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**Master's degree in  
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THE SHIFTING APPROACH TO  
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

THE ROLE OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY  
IN THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

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## Acronyms

Acronyms	Description
AHLC	Ad Hoc Liaison Committee
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EU	European Union
IPCRI	Israeli-Palestinian Center for Research and Information
MEPP	Middle East Peace Process
NGO	Nongovernmental Organisation
ONUSAL	United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador
PA	Palestinian Authority
PINGO	Palestinian Israeli Nongovernmental Organisation
PLO	Palestinian Labor Organisation
PNGO	Palestinian Nongovernmental Organisation
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
UNTAES	United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium
UNTAG	United Nations Transition Assistance Group
US	United States

## **Introduction**

The aim of the thesis is to investigate the role of the civil society in the conflict resolution mechanisms in the framework of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict between 1993 and 2020. Civil society is understood as a variety of public-oriented associations that are not considered the official governing institutions of the state such as different community organizations, trade unions, business associations, religious institutions, and nongovernmental organizations (including all the purposes they bring with their foundation), and professional institutions. In this thesis, the main focus lies on the analysis of Israeli and Palestinian NGOs activities and their involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process. Guided by the theoretical framework of contemporary conflict management strategies together with theoretical analysis of the civil society's role in the conflict situation, the research examines the effectiveness of the bottom-up approach to conflict resolution by analyzing civil resistance campaigns in Israel and Palestine. It argues that the Peace Process strategies applied by the international community to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict fail to lessen tensions in the region and bring peace. The longevity of the conflict serves as an implication for necessity of the new peacemaking and peace-building approaches to conflict resolution in the area, and the data suggests that civil society plays a crucial role in shaping these new strategies.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the longest and most complex conflicts that can be traced back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its complexity is explained by its longevity due to the multiple issues that neither parties to conflict nor external intermediaries can find a solution to. The longer the conflict lasts, the more polarized and radicalized society and governments become, which raises the question if there will ever be a reconciliation. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is based on the issues of religion and territory. The dispute occurred between Palestinian Arabs and Zionist Jews, two national ethnoreligious groups, in Israel, the Palestinian territories, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The territorial struggle results from the land that both groups share and claim as their own. Centuries ago, both groups lived peacefully together with the majority of Palestinians on the territory, however with the globally growing antisemitism in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, more Zionist Jews

arrived. Initially, the land was known as Palestine where Palestinians consider themselves an indigenous population whereas the Zionist Jews claim the territory as a holy land, particularly Jerusalem. Theodor Herzl, a journalist and writer, is widely regarded as the founding figure of political Zionism, and his book "The Jewish State" is considered a key work in the movement. The Zionist movement aimed to create a Jewish state in Palestine, which was under Ottoman rule at the time, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The objective was driven by the desire to return to Zion, the historical Jewish homeland, and to establish a modern Jewish nation there. The United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine, adopted on November 29, 1947 by the General Assembly, aimed to end the conflict between Jews and Arabs over control of Palestine, which was then under British rule. The plan proposed dividing Palestine into two states, one for Jews and one for Arabs, with Jerusalem as a city under international control. Despite being accepted by the Jewish community, it was rejected by the Arab side, resulting in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and the eventual establishment of the state of Israel. Somewhat 700,000 Palestinians became refugees, and in 1967 as the outcome of the Six-Day War between Israel and its Arab neighboring countries, Israel occupied the territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip which worsened the situation (Karkar, 2007). The result of the war greatly affected the area, causing persistent tensions between Israel and the Arab nations, particularly Palestine. The number of Palestinian refugees was growing while the Israeli state denied Palestinians the right to return. As a response to the oppressive Israeli regime, Palestinians organized the First and the Second Intifada, two major rebel movements, in 1988 and 2000, accordingly. However, the periodical escalation of violence is a regular method of both Israelis and Palestinians to express their interests (Pressman, 2003). Israel continued to further the occupation by commencing the construction of the separation barrier in the West Bank in 2002 which deprives Palestinians of their land and contributes to fostering more polarization and violence between the two nations. The Second Intifada and the wall construction demonstrate the failure of the Oslo Accords, the Camp David Summit and the Arab Peace Plan, the major peace initiatives, directed at promoting diplomacy, reduction of violence and effective reconciliation (Pathak&Williams, 2017).

Although the conflict is not always in the active stage accompanied by violent actions, grave human rights violations and regular escalation of violence are consistent characteristics of the occupation for over seventy years. Palestinians in the Occupied Territories are deprived of civil and political rights since Israeli law does not grant full equality to all. Besides, the Israeli government commits arbitrary arrests of Palestinians, cruel treatment, torture, and unlawful executions of detainees. Israeli military controls the areas in the West Bank including the checkpoints along the separation barrier. Besides violating the right for assembly, Israeli authorities also violate fundamental human rights such as the right to housing by evicting Palestinians from their houses and exercising displacement of Palestinians from their land (Amnesty International, 2016).

Given the importance and extensive sources of the research topic although with some gaps on specific matters, the research question of the thesis is designed to explore the roles different types of Israeli and Palestinian civil societies in the area have played in bridging the gap between the two conflicting parties. The assumption that the inclusion of civil society in the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process, particularly participation in the negotiation process and further development of the joint activities of Israeli and Palestinian NGOs and CSOs, may enhance the peace efforts and bring sustainable and positive peace, constitutes the hypothesis of the thesis. Hence, the following objectives were set: revision of the literature on peace studies; analysis of the development of conflict management strategies; understanding of the concept of intervention and its application. For the case study of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict the objectives include the analysis of actors, their motives and strategies applied in the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process since the Oslo Accords; and the evaluation of the Israeli and Palestinian organizational structure, activities and campaigns developed by joint efforts of the local organizations.

The thesis work limits its scope of analysis to the period of the past three decades since the start of the Oslo Period after signing the Oslo Accords in 1993 and 1995. The geographical scope covers the territory of the Israeli state, the West Bank comprised of Areas A, B and C, East and West Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. The two nations living on those



territories are under the scope of the research, including Israeli citizens and Israeli settlers, Palestinians living in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Israel.

The analysis of the related literature reveals a strong theoretical foundation on the topics such as peace and conflict studies, the concept and types of intervention, and the development and applicability of guidance tools for peace initiatives and conflict management strategies. Despite the comprehensive framework, the strategies do not always produce positive results. In the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, peacemaking and peacebuilding strategies were applied multiple times in the past three decades, however, they all resulted in failure. Therefore, the specific literature was collected in order to analyze the main gaps in the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process. The review of the concept and development of the peace process includes the studies of Johan Galtung, Jonathan Tonge and Hugo Slim. The critical analysis of the stages of the peace process is based on the works of David Shearer, Christopher Clapham, Michael Doyle and Teresa Cravo.

Some experts offer an alternative approach to peace by claiming that the inclusion of civil society in the peace process may enhance the peace efforts and bring lasting and positive peace since civic values are peace-oriented which is an important component in war-torn societies. Prendergast and Plumb point out that civil society groups possess unique local knowledge together with a deep understanding of opportunities and barriers to achieving peace in the local context (Prendergast&Plumb, 2002). Albin demonstrates the necessity of NGO participation in negotiation processes due to their ability to influence political elites and find creative solutions (Albin, 1999). The work of Belloni suggests that the participation of civil society in peace processes can act as a catalysator and set in motion dynamics during the transition from the negotiation stage to peacebuilding (Belloni, 2008). Overall, the idea is that civil society groups and local authorities may have more capacity to facilitate conflict de-escalation, establish contacts between conflicting parties for the negotiation process, and arrange ceasefires (USIP, 2007). Veronique Dudouet, Erica Chenoweth, Gene Sharp and Andrew Rigby point out that nonviolent resistance and nonviolent intervention have more constructive effects on the users, opponents, and environment than those of armed activities. In a recent study, Leonie Fleischmann argues that the presence of internal third-party

interveners (the dominant group) would significantly enhance the efforts of civil society and shows the capability of conflicting groups for reconciliation (Fleischmann, 2019).

For the analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Model the works of various authors, including Peter Lintl, Peter Turner, and Michael Atallah, were analyzed. As for the role of civil society in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the contributions of multiple experts, such as Kai Brand-Jacobsen, Leonie Fleischmann, Maia Hallward, Shany Payes, and Ifat Maoz, were reviewed. The thesis research identified several gaps in the modern studies of civil society's role in the conflict, particularly the shortcomings of the theoretical works on the effectiveness of joint activism and analysis of the practical implementation of the internal third-party nonviolent intervention and joint activities. Therefore, the current thesis work may serve as an additional contribution to further research on that topic since it addresses certain gaps in literature and builds on existing research.

The methodology is based on qualitative research, including qualitative and thematic analysis and grounded theory methods. In particular, the analysis in the fifth chapter includes quantitative and qualitative methods collected from the secondary data which includes interviews with the Israeli and Palestinian activists and an analysis of the campaigns. Besides, the websites' activity, reports and publications of organizations were analyzed in order to get first-hand information on the campaigns.

This thesis has five chapters: an introductory chapter, two theoretical chapters, and two analytical chapters. The first chapter is aimed at covering the specific concepts that serve as a fundamental basis for both the theoretical framework of the thesis and the practical part of it. Moreover, it provides an overview of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, an analysis of the type of the conflict and its main issues. The second chapter contains the first part of the theoretical framework directed at highlighting the concept of the Peace Process including its development and main characteristics. The second part of the chapter demonstrates the modern strategies of conflict management that are also outlined in the Agenda for Peace. Each stage includes detailed critical points directed at answering the research question and building up a strong theoretical basis for the empirical part of the thesis. The third chapter

includes the second part of the theoretical framework which is focused on the roles of civil society in a conflict situation and, therefore, supports the empirical part of the thesis directed at analyzing the civil society's role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The chapter goes deeper into the subject by differentiating external and internal third-party nonviolent intervention and pointing out the positive effects of "internal interventions" which serve as one of the main theoretical points for the empirical part of the thesis. The fourth chapter is directed at analyzing three decades of peace initiatives starting from the Oslo Accords and the selected approach to peace. In order to understand the failure of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process, the research includes the analysis of implemented peace initiatives, such as official negotiations, and the actors involved in the Peace Process together with their motives. The fifth chapter is aimed at analyzing the role of the Palestinian and Israeli civil society in the ongoing conflict. In order to verify the hypothesis, the research highlights the main characteristics and work of both Palestinian and Israeli NGOs and CSOs with the main focus on the joint activism of the organisations. The analysis is strengthened by the listed examples of joint civil resistance campaigns and peacebuilding activities as successful strategies applied by organizations in Israel and Palestine.

# Chapter I

## Violence and Peace, Concept of Intervention, Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The first chapter is aimed at covering the specific concepts that serve as a fundamental basis for both the theoretical framework of the thesis and the practical part of it. It is important to understand the concept of peace and its variations since it is the final goal of the conflict resolution process. Moreover, it is necessary to explain the concept of intervention and the principles of intervention and nonintervention because the phenomenon tends to appear in a regular occurrence in various forms in different types of conflicts. A part of the chapter is dedicated to demonstrating the development of interventionism and consequently, the creation of “*An Agenda for Peace*” which contributed immensely to the modern model of the Peace Process applied by the UN, regional organizations, and the international community in general. The final part of the chapter explains the specificity of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including the reasons for the intractability and longevity of the conflict. Besides, it discusses the type and nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by outlining the main ideas of some scholars who tried to define it in their work.

### 1.1 Defining Peace

Before analyzing the concept of the peace process and conflict management it is important to understand how scholars define peace itself. Johan Galtung, a Norwegian sociologist who is considered the founder of Peace Studies, redefined the terms peace and violence and introduced a theoretical framework for achieving peace by using three approaches which served as a theoretical and operational foundation for the contemporary peace process procedures described in “*An Agenda for Peace*” presented by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and adopted by the UN in 1992. According to his theory, if peace is defined as a mere absence of violence, it appears to be limited, in other words, it is not used to its full potential. Therefore, Galtung offers a dual definition: negative and positive peace. Negative peace is explained as the absence of violence, while positive peace is defined

as the integration of human society including the recovery process of economic, social, and cultural dimensions (Galtung, 1964). The scholar explains that deepening the definition of peace ultimately produces the notion of general and complete peace.

Another contribution to the peace studies made by Galtung was the identification of the triangle of violence and, respectively, the triangle of peace. The author distinguishes the aspects such as direct, structural, and cultural violence, where direct violence is an intentional act of aggression, structural violence appears to be indirect by taking a form of political repression, as an example, and cultural violence creates a system of certain behaviours that normalize and even legitimize direct and structural violence (Galtung, 1990). The absence of the three typologies of violence results in peace. Therefore, the triangle of peace completely reflects the triangle of violence emphasizing the broad and complex concept of peace and exposing the violence with structural dynamics as well as symbolic violence that exists in ideology, education, and language.

## **1.2 Concept of Intervention**

Intervention can take different forms and have multiple purposes, so the phenomenon is surrounded by discussions and debates due to its definitional issues. What is clear is that intervention “takes place within a system or society of sovereign states, that the intervening actors are sovereign states, and that the targets of intervention are sovereign states.” (Reus-Smit, 2013) Intervention is characterized by its transformative nature; it is always a transgression of one’s realm of jurisdiction, hence practices of intervention are considered a direct violation of sovereignty, and it violates established principles of differentiation. In International Law, the term intervention is described as a dictatorial interference in the political independence and territorial integrity of a sovereign state (Sellers, 2014). Due to the number of philosophical precepts the principle defining the prohibition has never been formally ratified as a treaty, therefore, interventions have continuously been justified by politicians, scholars and citizens who provided good reasons why it is allowed to override the principle.

### *1.2.1 Principles of Intervention and Nonintervention*

There are numerous justifications for the principles of intervention and nonintervention. The realist approach is in favour of intervention to promote national security, human rights, prestige, or profits. However, some liberalists assume that these kinds of motives lack moral significance and moreover justify and promote the idea of ideology. Among direct considerations, the most important one according to the liberal approach is that nonintervention reflects and promotes human dignity. Nonintervention enables citizens to determine their own way of life through participation without outside interference. As a second direct argument, intervention undermined the authenticity of domestic struggles for liberty. For the sake of democratic rights and liberal freedoms, a free government cannot be considered authentic and self-determining when achieved by means of intervention. The society that got its freedom from foreign intervention would never know its true value (Mill, 1973). Another argument against intervention refers to the difficulties of transparency. Some scholars claim that no matter how prepared and engaged foreign interveners are in the conflict, they are not capable of identifying all the reasons and finding solutions due to historical, cultural and political compromises. As a result, those misinterpretations might create more violence rather than help leading actors in the conflict protect their states from foreign aggression, making intervention highly ineffective and sometimes counterproductive. The fourth argument against intervention constitutes the evaluation of the impartiality of the interveners. It is almost impossible to recognize the true reasons behind foreign intervention even if they are justified by high-sounding principles. The requirements of impartiality, respect for the multilateral process of international law, and avoidance of unilateral decisions are important procedural considerations, and they are difficult to track. As a result, those rescues might turn into imperialist and self-serving operations where intervening states and organizations indulge in their own profit and control. Violation of principles and the last resort of proportionality is another argument to consider. International history has several cases where foreign intervention brought more damage to the infrastructure and human cost of war than the conflict itself.

Among indirect reasons for nonintervention, the key consideration is the rule of law among sovereign states which prohibit intervention. Besides, interventions foster militarism and require multiple human and financial resources which might create a discrepancy in budget planning and, consequently, lead to a crisis in other spheres of life on different levels of governance.

The arguments of liberal political philosophers supporting intervention fall into different camps. Some scholars believe that the rights of cosmopolitan freedom are equally valuable for all people, therefore, any violation of these rights should be resisted provided that intervention does not cause harm that it seeks to eliminate in the first place. Other experts take into consideration the grounds for nonintervention which have to be respected and addressed during the intervention process by either overriding the nonintervention principles or completely disregarding them. In the first case, overriding the principles still allows them to hold but justifies that other more important values trump them. J.S. Mill argued that there are three exceptional reasons to override the nonintervention principles. The first reason refers to international civil wars, like between Catholicism and Protestantism, where nonintervention might neglect vital transnational sources of national security. The second reason explains the intervention of the victor in order to remove a perpetual threat to peace, whether it is a person or a regime, the de-Nazification in Germany after the Second World War serves as a reference. The third reason that justifies foreign intervention due to the longevity and undecidability of the conflict is another reason for intervention since a common sense of humanity for the protracted suffering of the civil population calls for certain action from outside (Mill, 1973). In the second case, disregarding the principles of nonintervention would mean the non-applicability of the principles to the particular case. There are three cases where nonintervention principles are not relevant. The first instance regards the situation when too many nations contest one piece of territory due to the absence of the “one nation” criteria. In this case, foreigners might intervene as an act of liberation for the oppressed people. Hungarian rebellion against Austria or American Revolution against Britain may be relevant examples. The second case refers to the counter-intervention in a civil war. It is certain that the decision power to define society and government should not be made by foreigners.

However, if the foreign intervention occurs on behalf of one of the sides, then another foreign power might counter-intervene to restore the balance and actually serve the purpose of self-determination the first intervention seeks to undermine. In the third case, intervention is justified for humanitarian purposes to terminate the gross violations of the rights of a noncombatant population, such as massacres, genocide and slavery. Interveners can act only if there is confidence, they will save more lives rather than do more harm as a conflict itself does in the first place, in other words, the intervention must not destroy the place and society in order to save it.

### *1.2.2 The New Interventionism*

In the 1990s there were two developments that contributed to the concept of intervention: multilateral revival and multidimensional peace operations. Both are interconnected since the new authorization of multilateral intervention would not be legitimate unless it is done less invasively than direct intervention, and the set of peacekeeping strategies would not be tolerated or be effective without multilateral engagement.

In the last decade of the 20th century, the UN's role toward security and peace for both domestic and international disputes rapidly expanded and found its reflections in “*An Agenda for Peace*”. Thus, the UN jurisdiction has the full power of decision and the authority to override domestic sovereignty for various reasons that before would be seen as infringements of traditional sovereignty, such as domestic violations of human rights, humanitarian emergencies and civil wars (United Nations, 1993). The shift occurred also in the rules constituting the concepts of intervention and international protection of basic human rights, particularly the concept of sovereignty was expanded in its definition by incorporating a global interest in human rights protection. As a result, this change made the UN a legitimate agent to decide what sovereignty is and when is violated.

The main reason for rejecting intervention was its harmful consequences and failure to support self-determination. However, statistics show that the new developments in multi-



dimensional peace operations give more positive results.<sup>1</sup> Although the operations in Somalia and former Yugoslavia failed, the records are better in certain conflicts, such as the ones in Namibia (UNTAG), Cambodia (UNTAC), Croatia (UNTAES), and El Salvador (ONUSAL) (Doyle, 2001). The success is explained by the fact that the new multidimensional peace operations are based on the consent of all parties. “*An Agenda for Peace*” offers a comprehensive step-by-step guide for identification and support structures which facilitate achieving and consolidating peace. This guide includes stages of the peace process and tools to build a foundation of protracted peace and stable legitimate government.

### **1.3 Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**

Despite decades of violence and numerous attempts to reach peace agreements over a 75-year period, none of the initiatives was successful to break the Israeli-Palestinian stalemate. The conflict continues to be one of the world’s longest-running conflicts with no clear perspective to be solved soon. The longevity of the conflict can be explained by several reasons. One of the main factors of the intractability of the conflict is the indistinctive and complex nature of the conflict. According to Theodore Minerva, the aspects of civil war contained in the conflict render it intractable. Donald Horowitz asserts that when opposing ethnic groups share the same environment, competition for moral worth occurs (Horowitz, 2001). Barbara Walter explains that civil wars are harder to settle rather than interstate conflicts since civil wars include more one-sided victories, have a higher rate of recurrence, and consequently, are longer (Walter, 2009). These factors apply to the civil unrest in the Israeli-Palestinian context since Israel keeps daily violence at a minimum by applying structural violence, nevertheless, the outbursts occur on a regular basis with the definitive Israeli victory. However, the conflict differs from other civil wars that history knows. Although Israel controls Palestinians’ security, livelihood, and movements in the Occupied Territories, the Israeli government does not fully represent them since the Palestinian population does not have citizenship and the benefits that come with it. Besides, Palestinians

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<sup>1</sup> The new developments and structure of multidimensional peace operations are going to be thoroughly analyzed in Chapter II.

are not aiming at secession or government overthrow, which are one of the main goals in the civil war, but they revert to the conditions which preceded the establishment of the Jewish state. Walter states that information asymmetry, indivisible stakes and difficulties in credibly committing to agreements derail the resolution of intrastate conflicts (Walter, 2009). These characteristics resonate in the situation of Israel and Palestine, such as the uncovered network of secret Hamas tunnels, failed commitment to the agreed settlements because of the vulnerabilities in changes of the status quo expressed by both sides, and the problem of Jerusalem.

The conflict also seems to operate as a war between two sovereign states, since parties to the conflict are ethnically and religiously distinct, comprising Palestinian Arab and Israeli Jewish. However, there are different opinions on the status of both Palestine and Israel, including the lack of sovereign status for Palestinian-dominated territories, such as the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, so the necessary condition characterizing an interstate crisis is arguable. Therefore, the civil unrest brings an intrastate nature while the fact that Occupied Territories are not integrated into Israel and a clear ethnic and cultural distinction draw more towards interstate conflict. This dilemma creates difficulty in identifying the conflict, and consequently, finding a long-term solution to it.

There is an assumption that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would have a better chance to achieve a resolution and, consequently, peace if it was an interstate dispute since the international community would recognize Palestine as a sovereign state under those conditions (Minerva, 2019). The efficacy of this approach can be tested based on the analysis of the dynamics of how the problematic intrastate disputes explained in the above paragraph change in interstate conflict. Regarding the information asymmetry, the interstate conflict would allow external assistance (NGOs) and more centralized power, which would reduce the influence of Hamas and help unify Gaza and the West Bank. The assumption is supported by a further explanation of the restructured negotiation process which would be more productive since both states would show more commitment if they approached the issues on

a state-to-state basis.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, when it comes to the issue of indivisible stakes in an interstate debate, the independent entity would serve as support for administration and ensure protection and access to holy sites for everyone.

Another crucial point of analysis is the asymmetry of the power in order to understand the dynamics and longevity of the conflict. Besides, analysis of this feature can be effective for understanding the reasons why a conflict has a particular pattern and finding solutions to end the conflict. There are different types of asymmetries, but when it comes to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict Giorgio Gallo and Arturo Marzano relate to it as a structural asymmetric conflict (Gallo, 2009) in which “the root of the conflict lies not in particular issues or interests that may divide the parties, but in the very structure of whom they are and the relationship between them.” (Ramsbotham, 2005) Christopher Mitchel also studied the structural type of asymmetry in the context of ethno-nationalistic and intra-state conflicts (Mitchel, 2014). As a result of his studies, he provided 6 key dimensions that characterize structural asymmetry, among those are legal asymmetry, access to political agenda, the salience of goals, survivability, intra-party cohesion, and leadership insecurity.

According to Gallo, some of those elements are present in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Firstly, the asymmetry that would characterize the conflict the most is the legal asymmetry. From 1948 Jews were recognized as a nation and Israel has become an internationally recognized sovereign state with its own territory, a defined foreign policy and political agenda while Palestinians have had to fight for their right to a national state. The structural asymmetry in terms of access to political agenda started to appear after the Basel Congress of 1897. The Zionist movement’s political agenda was becoming aware in the international arena causing a disbalance with Arab Palestinian parties that did not develop a specific political program and lacked diplomatic efforts. Regarding intra-party cohesion, the Zionist parties were more advanced in having a basic consensus compared to any form of cohesion among Arab Palestinian parties. As to the salience of goals, Jews were aware of what they were fighting for, unlike the fragmented Arab Palestinian society, although the

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<sup>2</sup> The hypothesis is based on the two-state solution theory in which borders issues, the right to return and mutual recognition are settled upfront.

political parties knew about the risks that the Zionists imposed. In terms of survivability, anti-Semitism played a major role in creating a disbalance between the Jews and Arab Palestinians. With the spread of antisemitic attitudes in the 1930s, the creation of Israel was considered the only possible option for the Palestinian Jews together with the survivors who moved there, while Arab Palestinians did not perceive the conflict in such a way up until 1947-48, however, it was too late since the asymmetry between two parties became too strong.

### **Conclusion: Interconnection of the Concepts as a Ground Basis for the Thesis**

All three parts of the chapter serve as a ground basis for the following chapters. The definition of peace is based on Galtung's theories where he distinguished positive and negative peace and the triangle of violence. If negative peace is defined as a mere absence of violence, positive peace involves the recovery process in all societal dimensions. Hence, the theory embodies the idea of absolute peace. Such deepening of the definition allows to discover new tools and develop new strategies in order to achieve peace. The intervention serves as one of those mechanisms for conflict resolution and, consequently, building peace, although the opinions of the scholars highly differ either in favour or against intervention since both intervention and nonintervention can be as beneficial as counterproductive. International Law states that intervention is a dictatorial interference in the political independence and territorial integrity of a sovereign state, however, the principle of nonintervention has never been ratified as a treaty, hence, the society, particularly politicians, scholars, and citizens override the principle and justify interventions referring to beneficial effects it may bring in. The major shift in favour of intervention occurred with the release of "*An Agenda for Peace*" by the UN in the 1990s which allowed the UN and member states to override domestic sovereignty for various reasons that before would be seen as infringements of traditional sovereignty by incorporating a global interest in human rights protection. "*An Agenda for Peace*" is based on Galtung's violence and peace framework; hence its strategic approach implies multiple stages and variations of intervention, including preventive actions, negotiations, military intervention and peacebuilding activities to build lasting peace and avoid the relapse of the conflict. Although the strategy shows some positive

outcomes, it failed to bring peace in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The analysis of the conflict and its developments in the past decades reveals its complex structure and difficulty to define it, which creates a barrier for the external actors to find the right approach within the strategy and brings counterproductive results which are analyzed in the fourth chapter of the thesis.

## **Chapter II**

### **Peace Process:**

#### **Contemporary Conflict Management – the UN Peace Model**

The following chapter contains the first part of the theoretical framework directed at highlighting the concept of the Peace Process including its development and main characteristics. Starting with the development of the Peace Process initiatives, the framework also demonstrates two schools the scholars are divided into while studying Peace Processes and the limits it possesses. Moreover, it illustrates the essential features of the Peace Process including the external third-party intervention which takes a different form at all the stages of the Peace Process accordingly. The second part of the chapter demonstrates the modern strategies of conflict management that are also outlined in *“An Agenda for Peace”*. The strategies are comprised of preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding initiatives and their structure. Besides, each stage includes detailed critical points directed to support the research question and builds up a strong theoretical basis for the empirical part of the thesis. The following chapter aims at supporting the second objective of the thesis which implies the analysis of the development of conflict management strategies. The findings will assist to build up a comprehensive framework including the main strengths and gaps of the peace process strategies which provides a basis for the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process analyzed in the fourth chapter.

#### **2.1 The Development of the Peace Process Initiatives**

It is important to consider that the peace process rarely has a definable start and end dates since transitions towards non-violence and eradication of the conflict are non-linear processes. A peace process is defined as the active attempt at the prevention and management of conflict between and within states, a remit covering the treatment of inter-state, inter-communal and intra-communal violence (Tonge, 2014). A peace process is also understood as “any formal or informal, private or public political process which involves the parties to

an armed conflict working together to plan and undertake a process of dialogue and to reach and jointly implement any agreement from it.” (Slim, 2007).

The Peace Process includes the involvement of most combatants, the cessation of the conflict, the formulation and implementation of political arrangements, whether interim or comprehensive accords, the prevention of the re-ignition of the conflict, and the attempted political management of differences. The use of the term “process” acknowledges that peace is not a singular event, it involves military, political, humanitarian, psychological and restorative aspects to eradicate the conflict (Tonge, 2014). That is why, even if the military actions are over, infrastructure, political regime and economy are restored, decades might still be needed to rebuild harmony in societal and interpersonal relationships. And a small shift in the restoration process of the psychological aspect might lead to the resumption of the conflict (Rinehart, 1995).

Peace processes vary because of the type of conflicts they seek to resolve, the number and nature of the parties concerned and the type of mediator, specialists and supporters that are acceptable to the parties. A peace process in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict may respond to a situation of international armed conflict, it seeks to resolve social unrest and civic disorder caused by a protracted social conflict. It involves several parties and requires multi-party talks, and it uses a system of co-mediators.

### *2.1.1 Studying Peace Process*

Scholars of peace processes are divided into two methodological schools: critical peace research and positivist empiricists (Dedring, 1987). While empiricists believe that peace processes should be studied by means of behavioural and quantitative approaches, critical peace research focuses more on qualitative analysis, such as detailed work and interviews with combatants.

Critical peace research scholars argue that the quantitative approach is not objective, and it lacks the primary purpose of the research, namely how to avoid future conflicts whereas qualitative research offers a more value-learning process resulting in a more reliable predictive capacity of future conflicts. For researchers in the critical peace school, genuine

peace is not merely the absence of war but a more complex concept containing in itself the idea of absolute or positive peace. Following this idea, another critical point the quantitative approach receives is the risk of being reductionist in the definitions of war and peace. Therefore, qualitative researchers bring into question the value of the conflict data filtered and utilized by the empiricist school according to the values of the researchers (Tonge, 2014). Similarly, positivist empiricists argue that the quantitative approach is the most appropriate for studying peace processes since it allows forecasting and analyzing how peace can be attained by testing falsifiable and verifiable hypotheses, measuring variables and applying mathematical modelling (J David Singer & Small, 1972). Researchers state that the quantitative approach is more science-based, therefore more reliable, whereas the qualitative approach risks being too normative, descriptive, and value-laden. The discussion over importance and validity is redundant since both approaches offer deep analysis and as a result, complement each other in their findings providing a more elaborative picture for the study of a peace process with numerous variables and factors.

It is arguable how relevant the criticism of the quantitative approach can be since the predictive capacity, in terms of the ability to forecast and prevent future conflicts, remains low no matter the choice of the approach to study peace processes. For example, there is no academic anticipation of the violence in Northern Ireland in the 1960s lasting for decades or warning of the war in the Balkans in the 1990s ending with a huge death toll (Tonge, 2014). Therefore, approaches to peace studies have been more successful in terms of conflict prevention and recurrence or management of ongoing conflict rather than forecasting the next outbreak of violence.

An important point made by the critical peace research school about absolute peace is worth additional analysis. There is a clear division of opinions on the definition of peace: some scholars believe that peace can be defined as the control or mere elimination of war whereas others prefer a more positive approach defining peace as both the prevention of war and the advancement of justice and human rights (Parker 1978), which is directly related to the Galtung's theory of peace.



### *2.1.2 Essential Features of the Peace Process*

Although peace processes are not characterized by linear developments with numerous reversals and breakdowns throughout the way, common stages can still be identified. The stages are expressed more as key elements rather than a comprehensive checklist due to the nature of the peace processes and their individual developments. Darby and Mac Ginty offer five components: negotiations, the inclusion of the main combatants, willingness to address the key points of dispute, the disavowal of force and prolonged commitment (Darby & Roger Mac Ginty, 2003). The success of the peace process depends on the commitment to these principles of all parties.

Another important element of the peace process is the symmetry of the position of the participants in the conflict. If the conflict results in a total victory of one of the actors, it creates a disparity between parties and, consequently, the peace process is superfluous since states do not tend to start negotiations about something that might be already taken on the battlefield. However, when the prospects of success are low and the human and financial costs of war are high, the peace process can take place.

### *2.1.3 External Third-Party Intervention*

There are several approaches to studying conflict management, peace processes and the occurrence of violence. The comparative approach allows going deeper into the process of peace construction by identifying common factors in different conflicts, such as verifiable ceasefires, demobilization, and humanitarian aid. According to Tonge, this approach may contribute to the improvement of the success rates of peace processes since it allows peace scholars to use accumulated knowledge from successful peace initiatives in cross-national tests of applicability and viability in various conflict situations. Since the range of available tools in the peace process increases together with the awareness of when best deployed, the number of successful peace processes may rise (Tonge, 2014). Therefore, international norms of peace promoted by the UN encourage the usage of external brokers as negotiators and mediators being an important component of many peace processes in the last decades given that local groups are often unable to settle without external intervention. Nonetheless, it does

not necessarily mean that external brokerage always takes a neutral position. The mediation role of the United States in the Middle East serves as an example of failed external brokerage. Therefore, external brokers do not resolve the conflict, but referee using the technic of knowledge transfer and move the conflict into a more peaceful setting. However, Galtung states that it is important to notice to what extent external agents can bring their cultural understandings and knowledge to the peace process since there is a risk of collapse of the peace process implemented in the culture-based conflict (Galtung, 1976). External input is not limited only by diplomacy but also implies armed intervention or the use of force serving as a prelude to the peace process (Tonge, 2014).

#### *2.1.4 The Recurrence Tendency*

Some scholars are concerned about flawed agreements (Call 2008; Mac Ginty 2006). They argue that while there is too much focus on the attainment of the agreement and, consequently, peace, there is too little attention given to the after-effects of the deals, which often cause a long-term destabilization or recurrence of the conflict. Besides, failure of peace initiatives is quite frequent. The UN intervention in Somalia is considered a failed peace process initiative since the conflict turned from endemic to episodic without being completely eradicated (Tonge 2014).

### **2.2 Modern strategies of Conflict Management: “*An Agenda for Peace*”**

The current model of conflict management includes four interrelated and crisscrossed strategies explained in “*An Agenda for Peace*”: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding (UN, 1992). This document presents an institutionalized model of peace that gives the UN the authority to perform the drafted practices which give the organization more international importance in the field of peace and security in relation to previous decades.

Preventive diplomacy aims to the identification of latent conflict and prevention of an ongoing conflict or violent situation from the potential spread. Peacemaking implies supporting parties to the conflict in peace negotiations. Peacekeeping is the deployment of

the UN military forces on the ground in order to stabilize volatile areas and ensure that actions including armed forces are over. Peacebuilding is directed at strengthening peace through supporting structures to minimize the risks of conflict relapse. Theoretically, preventive diplomacy is a pre-conflict procedure, peacemaking and peacekeeping operate within the ongoing violence, while peacebuilding is related to the post-conflict period. However, all these operations are rarely limited to a single type of activity and, considering the non-linear individualistic nature of the conflict, the boundaries between the stages of the peace process have become increasingly diffuse (UNDPKO, 2008).

### *2.2.1 Preventive Diplomacy*

Preventive diplomacy implies actions to prevent disputes from arising between conflicting parties or mechanisms to prevent ongoing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur (Boutros-Ghali, 1992).

The procedures can be performed by the Secretary-General, specialized agencies, and bodies of the United Nations, and also by regional organizations. Preventive diplomacy measures include fact-finding missions for information on economic, social, and political trends that might lead to tensions; early warning concerning threats to peace through political indicators; and preventive deployment. The latter needs to be explained in regard to intra-state and inter-state conflict. In inter-state disputes, the preventive deployment mechanism takes the necessary form after the agreement of both parties to the conflict and the Security Council. In internal conflict the UN needs to respect the sovereignty of the State, hence, the UN can perform preventive measures upon the consent of all parties, otherwise, the organization can offer conciliation efforts. In this case, the participation of nongovernmental organizations is the main resource and tool for the UN to get involved. Preventive diplomacy also includes demilitarization agreements. The agreement usually involves the demilitarization of the zone at the borders or in the territories where there is the risk of conflict occurrence or resurgence, however, it does not include the full demilitarization procedure of the State.

### *2.2.2 Peacekeeping: The Dissociative Approach*

The classical approach to peace has a dissociative nature and is defined as the balance of power. The main purpose of this approach is to keep the parties away from each other under mutual threats of considerable punishment in case of transgression, in each other's territory. The approach also implies other tools to keep the balance of power, such as social measures, for example, social distance, or the use of geography in the form of impediments and distance. If the above-mentioned instruments prove themselves insufficient, third parties may intervene to exercise peacekeeping operations as well as use technology to supplement geographical measures.

#### 2.2.2.1 Criticism

The structure of the approach has certain demerits. First of all, it requires the use of arms. Given the used measures in this approach, actors are naturally obliged to build the capacity to defend or destroy, however, it lacks credibility. Thus, the discrepancy creates power but little balance. These dynamics tend to spread among actors in order to prove their power and capability. Besides, due to its contagious nature, the development of weaponry gains momentum which makes the usage of arms more and more dangerous. Shearer points out that in some cases intervention might only prolong the conflict along with the suffering since the Western policy is often targeted at promoting victory by one side rather than more compromised settlements. Besides, the use of force may not bring peace to already militarized conflicts (Shearer, 1997). The second demerit offered by Galtung argues that the contemporary world no longer fits this approach due to the irrelevancy of the geographical argument. Nowadays there is no geographical barrier that modern weapons could not handle. Besides, people move around more often and more easily eliminating existing prejudices, which makes the instrument of social distance irrelevant too. Following those demerits, one of the evident solutions to the eruption of violence is the intervention of the third actors. In this case, the main purpose of peacekeeping can be read in its own name, so as to keep the peace or "maintain the absence of direct violence" (Galtung, 1976), while other aspects, such as maintaining peace or reasons and actors of the conflict, lie outside the scope of the approach. Another demerit is based on the universalistic nature of the approach. Clapham

bases his criticism on the peacekeeping operation in Rwanda, pointing out that the approach does not recognize the need to identify and work with deep-seated differences caused by the conflict. Peacekeeping operations are too mechanistic, and the timescale chosen for the operations does not correspond to the set goals and tasks. Moreover, Clapham also criticizes the peacekeeping model for having “Western” assumptions, particularly the idea that any conflict parties share a common value framework with the Western culture, which causes imposing certain values and principles during the missions that work counterproductive and results in more misunderstanding or even failure. The scholar believes that the application of the Western conflict resolution model to conflicts around the world gives rise to problems, therefore the approach has to be thoroughly examined (Clapham, 1998). Duffield’s ideas of Western regulation of third-world politics overlap with Clapham’s claims. He sees “western intervention as a new form of imperialism” and points out that the approach undermines local political projects by considering them “inadequate and lacking” (Woodhouse, 2000).

Besides the above-mentioned demerits peacekeeping operations bring the same issues as military parties to the conflict cause. When it comes to the violation of human rights, and maltreatment of the civilian population, peacekeepers go along with the soldiers participating in the conflict. There are multiple reports from Human Rights Watch, the Associated Press and other media outlets on sexual abuse and exploitation in countries with the presence of peacekeepers. Among the reports, there are cases of rape, human trafficking, and sexual exploitation by African Union forces in Somalia, UN troops in the Democratic Republic of Congo, French and UN peacekeepers in the Central African Republic, and the UN peacekeeping forces in Haiti. Out of 2,500 interviewed community members in Haiti who lived in the towns with peacekeepers, 10 per cent reported the issue of children fathered by the UN soldiers (Essa, 2017). Although the UN conducts investigations on those cases, the accountability of peacekeepers is the responsibility of the country that sends the troops, which makes prosecution a rare procedure even with media coverage. Marsha Henry, Deputy Director of the Centre for Women, Peace, and Security at the London School of Economics explains that sexual violence by soldiers during the conflict is sometimes caused by racism and feelings of superiority towards the local community where peacekeeping operations are

conducted. Statistics show that there are more cases of sexual abuse and exploitation by peacekeepers in African states than in all other territories under the UN missions combined. Henry proposes that it is important to develop a different set of values and emotions in the peacekeeping industry such as empathy and impartiality, which traditional military training tends to ignore and even discourage. This is a big issue to consider when applying the model since the crimes committed by peacekeepers are unacceptable since they are supposed to protect the civilian population (Kapila, 2021).

One of the dilemmas of peacekeeping is the impartiality of the third parties. In the horizontal conflict, where actors do not impose the element of dominance, it is easy to keep neutral status, while in the vertical type of conflict, third parties might side with the actors most interested in preserving the status quo, which can undermine the whole purpose and essence of the peacekeeping operation. As a solution to apply peacekeeping in its most effective manner, Galtung offers a distinguishment between intra-national, intra-regional and international peacekeeping (Galtung, 1976). Intra-national peacekeeping implies the intervention of the state in internal conflicts both vertical and horizontal and it is one of the major functions the state is supposed to perform. Intra-regional peacekeeping allows the state with the power monopoly to exercise horizontal and vertical peacekeeping within its sphere of influence, particularly among periphery states. International peacekeeping, however, is a comparatively new phenomenon served under the UN Charter. Due to International Law regulations and the doctrine of non-intervention in internal affairs, the approach is very limited in scope. Firstly, international peacekeeping cannot be applied to the internal affairs of the nation-state. Secondly, this type of peacekeeping has no jurisdiction to intervene in regional wars, whether there is an imperialistic war or the war between periphery nations inside the empire. Thus, the only candidates for international peacekeeping are Centre nations and periphery nations and the main target is wars between periphery nations from different regions.

Those regulations cause another dilemma: international peacekeeping can be applied only to “the weak, not for the strong” (Galtung, 1976). The conflicts between Israel and Arab states, India and Pakistan clearly demonstrate the implementation of those regulations, as

well as the confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union or between China and the Soviet Union, serve as an example of the conflicts between the superpowers where international peacekeeping was not applied. The reason is that there is an assumption that superpowers have the right to be their own peacekeepers since these types of states are considered responsible, powerful, and autonomous enough, otherwise, those superpowers would no longer be big, and definitely not superpowers (Galtung, 1976). This structure puts into question the power of the UN, moreover, it questions the whole political world order, since the existing rules create inequality between states putting the superpower states in the dominant position and technically supplying them with omnipotence and impunity. This way of thinking also implies that “lesser powers” are the ones with a lack of experience and technical rationality and are more volatile, thus “it is not for lesser powers to try to meddle with” (Galtung, 1976).

Galtung offers several solutions to the dilemmas. As a first proposal, the scholar offered to make horizontal peacekeeping more symmetric, meaning there should be a system for the Periphery states in the Center in the same way as the superpowers engage in peacekeeping in the Periphery or being involved in peacekeeping which is condoned by them under the UN formula. Otherwise, symmetry can also be obtained through dissociation, particularly by locking the possibility of big powers to exercise peacekeeping in the Periphery, in other words, implement the non-intervention principle in an absolute manner. However, this solution might put global peace at risk. Since peace is indivisible, so should peacekeeping.

Given that achieving symmetry through dissociation seems sub-optimal, the second point is directed to the extension of the sphere of applicability of international peacekeeping in order to support the change in horizontal peacekeeping. That would mean that the doctrine of non-intervention would have to go. Firstly, with the growing number of internal wars, the doctrine becomes anachronistic, since modern society is well aware of ongoing conflicts due to technology and social media, and it cannot simply ignore the injustice. As for regional peacekeeping where one dominant power takes the role of the peacekeeper in the Periphery states, Galtung offers to demonopolize it in the same way as internal wars, since the only

intention of the big power in the region is imperialistic rather than an act of goodwill. The solution implies the absolute authorization of the UN regarding peacekeeping so that the authority is decentralized rather than regionalized. Galtung argued that it would be easy to implement those solutions since back in the 1980s there was a negative sentiment towards regional blocs, thus he believed there might be no blocs at all in the next decades, however, time proved him wrong. Regarding intranational peacekeeping, the solution might be the creation of criteria where the main point will be measuring the extent to which third parties are wanted. Moreover, the decision should be made not only by the government but also by society, particularly by formed institutional groups that represent it.

The role of peacekeeping is also problematic in a vertical conflict. There are three stands offered to understand the issue. The formalistic stand implies that each war should be handled in the same way by means of a third-party intervention; the stand of non-intervention since a vertical war is caused by internal contradictions and they should be worked out solely by the parties to the conflict, ultimately by the progressive forces; and a one-sided peacekeeping stand where third party intervention happens on the side of the righteous party to abolish structural violence. Each of the developments as a result causes even deeper problems rather than solving the primary issue. The first position would preserve structural violence, the second one is counterproductive due to the risk of drawn-out wars, and the third position creates difficulty in identifying the righteous and/or dominant actor. Therefore, the existing forms should be updated to be more efficient or other forms can be found. One certain thing that must be considered is that “international peacekeeping should not only consist in giving funds and know-how of various kinds to these territories but also, as a minimum, in helping protect these territories.” (Galtung, 1976).

### *2.2.3 Peacemaking: The Conflict Resolution Approach*

The peacemaking process is considered the conflict resolution approach. It may sound simple and obvious since the main purpose is to get rid of the source of tension so that every further step in achieving peace will come automatically. However, there is no guarantee that such a chain is the only possible development since the conflicts have a recursive nature due to numerous variables that have to be taken care of during the peace process to lessen the



risks of recurrence. Just as violence and hatred are the expressions of conflict, they still may take place after the conflict is solved, which is going to be a base either for the recurrence of the conflict or the occurrence of the new one. Moreover, the purpose of conflict resolution is not only to avoid war, but it is also a way for mankind to progress by overcoming incompatibilities and resolving contradictions or learning to live peacefully within them. According to its definition of conflict, conflict usually appears when actors are pursuing incompatible goals (Galtung, 1976). Therefore, there are two major options for conflict resolution: eliminating the incompatibility and preserving it. Elimination requires the negation of conflict so that actors stop pursuing incompatible goals. The second form is more complex and radical since it considers how much of the status quo the actors want to preserve.

Six types of conflict resolution are identified under the elimination of incompatibilities dimension. The incompatibility can be resolved by convincing parties empirically or logically that there is no conflict, only a perception of it. Parties can also make an agreement under a compromise formula. The trading approach offers to include more conflicts in the conflict system and trade one against the other. Multilateralization, using the logic from the trading approach, brings more actors that create cycles of conflicts that eliminate each other. The option of integration allows actors to fuse into one and harmonize their goals, while disintegration separates the actors, so they can pursue their goals without creating barriers for each other.

In the case where the incompatibility is preserved six other types of conflict resolution are recognized. The first four are related to protraction which includes either positive intra-action and inter-action or negative interaction, and also interaction with other actors. Another type appears as domination due to structural violence, so one of the actors is not capable of formulating its own autonomous goals. The last type is referred to as elimination, whether social, physical, or geographical. This form of conflict resolution implies direct violence where one of the actors cannot pursue its goal anymore although the incompatibility is preserved.

The six approaches that result in the elimination of incompatibilities sound idealistic and oftentimes utopian, however, there is still potential to use them efficiently in some conflicts. The protraction types do not offer a real solution but just avoid confrontation and gain time, however, a certain outcome will be needed, which hopefully defines itself neither in domination nor in elimination (Galtung, 1976).

When there is a risk of disintegration, domination and elimination to be used, the third-party approach, including mediators, conciliators and arbitrators, comes in to turn the situation back to the previous stages. This approach is actor-oriented, where a third party makes an effort to create certain links between conflicting parties. Those links are of a different nature: a third party can meet one actor at a time or both of them; besides, the purpose may be to raise awareness of the general situation or search for a solution. The main aspect the third party must consider is the idea of a symmetric relationship with conflicting parties. However, that means that the approach is adjusted solely for horizontal conflict.

There are five main types of agreement which may emerge from the negotiation process which range from the most minimal agreements to the most comprehensive. The first step is an agreement to talk or a so-called pre-negotiation agreement. The following steps would be the ceasefire agreement where parties agree to stop fire for a specific time, and a cessation of hostilities when armed violence must be completely stopped. The fourth step is a transitional agreement which aims to determine political change. A comprehensive agreement is the last step which sets out the complete arrangement for the reformed polity.

The peace process in terms of mediation typically includes four phases: pre-talks, talks, agreement and implementation. Pre-talks serve as initial bilateral contact with the parties. Communication is established in confidential assessment missions by the mediators. This phase provides certain agreements and builds confidence by being a preparatory period before the full dialogue begins. The talks phase implies the combination of shuttle diplomacy, proximity talks and direct talks. Finalizing agreements and designing appropriate mechanisms for their implementation falls into the agreement phase. The last phase is supported by continuous monitoring and dispute-resolution mechanisms throughout the implementation process (International Peace Institute, 2009).

### 2.2.3.1 Criticism

Negotiations are not simple and many of them throw up a common set of difficulties and dilemmas for mediators, peace process specialists and supporters. The challenge might occur in the asymmetry of intention and ability between the parties. One or more parties to a peace process might use the process in the logic of war rather than of peace for a number of reasons such as gaining international prestige and stalling the process to prepare better for further military activities. Another asymmetry can be protracted between negotiators, since one party may be physically, technically, and intellectually stronger as a negotiator whose outcome, as a result, will be favored. Another problem arises when one party denies the discussion of the ultimate desire of the other while the opponent continues to hide its final goal.

The peace process can also be disrupted not only by inter-group conflicts but by intra-group ones. The negotiation implies the involvement of different levels of concern from other states and non-state organizations since conflict affects wider politics. The nature of the outside interests differs so that the external actors serve as a tool to achieve peace by supporting and facilitating the diplomatic resolution of the conflict or often become a significant block in resolving the conflict by undermining or influencing the peace process in their own favour. This aspect concerns both regional and international powers since both of them can demonstrate either impartiality and favour an outcome of stability and sustainable peace or prioritize their own stability and pursue their own interests.

There are certain problems with the third-party approach. Besides the difficulty of being symmetrical and impartial by seeking their own benefit, third parties gain a certain status, prestige, growth, and power during the process, which creates some kind of competition between them. For example, the significance of this is obvious in the race between big powers and the UN to be the third party in the Middle East. The incapability of being neutral and the race for ultimate power undermines the whole idea of the approach. Moreover, the important factor can also be the level of concern and attention from external actors. While some conflicts receive high levels of continuous international engagement,

others are neglected with uneven and inconsistent political attention and disinterest. Both ways can bring harmful results in their own way.

Another dilemma occurs in the treatment and involvement of pariahs in the peace process. Negotiating with individuals holding unacceptable ideologies or responsible for particularly grave human rights violations can be controversial and requires sound judgement and a set of specific skills not to allow the pariah group to use the contact for non-peaceful strategies. The challenge of gender, political and social inclusion becomes another dilemma in the peace process. Unfortunately, any success in the inclusion of women in the peace process depends on the extent of the patriarchal mindset of the actors. In case gender inclusivity is neglected, it may be hard to ensure women's rights and needs in the agreement, thus it becomes a huge issue for the whole peace process since women not only constitute a significant part of society but also are a group most affected by the conflict (UN Women, 2013). Political inclusion might become an issue when parties to the conflict are armed political elites with authoritarian nature. Considering the fact that authoritarian regimes rarely include political flexibility in the sense of alternative representatives such as opposition, the possibility of widening the actors becomes small compared to the risk of having another gun-carrying elite being included in the peace process. Social inclusion implies the involvement of civil society movements. At first inclusion of the NGOs and CSOs seems logical and one of the most important things to do when it comes to the peace process considering the values of a truly democratic society where people have the power of decision-making. However, in practice, it can also create certain barriers to the peace process, since often the civil society in the conflict is highly antagonistic and divided. Therefore, in pursuit of building an all-inclusive dialogue, this fact is omitted, and the peace process has a risk of being stalled (McCulloch and McEvoy, 2018).

#### *2.2.4 Peacebuilding: The Associative Approach*

The concept of peacebuilding is quite recent compared to the other approaches to peace. The first official mention of it was in the United Nations' "*An Agenda for Peace*" in 1992 and it was based on the ideas of Galtung explained in his work "Three approaches to peace" (Cravo, 2017).

According to the theoretical discussion proposed by Galtung, peacebuilding is an associative approach to conflict unlike peacekeeping and peacemaking, and it constitutes the concept of positive or absolute peace. Galtung argued that in order to keep the peace the mechanisms of peace should be built into the structure of the world system which would remove the causes of wars before they even erupt. This way it would be an effective mechanism of conflict prevention functioning like an immune system of humans when the virus is trying to enter the body so that peace would not need peacekeeping and ad hoc peacemaking as a medicine. The scholar also emphasized that a peace structure free from direct and structural violence can take place only if the following six conditions are respected: equity, entropy, symbiosis, broad scope, large domain, and superstructure.

Following Galtung's theory of positive peace, "*An Agenda for Peace*" states that the main purpose of the peacebuilding approach is to eliminate the root cause of violence, defining the concept of post-conflict peacebuilding as an action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). Peacebuilding includes two main tasks, the first one of which is directed at achieving negative peace, in other words eliminating violence, particularly, to prevent the reoccurrence of hostilities and the second one addresses the principles of positive peace, specifically dealing with the issues in social, economic, and political dimensions that cause conflicts or in other words "pacification through political and economic liberalization" (Paris, 1997). This way the UN acts as an external guarantee at all stages of conflict situations (Cravo, 2017).

Liberal democracy as the "dominant political philosophy" (Barnes, 2001) of the global post-Cold War community gave shape to the approaches to peace and peacebuilding is one of them, namely the Western approach to liberal peace (Doyle 2005). The international system has to be restructured in accordance with Western values and principles: liberal democracy, human rights values, rule of law and market economy. As a result, the peacebuilding approach serves as an instrument of "transplanting Western models of the social, political and economic organization into war-shattered states" (Cravo, 2017). As a result, the potential of the approach is not used fully since Western and liberal worldview has

been seen as the only correct structure for the rest of the states. Therefore, currently, the approach is completely close to the alternatives.

Peacebuilding operational procedure is multidimensional including four interdependent aspects: military and security, politico-constitutional, socio-economic, and psycho-social dimensions. The military and security dimension is often used in intrastate conflicts since it involves the demonopolization of the legitimate use of force. This aspect of peacebuilding pursues two objectives, namely establishing a balance between conflicting parties and restricting combatants to return to hostilities. For these purposes, a specific programme aimed at soldiers was created, which includes the following phases, such as demobilization, disarmament and reintegration into the national armed forces or civilian life, known as DDR. Afterwards, the focus shifts toward the establishment of more democratic and transparent control which involves the reformation of police, intelligent services, and other security groups.

The politico-constitutional dimension is aimed at transferring the tensions between conflicting parties to the institutional level, so as to continue conflict resolution through non-violent means. The main purpose, however, is to ensure the political transition, particularly the reformation of the disassembled state administration and the legitimation of the new government authority. Obviously, the political structure of the intervened societies is reformed in accordance with liberal democratic principles, such as rule of law, political parties, media, and civil society.

The socio-economic dimension seeks to reverse the impact of armed conflict imposed on the social and economic fields of the states. The aim is to provide humanitarian aid and financial and practical support for the reconstruction of the infrastructure and implementation of the newly developed economic policies.

The psycho-social dimension pursues reconciliation of the conflicting parties including societies as the ultimate goal of transition to peace. As mentioned in the previous parts of the chapter, conflict might be solved and state order together with the infrastructure restored, but it nevertheless will take a long time for societies impacted by the costs of war

to completely reconcile. Teresa Almeida Cravo in her work explains that this aspect of peace restoration requires the deconstruction of stereotypes brought by conflict through the change of individual and societal attitudes towards reconciliation (Cravo, 2017).

There are certain practices developed to deal with the psycho-social aspect during the process of transition to peace. One of them is a so-called “Amnesia formula”, which is difficult to apply since it offers just to bury the past. The other three practices are considered fundamental in dealing with psycho-social issues. Peace can be achieved through traditional reconciliation practices based solely on local cultural resources. Often justice plays the main part in the reconciliation process, since it serves as medicine for the sufferers, hence dealing with the past is conducted through a domestic or international judicial settlement (courts) or through truth and reconciliation commissions.

#### 2.2.4.1 Criticism

Despite the good intentions of the peacebuilding model and its elaborate structure, statistics showed little success in achieving lasting peace with a 50% recurrence of conflicts in the first five years after signing peace agreements. (Collier, 2003). The data put into question the effectiveness of the approach and caused harsh criticism. Some scholars questioned the credibility and legitimacy of the UN and pointed out its institutional incapacity to undertake the missions while dealing with such complex and structural problems faced in peace and security (Roberts & Kingsbury, 1993). This criticism is also related to the interventionist actors of the international system. Due to certain positions of the critics, it is possible to distinguish two groups: reformist and structural critiques.

Reformists do not challenge the ideological foundation of the model; their aim is to recognize the defects of the process and refine it while advocating for its continuation. The reformist group believes that external intervention is more beneficial rather than harmful, the model is fully capable of being efficient and successful, it just needs improvements so to minimize destabilizing effects and the risks of failures (Paris, 2010).

The structural critics, on the other hand, put into question the legitimacy of the model, the order accepted as immutable, and the values and interests coming with it. The aim of the

structural critiques is to resist the Western hegemonic model of liberal peace, and hence peacebuilding. Scholars believe that the model serves solely the interests of Western States since interventions impose a top-down model which creates a clear hierarchy between intervenors (West) and intervened (Periphery). Therefore, the reinforced asymmetries of power between Global North and South draw the analogy between peacebuilding and colonialism (Chandler, 2010). Moreover, some scholars argue that solutions to post-war reconstruction proposed by the West cause the violence and conflict they try to solve so that putting the system into more instability than it has already been (Duffield 2001, Pugh 2005). The solution might be considering the worldviews that are different from Western, so the paradigm of liberal peace does not appear as the only right and possible version of world order. This way it will be possible to create and recognize the existence of alternative ideas of peace and stability, as Almeida Cravo pointed out a “multiplicity of peaces” (Cravo, 2017). The idea is looking to overcome the exhausted logic of imposing international values on the locals and the hegemony of liberal peace. The theory implies the recognition of heterogeneity that opens the way to various forms of societal governance, structure, and state-building and, consequently, forms of peace that are distinct from the imposed hegemonic model.

The creation of the peacebuilding model is a huge step forward in the attempts to achieve absolute or positive peace. However, the appreciation of the approach cannot hide the devastating disadvantages and counterproductive effects it brings in practice. Nonetheless the difference between the two critique groups, they both question the nature, legitimacy, and efficacy of the intervention model together with its goodwill.

### **Conclusion: Search for an Alternative Approach to Conflict Management**

The second chapter analyzed the current model of conflict management which includes four interrelated and crisscrossed strategies: preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding. It is fair to say that the modern peace framework is very elaborate at all stages since there are multiple strategies designed to deal with various types of conflicts and approach each conflict differently considering the non-linear individualistic nature of each conflict situation. However, each phase still has demerits and hence, receives



a lot of criticism from experts. The main critical points address the common gaps at all the stages of the peace process, such as the imperialistic or “colonial” tendencies of the “liberal world” when dealing with the conflicts around the world, the lack of impartiality of the intervening parties, and the self-serving purposes of participation. Moreover, the strategies are criticized for their contradictive character when trying to bring conflicting parties to peace often through military mechanisms. According to the experts and data, the use of arms in the peacekeeping mechanism might prolong the conflict and create more violence in already militarized conflicts. Moreover, instead of reducing violence and protecting civilians, peacekeeping operations bring the same issues as military parties to the conflict cause, such as grave violation of human rights and maltreatment of the civilian population.

The peacemaking and peacebuilding strategies are directly connected to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since external actors have been applying them for the past decades without making great success. Such developments raise the question of whether the problem of conflict resolution lies in the strategies or those who apply them. It is important to understand that the shift is necessary, hence the third chapter provides the analysis of an alternative approach to conflict resolution while the fourth chapter identifies the successes and failures of the conflict resolution strategies in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process.

**Chapter III**  
**Civil Society:**  
**Definition, Purpose,**  
**and Roles in the Conflict Situation**

The third Chapter includes the second part of the theoretical framework which is focused on the roles of civil society in a conflict situation and, therefore, supports the empirical part of the thesis directed at analyzing the civil society's role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Chapter starts with the definition and purpose of civil society which also involves the impact of civil society on the government and state. The second part of the Chapter demonstrates the roles of civil society during the conflict, including its role in peace negotiations with special attention to the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion of civil society groups during the process; the phenomenon of civil or nonviolent resistance; and nonviolent intervention. The last point goes deeper into the subject by differentiating external and internal third-party nonviolent intervention and pointing out the positive effects of "internal interventions" which serve as one of the main theoretical points for the empirical part of the thesis.

**3.1 Civil Society: Definition, Purpose, and Roles**

Civil society is defined as a variety of public-oriented associations that are not considered the official governing institutions of the state such as different community organizations, trade unions, business associations, religious institutions, and nongovernmental organizations (including all the purposes they bring with their foundation), and professional institutions. The purpose of civil society groups is to promote and represent the interests and views of a particular sector of society that generally falls within a lawful framework (Wanis-St. John&Kew, 2008). Unlike political parties, civil society groups usually work on a single universal issue, besides, they neither utilize violence and destructive methods and tools like militias groups, nor pursue engaging directly in business activity

(Diamond, 1999). Consequently, as Hegel stated civil society acts as a middle sphere creating an intermediary space between the individual and the state the purpose of which is to balance the power of the state and create communication channels for individuals to bring their concerns and promote ideas toward the state (Cohen&Arato, 1992). Berman also stated that political elites and civil society groups are mutually dependent, while civil society needs a strong and stable state in order to function and provide a specific order where the interests of all civil society groups can be considered, the political elites depend solely on the public support and advice for the policies, besides the whole existence and success of political groups is based on the elections which can be supported by civil society, however only in democratic political systems (Berman, 1997). Therefore, civil society is a very important component of a democratic state and plays a major role in democratic development (Diamond, 1999). Nevertheless, civil society also exists under the authoritarian regime, however, due to its vulnerability to the state, it can be influenced, oppressed and targeted by political elites toward undemocratic ends (Wanis-St.John&Kew, 2008).

The impacts of civil society can be divided into two categories (Wanis-St.John&Kew, 2008). The first one is structural, meaning that civil society shapes and protects the structures of the state and its policies, and as a result, it provides support, legitimacy, and accountability to political elites. Therefore, civil society strengthens democratic development and undermines authoritarian rule. Another major impact is political-cultural, in the sense that civil society groups disseminate civic values, or so-called social capital (Putnam, 1993), across the polity and demonstrate and reinforce democratic principles and behaviours for both public and political groups (de Tocqueville, 1956). Civil society groups also can function in failing or collapsed states, however, due to the restricted scope of activities the impact may be very limited. In the case of authoritarian or anarchic decline, civil society may perform as a democratic “safe area” protecting democratic values.

### **3.2 Civil Society Roles in Conflict Situation**

Besides supporting democracy, civic values are peace-oriented which is an important component in war-torn societies. When it comes to the conflict situation, there is an

assumption that transnational civil society groups are more capable of providing important lifelines for civil societies at risk rather than local NGOs due to their various resources, network, and exposure to media. Nonetheless, transnational civil society groups can establish cooperation with local ones in order to have joint projects oriented toward conflict prevention and conflict resolution. There are various cases of cross-sector collaboration, such as the emergence of civil society groups promoting public health issues during the conflict which brings together international and local health organizations and experts (World Health Organization, 2002). Whether the local civilian population (including civil society groups and NGOs) has the support of international civil society organizations, they participate at every stage of the conflict playing different roles, which are explained in the following paragraphs.

### *3.2.1 Civil Society Role in Peace Negotiations*

Multiple scholars state that civil society significantly contributes to peace processes through consultative mechanisms and representative or direct participation (McKeon, 2004; Barnes, 2002; Pfaffenholz, Kew&Wanis-St.John, 2006). Whether the conflicts are intrastate or interstate, civil society should participate in conflict resolution and find lasting solutions for peace, protection and stable development of the state (Obita, 2000). Moreover, civil society is more capable than anyone else of demonstrating public interest, addressing issues, and resolving them since the civilian population is the one that suffers the most in the conflict and is not being respected by the oppressors.

Prendergast and Plumb point out that civil society groups possess unique local knowledge together with a deep understanding of opportunities and barriers to achieving peace in the local context. Those advantageous tools enable civil society to contribute immensely to all the stages of conflict resolution and give a positive impact on efforts of achieving absolute peace. Therefore, it is important to utilize bottom-up processes which engender societal ownership of the peace process that is necessary in order to attain a durable peace alongside the top-down implementation (Prendergast&Plumb, 2002).

Civil society groups engage in the negotiation stage of the peace process in several ways. Generally, they act as practitioners by supporting the peace process in Track II diplomacy initiatives performing as key secondary actors and supplementing Track I negotiations among the political elites.<sup>3</sup> In this role, civil society groups facilitate interpersonal and intergroup reconciliation through the elimination of psychological barriers that prevent conflict resolution (Montville 1987; Fisher 1989; Kelman 1996). The findings of Wanis-St.John and Kew also explore and affirm the ability of civil society groups to perform as Track I actors, which in some cases was even encouraged (Wanis-St.John&Kew, 2008). In the absence of the primary channels of negotiations, civil society groups act as temporary intermediaries, establishing and keeping communication chains between conflicting parties (Pruitt, 1994). Once or if the primary actors are engaged in the negotiations, temporary intermediaries usually revert to the role of Track II negotiators. Besides, Track I teams may involve the representatives of civil society groups. Nevertheless, being members of an official delegation, they do not take leading roles in the negotiations. Civil society groups can also impact negotiations when they are invited as separate parties to the conflict in their own right, so-called civil society-led delegations. In this role, they deliver the opinion and support of a sector of the population (Stedman, 1997). All these roles of civil society groups in negotiation processes are predicated upon the actions or inactions of Track I actors, thus the type of their role and participation per se is always controlled by more powerful parties. There is an indirect mode of civil society groups' participation, which impacts the peace process without the presence of civil society representatives. Participation is attained by providing expert advice to the key positions advocated by official parties and lobbying democratically elected representatives.

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<sup>3</sup> Track I Diplomacy is an official form of diplomacy applied at the state-to-state level and directed at developing contacts between states with the use of intermediaries recognized by all parties, hence it serves as a peacemaking instrument of the states' foreign policy which includes the participation of heads of states, diplomats, and high-ranking government officials. Whereas Track II Diplomacy is an unofficial form of diplomacy serving as a complementary mechanism to Track I Diplomacy that may compensate for the constraints and fill the gaps of the official negotiations. Track II Diplomacy is conducted by members of adversary nations or groups (including NGOs and CSOs) whose goal is to influence public opinion and develop strategies that can contribute to conflict resolution (Mapendere, 2000).

### 3.2.1.1 The Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion

The opinion on civil society groups' participation in peace processes is highly divided among scholars. In theory, the active inclusion of civil society in negotiations is assumed to disturb an already complex and contradictory process of negotiations. There is a theory stating that two actors can develop cooperative behaviours and come to an agreement more easily and in a shorter period of time, rather than the n-number of actors that have no capability of either reaching a compromise or identifying the parties that fail to cooperate (Axelrod, 1984). Spector's analysis demonstrates that the participation of multiple actors causes a certain degree of disorganization which grows respectively with the increase in the number of parties (Spector, 1994). This development leads to a lack of commitment, disagreements on purposes and approaches of the negotiation process, more positions on the different issues at stake, and inconsistency in the decision-making process. Literature also refers to the phenomenon of "cognitive overload" (Raiffa, Richardson, Metcalfe 2004), meaning the deterioration of effective communication due to the struggles of controlling the agenda, interpersonal conflicts between numerous parties, the introduction of additional information without the necessary capacity to process it. Besides, a big number of parties at the negotiation table might cause the creation of competing coalitions whose interests hinder the efforts of reaching a comprehensive and durable agreement. The parties tend to defend their preferences until the point that "no zone of possible agreement is found" (Wanis-St.John&Kew, 2008).

The countervailing arguments promoting inclusive participation state the main idea that it is only the management of the richness that may be critical to the success of the negotiations. The research on conflict resolution demonstrates that peace agreements are insufficient for a full transformation from conflict to peace without incorporation of other sectors of societies besides political elites since the transformation process always requires more multiple approaches which political elites solely do not have the capacity to produce (Corell 1999; Kempel 1999; Short 1999). Lederach, as one of the scholars working on the inclusion of civil society groups in peace processes, proposed a pyramidal structure of actors respectively with their activities where the summit of the pyramid is for political elites, civil

society elites take place in the middle and grassroots civil society is at the base, highlighting the role of the civil population in conflict resolution and peacebuilding process (Lederach, 1997). Albin demonstrates the necessity of NGO<sup>4</sup> participation in negotiation processes due to their ability to influence political elites, find creative solutions, and focus public attention on the problem. Besides, NGOs are as competent actors as political parties, since they possess credible data and technical expertise (Albin, 1999). To counterweight the argument about “blocking” or competing coalitions (Sebenius, 1995), the strategy of setting a “people-focused peace agenda” and inviting like-minded parties in favour of peaceful settlement can be applied in order to support peace-oriented negotiators (Brenk&van de Veen, 2005). The work of Belloni suggests that the participation of civil society in peace processes can act as a catalysator and set in motion dynamics during the transition from the negotiation stage to peacebuilding – the period that has a high risk of being stalled if monitored only by combatant parties (Belloni, 2008). The beneficial participation of civil society groups has also been identified at the stage of escalation of armed conflicts. History shows that some armed conflicts are impossible to de-escalate with the top-down approach.<sup>5</sup> In those cases, civil society groups and local authorities may have more capacity to facilitate conflict de-escalation, establish contacts between conflicting parties for the negotiation process, and arrange ceasefires (USIP, 2007).

Public participation can be organized through groups in the civic sphere. Hence, the discourse on civil society inclusion in the peacemaking process is being supported by academics, diplomats, international organisations and civil society groups themselves. Generally, civil society itself demands to be heard by giving it a role and a seat at the negotiation table in order to end the conflict and meet the needs of people that suffered. However, Wanis-St. John and Kew stated that local civil society groups still struggle immensely to be able to participate in the peace negotiations regarding the ongoing conflict on their own territory (Wanis-St. John&Kew, 2008).

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<sup>4</sup> Civil society is presented more as an umbrella term, so that NGOs are not synonymous with civil society, however, they comprise one aspect of it.

<sup>5</sup> The efforts of Norwegian Church Aid and its affiliates in the conflict within Mali (Brenk& van de Veen 2005) as well as contributions of the local tribal authorities in Iraq (USIP, 2007).

### *3.2.2 Civil or Nonviolent Resistance*

Civil resistance also called “nonviolent resistance” or “nonviolent struggle” (Sharp, 2005) is defined as the “application of unarmed civilian power using nonviolent methods” (Chenoweth and Cunningham, 2013) which is used under different circumstances and pursues different goals. Nevertheless, the cases have a common feature of challenging more powerful groups through non-violent means (Chenoweth and Stefan, 2011). The definition suggested by Dudouet explains that nonviolent resistance is an eschewal from using physical force to achieve a goal while resisting different forms of injustice, such as oppression and domination. According to the authors’ definition, nonviolent resistance can be applied to deal with both direct and structural violence (Dudouet, 2008).

Some authors point out that nonviolent resistance has more constructive effects on the users, opponents, and environment than those of armed activities. For that reason, there is a proposed distinction between conflict escalation which is caused by violent actions and conflict intensification which comes as a result of the nonviolent resistance that makes conflict or injustice more visible (Dudouet, 2008, Fisher, 2000).

There are three principal audiences involved in past nonviolence research in terms of its relevancy: nonviolence researchers, activists, and policymakers. However, while researchers and activists have been fully engaged in the research activities, there has been little impact on policy (Martin, 2005). Until recently the research on nonviolent struggle has been mostly descriptive and normative. In the last decades, the concept has started to be analyzed from analytical and empirical perspectives (Chenoweth&Stephan, 2011, Nepstad, 2011, Svensson&Lindgren, 2010). The scholars explicitly state that civil resistance works by bringing unique benefits and effective tools for success in conflict resolution. There are three reasons why the research on nonviolent resistance was previously ignored. Firstly, violence seems to be a huge problem and nonviolent resistance does not have enough capacity to deal with it so civil resistance is perceived as a more peaceful activity. Secondly, the word “nonviolent” is often compared with “passive” and “weak”, which contributes to the assumption of its incapacity and ineffectiveness. Moreover, nonviolent resistance actions and



efforts may be difficult to measure empirically (Chenoweth&Cunningham, 2013). Those reasons mislead scholars, and as a result, there are false assumptions that if there is no violent conflict, there is no conflict at all. This hierarchy of more and less important conflicts can be very dangerous since it diminishes the suffering of those involved in the conflicts with other forms of oppression and discrimination or protracted conflicts when violence erupts periodically (Schock, 2003). Therefore, the new development in current research work suggests the incorporation of nonviolent resistance into conflict literature because the empirical research proves the efficacy of the method in any type of conflict (Chenoweth&Cunningham, 2013).

Since the 1990s the new developments in the research on nonviolent struggle offer a wide range of statistical studies (Karatnycky&Ackerman 2005) and analyses of the past civil resistance campaigns (Ackerman&Duvall, 2000, Schock, 2005) that help to identify certain internal and external conditions contributing to the success of nonviolent resistance as well as its vulnerabilities and limitations. Schock identifies the general tendency of scholars to emphasize the importance of the internal organizational factors that make campaigns effective (Schock, 2005). The literature mentions various variables such as the level of mobilization and social cohesion of the movement, the general support and the degree of legitimacy, the selected methods, the degree of nonviolent principle and effective leadership. The recent research on the external conditions affecting nonviolent campaigns includes the degree and means of control and repression by the government, the social distance between the opposing parties, the level of loyalty of security forces to the regime, and the broader geopolitical context (McAdam&Tarrow, 2000, Roberts 2007).

Statistical studies on nonviolent resistance demonstrate detailed empirical findings on the successful and failed campaigns categorizing them by regions and themes (Schock, 2005, Stephan&Chenoweth, 2008). The three groups are listed as follows: pro-democracy movements which imply resistance to authoritarian regimes; demands for civil rights in a multicultural state; and campaigns resisting external occupation or seeking national self-determination. Compared to violent resistance campaigns, major nonviolent initiatives have been more successful than those that are more focused on violent methods. This is because

their commitment to nonviolence allows for a more broad-based involvement in the movement, which results in increased pressure being put on the target. The recognition of a challenging group's grievances can help strengthen their external and internal support, which can help them break the regime's political, economic, and military power. On the other hand, violent confrontations with armed insurgents are more likely to fail than nonviolent groups. Most people who are sympathetic to militant groups believe that they have extremist or maximalist goals. However, they also see nonviolent resistance as less extreme. This can help facilitate the group's ability to extract concessions through negotiation (Chenoweth, 2008).

Nonviolent resistance is a form of direct action due to its unconventionality and certain risks for its users (Rigby, 1995). Sharp offers a classification of nonviolent actions according to their strategic function: nonviolent protest and persuasion; noncooperation and nonviolent intervention (Sharp, 1973). Protest and persuasion constitute 54 methods of action that intend to create a peaceful opposition to policies, laws and specific actions of the government as a response to injustice and conflict. The methods take the form of public assemblies, formal statements, different forms of communication and symbolic public acts. Noncooperation is demonstrated as a denial action that aims to defy existing relationships. This form of nonviolent action is expressed as social noncooperation, such as student strikes, withdrawal from institutions, economic disobedience in a form of boycotts by consumers, workers, owners or foreign governments, and political noncooperation which implies the rejection of authority, political boycott and severance of diplomatic relations. Nonviolent intervention includes 43 different methods that involve the creation of a physical obstacle in order to implement a specific change either positively, by establishing new autonomous social relations, or negatively by suspending existing relations (Sharp, 1973).

### *3.2.3 Civil Society and Nonviolent Intervention*

According to Andrew Rigby's work on unofficial nonviolent intervention, nonviolent interventionary action can take different forms based on three main criteria which are the geographical location, the goals, and the styles of the actions (Rigby, 1995). According to the geographical criteria, intervention can be held on-site, meaning the physical presence of

the interveners in the zone of conflict, and off-site, which implies making efforts without being physically present, respectively.

Rigby also mentions two styles of intervention: nonviolent direct action and conventional political action. As for conventional political actions, the process can be interpreted as sanctioning certain actions or “challenging the convention” in different aspects of life in order to convince the authorities to take a specific action. Economic pressure, such as boycotting Israeli products, would be a good example of such intervention. The nonviolent direct action implies unconventionality, “the element of defiance embodied in the action”, which brings the risk of sanctions or punishments incurred by interveners. However, the two styles can overlap each other depending on the political context and culture where they take place. While in Western countries a protest or a demonstration would not be considered a form of direct action, in the Occupied Territories of Palestine would be deemed as a direct action which will have certain consequences for the participants.

The objectives of nonviolent intervention can have short and long-term character. Rigby offers a classification for more immediate goals, identifying four types of actions: protest, support and solidarity, humanitarian relief and conflict resolution. Protest refers to an action which aims at raising concern and disagreement about a particular conflict situation and seeks to bring the conflict to an end or more just condition by reducing violence. Protests are targeted at core parties to the conflict or concerned parties such as international organizations. Just as protest, support and solidarity target one’s own government or other actors who are parties to a conflict, however, the nature of the action is obverse to protest and propaganda work. Humanitarian relief includes persuasion efforts directed at the parties to the conflict to organize and participate in humanitarian work to help alleviate the suffering of those caught up in the conflict. Efforts directed at dialogue facilitation and processes of reconciliation between conflicting parties constitute conflict resolution actions.

### 3.2.3.1 Third-party Nonviolent Intervention

Third parties, such as transnational grassroots networks and NGOs, also actively use nonviolent action as the technique of cross-border intervention in order to stop violence and

contribute to constructive social change processes (Schirch 2006, Clark 2009). There are two main distinctive roles of third parties, particularly conflict transformation and nonviolent traditions. While the conflict transformation process requires external actors for impartiality and includes mediation, nonviolent interveners are engaged in working on the sides of the dominated group in order to assist them and reduce the imbalance of power in the conflict and have an advocacy role (Dudouet, 2005). However, it is important for both methods to respect the principle of “local ownership”, where dominated society should act as a primary driver of social change (Lederach, 1995). Otherwise, both the opinion and action of external third parties might be considered imperialistic, and elitist, and be questioned for having a self-serving nature. As Sharp argued, the initiative and primary actions should always come from the internal civil society while external third-party actors can be a powerful supporting force (Sharp, 2005). Therefore, some authors refer to the terminology of cross-border support or accompaniment instead of assistance to reduce the risk of victimization of dominated groups (Muller, 2005). It is important to notice that there is once again no differentiation between external and internal third-party actors, and considering the advantages of internal third-party interveners, their actions and opinions would cause fewer risks for the campaigns compared to external ones.

There are four main types of third-party nonviolent intervention: off-site nonviolent campaigns, mobilization actions, nonviolent accompaniment, and nonviolent interposition. Off-site nonviolent campaigns imply nonviolent initiatives that work in support of resistance efforts in another country. They aim at halting violence and injustice through sanctions against the oppressive and dominant actor or by putting pressure on Western governments to change their policies that support the oppressive regimes. The main goal of mobilization actions is to draw international attention to the conflict situation and ongoing violence and injustice. Nonviolent accompaniment implies on-site actions in conflict areas that are aimed at creating a safe space for local activists to be able to engage in various nonviolent activities. The effectiveness of the campaigns explained by the presence of foreign volunteers on the territory put limits on violent actions from the oppressive state since the attacking government risks condemnation and punishment from the international community. However,

as stated in the second chapter, sometimes the presence of foreign activists does not give the expected results, while the presence of the nationals of the oppressing state might give more effective outcomes. Nonviolent interposition requires the placement of unarmed activists between conflicting parties. While there are some successful cases, it is extremely dangerous and risky to organize such campaigns if the imbalance of military power is too strong. In fact, it is important to acknowledge that the proportion of successful cases of international nonviolent intervention is extremely low and nonviolent struggles received a limited level of external assistance (Sharp 2005).

#### 3.2.3.2 External and Internal Third-party Nonviolent Intervention

The numerous research on civil resistance or, in other words, non-violent resistance mostly refers to external third-party interveners, who intervene in order to support the local resistance campaign. Their presence on the territory is arguable since some experts believe they help campaigns to achieve their goals (Coy 2012), while others question the positive effect of supporting resistance efforts because of colonial attitudes and asymmetrical power dynamics (Mahrouse 2014). Therefore, the dubious assistance of foreign activists and organizations raises the question of who should be engaged in civil resistance campaigns.

The role of external third-party interveners has been documented and analyzed in numerous studies, and its positive impact and criticism have been well-presented in the literature, however, less attention has been given to ‘internal third-party interveners’ and the ways in which concerned activists and NGOs can intervene in situations outside the borders of their country in order to influence the process and contribute to the conflict resolution efforts. This category of interveners cannot be considered in the same place as external interveners due to the specific characteristics which put internal activists into a more advantageous position. The concept of internal third-party interveners is explained in the work of Leonie Fleischmann and refers to organizations and activists that are “internal to the conflictual situation, as members of the population that are either directly or indirectly complicit in upholding and perpetuating a system of oppression (Fleischmann, 2017). This group is a part of the dominant population which refuses to follow and cooperate with the

system of oppression. Dissenting from the side of the aggressor gives the group power, privileges and rights that are not available to resisters, but can assist the resistance campaigns if transferred to them through cooperation. The strategic value of the internal third-party interveners is unarguably greater than the one of external interveners due to the relationship with local resisters, engagement in the conflict, various resources and access to them. Therefore, internal third-party interveners must be considered as distinct actors engaged in civil resistance campaigns. Nevertheless, it is important to consider that the actions of external and internal third-party interveners cannot be considered mutually exclusive, rather they complement each other.

#### 3.2.3.3 Role of Internal Third-party Intervenors

There are numerous ways for internal third-party intervenors to contribute to civil resistance movements while external third-party intervenors do not have the capacity to assist with. Being a member of the dominant population, which is a party to the conflict is a privilege since they have knowledge of the legal system as well as access to it and to spaces that foreigners do not; members speak the language of the dominant force; besides, they may work or have worked in the governmental structures within the regime.

One of the beneficial roles for internal third-party intervenors could be the physical presence in civil resistance campaigns in the same way as the role of external intervenors since the presence of international volunteers is used to deter the dominant government from using violent means with resisters (Burrowes, 2000). There is a documented effect that presence has on the opponent: the violence is less likely to be used due to the costs of harm or death of the foreign citizen (Rigby, 1995). Although there is a limitation expressed in the tendency of foreign activists to favour one of the parties to the conflict which as a result may justify the use of violence from the opponent (Coy, 2012). In addition, despite the quite positive effects of the strategy, there are still numerous cases where external intervenors were killed but no outrage and condemnation followed (Mahrouse, 2014). In the study, Leonie Fleischmann argues that the presence of internal third-party intervenors would not create the same barriers. The author explains that internal third-party intervenors harmed or killed by

their own government and security forces would more likely cause greater criticism and condemnation (Fleischmann, 2019). As the study shows, the analysis of three campaigns involving joint efforts of Palestinian and Israeli activists proves the fact that the presence of Israeli interveners was necessary and more useful rather than the involvement of external interveners.

### **Conclusion: The Shifting Approach to Conflict Management**

The third chapter serves as a ground basis for the alternative strategy to conflict resolution and a comprehensive theoretical framework for the fifth chapter of the thesis which demonstrates the applicability of the strategy in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. One of the main arguments stated in the chapter is that civil society is a core element of each state due to its various functions. The emphasis lies on the fact that civil society groups also can function in failing or collapsed states and in the case of authoritarian or anarchic decline, civil society may perform as a democratic “safe area” protecting democratic values.

That kind of functionality applies to conflict situations too. Whether the local civilian population (including civil society groups and NGOs) has the support of international civil society organizations, they participate at every stage of the conflict playing different roles such as negotiations, and nonviolent resistance which includes various methods according to their strategic function in different types of the conflict, particularly nonviolent protest, persuasion, noncooperation, and nonviolent intervention.

The focus lies on the inclusion of civil society in the negotiation process and analysis of the nonviolent intervention in order to theoretically support the research question and the case study of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Multiple scholars state that civil society significantly contributes to peace processes since it is more capable of demonstrating public interest, addressing issues, and resolving them since the civilian population is the one that suffers the most in the conflict and is not being respected by the oppressors. Moreover, civil society groups possess unique local knowledge together with a deep understanding of opportunities and barriers to achieving peace in the local context. Those advantageous tools

enable civil society to contribute immensely to all the stages of conflict resolution and give a positive impact on efforts of achieving absolute peace. Therefore, it is important to utilize bottom-up processes which engender societal ownership of the peace process that is necessary in order to attain a durable peace alongside the top-down implementation. Scholars also point out the advantageous position of civil society compared to the external actors since its inclusion reduces the risks of self-serving nature and imbalance of power which are fundamental steps in the conflict resolution process that external parties often undermine when getting involved in the peace process.

Regarding nonviolent intervention, the technique of cross-border intervention serves the function to stop violence and contribute to constructive social change processes. The analysis of external and internal third-party nonviolent intervention proves that internal intervention, particularly the cooperation between the dominant and oppressed parties, is more effective due to the stabilization of the power balance and shows the capacity of both sides for reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. Dissenting from the side of the aggressor gives the group power, privileges and rights that are not available to resisters, but can assist the resistance campaigns if transferred to them through cooperation. The strategic value of the internal third-party interveners is unarguably greater than the one of external interveners due to the relationship with local resisters, engagement in the conflict, various resources and access to them. Therefore, internal third-party interveners must be considered as distinct actors engaged in civil resistance campaigns. Nevertheless, it is important to consider that the actions of external and internal third-party interveners cannot be considered mutually exclusive, rather they complement each other. There is a documented effect that presence has on the opponent: the violence is less likely to be used due to the costs of harm or death of the foreign citizen.

The criticism of the strategy addresses the issue of disorganization once civil society groups are involved in negotiations since they might make an already complex and contradictory process of negotiations and peacebuilding activities even more chaotic. However, it is just a matter of developing a specific strategy of inclusion as an alternative or an additional one to the inclusion of external mediators. The research on conflict studies



demonstrates that peace agreements are often insufficient since the transformation period from violence to peace requires a lot of effort in different fields and has many nuances to consider which political elites solely do not have the capacity or sometimes desire to produce. As a response to the criticism, some scholars proposed a pyramidal structure of actors respectively with their activities where the summit of the pyramid is for political elites, civil society elites take place in the middle and grassroots civil society is at the base, highlighting the role of the civil population in conflict resolution and peacebuilding process.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process:**

#### **The Role of the International Community**

The following chapter is directed at analyzing peace initiatives in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict starting from the Oslo Accords and the selected approach to peace. The Oslo Accords, considered a milestone in the Peace Process that provided a consensus on a two-state solution, constitutes a Declaration of Principles and The Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip signed in 1993 and 1995, accordingly. The Oslo Process secured the Palestinian participation in the negotiations as an independent negotiating partner with Israel. The Peace Process was expected to last for five years starting from signing The Oslo Declaration of Principles which was not a final peace agreement, but rather a set of guidelines for interim self-governance arrangements and a structure for further negotiations towards a comprehensive peace treaty, with a target completion date of 1999. However, the conflict was never resolved (Al Jazeera, 2013). Another attempt to put parties at the negotiation table was initiated by Bill Clinton at the 2000 Camp David Summit, however, the effort ended without any agreement, moreover, the summit became one of the main triggers for the outbreak of the Second Intifada. The Road map to Peace, drafted by the US, the UN, the EU and Russia, envisaged the same goal as the Oslo Process, so to reach the permanent-status agreement by a set date. The international mediators did not handle the proposal as a priority matter, therefore, with the continued violence on the ground, the conflicting parties did not find a solution and the initiative collapsed. The Kerry initiative, held in 2013-2014, suffered the same fate as the previous ones. The agreement was not reached due to the fact that neither side felt obliged to follow the recommendations of the proposal, since the US did not state the explicit message and ground rules which caused a misunderstanding between negotiating parties (“Israeli–Palestinian Peacemaking”). At the Paris Conference in 2017, organized by France, the international community did not manage to secure the participation of both Israel and Palestine which made it impossible to restart the process of achieving a two-state solution. The Trump Plan or “The Peace to Prosperity” in 2020 completely undermined the current situation on the ground by declaring that the

temporary occupation should be replaced by a military regime which does not ensure full rights for people living under it (Barkan & Allen, 2020). Seeing a chain of failed initiatives lasting for decades, there is a rising question about the approaches chosen to resolve the conflict. To understand the peace model implemented in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is necessary to introduce the actors behind it, particularly the international community involved in the Peace Process and its motives, and most importantly, explain the reasons why every initiative resulted in a failure.

#### **4.1 International Community**

Prior to analyzing the actions of the external actors involved in the conflict, it is important to identify who falls under the term “international community”. Firstly, the UN is an organization that manages international matters including conflict situations and peace processes in accordance with International Law. Secondly, the international community also describes the majority of donor countries which includes the European Union Member States and the United States, that endorse a two-state solution that supports the establishment of a Palestinian state in the 1967 boundaries which include the territories that Israel occupied after the Six-day War, particularly East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The two-state solution was adopted in the UN Security Council Resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). While maintaining robust diplomatic relations with Israel, the donor countries are the main financial resource of the Palestinian state-building, however, none of the actors recognizes Palestine as a sovereign state. The international community considers the idea of the two-state solution as the only option to resolve the conflict, which became known as the international two-state consensus (Moughrabi, 1987; Tilley, 2015). Therefore, the financial resources have been directed at achieving this goal with the European Union being the largest donor (World Bank, 2018). Both Israel and Palestine are accountable for failing efforts of conflict resolution, however, due to the extensive involvement of the international community in the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process over the past three decades, the external actors also bear responsibility for the failures of the Peace Process (Lintl, 2018).

## 4.2 Israeli-Palestinian Peace Model

The Middle East Peace Process<sup>6</sup> was based on the international consensus of a two-state solution which implied the establishment of the Palestinian state in twenty-two per cent of the historical territory of Palestine including the West Bank, Gaza Strip and the capital in East Jerusalem (Huber&Kamel, 2015). Although the MEPP lasts for decades and does not bring the conflict to an end, there are some accomplishments yielded throughout the time. Firstly, MEPP built the industry of peace practitioners, political experts, diplomatic initiatives and active involvement of the UN General Assembly and Security Council. Thus, multiple negotiation initiatives and closed discussions were organized to facilitate the talks between the parties and resolve core issues. Besides, the international community contributed immensely to Palestinian statehood. Regardless of multiple criticisms, the 1993 Oslo Accords, a landmark moment in the Peace Process marking the first time Israel and PLO officially recognized each other, allowed technical expertise and donor funding directed at the Palestinian state-building process. The UN's report to the AHLC showed that by 2011 Palestine had sufficient governmental functions, in particular infrastructure, rule of law, livelihoods, health, and education, to become an operative sovereign state (UN, 2011). Moreover, the international community served as a great tool to uphold the public attention and awareness needed for the support of civilians and conflict resolution.

Nevertheless, the MEPP and the actions of the international community are highly criticized emphasizing the inability of the external actors to bring the parties closer to conflict resolution (Lustick, 2013; Qumsiyeh, 2009; White, 2017). There are various arguments explaining what the reasons behind international aid are or how it makes more damage rather than help. Firstly, the criticism addresses the issue of Western donor funding which assisted Israel to maintain the occupation of the Palestinian territories which disrupts any attempts of a political settlement (Dajani & Lovatt, 2017). According to some experts, Western security management and peacebuilding strategies in Palestine allowed Israel to ensure the colonization process by controlling the Palestinian population (Turner, 2015). Moreover,

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<sup>6</sup> Under the scope of the topic of the thesis, in this context the MEPP refers solely to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict without including Israeli relations with other Arab states.

another assumption states that the core idea of the funding is to induce Palestinians “to buy into a peace agreement with Israel” (Wildeman & Tartir, 2014). While donor funding for Palestinian state-building is seen as an achievement, there is strong evidence that it creates a bigger gap and fractures in the Palestinian political sphere which undermines economic development and democracy in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank (Farsakh, 2016; Turner, 2014). The fracturing of Palestinian politics raised Israeli internal security concerns when engaging in negotiations with Palestinian authorities so that Palestinian institutions could not be engaged in the MEPP without Israeli approval. With these actions, donor countries promoted the “right” type of Palestinian elite that Israel can deal with, which undermines the legitimacy of Palestinian authorities as well as Palestinian society (Turner, 2011). The consequences of the 2006 PA elections serve as an example of such “selectivity”. Hamas won the majority of the seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council; however, Israel did not recognize the electoral results, and consequently, donor states supported Israel by halting international aid to the Hamas-formed government and “favoring the PA president Mahmoud Abbas and his party Fatah as ‘partners for peace’”, which caused tensions between Palestinian authorities and affected relations with Israeli government (Mackert, 2022). The donor assistance has also put constraints in the political space for Palestinian leaders to develop the narrative of self-determination. Besides limiting the Palestinian rule to enclaved Area A of the West Bank, the international community accepts the liability of President Mahmoud Abbas’s administration whose mandate expired in 2010 and whose elections in 2021 were postponed for an indefinite period. While the electoral democracy was suspended, Palestinian authorities continue to receive donor funding (Atallah, 2021). One of the reasons for that is the high dependence of Palestinian authorities and citizens on international funding since any move might jeopardize the financial assistance which would put at risk the livelihood of Palestinians employed by the authorities.

Moreover, another critical point of the MEPP touches upon the failure of the external actors to recognize Palestine as a sovereign state. Therefore, the international community failed to address the power asymmetry between Israel and Palestine and proved its inability to establish more balanced conditions for both parties, so that to allow Israelis and

Palestinians to participate in the negotiation process as equals (Ben-Porat, 2008; Turner, 2011). Since external actors ignore the great power asymmetry between Israel and Palestine, the principles of negotiation are undermined which makes any effort to make a deal unimplementable. On the other hand, the failure of the international community in the Palestinian state-building activities and failure to recognize its sovereignty negatively affects Israel, since these are the key factors of safeguarding Israel in regard to demographic and security matters. The political turmoil in Palestine might destabilize the already fragile relations between Israel and Palestine which would put at a greater risk the lives of civilians in both countries in case of an outburst of unrest or political decisions causing involvement of the military which undermines the safety of the civilian population.

Michael Atallah addresses “groupthink phenomena” as another issue that negatively contributed to the MEPP. The phenomenon implies the collective impression built by international actors based on mostly problematic and erratic assumptions (Atallah, 2021). Western countries have collectively endorsed the two-state solution for decades and all the efforts to achieve it would eventually pay off without taking into consideration the contradictory realities on the ground which were taking different trajectories throughout those years and needed different approaches to the situation, respectively. The international community does not pay sufficient attention to the transforming attitudes of Israelis and Palestinians in the MEPP. The polls show that in 2019 only 34 per cent of Israelis supported the two-state solution compared to 69 per cent in 2012 (Kraft, 2019). Similarly in Palestine, in 2006 65 per cent of Palestinians supported the two-state solution approach, the number reduced to 43 per cent by 2018 (Shikaki & Scheindlin, 2018). This is one of the main reasons why the peace process is taking three decades instead of the planned five years envisioned in the Oslo paradigm. The wrongful assumption of policymakers, in this case, was that there is no other alternative to the proposed approach, so no other option should even be explored. By avoiding the fact that the two-state solution is collapsing, the international actors increase the struggle of Palestinians together with isolating Israel on the global stage (Atallah, 2021). While the other approaches did not offer perfect solutions which would satisfy both parties to the conflict, they were worth being considered as alternatives to be elaborated on and

implemented. For example, the one-state solution, proposed by left-wing Palestinian and far-left-wing Israelis, offered numerous variations based on unitary, binational, federal, and confederal models where there are equal rights for all inhabitants. With the prolonged West Bank and Gaza divide, there is a growing belief that the three-state solution, composed of Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, could be considered. Moreover, some regional states also got involved in finding alternative solutions, like Jordan which proposed to establish a Jordan-Palestine confederation which was supported by far-right Israelis. Another option, proposed by far-right Israelis, implied Egypt annex Gaza or assume greater responsibility there since it could play a role in stabilizing the region (Hinman, 2012).

### **4.3 The Role of the United States**

The United States has been the main external actor in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since 1991. As a superpower and an active actor in many international matters including conflicts, the US maintains absolute control over the diplomatic process regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by sidelining international law and bypassing the UN and referring to resolution 242 as the ostensible basis of the conflict resolution (Afshan, 2019). However, the UN resolutions and requirements of International Law are sidelined by the US since it poses itself as a peace broker in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict while actively being Israel's major military, financial and diplomatic backer.

The US has posed itself as one of the main mediators in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and after the Oslo Accords the state has become more engaged and the most influential actor in this trajectory. After the September 11 attacks, the US intensified its efforts in fighting terrorism and maintaining peace and stability in the Middle East, which included mediation efforts for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

With the change of the US administration, its policies changed accordingly, however the foreign policy regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the common one that all US governments share since the 1990s. Particularly, there are two main forms that the US political stance can be defined with: military, political and economic support for Israel, and the denial of Palestinian statehood. The denial was expressed directly as well as through

approaching the Palestinian issue solely as a refugee issue which was stated in White House official foreign policy documents (Erdogan, 2020). Moreover, when dealing with the Palestinian refugees, in particular the right to return to their homeland, the support was more verbal than actual.

Meanwhile, the support for Israel is based on three pillars: political support, military aid and cooperation, and financial assistance (Erdogan, 2020). US political support is directed not only to the Palestinian question but also to regional geopolitics. As per the political perspective in the United States, Israel is considered the only democracy in the Middle East; therefore, the two states share common values, interests, and goals in the region. While being ideological allies, Israel and the US also share a common strategic view on regional threats and challenges where all other states are considered failed or failing with ideologies hostile to American narratives (Malka 2011, Sharp 2019). Regarding military cooperation, the key component of the alliance is the human intelligence that Israel offers to the US since Israel's Unit 8200<sup>7</sup> and the US National Security Agency work together in the war on terrorism and various issues such as weapons proliferation and Iran's nuclear program. The US financial assistance to Israel consists of economic and military funding. For the period 2019 to 2028, the United States has increased its annual security assistance to Israel to \$3.8 billion (from \$3.1 billion at present) (White House, 2016). With such support, Israel built a strong domestic defence industry and became one of the top global suppliers of arms itself.

Since Israel plays the role of an important strategic partner in the region, the US cannot risk this cooperation, thus American administration has supported Israel in the international arena by using its veto power to block any resolution of the UNSC that condemned Israeli violations of Palestinian rights. Until 2019 the US used its veto 44 times to block any resolution condemning Israel and its policies against Palestinians with the one exception of abstention on Resolution 2334 regarding the Israeli settlements in the West bank which happened under the Obama Administration. Such political protection from the UN Security Council resolutions allowed Israel to shield its polity to feel the real costs when not obliged to change its policies toward the occupied territories and make concrete decisions

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<sup>7</sup> Regarded globally as a critical intelligence agency.



towards achieving peace. Therefore, no matter what policies the Israeli government would implement toward reaching a political consensus and consequently solution to the Palestinian question, it will always be supported by the US.

By increasing such asymmetry of power between two conflicting parties, the US failed to act as a credible mediator which consequently let Israel ignore or avoid its obligations during the peace process given that any decision would be supported by the US. The Oslo Accords, mediated by the US were first considered a historical breakthrough, given that the demands of Palestinians for statehood were recognized. The goal of the peace process was to achieve a peace treaty based on Resolutions 242 and 338 of the UN Security Council. After mutual recognition and international acknowledgement of PLO and Israel as negotiating partners, the bilateral dialogues neither defined the powers and responsibilities of the post-Oslo Palestinian government, nor the concrete borders of its territory. The Oslo Process did not realize all its goals due to the following reasons. First, during the negotiations the US coordinated its position with Israel which gave the state certain privileges. Second, the goal was to keep parties at the negotiation table and there was no timeline for the fulfilment of the obligations. Third, the Israeli government lacked the political will to implement the deal. As a result, Israel violated every provision of the Oslo Accords.

Besides the Oslo Accords initiative, the US administration, during President Bill Clinton's term, tried to launch the Camp David II Process in 2000. Based on the all-or-nothing approach addressing the issues of territory, settlements, Jerusalem and the Palestinian right to return, the summit did not bring fruitful results either (Pressman, 2003). Moreover, Clinton blamed Palestinian authorities for the failed negotiations when Israel backed down from the deal (Erdogan, 2020).

Similarly, under the George W. Bush administration, the country took a position of not pressuring Israel into making any compromises that the country is not willing to accept since it was not politically correct to intervene in the affairs of another democratic state to impose their preferences. In 2002 the Arab League endorsed the Arab Peace Initiative, which proposed the stabilization of the relations between the Arab world and Israel under specific conditions. The conditions implied the Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Territories, the

resolvent of the Palestinian refugee issue and the establishment of the Palestinian state with the capital in East Jerusalem. Bush administration supported the initiative, although Israel rejected it due to the requirement to withdraw to pre-June 1967 borders. The following attempts with the renewed proposals in 2007 and 2017 did not bring parties to the agreement either. In 2003 the Middle East Quartet including the US, the EU, Russia and the UN, released the Roadmap for a Peace plan, drafted by the US and directed at resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The plan outlined general goals without a specific time scheme and was composed of three phases: fulfilment of the conditions for a Palestinian state and accepting Israel's right to exist, creation of the sovereign Palestinian state with provisional borders and negotiations on a permanent status agreement together with the recognition of Palestine and its borders ("The Road Map", 2003).

Under the Obama administration, the support of the US was more verbal than actual since the government policies were directed at supporting Israeli demands to recognize the Israeli State's Jewish character while not imposing political pressure on Israel regarding the Palestinian question. The US government took the same approach as the previous US administrations and twice organized high-level negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian authorities in 2009 and in 2013-14, however, none of the initiatives managed to reach the two-state consensus.

The "Peace to Prosperity" was unveiled in 2020 during Trump's term in the office marking a departure from the proposal for peace envisioned by the two-state consensus. On the one hand, it may seem that the new approach was needed since it outlived itself due to not showing results for more than two decades after the Accords were signed. However, the new plan did not imply respecting the demands of both parties to the conflict. The "Peace to Prosperity" unilaterally established new boundaries beyond the 1967 borders including 30 per cent of the West Bank. Moreover, it allowed Israel to exercise sovereignty over Jerusalem and Palestinian statehood would be conditional depending on the requirements set by Israel and the US ("Peace to Prosperity", 2020). Besides, the plan also included no Palestinian refugee right of return and proposed the creation of a future demilitarized State of Palestine in the remaining territory of the West Bank (Robinson, 2021). Due to the perceived threat

from the Islamic Republic of Iran considered a “common enemy”, the Gulf States became an evident key economic player in the Trump Plan, although the strategic Arab states generally had a critical approach towards Israel when fighting for the Palestinian cause.<sup>8</sup>

#### **4.4 The Role of the European Union**

Regarding the role of the European Union, the key factor of its failure as a mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is its inactive position regarding the issue. Some experts claim that the EU is ineffective since it has not been allowed to play a real role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by the US and the parties to the conflict (Toje 2008, Wildangel 2018). Esra Bulut Aymat highlights that Europe lacks initiative by going along with the process at the expense of conflict resolution (Aymat, 2010). In addition, Hugh Lovatt states that although Europe continues to promote the two-state solution, which he addresses as “a broken model”, it acts as a placeholder without deploying the necessary tools and methods in order to engage parties and bring them closer to the conflict resolution (Lovatt, 2016).

The European Union formed its position in accordance with Security Council Resolution 242 and the Venice Declaration of 1980, therefore it has consistently supported the Palestinians’ self-determination and the right to statehood by being the Palestinian Authority’s largest donor while condemning the Israeli occupation and settlement policies. However, while calling for realizing the two-state solution, the EU contributions have limited scope, such as providing funding for Palestine. Yet years of investments in Palestinian state-building show little progress. Those results can be partially explained by the ambivalent relations of the EU with Israel and Palestine. While condemning Israel for its actions on the ground, the relations between Israel and the EU, including economic cooperation, were steadily growing. If in the 1990s the EU claimed the “special status” in relations with Israel, in 2000 the Association Agreement was ratified together with the presentation of the ENP

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<sup>8</sup> “Bin Salman: ‘Help Us Take Control of Middle East so That We Can Normalize with Israel.’” *Middle East Monitor*, 30 Sept. 2019, [www.middleeastmonitor.com/20190930-bin-salman-help-us-take-control-of-middle-east-so-that-we-can-normalize-with-Israel/](http://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20190930-bin-salman-help-us-take-control-of-middle-east-so-that-we-can-normalize-with-Israel/). Accessed 30 Nov. 2022.

Action Plan in 2005 which included Israel<sup>9</sup>. In 2008 Israel and the EU expanded their cooperation so that in 2012 the Association Council identified sixty fields to deepen cooperation. Finally, by 2016 the volume of trade reached €34 billion (Wissenschaft&Politik, 2018).

By building strong cooperation with Israel, the EU failed to demonstrate the seriousness of its stance against Israeli settlement-building, thus there were no reasons for Israel to stop or slow down the settlement expansion. Another mistake was the decision not to recognize the victory of Hamas in the 2006 elections, although the EU had the role of the observer and declared the elections free and fair. This action caused a loss of credibility for the EU from the Palestinian side. Besides, in 2011 the UN officially confirmed the governmental capacities of Palestine in order to maintain the functioning administration of the state, however, the EU showed a lack of support in political recognition of Palestine, since only Sweden fully recognized the Palestinian state and fourteen other EU member states voted for a “non-member observer state” status. All those actions show the lack of consensus within the EU over the question of Palestinian state recognition and conflict in general (Lintl, 2018).

#### **4.5 The Role of the United Nations**

Although the agenda of the United Nations includes activities related to maintaining peace and security, its participation in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process is sidelined. The superpowers and individual states shaped the UN in the way to be able to preserve their power and keep international matters under so that the UN acts as an organizational framework where those Powers exercise their role, particularly the US as a decision-maker and the European Union as the main funding donor.

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<sup>9</sup> The ENP Action Plans are bilateral, and the EU deepened its cooperation with the Arab world by signing agreements with Arab states including Palestine, however, it also became more open to cooperation with Israel despite the criticism of the Israeli control of the occupied territories and expansion of settlements. “Only four Arab countries have more trade with the EU than Israel: the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Algeria and Morocco.” European Commission, Client and Supplier Countries of the EU28 in Merchandise Trade, 15 February 2017, [http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc\\_122530.02.2017.pdf](http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_122530.02.2017.pdf) (accessed 30 November 2022).

During the Oslo Peace Process, the UN participation remained sidelined besides announcing a series of violations of UN resolutions and International Law regarding Israel's occupation in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. For example, Afshan notes that after signing the Oslo Declaration of principles, bilateral negotiations were underway, thus the US aimed at making irrelevant the existing UN resolutions on the conflict (Afshan, 2019).

At the collapsed Camp David Summit, organized by the US without the involvement of the UN negotiators, there started to be a growing sense that the US control over Middle East negotiations was bringing failures which gave more thrust for regional and international forces to participate in the conflict resolution process, however, the US remained the central actor. After the outbreak of the second intifada, UN Secretary-General Kofi Anan together with the regional actors was involved in the negotiations leading to the Sharm el-Sheikh "ceasefire summit". However, there were multiple limits in the UN participation, particularly the efforts to persuade Palestinians to accept US-Israeli terms which included "giving up the demand for an UN-based international commission of inquiry". During the negotiations, Kofi Annan's position expressed the demand to end the escalation of violence and return to "normality" which unintentionally implied that Palestinian territories under military occupation are a temporal solution. (Afshan, 2019).

In 2002 external actors formed the Middle East Quartet which included the United States, the European Union, Russia and the United Nations as equal partners when dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, however, this format did not bring significant changes to the familiar pattern where "the US decides ..., the EU pays, the UN feeds" (Le More, 2005). Despite this development, the US continued to sideline the international actors by putting vetoes on the UN resolutions and restricting the engagement of the EU in search of a political solution (Bruck, 2014).

In 2011, the UN member states decided not to provide Palestinian Authority with UN membership as a fully sovereign state especially because the Hamas rocket attacks on Israel and Israeli air roads were taking place in Gaza (Lintl, 2018). Only in 2012, Palestine gained a status of a non-member observer state at the UN General Assembly, while Israel was

admitted to the UN back in 1949 although it was recognized by 165 states by the end of 2020 (World Population Review, 2022).

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict lasts as long as the existence of the UN itself, and more than two hundred resolutions were adopted by the UN on the question of Palestine and Arab-Israeli conflict, however, no action was implemented to ensure their observance and implementation.

### **Conclusion: The Necessity for an Alternative Approach to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**

The failure of the MEPP demonstrates key erratic factors within the peace process. Groupthink phenomena misled international actors regarding settlement activity in the West Bank. Western countries have collectively endorsed the two-state solution for decades without taking into consideration the contradictory realities on the ground which were taking different trajectories throughout those years and needed different approaches to the situation, respectively. Nevertheless, alternative approaches have not been considered. Power asymmetry between conflicting parties, partially caused by the international community that undermined Palestinian self-determination, created a great gap between negotiating states which prevented them from achieving any consensus during negotiations. Western donor funding enabled Israel to become one of the most powerful states in the region and keep the Palestinian population and territories under control by maintaining the occupation of the Palestinian territories which disrupts any attempts of a political settlement. Moreover, such control of Palestinian territory, supported by Western security management and proposed peacebuilding strategies, can be assimilated with the colonization process.

The US maintains absolute control over the diplomatic process regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, however, it fails to act as a credible mediator since the US approach denies Palestinian statehood and its policies address the Palestinian issue solely as a refugee issue while supporting Israel in its decisions and being its major military, financial and diplomatic backer. Moreover, posing itself as a peace broker in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, the US sidelines other international actors such as the EU and the UN. Therefore,

the inactive position of the EU towards the conflict can be explained by the US not allowing it to play a real role in the peace process, although the EU continues to be the main funding donor for Palestinian state-building. The main failure of the UN is giving up control of international matters and political decision-making to the superpowers and individual states so that the UN acts as an organizational framework where those Powers exercise their role, and its resolutions together with the International Law are being sidelined by the US in favour of Israeli political stance.

Seeing such development, one may suppose that the international community is not capable of assisting the peace process between the two states. That leads to the idea that maybe there should be a shift in the actors rather than mere melioration of the approach in order to bring two states to the negotiation table and reach consensus. The next chapter is directed at analyzing civil society as an alternative actor in the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process.

## **Chapter V**

### **The Role of the Civil Society in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict:**

#### **Joint Activism of the Israeli and Palestinian Organizations**

##### **in Peacebuilding Initiatives**

The third chapter outlined the theoretical framework of civil society's role in the conflict. Based on the framework presented in the third chapter, the following chapter is directed to analyze the role of the Palestinian and Israeli civil society in the ongoing conflict. Given the complicity of the conflict, and hence the complex relationship between the two societies, it is important to highlight the main characteristics and work of both Palestinian and Israeli NGOs and CSOs. Primarily, the chapter provides an overview of the public sentiment both in Palestine and Israel regarding the ongoing conflict and activities of the NGOs and CSOs. The overview is followed by an outline of the structure, development, and scope of activities of the non-profit sector in Israel and Palestine. Since the situation on the ground is very different for the activists, it is necessary to go deeper in the analysis by highlighting the main activities, struggles and work efficiency of the Palestinian organizations in Palestine and Israel as well as Israeli organizations. The detailed evaluation is necessary due to the great differences in legal, political, financial, and societal frameworks when it comes to the work of the NGO sector in Israel and Palestine. The analysis includes quantitative and qualitative methods collected from the secondary data which includes interviews with the Israeli and Palestinian activists and analysis of the campaigns. Besides, the websites' activity, reports and publications of the organizations were analyzed in order to get first-hand information on the campaigns. The analysis revealed that Israeli and Palestinian NGOs and CSOs have higher efficiency when working together and organizing joint projects. The following paragraph highlights the crucial role of Israeli groups' participation in civil resistance campaigns, particularly when organizing their activities together with Palestinian organizations. Hence, it is important to analyze the joint activism of Israeli and Palestinian organizations. The chapter highlights the reasons for its success and mentions the key issues of joint activities, particularly, the inner structure and organization



of work between Palestinians and Israelis as well as demonstrates the external factors that challenge joint activism. The conclusion of the paragraph outlines the strategies to overcome external challenges and enhance the structure and work of the organizations internally. The last part of the chapter is directed to demonstrate examples of civil resistance campaigns as successful strategies applied by organizations in Israel and Palestine. The campaigns are divided into three parts where the first part presents the campaigns directed at confronting the construction of the separation barrier in the West Bank. The second part demonstrates the nonviolent campaigns aimed at countering displacement, eviction and harassment of Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The last part highlights the peacebuilding initiatives directed at Israelis and Palestinians. The initiatives challenge the existing conceptions and stigma in both societies, and as a result, bring both societies to reconciliation.

### **5.1 Palestinian Society**

Due to the unstable political situation with different factions in the government, continuous occupation, and division of territories, Palestinian society is deeply fragmented. Polarization touches all the fields such as territorial, economic, social, political, generational, religious, and ideological. Both vertical and horizontal division combined with the continuous war and lack of a coherent strategy to address the conflict, leave Palestine in an internal crisis where it is impossible to build a cohesive society and a viable independent state.

The polarization and further breakdown are partially caused by violence from the people and parties aligned with Fatah and Hamas. Some statistical findings demonstrate that in the past two decades intra-state Palestinian violent actions killed more Palestinians than Israeli military and settlers (Brand-Jacobsen, 2009). Such division on the governmental level spreads through all the segments of the population which weakens the efforts of the Palestinian civil society groups in their fight for national freedom and conflict resolution. Moreover, such great political and societal instability serves as a justification for Israeli actions on the ground since Israeli government feels the need to undertake severe security measures to protect its population and territories.

This fragmentation also finds its reflection in Palestinian CSOs. Actors follow various initiatives and approaches which lack cohesion and often contradict each other. Therefore, it is impossible for Palestinian people to mobilize their full potential of political, social, and human resources since there is no united leadership and clear cohesive strategy. Reliance on foreign donors and cooperation with Israeli NGOs and civil society undermine the image of Palestinian NGOs in the eyes of society and its government. While working hard to serve the community and developing peace initiatives, the organizations are under constant control from Palestinian and Israeli governments and suspicion from the population as well as between NGOs advocating peacebuilding but with different approaches. This negatively affects the activities and the impact of the Palestinian NGOs both in Palestine and Israel (Brand-Jacobsen, 2009).

## **5.2 Israeli Society**

Israeli CSOs, NGOs and individual activists face multiple issues while working on conflict resolution. The organizations based in Palestine whose main activity is to oppose continuing settlement expansion and protest against the construction of the separation barrier are considered traitors by many Israelis. Moreover, Israeli organizations that work on broader issues, such as the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are considered naive. Primarily, in order to build a broad-based consensus and support for peacebuilding, particularly, it is important to address the legitimate interests of Israeli citizens and recognize the needs of Palestinians.

Moreover, the majority of peace organizations are struggling to make clear the illegitimacy of war and occupation and explain the responsibility of the Israeli people and the government for that. Israeli public opinion is shifting towards supporting the militarization of the conflict as a security response to Palestinian attacks while many people are still unaware of the realities in the Occupied Territories.<sup>10</sup> Israeli government and pro-

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<sup>10</sup> This fact is explained by the results of the 2022 elections in Israel. The majority voted for the right-wing government and Benjamin Netanyahu as a prime minister. His campaign is focused on the security of the Israeli state which implies continuing the construction of the barrier and protection of Israeli citizens from Palestinians. The new government also bases its campaign on economic reforms. Most Jewish Israelis are more concerned

government media create propaganda that convinces many Israelis that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a matter of survival for Israel and the Jewish People by applying an anti-Semitic narrative to anything that questions the rights of Israelis or is seen as a threat. Israeli media highlights official government positions which do not explain the root causes of the conflict from different perspectives. Instead of promoting balanced discussions for the sake of both nations and developing empathy towards Palestinians, media sources create a greater polarization of the society by dehumanizing the Palestinian population and legitimizing Israeli actions on the ground (Brand-Jacobsen, 2009).

Israeli peace organizations working on peacebuilding strategies manage to organize large demonstrations for peace and in support of peace initiatives, however, more needs to be done to transform this into active strategic engagement for public and political opposition to war and occupation. Existing approaches in this direction are quite limited. One of the reasons for limitation is the fact that Israeli CSOs involved in peace work constitute less than 5%, although Israeli civil society is active when working on human rights issues, and social and economic injustices without relating them to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Israeli population together with the NGOs do not see the parallel between economic and political issues and continuing occupation (Bach, 2010).

To develop strategic momentum and direction for a resolution, broader sectors of the Israeli public need to be mobilized and engaged by addressing their legitimate needs, concerns and beliefs.

### **5.3 Structure, Development and Activities of the NGOs in Israel and Palestine**

Israeli-Palestinian CSOs and NGOs created multiple peace and nonviolence programmes and projects over the last decades that have a number of common characteristics and trends. Among common factors is the design of the initiatives and how they were

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about the economy and cost of living than the “Palestinian issue”. According to the Israel Democracy Institute, in the pre-electoral survey, only 31 per cent of Israeli citizens responded that the government should advance the “two states for two people” strategy (Hermann, 2022).

implemented. Israeli-Palestinian CSOs have a wide range of activities playing a significant role in serving the society under the conflict. Despite the narrative of weakening the political parties<sup>11</sup>, Palestinian NGOs and CSOs facilitate dialogues to develop and implement strategies that address the full range of issues in the conflict when there are no official political negotiations. Besides, the organisations focus on the delivery of humanitarian aid, witnessing, accompaniment and acting as supporters and promoters of nonviolent resistance methods as a response to increasing tensions and violence on the ground (Levins Morales, 2007).

Although the projects are based on good intentions, they are often criticised, and a major part of the criticism comes from people who work in the organizations. The initiatives are often ad hoc and lack coordination and cooperation between each other, such as organization of demonstrations and workshops which may not have a tendency to become a regularity and actually bring results (Kaufman 2006, Brand-Jacobsen 2009). There is a lack of a comprehensive strategic framework that would allow multiple areas of engagement in order to make initiatives more effective and sustainable. Therefore, the lack of common and coordinated effort did not bring a cumulative impact, so even an increased number of projects related to peacebuilding failed to contribute substantially to the mobilization and reconciliation of the population of both states, substantial and effective leadership and dynamics of the conflict. Moreover, some NGOs went through the “NGOisation” of political activists, so that the activities are shaped around the needs of the donors or government rather than communities and issues to address the conflict.

The post-Oslo organizations are criticized for lacking ideological roots and commitment to end the conflict and establish long-lasting peace. Instead, they become more apolitical and service-oriented with a quite limited scope of action and relevance. After the Oslo Accords were signed, there was an immediate rise in the number of Israeli-Palestinian and international organizations and initiatives involved in the peace-building process. In several cases, funding for the Israeli-Palestinian organizations was comparatively smaller

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<sup>11</sup> For example, in Palestine leading political activists and experts working for peace generally join NGOs and CSOs rather than political parties.

than for the international ones, although the capacities of the local organizations significantly increased (Maoz 2004 , Hallward 2009, Brand-Jacobsen 2009).

Palestinian NGOs lack a common action strategy, activists lack cooperative mechanisms, and the organizations are under absolute control from both the Palestinian and Israeli governments. Compared to the Palestinian organisations, Israeli NGOs have more liberty in their activities and are characterized by a deeper divergence in analysis and approaches to the conflict and occupation which may be an advantageous position compared to the Palestinian organizations, however such divergence causes fragmentation within and between organizations. Therefore, they have a limited impact on the Israeli population and public opinion. Moreover, while continuing their activities, Israeli organizations working for peace have low credibility with both authorities and the population. Such a challenging operating environment together with divergent or even contradictory strategies, and limited donor support prevent Israeli NGOs from making a real impact to end the occupation, however, peace activists are highly committed to learning the experiences of the past decades and are always in search of more relevant and effective strategies.

### *5.3.1 Palestinian NGOs*

With the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994, Palestinian civil society<sup>12</sup> needed to make a shift in terms of structural conditions and types of activities since many established service sectors expected centralization and transfer to the PA. However, the adaptation to the new reality came along with a power struggle between PLO and the local Palestinians since the political culture in Palestine was based on resistance (Hammami, 2000). Such developments on the ground affected the way civil society was going through the transformation and acted vis-à-vis the Palestinian government. Considering that Palestinian territories still were not independent even after the establishment of the PA by being under continuous Israeli military occupation, the NGO sector directed its work strategies into close cooperation with Western donors. Some experts argue that such cooperation does not always bring fruitful results. For instance, the research of Tariq Dana highlights the fact that some

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<sup>12</sup> Palestinian civil society includes NGOs, CSOs, and voluntary and charity organizations.

PNGOs lacked the capacity to respond to grassroots issues and pursue the activities based on the needs of the local communities since the organizations were becoming more dependent on the agenda proposed by the external donors (Dana, 2015). Moreover, a great number of NGOs were accused of corruption due to the fact that some of them developed close ties with the donors and managed to obtain a greater amount of funds (Bouillon, 2004).

In the pre-Oslo period, civil society in Palestine acted as a social mobilizer due to the presence of Israeli occupation authorities. In the absence of the official Palestinian government, the Palestinian population used the NGOs within civil society as an alternative sector to approach when dealing with the problems. Hence, some of the pre-Oslo NGOs have links with the PLO party after the transformation period within the establishment of Palestinian Authorities and were considered less independent from the government, the so-called “grey zone between the PA and civil society” (Schulz&Suleiman, 2020). However, without a stable government and proper statehood, these organizations can be related to as civil society actors.

In the Oslo period, the NGO sector received an increased number of criticism due to donor dependency and close relations with the PA authorities. With the further division and polarization of the Palestinian government and the formation of Hamas, civil society organizations also experienced a fraction. Since the sector comprises a variety of organizations including Islamic charity organisations involved in humanitarian work, the Western donors tended to view the non-PLO sector as more radicalized and considered them apart from civil society. Seeing those organizations as a threat caused cutting their funds and limiting activities which worked as an advantage for other NGOs, particularly those who had a linkage with the PLO and were considered left oriented. However, with time PA started to lose its credibility in the eyes of the Palestinian population hence there was a new belief in civil society organizations serving as an alternative to the State system. The belief was based on the pre-Oslo achievements of the PNGO sector where they worked with human rights, education, health, and other state functions.

Regarding donors’ involvement in the NGO sector, in the interviews conducted by Michael Schulz & Lina Suleiman with leading figures from PNGOs operating in the West

Bank in 2015, many NGOs highlighted the structural shift with the occurrence of international donors. Besides benefits such as professionalization and expansion of the activities, NGOs got involved in different activities simultaneously in addition to the work their own agenda implied or shift from one activity to another depending on the call and application approval from funding donors. However, there is no functional monitoring mechanism to control the funding and activities regulated by the PA, which creates a risk for corruption to flourish (Michael Schulz & Lina Suleiman, 2020).

Although there is no clear structure to monitor the activities of NGOs, PA made some policy changes regarding the NGO sector requiring organizations to register with the Ministry of Interior. Besides, NGOs have to provide information about their political associations to security officials. Despite the efforts of the Palestinian government to take control of the NGO sector and restrict their activities, many organizations continued to function on both local and national levels under different circumstances.

### *5.3.2 Palestinian NGOs in Israel*

Palestinian NGOs in Israel are identified as institutionally separate nonprofit organizations with a distinct legal character. The legal character includes registration with the Registry of Associations in the Ministry of the Interior. Run by Palestinian citizens in Israel, the organizations are addressed as PINGOs which stand for Palestinian Israeli NGOs, and their main goal is to serve the Palestinian population inside the boundaries of the Green Line.

Benjamin Gidron identified four main reasons for the development of PINGOs at the end of the twentieth century. Primarily, PINGOs fulfil the functions of the Israeli State due to the isolation of Palestinians in Israel. Second, there are a few governmental entities such as the Law of Association which is a form of legal political participation available to Palestinians. Further, there was an increasing need to provide social services and organize campaigns for equality between Palestinian citizens and Jewish in Israel due to the unequal treatment in regard to social and economic rights and land rights. Moreover, PINGOs

provided employment opportunities for Palestinian citizens in Israel with double the rate of hired individuals compared to their Jewish counterparts (Gidron, 2001).

PINGOs are often exposed to the risk of being shut down since Palestinian civil society live under Emergency Defence Regulations, an alternative to civil law implemented by Israel, which allows Israeli authorities to ban parties, control media and dismantle organizations in the NGO sector (Payes, 2003). In comparison with Israeli Jewish NGOs which are funded by the state and have little opposition to the government, PINGOs are mainly funded by external donors. Moreover, many of the organizations challenge the government by doing advocacy work and providing services that are denied to the community by Israel. The non-neutral position of the state of Israel is demonstrated through restrictive and discriminative laws applied to PINGOs compared to a more advantageous situation of the Israeli NGOs which creates multiple barriers to development and undermines Israeli democracy. Nevertheless, the PINGOs continue to grow and fight for their right to serve the Palestinian minority in Israel.

Despite the influence of Palestinian and Israeli authorities on the work of PINGOs, there is an additional limitation to their activity which comes from their own strategical framework of actions which is common to NGOs around the world (Wright, 2012). Generally, it is difficult for NGOs to challenge the power dynamics between majority and underrepresented groups whether this imbalance comes from ethnic or national issues, or, for example, economic gaps caused by territoriality (centre and periphery). The limitation is explained by the fact that NGOs tend to give technical solutions to the problems instead of applying the political approach to pressure the government and challenge the roots of inequality. Besides, another difficulty is based on their apolitical status since they are not elected institutions which creates a dependency on the state regarding recognition of their legitimacy. And sometimes the agenda for action is also dictated by external donors which makes it difficult to pursue their own activity.

Despite all the challenges inflicted by the state that the PINGOs faced, they played a significant role in the political sphere by organizing campaigns for civil equality in Israel



which were oriented to the expansion of civil rights and establishment of the formal associations to serve the minority population. The efforts also resulted in increased legitimacy for extra-parliamentary opposition in Israel and reforms of the governmental policies, such as the promulgation of the 1992 Basic Laws<sup>13</sup>. With the creation of the Law of Associations, PINGOs got provided with a legal frame although with various restrictions on the activities. PINGOs managed to improve civil society in Israel in various ways. Firstly, the organizations supported the coordination of the Palestinian society in the centre and the periphery of Israel. Secondly, PINGOs enhanced the participation of underrepresented groups in public life. The organizations such as Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC) managed to mobilize Palestinians and improve their professional abilities. While enhancing the employability level of the minority group, the organizations like AL-Haq<sup>14</sup> and Adalah also trained personnel to challenge government policies. The Palestinian minority became more empowered due to the provision of health, housing and education services organized by PINGOs. Besides fighting for the Palestinian minority rights in Israel, PINGOs such as the Association for Support and Defense of Beduin Rights, the Regional Council of the Unrecognized Arab-Beduin Villages in the Negev, and the Association of Forty, also enabled the higher representation of the disadvantaged groups within Palestinian society in Israel fighting for the Beduin in the Unrecognized Villages (Schultz&Suleiman, 2020).

### *5.3.3 Israeli NGOs*

Israeli society is a complex structure constituted of different groups of people with different ideologies and beliefs, therefore Israeli NGOs work on various issues and different levels of society which sometimes do not concern the Palestinian question. However, there are multiple organizations working on peacebuilding strategies and supporting Palestinians

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<sup>13</sup> “Passed on March 17, 1992, by the Twelfth Knesset. The law determines that the basic human rights in Israel are based on the recognition of the value of the human being, the sanctity of his life, and his being a free person.” (The Knesset, 2022).

<sup>14</sup> UAWC and Al-Haq are shut down by Israel in 2022, however, both organisations continue their activities while demanding the international community to take action against targeting human rights organisations (Al Jazeera, 2022).

in the Occupied Territories as well as the ones living in Israel. The entities often collaborate with international and Palestinian organizations in order to make their work more effective. Most of the cases are focused on Bil'in and the West Bank. For example, the organization Anarchists Against the Wall cooperates with the International Solidarity Movement while organizing and attending weekly demonstrations against the construction in 2005. Moreover, they provide help to the Palestinians in the village. The movement grew into a big network where Israeli and Palestinians find a way to communicate and live peacefully with each other which requires knowing the language, respecting cultural differences and overcoming the "enemy barrier" which is a strong stigma in both societies (Bach, 2010).

Leonie Fleischmann in *The Role of Internal Third-Party Interveners in Civil Resistance Campaigns: The Case of Israeli-Jewish Anti-Occupation Activists and Mahmoud Soliman in Resource Mobilization in Palestinian Nonviolent Campaigns* highlighted the crucial role of Israeli groups' participation in civil resistance campaigns. Internal third-party interveners can contribute significantly to the campaigns' efficiency in multiple ways. Firstly, Israeli activist groups may help to assist the campaigns that challenge the Israeli government. Besides, Israeli NGOs can provide various material and non-material resources, including access to restricted areas and to legal protection, and additional human resources such as activists, professionals, and volunteers (Soliman, 2022). For example, B'Tselem lawyers defended the arrested people during the South Hebron Hills campaign. Material resources, in turn, constitute the provision of the necessary equipment for the campaigns or necessary infrastructure to ease the lives of Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories. For example, Comet-ME managed to provide communities with renewable energy by donating solar panels during the SHH campaign and teaching people to maintain them. Ta'ayush provided human resources to assist Palestinian campaigns in rebuilding houses and protecting farmers from the settlers' attacks. Moreover, Israeli organizations can connect Palestinian organizations with international actors who can better raise awareness of the issues in the international arena and provide additional resources and training to people in Israel and Palestine. While enjoying a democratic regime and access to information, Israeli organizations contribute by spreading information on the Palestinian struggle and raising awareness of Israeli citizens

and people abroad on the actions of the Israeli government and military. *Rabbis and Breaking the Silence* drew the attention of Israeli citizens and the international community to the Israeli government and army's violations of rights in the Occupied Territories. Because of the position of the dominant population, Israeli activists can contribute significantly to the campaigns due to the certain rights, benefits and privileges they possess. The physical presence of Israeli activists assisted to limit the repression of the IDF in the West Bank. Moreover, Israeli activists use their skills to attract media attention and legal knowledge which contributed positively to making some shifts in the strategies of the Israeli military forces in the Occupied Territories (Fleischmann, 2019).

#### **5.4 Joint Activism**

Seeing the success of the Israeli and Palestinian joint efforts, organizations started to get more involved in the joint projects, develop cooperation or create fully new organizations which required the presence and power symmetry of both Israeli and Palestinian activists. Joint activities refer to the work carried out in partnership and cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian organizations which involve NGOs, CSOs, local authorities, media, academic and research institutions, the art sphere, and former combatants. The majority of the Palestinian and Israeli organisations involved in the joint activities were founded in the pre-Oslo period, so the joint activism itself started to appear with the development of the NGOs' activities. However, the number of joint activities increased first in the Oslo period when civil society witnessed the willingness of the governments to take steps for the conflict resolution and then with the failure of the negotiation process and the outbreak of the Second Intifada organisations felt the necessity to maintain joint activism and put more effort into it in order to reduce violence and polarization and radicalization of both nations. Joint activism has been developing for the past two decades and it includes a number of various activities such as conferences and dialogue forums with political and religious narrative, trainings, educational and cultural programs, research projects, public peace processes with public demonstrations and nonviolent actions, policy development and solidarity groups (Brand-Jacobsen, 2009).

The main outstanding characteristic of the joint NGOs or Palestinian and Israeli NGOs collaborating with each other is the requirement for equality and symmetry between Palestinians and Israelis. According to Maoz, this equality is manifested geographically and through representation and language (Maoz, 2004). First of all, the campaigns are organized both in Israeli Jewish locations and in the West Bank. Second, equal representation implies not only the participation of both sides but also the equal distribution of authority and decision-making power in the organizational hierarchy. Moreover, regarding language, all the cooperative projects and activities that share common goals and approaches are held in English and both Arabic and Hebrew. Organisations, promoting nonviolence in conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities, such as Israel- Palestine Center for Research and Information and Neveh Shalom School for Peace led by both Palestinians and Israeli Jews, develop various educational projects, conferences and workshops and serve as a good example of equality and inclusivity both in the organizational structure and externally.

#### *5.4.1 Main Challenges of Joint Activities*

Considering the situation on the ground, it is challenging to follow the requirements since it takes a long time to build a such structure. Despite the successes of the organizations, there is also some criticism regarding this issue (Sonnenschein et al., 1998; Rouhana & Korper, 1997). The criticism comes from the failures to achieve the specific parameters mentioned above, specifically the equality in organizational hierarchy and decision-making powers, the geographical aspect and consequently, the language, which negatively affects the effectivity of the joint activities.

##### *5.4.1.1 Key Issues of Joint Activities:*

Kai Frithjof Brand-Jacobsen conducted the interviews with Israeli, Palestinian and joint organizations for the research project “Palestine and Israel: Improving Civil Society Peacebuilding Strategies, Design and Impact” in order to evaluate the cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian NGOs given the centrality and fast development of the joint activities. Their work contributed to identifying the key issues, challenges and weaknesses of joint projects and the way they affect the implementation and effectiveness of the initiatives. Just

as there is power asymmetry between political authorities which creates a barrier to initiating negotiations and reaching a consensus, there is the same issue of imbalance between Israeli and Palestinian organisations. Many projects struggle to make a real impact with the lack of authentic partnerships since Israeli organizations would take control over financial resources and other opportunities and project management steps. Another issue refers to different contexts and objectives. Within each project development, the nuances regarding different needs, such as funding, contexts, and understanding of the problem were not considered enough, therefore affecting the performance of the organisations. For example, some Israeli organizations were unwilling to go to the Palestinian areas while Palestinian NGOs faced obstacles to travel at all. Besides, Palestinian activists often preferred to keep low visibility when reporting joint activities since joint initiatives build a barrier for them to continue any activity when Israeli organizations sought high media coverage of the activity to improve interaction and shift propagandist public opinion. Due to the different contexts, the organizations sometimes failed to structure their projects with regard to a mutual understanding of trends on both sides together with solidarity and shared ownership between Israeli and Palestinian which often led to criticism and scepticism towards the projects. Moreover, many projects managed to cover a limited segment on each side. Since the activities sometimes failed to build a more significant understanding and engagement both among organizers and the population, the projects had a risk of having a narrow and superficial impact. Another issue is explained by the high dependency of joint projects on donor funding. Both organisations and donors sometimes failed to build linkage and cooperation between the two populations through joint activities so that once the funding was ended, the initiative ceased without having sustainable after-life capacities. Overall, even when the established goals of the activities were achieved, such short-term projects had little impact on the environment, driving factors and dynamics of the conflict (Brand-Jacobsen, 2009).

#### 5.4.1.2 The External Challenges of Joint Struggle

One of the main issues of joint activism is the stigma which the Oslo Accords failed to reduce in an attempt to bring people together for similar reasons. The stigma lies in the

idea of people that any participation as a joint activity is considered a betrayal of their nation, hence the person is a traitor (Hallward, 2009). The joint programmes try to bring communities together around shared concerns in order to humanize the other side so that the perception of “traitor” or “collaborator” with the enemy can be mitigated. However, it is a long run and joint activism struggles to reach success by having a risk of falling into this stigma more often. After signing the Oslo Accords, this approach had quite limited success since it was criticized by both sides. The reasons for criticism include power differences between participating entities, failure to address the causes of the conflict and hence different objectives for participation in joint activities (Hassassian, 2002). After the collapse of the Oslo Process, the polarization of both societies has grown even more, promoting the rhetoric of anti-normalization on both sides. Besides, legal measures and physical infrastructure directed at the further separation of populations complicated an already challenging environment for those working together for lasting peace. The establishment of different areas in the West Bank with different levels of control had a negative impact on the effectiveness of joint activism due to a checkpoint regime applying discriminatory control of the movement between areas, the system of restricted roads in the West Bank, and different sets of laws for Israelis and Palestinians. The legal framework creates a greater imbalance between the communities working in cooperation because for participation in demonstrations Palestinians face military courts, the possibility of administrative detention, curfews and road closures while Israelis are more likely to be taken to the detention center for a few hours. While Palestinians have higher stakes compare to Israelis when organizing joint activities, some cases would have never succeeded in the absence of joint effort, particularly Israeli participation, since Israelis are in a more privileged situation regarding the law.<sup>15</sup> In 2002 after the outbreak of the Second Intifada, following the attacks perpetrated by Palestinians Israeli government decided to start the construction of the separation barrier in order to enhance security and prevent Palestinians from entering the territory. The separation barrier also had a hidden goal of annexation of the territory since it goes through the West Bank and

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<sup>15</sup> The joint activism in Bil’in allowed activists to win the case of the route of the separation barrier. Israeli activists brought the case to the Israeli High Court since organized demonstrations directly referred to international law.

not along the Green Line. The establishment of the checkpoints at the separation barrier within the West Bank and on the border with Israel significantly complicates the implementation of joint activities since the movement of Palestinians is impeded within the West Bank but also forbids Israelis from entering the areas that are under Palestinian control according to Israeli law. The system of restricted roads facilitates the movement of settlers which keeps the maintenance of separate boundaries of identity since the roads are restricted to the Palestinian population and prevent access to the neighbouring areas on their own land. Consequently, it affects joint activism since it is difficult to coordinate the activities and the transportation of activists.

#### *5.4.2 Overcoming Challenges*

When dealing with challenging conditions, peace activists apply various strategies in order to minimize the negative impact and change the situation on the ground. The nonviolence strategy is one of the approaches that shift the image of Palestinian resistance from terrorism with a radicalized narrative to legitimate nonviolent resistance against an occupying force. The approach is particularly difficult to implement since activists should touch upon multiple societal contexts and have to show the legitimacy of their actions to very diverse groups of people with different backgrounds and various personal and professional experiences (Maoz, 2002).

Using the Israeli law system to address the issues (for example, taking cases of human rights violations to the court and actually winning them), there is a demonstration of the willingness to adhere to the rule of law that contributes significantly to changing the perception of people on NGO activities. Changing the focus of the demonstrations from one against Israeli occupation to a more positive as for human rights is also a way to gain leverage in society, challenge existing assumptions about the conflict, and change the perspective of how people see the activities which allowed the development of partnerships between Israeli and Palestinian activists as well as international activists. Hence, joint activism gets a more legal character and manages to persuade both public and governments about its assertive and powerful activity. Besides, activists apply the following tactics that contribute to the campaign's efficiency and sustainability regardless of the difficult circumstances. Due to

different geographical locations of the joint organisations, activists manage to extend the geographical scope of action in order to popularize campaigns in all areas and mobilize a greater amount of people and enhance their ability to organize collective actions. Moreover, activists foster unity and keep transparency within organizations and the civilian population in order to gain credibility. In order to avoid too much influence from international actors, the organizations try to maintain the independence of campaigns. And finally, activists focus on sustaining their projects for many years while organizing events regularly keeping the high frequency of the initiatives, which helps to keep attention to the issue of various groups including both civil and political sectors.

## **5.5 Resistance Campaigns**

According to the research on grassroots activism, joint activism has a higher rate of success rather than other strategies including nonviolent struggle, dialogue, and violent struggle. Joint activities are effective 57% of the time, nonviolent struggle was coded as successful 49% of the time, whereas violent struggle showed low success 100% of the time, and even peace talks reach only 27% of effectiveness (Pathak&Williams, 2018). By engaging in joint struggle and building a relationship based on equality, activists reframe conflict discourse which contributes to the development of a more cohesive and open-minded civil society where two different nations can coexist in peace.

### *5.5.1 The Struggle Against the Wall*

In 2002, the Israeli government decided to construct the separation barrier following the attacks of Palestinians, although the construction would serve Israeli authorities to pursue the annexation goals. About 85% of the route goes through the West Bank but not along the Green Line, covering the territory of the settlements. With the construction of the Wall, Israel makes sure to minimize the number of Palestinians living on the territories between the barrier and the Green Line, “thereby laying the groundwork for the de facto annexation of most of the settlements and much land for their future expansion”. Such policy disregards



the rights and needs of the Palestinians since they lose their land, and urban and rural structures and the whole communities get separated and displaced.

The route of the separation barrier has affected many villages in Palestine. Nonviolent resistance activism has been organized by the Grassroots Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign, which began as an initiative of the Palestinian Environmental NGO Network in October 2002. The campaign itself comprises a network of 54 communities in the West Bank that are affected directly by the construction of the barrier.

Despite the multiple construction sites, the small agricultural village of Bil'in became a main spot for resistance campaigns in 2005 when the construction began. Firstly, the village is located 4km from the Green Line in the Central West Bank. According to several sources, the separation barrier cuts a couple of thousands of villagers from 50-60% of their farmland (Hallward, 2009, B'Tselem 2017). The construction deprives Palestinian villagers the access to their olive trees, which makes it impossible to maintain the crops and hence provide for their families. Secondly, Bil'in became a training territory for Israeli activists and volunteers willing to join the resistance campaigns against the Wall and other villages also started to apply its framework of actions (Norman 2011). The campaign is committed to nonviolent strategies in its activities. Specifically, activists apply creative and unique actions which attract media coverage. They step aside from the official narrative of demonstrating the confrontation between the military and protesters, which gave a wrongful impression of the illegal presence of activists in the military zone. Instead, the message depicts the reason for the protest which is addressed not only to Israelis but also to the Palestinians and the international community and manages to counteract the effects of territoriality (Hallward, 2009). Besides, activists link protests with politics and the legal system to implement change. Engaging politicians in the joint struggle helps to raise the campaign profile and attract the attention of the authorities to the issue. By using legal structures such as the court system which is facilitated by the presence of Israelis on the ground, the activists manage to reshape the existing conceptions of the protests and conflict in general.

### *5.5.2 Countering Displacement, Eviction, and Harassment of Palestinians*

Area C<sup>16</sup> constitutes around 60% of the West Bank, where Israel has almost exclusive control. Due to Israeli policies in the region, Palestinians are deprived of their fundamental rights, and there is continuous direct violence from the Israeli army and settler harassment. Hence a variety of nonviolent resistance campaigns were organized in order to address the issues. The nonviolent actions include direct collective actions such as demonstrations and nonviolent interventions including rebuilding village infrastructure and land cultivation (Kaufman-Lacusta 2010).

South Hebron Hills campaign is one of the campaigns that applied various civil resistance tactics, but its main goal is to rebuild infrastructure in the area for fifteen communities living about 30km to the south of Hebron which is located within Area C. Israeli occupation considers the territory as a firing zone which means that the residents can be evicted by the Israeli army and forbid further construction. Activists focus on rebuilding roads, water wells and pipelines, and basic infrastructure such as houses, clinics and schools. The initial tactic of the organizations is to build tents, which is the fastest way to provide residents and volunteers with places to stay. Organization of conferences and festivals helps with campaign fundraising and media coverage. Moreover, the campaign provides residents with legal support to prevent house and land demolition and defends activists in military court. Besides, there are regular trainings on protection and security issues.

Jordan Valley Solidarity campaign (“We Exist to Resist”) takes place on almost one-third of the West Bank in the Jordan Valley. The main difficulty of the campaign is that the communities are small and distributed across the area while being surrounded by military training zones and illegal settlements. Activists’ main pursuit is building livable infrastructure and schools. Due to the location of the villages which does not allow activists to move often and easily together with transportation of the materials and resources, the

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<sup>16</sup> According to the Oslo Accords, the West Bank was divided into three administrative zones: Area A where civil and security matters are under the control of the PA; Area B administered by the PA for civil matters only; and Area C under the full control of Israel. Area C is a continuous territory comprising Israeli settlements and two-thirds of the fertile agricultural land while Areas A and B are broken down into 166 enclaves (B’Tselem, 2002).

organizations arranged trainings to teach communities traditional building methods to acquire internal resources in order to overcome barriers and restrictions set by Israel.

The Rebuilding Villages campaign took place in 2013-2015 and did not have a specific area since it targeted locations close to the settlements in Area C, East Jerusalem, and spaces close to the Green Line. The choice of the locations depended on the plan to improve the rights of Palestinians and the idea of establishing a geographical continuity contributing to a unification of the Palestinian State. If the short-term goal was to rebuild the villages, the main goal of the campaign was to raise awareness of land annexation and expansion of the settlements in the Occupied Territories. Each location was selected due to the different stories that had great media coverage, such as the visit of Barack Obama to the OPT and Israel or John Kerry's proposal to take control over Jordan Valley. Activists used very thorough planning tactics, including the element of surprise in order to make their campaign effective. For example, organizations first built tents with the full infrastructure planned in advance such as medical support, education, and media centers with volunteer journalists, lawyers, and even a mayor. Such planning was a crucial factor in the success of the campaign because the procedures for dealing with buildings are different to those that prevent the construction according to Israeli law. Therefore, once Israeli military forces discovered the village with tents only, it took consideration and more time to start the demolition. As a result, the campaign managed to postpone and, in some cases, prevent constructions planned for the expansion of Israeli settlers. Besides, activists managed to pressure the Israeli government not to start construction or annex the E1 area.<sup>17</sup>

In 2008 some Palestinians were evicted from their houses in favour of Israeli settlers in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah. After that, the campaign to stop house evictions of Palestinians emerged. First, the demonstrations were attended by Palestinians, however, it became one of the biggest joint actions against policies of occupation at that time. The active participation of Israelis in the protests also helped to launch an additional legal

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<sup>17</sup> E-1 administrative area in the West Bank located between East Jerusalem and Ma'ale Adumim (Israeli settlement). It is a strategic position for Israel since the construction in E1 Area would split the West Bank into the Northern and Southern parts, connecting East Jerusalem and Ma'ale Adumin which, consequently, would allow taking control of East Jerusalem (IMEU, 2021).

campaign comprised of Israeli lawyers in order to assist evicted people and activists. Hence, the evictions in the area stopped for the next eight years.

### *5.5.3 Peacebuilding Initiatives*

There are NGOs focusing on the educational matter including open dialogues, workshops and conferences for Israelis and Palestinians in order to promote nonviolence and dialogue in peace-building activities. The activities are directed at inspiring the public to participate in initiatives supporting conflict resolution and sustainable peace.

Some Israeli NGOs, such as Jad be Jad (“hand in hand”), also organize activities to connect young Palestinians and young Israelis in order to break the stigma and reconcile the two nations and make them more cohesive. Conducted by professionals in conflict management and nonviolent communication, activities include discussion of artwork, recent developments in the area, oil harvesting in the West Bank, and attendance of the demonstrations together as a joint group of Israeli and Palestinians.

Israel-Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI), an Israeli-Palestinian NGO, organized a series of workshops in the framework of a peace education project. The organization conducted dialogues between Israeli and Palestinian high school students to deal with political, social, and cultural issues guided by facilitators. According to the study, both Jews and Palestinians had reduced stereotypes towards each other, and mutual attitudes went through a transformation to a more “tolerant” and “considerate of others” (Maoz, 2000).

The Israeli-Palestinian institute, Peace Research Institute in the Middle East, organized a project for both Israeli and Palestinian teachers in the 2000s to create a history textbook in order to use materials for teaching in schools.

The Middle East Children Association, a joint Israeli-Palestinian organization, organizes seminars and training workshops with the peace education topic for teachers from both sides so that participants can include materials to the study programmes for the topics related to peace and conflict studies, in particular Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Neveh Shalom School for Peace, managed by Palestinians and Israeli Jews, is located in Neveh Shalom, the only cooperative Jewish-Arab village in Israel. The school unites Israeli Jews, Israeli Palestinians and Palestinians from Gaza Strip and the West Bank to study and discuss such topics as discrimination, oppression, conflict, and imbalance of power.

Another organization engaged in the civil resistance activity where Israeli anti-occupation activists work with Israeli society to show the government's injustices and crimes it commits against Palestinians is Combatants for Peace. The volunteer organization comprised of Israeli and Palestinian ex-combatants who made their mission to boost public awareness by showing civilians what lies behind the propaganda and people's indifference. Since many Israelis are not aware of the realities on the ground, activists focus on the Israeli military trying to unveil the actions of the Israeli army in the Occupied Territories in order to fight propaganda sources by collecting testimonies of ex-combatants and organizing tours to the hot areas, show how Israeli soldiers pressure the civilian population daily and control them. By bringing testimonies, they prove the cases of abuse towards Palestinians, and destruction of property and show that these actions are far from "extreme" and "unique" cases. Such treatment has been a norm for years and is completely justified by the Israeli government in the name of the state's security and the majority of Israeli believe and support it.

Another strategy applied by NGOs in Israel is networking activities. The Peres Center for Peace in Jaffa is one of the organizations developing these initiatives. The Center connects people from both sides based on their professional backgrounds so that they can meet and build a foundation for further professional cooperation which is an effective strategy for reconciliation as well. The organization believes that the economy is one of the key factors in conflict resolution. Besides, activists from the Center run the Young Political Leaders program, which invites emerging politicians from both Israel and Palestine who are planning to build a political career or a leadership position in civil society. The aim of the one-year program is to provide leadership training and allow exchanging views by exposing students to various opinions and values. The training intends to establish a safe platform for an open

dialogue where participants can find consensus on current issues and create tight bonds which can contribute to political stability in the future.

### **Conclusion: Effectiveness of the Alternative Approach**

Due to the complex situation on the ground where Palestinian society is deeply fragmented and polarized and Israeli society in its majority supports its government in security efforts, both Palestinian and Israeli NGOs and CSOs struggle to maintain their activities and provide efficient services to the populations.

Palestinian organizations are highly dependent on both Palestinian and Israeli governments and external funding. Such dependency results in numerous legal restrictions which negatively affect the activity of the organizations. Besides, due to the unstable government structure, many organizations have to carry out state functions and Palestinian organizations in Israel are overwhelmed with keeping their legitimacy and dealing with rights violations of the Palestinian minority. Therefore, many organizations fail to focus on peacebuilding activity.

Israeli organizations are characterized by a deeper divergence in analysis and approach to the conflict and occupation which causes fragmentation within and between organizations. Moreover, while continuing their activities, Israeli organizations working for peace have low credibility with both authorities and the population. Therefore, they have a limited impact on the Israeli population and fail to make a shift in public opinion and the existing stigma towards Palestinians.

According to the analyzed literature, joint activism has been developing for the past two decades and it appears to be the most efficient strategy compared to other approaches. The experts claim that Israeli activists, as representatives of the dominant population, can contribute significantly to the campaigns due to the certain rights, benefits, and privileges they possess. Moreover, the main outstanding characteristic of the joint NGOs or Palestinian and Israeli NGOs collaborating with each other is the requirement for representational equality and power symmetry between Palestinians and Israelis. Such a requirement

embodies the concept of peace by showing that both societies are capable of finding compromises and building strong relationships based on mutual respect and consensus. Regardless of the challenges imposed by external factors and internal struggles in maintaining such organizational structure, joint activists are managing to reframe conflict discourse which contributes to the development of a more cohesive and open-minded civil society where two different nations can coexist in peace which is confirmed in numerous civil resistance campaigns organized in the past decades.

## **Conclusion**

The research question of the thesis was formulated to explore the roles different types of Israeli and Palestinian civil societies in the area have played in bridging the gap between the two conflicting parties. Based on the theoretical framework of the role of the civil society in the conflict which implies inclusion of various civil society groups in the negotiations and nonviolent intervention and resistance activities, the case of Israeli and Palestinian civil societies was thoroughly analyzed. It was important to consider the situation on the ground, public attitudes, and relations between the organisations and the government authorities to build a wholesome picture of the developed activities. Due to the complex situation on the ground where Palestinian society is deeply fragmented and polarized and Israeli society in its majority supports its government in security efforts, hence both Palestinian and Israeli NGOs and CSOs struggle to maintain their activities and provide efficient services to the populations and, more importantly, get involved in the conflict resolution activity. By virtue of numerous legal restrictions, dependency on external funding, and unstable government structure, Palestinian organisations carry out state functions while being overwhelmed with keeping their legitimacy and dealing with rights violations of the Palestinian population. Therefore, many organizations fail to focus on peacebuilding activity. Meanwhile, Israeli organizations are characterized by a deeper divergence in analysis and approach to the conflict and occupation which causes fragmentation within and between organizations. Moreover, while continuing their activities, Israeli organizations working for peace have low credibility with both authorities and civilians. Therefore, they have a limited impact on the Israeli population and fail to make a shift in public opinion and the existing stigma towards Palestinians let alone contribute effectively to the conflict resolution.

However, according to the theoretical findings and comparative analysis of the activity of the civil society groups on the ground, joint activism has been developing for the past two decades and it appears to be the most efficient strategy compared to other approaches where Israeli and Palestinian organisations work separately when dealing with the issues on the ground. The experts claim that Israeli activists, as representatives of the dominant population, contribute significantly to the campaigns due to the certain rights, benefits, and



privileges they possess. Moreover, the main outstanding characteristic of the joint NGOs or Palestinian and Israeli NGOs collaborating with each other is the requirement for representational equality and power symmetry between Palestinians and Israelis. Such a requirement embodies the concept of peace by showing that both societies are capable of finding compromises and building strong relationships based on mutual respect and consensus. Regardless of the challenges imposed by external factors and internal struggles in maintaining such organizational structure, joint activists are managing to reframe conflict discourse which contributes to the development of a more cohesive and open-minded civil society where two different nations can coexist in peace which is confirmed in numerous civil resistance campaigns organized in the past decades. The majority of the initiatives are directed at countering displacement and eviction of the Palestinians via legal instruments, resisting construction of the separation barrier and settlement expansion by engaging in nonviolent resistance, and peacebuilding activities aimed at shifting Israeli and Palestinian public opinion through educational and collaborative mechanisms. Therefore, the hypothesis of the thesis is confirmed, although there is a necessity for more action on the ground and profound research to prove the efficiency of the strategies.

The findings also confirm the theoretical assumptions of inclusion of civil society in the conflict resolution processes, particularly the theory of internal third-party interveners and advantages they bring in. By organizing civil resistance campaigns, the Israeli and Palestinian activists demonstrated the public interest in the matter and willingness to be engaged in it. The majority of the campaigns and activities were successful due to reduction of power imbalance and exchange of knowledge and tools available only to the local populations involved in conflict. Therefore, it is important to utilize bottom-up processes as an alternative or a complementary mechanism to the top-down implementation since bottom-up approach engenders societal ownership of the peace process that is necessary to attain a durable peace. The criticism of the strategy addresses the issue of disorganization once civil society groups are involved in negotiations since they might make an already complex and contradictory process of negotiations and peacebuilding activities even more chaotic.

However, it is a matter of developing a specific strategy of inclusion as an alternative or an additional one to the strategy of inclusion of external mediators.

Another reason for further development of such activism is often insufficient and erratic top-down approach to conflict resolution that have been applied to the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process for decades. The theoretical framework on the peace process strategies addressed the main critical points, such as the imperialistic tendencies of the “liberal world” when dealing with the conflicts around the world, the lack of impartiality of the intervening parties, and the self-serving purposes of participation. All of them found its reflection in the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process. The analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process since the Oslo Accords demonstrates that external actors have been applying peacemaking strategies for the past decades without making great success. The failure of the MEPP demonstrates key erratic factors within the peace process. For instance, groupthink phenomena misled international actors regarding settlement activity in the West Bank. Western countries have collectively endorsed the two-state solution for decades without taking into consideration the contradictory realities on the ground which were taking different trajectories throughout years and needed different approaches to the situation. Nevertheless, alternative approaches have not been considered. Power asymmetry between conflicting parties, partially caused by the international community that undermined Palestinian self-determination, created a great gap between negotiating states which prevented them from achieving any consensus during negotiations. Western donor funding enabled Israel to become one of the most powerful states in the region and keep the Palestinian population and territories under control by maintaining the occupation of the Palestinian territories which disrupts any attempts for a political settlement. Moreover, such control of Palestinian territory, supported by Western security management and proposed peacebuilding strategies, can be assimilated with the colonization process. Regarding the actors, the US maintains absolute control over the diplomatic process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, however, it fails to act as a credible mediator since the US approach denies Palestinian statehood and its policies address the Palestinian issue solely as a refugee issue while supporting Israel in its decisions and being its major military, financial and diplomatic backer. Moreover, posing

itself as a peace broker in the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process, the US sidelines other international actors such as the EU and the UN, although the EU continues to be the main funding donor for Palestinian state-building. The main failure of the UN is giving up control of international matters and political decision-making to the superpowers and individual states so that the UN acts as an organizational framework where those Powers exercise their role, and its resolutions together with the International Law are being sidelined by the US in favour of Israeli political stance. Therefore, the above-mentioned issues are the main reasons for the failure of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process. In this case, Israeli and Palestinian civil societies could fill in the gaps to complement the approach to peace and make it more effective. However, the imposed restrictions to the activity and sometimes unlawful status of the organisations and activism foist lack of integrity and create a barrier to make a significant contribution. Hence it is necessary to further identify the multiplicity of roles of civil society and undertake its practical implementation as a legitimate conflict management strategy.

It is important to continuously enhance the existing peace strategies by modifying them in accordance with the specific nuances of each conflict situation or move forward and develop new approaches if the previous ones overlived themselves. The findings suggested that the actions of the international community bring counterproductive results to the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process, and it is necessary to consider the full and strategic inclusion of Israeli and Palestinian civil society in the conflict resolution process since it proves its effectiveness, however, the approach is highly underestimated in the political circles. While proving to be operational, the approach needs to be further explored. The analysis of the Israeli organisations and their activity revealed that peace organisations differ significantly in the way they approach the conflict issue. While some groups, working in collaboration with Palestinian activist groups on the human rights violations and peacebuilding activities, condemn the actions of Israeli government, other peace organisations maintain their activities without denouncing the occupation. Such a narrative might undermine the purpose and the ultimate goal of the peace initiatives, therefore further analysis is needed to explore the intentions of the organisations and possible outcomes. Besides, the thesis research identified several gaps in the modern studies of civil society's role in the conflict, particularly the

shortcomings of both theoretical and practical works on the implementation and effectiveness of internal third-party nonviolent intervention and joint activism. More attention needs to be given to the development of comprehensive conflict management strategies with a focus on the civil society roles alternative or complementary to the existing approaches to peace.

The main limitation of the thesis work and methodology is reliance on the previously conducted interviews and observations of the situation on the ground, therefore the research is constrained by theoretical assumptions and secondary practical data. Despite the comprehensive theoretical framework, the practical findings for hypothesis verification are quite limited in secondary sources since the research on joint activism in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is relatively recent and groundbreaking.

The analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its developments reveals its complex structure. The dynamics of the conflict are complicated and rooted in the identities of the people. There is growing trauma, fear, stigma and, consequently, violence from both Israeli and Palestinians towards each other, and the dehumanization of conflicting parties continues to flourish, which makes it difficult to bring authorities to the negotiation table and to mobilize people and persuade them that the peaceful coexistence is possible. Finding an effective approach to solve the conflict and bring durable peace is a challenging task since the attitudes of people differ enormously and are quite radicalized. The peace initiatives applied in the last decades have zero or counterproductive effect. There is an urgent need for new or complementary strategies. The recent research activities seem to be finding answers to fill in the gaps and improve the peace initiatives, however further research needs to be done in order to find out the necessary tools to a more efficient conflict resolution strategy. Moreover, major effort on the ground is needed to break the stereotypes and increase the willingness of both nations to find a solution and establish a sustainable peace.

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