to justice. You are either in or you're out." Well, I'm in.

1.9K 16K 36K



Enas B. AlSaffadi
@EnasAlSaffadi

Revolution of #Ferguson, can't be prouder of these people who won't let their son's blood goes for nothing
#MikeBrown
10:43 PM - 13 Aug 2014



gazawia
@gazawia

Where I come from, what some call "rioting" we call an uprising #Ferguson #Gaza #Palestine #intifada
10:37 PM - 13 Aug 2014

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