

SUPPORTING HUMAN RIGHTS IN ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN
TERRITORIES: AN INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL JUSTICE RESPONSE

SUPPORTING HUMAN RIGHTS IN ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN
TERRITORIES: AN INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL JUSTICE RESPONSE

By

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Abstract

Human rights are fundamental rights that belong to all human beings. They include the right to life, liberty and equality. Upholding human rights is the most universal form of social justice. International human rights legislation and humanitarian law have been established to protect the security and dignity of all people. Increasingly, International Human Rights Organizations are working to enhance human rights norms across the globe.

Using the Israeli/Palestinian conflict as a case study, this thesis aims to provide a better understanding of international human rights work, the ways in which this work is addressed, and the experiences of individuals involved in human rights work. In-depth interviews with four individuals working in Canadian-based organizations strive to identify their challenges and successes as they engage in advocacy and grassroots activism.

My intention in undertaking this research project was to develop an understanding of the work of International Human Rights Organizations in Canada that are promoting Palestinian human rights. What I found was another story: a story of the perceptions and meanings assigned to this work by those engaged within Canadian human rights organizations.

Three important findings emerged from data collected during the interview process: 1) individuals are engaged with International Human Rights Organizations to

reinforce their own personal and political beliefs; 2) there is little decision-making power nor meaningful participation of the Palestinian community in the work of International Human Rights Organizations; and, 3) there is a need for International Human Rights Organizations to consider the local implications of the international conflict.

Information resulting from this research contributes to our understanding of how International Human Rights Organizations can most effectively engage in social change work to promote social justice in Israel and the Occupied Territories of Palestine, and whether that is best accomplished through advocacy and activism locally or internationally.

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Chapter One: Introduction

About the Researcher

My name is Keri Okanik and this research was completed for the thesis component of my Masters of Social Work degree at McMaster University.

I was introduced to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict as a high school student. With a friend, I had begun to attend lectures and educational seminars surrounding the issue of Palestinian human rights. The more I learned of the issues faced by Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation, the more questions I had about the processes of power and peace in the Middle East.

Since 2005, I have been actively involved in the international response to promote Palestinian human rights in the Occupied Territories. I have volunteered with a variety of agencies in the Hamilton/Toronto area and have had the opportunity to debate and learn the perspectives of both parties to the conflict. I have participated in a number of demonstrations to raise awareness of the Palestinian experience amongst Canadian populations. While obtaining my undergraduate degree in social work, I often presented about upcoming events to encourage other students to learn more about the human rights situation in Israel/Palestine.

As I began my graduate education and started thinking about potential research topics, a professor aware of my interest in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict approached me. She too had an interest in the issues and thought that thesis research would be a great opportunity for me to explore my interests further and contribute to the Palestinian human

rights movement. I appreciated her knowledge of the conflict and how that knowledge would be an asset in a research supervisor. This was the beginning of my thesis research into the international Palestinian human rights movement.

Whipp (1998) argues that, when engaging in a research project, it is important to be reflexive of “prior ties and obligations” to the community of research participants (p. 58). Similarly, Corbin & Strauss (2008) suggest, “researchers bring to the research situation their particular paradigms, including perspectives, training, knowledge, and biases; these aspects of self then become woven into all aspects of the research process” (p. 32). My experiences within the community of those fighting for Palestinian human rights in Canada have placed me in an interesting social location. I do not belong the community of Palestinians nor Israelis living the daily realities of the conflict in the Middle East. However, my involvement with Canadian human rights organizations has positioned me as an insider within the organized human rights movement. According to Malony, Jordan, & McLaughlin (1994), insiders are those individuals who have an established relationship to the community of which they are engaging in the research process. Outsiders are defined as those individuals who do not have a previously established relationship with the community that they are researching.

Despite my involvement in the promotion of Palestinian human rights with Canadian-based International Human Rights Organizations, I felt a great deal of hesitation from organizations I approached to participate in this research. Considering what I have learned from this research about the dominant pro-Israeli discourses within Canadian society, I speculate that the hesitation to be involved in research stems from the

lack of power and influence of the pro-Palestinian narrative in Canada. Organizations wanted to ensure that I was an ally of their cause so as to discourage further marginalization of their voices. My awareness of the struggles for Palestinian human rights allowed me to articulate my position. I do not support one party over another. I do not define myself as pro-Palestinian nor pro-Israeli. I define myself as pro-human rights. In my opinion, it is the Palestinians living under Israeli occupation that experience a lack of power and suffer severe oppression under military rule. However, this is not to suggest that I do not recognize the suffering of Jewish people or of Israelis. Therefore, the goal of my research is to consider the work of International Human Rights Organizations, both pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian, that exist to promote the human rights of the oppressed Palestinian population in the Middle East.

International Human Rights and the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict

Human rights are fundamental rights that belong to all human beings. They include the right to life, liberty and equality. Upholding human rights is the most universal form of social justice. International human rights legislation and humanitarian law have been established to protect the security and dignity of people across the globe. Today, it is generally accepted around the world that all people deserve to live within a comfortable environment in which they have the capacity to fill their basic survival and psychosocial needs, as evidenced by an overwhelming number of nations that are signatory to human rights legislation (See United Nations Declaration of Human Rights: 1948; and, African (Banjul) Charter of Human and Peoples Rights: 1981).

Over the past twenty years, the rapid rate of globalization and the development of new information and communication technologies such as the Internet have enabled greater global awareness about the human rights violations occurring in different areas around the world (Schulz, 1998). Using the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as a case study, this thesis aims to provide a better understanding of international human rights work in Toronto, the ways in which this work is addressed, and the experiences of individuals involved in human rights work. The international community has become increasingly involved in efforts to support a peaceful resolution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and promote the advancement of human rights standards for both populations. Many countries, including Canada, are engaged in the public critique of Israeli military and Occupation policies in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem (The Veritas Handbook, 2010). Human rights and social justice organizations from around the world are increasingly engaged in activism and other grassroots activities aimed at promoting peace and human rights within the Occupied Territories of Palestine. For example, Amnesty International, one of the leading International Human Rights Organizations engaged in the promotion of human rights in Israel/Palestine, has grown to over 2.8 million members since it began campaigning in 1961 (Amnesty International, 2010).

Based on interviews with four human rights and social justice organizations in Canada, this research addresses the question of how International Human Rights Organizations become aware of and involved in the efforts to support peace and promote human rights for Palestinians living under Israeli Occupation. Consistent with the human rights perspective of valuing self-determination of all peoples, this report explores how

these human rights and social justice organizations ensure that the Palestinian voice is being heard, when opportunities for Palestinians to raise their voice appears limited. Specific areas of inquiry include goals of International Human Rights Organizations, education and training of staff and volunteers, organizational strategies for change including organizational policy, procedure, program design, evaluation, and recommendations for best practices. Information resulting from this research project will contribute to our understanding of how International Human Rights Organizations can most effectively engage in social change work to promote social justice in Israel and the Occupied Territories of Palestine, and whether that is best accomplished through advocacy and activism locally or internationally. Findings will provide valuable insight into how International Human Rights Organizations can contribute to the attainment of human rights standards for Palestinians under Israeli Occupation. The interviews with four individuals working in Canadian-based organizations strive to identify their challenges and successes as they engage in advocacy and grassroots activism.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

In order to develop a thorough understanding of both the concepts and context through which the Israeli/Palestinian International Human Rights Organizations emerged, it was important for me to complete an extensive literature review surrounding several different, but related, fields for inquiry. The areas of focus in the following literature review include: the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights; roles, goals, and strategies of International Human Rights Organizations; human rights and the Israeli/Palestinian conflict; and the need for international involvement to promote human rights.

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

For the purpose of this paper, human rights will refer to the fundamental human privileges and responsibilities as set forth by the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Following the Second World War, after bearing witness to the atrocities people were capable of committing against one another, the international community developed a new appreciation for the importance of developing a global standard for the treatment of all human beings. The first international attempt to create a universally defined list of human rights was initiated by the United Nations, consisting of 192 countries, in 1948 (United Nations, 1948). This document became known as the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Though several countries are not signatories of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, many of those non-participants have developed their own agreements on the treatment of persons, often

making reference to a commitment to the Declaration set out by the United Nations (for example, see African/Banjul Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights). According to Keith (1999), "three-quarters of the world's nation-states have legally recognized a comprehensive set of human rights and have pledged to take appropriate action to protect and provide these rights" (p. 97). The language of human rights is, therefore, the most widely recognized discourse pertaining to the treatment of peoples.

Within a framework of rights, people around the world are given hope for achieving a state of peace and security. For example, Said (2004) describes the protections all people are afforded under this policy as follows: "each individual or collectivity, no matter his or her social location, is to be protected from such horrific practices as starvation, torture, forceful transfer of populations, religious and ethnic discrimination, humiliation, and land expropriation" (p. 16). A human right is defined by Thakur (1994) as social, relational, and material entitlements that are, "universal - owing to every person simply as a human being; held only by human beings; held equally by every person; not dependant on the holding of office, rank, or relationship; and claimable against all governments" (p. 144). Sen (2004) discusses human rights in terms of resources and responsibilities, viewing human rights as "ethical demands" with a shared universal moral undertone attempting to ensure social justice for all people (p. 319). Sen (2004) explores the "capabilities approach" to human rights to determine how well states are able to meet the ethical demands of their population with cooperation from the international community. This approach is premised on various states having different resources and motivations for fulfilling human rights standards. Sen (2004) posits that

the capabilities perspective, “concentrates on what actual opportunities a person has, not the means over which he/she has command [...] and allows us to take into account the parametric variability in the relation between the means, on the one hand, and the actual opportunities on the other” (p. 332). As such, the capabilities approach to human rights allows for the assessment of the actual living conditions of people and the abilities of their national governments to intervene in the case of human rights violations based on resource availability and the momentum of international involvement in the human rights social movement. This approach does not victimize those who have experienced violations of human rights, and it puts the responsibility of the fulfillment of rights in the hands of more powerful actors. Alternatively, Twiss (2004) argues that not only states, but the international community as well, have the responsibility of fulfilling all peoples’ human rights, positing that within the discourse of human rights, “states were envisioned as being able to bring other compacting states to the bar of justice when it became apparent that they were violating the rights of their citizens in an egregious manner” (p. 51). Similarly, Ferrera (2003) sees the responsibility of the fulfillment of human rights as belonging to everyone. With the development of internationally defined human rights standards and the increase in global relationships, the divide between nation-states is made invisible by our commitment to uphold certain standards of living for all. As Ferrera (2003) states, “the story is ultimately about us [...] Our lives are unequivocally tied up with global processes and with the actions and strategies of global players, as well as with the unintentional effects of action that take the whole world as their theatre” (p. 413-414).

In order to clarify the commitments set out in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, two additional treaties opened for signature by the international community in 1966, the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (Keith, 1999; Thakur, 1994). Through these international developments, Twiss (1998) argues that human rights have become an intercultural and internationally agreed upon condition for comfortable and fulfilling human life. Tsutsui and Wotikpa (2004) discuss how human rights are afforded to people in four categories: political rights, economic rights, social rights, and cultural rights. These include such rights as holding parliamentary office; having the ability to find employment and receive fair pay for work; having the ability to claim a nationality; and, having the ability to leave one's country and return to it (United Nations, 1967). These international agreements have become the central focus of the human rights movement. Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui (2005: p. 1378) note that "human rights advocates regularly mobilize around these treaties, leveraging the emergent legitimacy of human rights as a global norm of appropriate state behaviour to pressure states to improve actual human rights practices". The next section of this report considers the work of International Human Rights Organizations in the promotion of global human rights achievement.

International Human Rights Organizations

Over the past several decades the international community has become involved in the promotion of human rights around the world, including in Israel/Palestine. International involvement in human rights issues began to gain momentum throughout the

1980's "norm cascade" through which Cardenas (2004) argues, "human rights mechanisms became more visible" (p. 214). Shelly (1989) supports the claim that international involvement in human rights is increasing, arguing that the number of international organizations has risen dramatically over the last decade, with transnational organizations operating almost everywhere in the world. Twiss (2004) posits that the growth in international involvement is largely due to processes of globalization, which he defines as, "the multidimensional and interactive process of economic, political, and cultural change across the world resulting in increased social interconnectedness as well as opportunities for social confrontation among peoples" (p. 40). Similarly, Nickel (2002) views the international system for the promotion and protection of human rights as part of 'normative globalization' and the shrinking of world politics. It is through International Human Rights Organizations and their work towards the fulfillment of human rights around the world that human rights norms have been legitimized. With a growing number of nations committing to international treaties such as the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Human Rights Organizations have assumed the role of diffusing and promoting human rights principles (Hafner-Burton & Tsutsui, 2005: p. 1385-1398).

By signing the UN Declaration, states give the international community power to become involved in human rights promotion (D'Amato, 1982). Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui (2005) see International Human Rights Organizations as part of global civil society, "providing the enforcement mechanism that international human rights treaties may lack [...] and can pressure increasingly vulnerable, human rights violating

governments toward compliance” (p. 1385-1386). Thakur (1994) positions grassroots human rights organizations as, “a peoples movement” made up of millions of individuals around the world engaged in a variety of work to raise consciousness about human rights. He states that, “while the United Nations may be better qualified to set international norms, non-governmental organizations are better able to investigate human rights abuses at the grassroots level” (p. 150). In the following section, I consider the goals of International Human Rights Organizations, the roles occupied by organizations, and some common strategies used by organizations to promote human rights.

Mandate/Goals of International Human Rights Organizations.

Human rights organizations share several common goals. A fundamental goal of International Human Rights Organizations is to give voice to victims of human rights violations. Since these victims often experience limited voice, decision-making power, and status (Yamin, 2005: p. 1225), International Human Rights Organizations have become involved as allies in a variety of work to address different areas of injustice. For example, organizations may work to constrain the official conduct of unjust power systems/governments (Rubenstein, 2004). In order to accomplish this, organizations may increase their monitoring of human rights violations committed by unjust power systems and report these violations to international governing bodies such as the United Nations, thereby creating pressure for change.

Another common goal of International Human Rights Organizations is sustainable development (Armstrong, 1999). This involves development of social, political, economic and environmental systems that can be maintained once the organizational

involvement ceases. Consistent with empowerment theory, this approach to social justice often involves education, teaching populations and the government new skills, and ways of interacting with one another to promote continued advancement of human rights. By strengthening civil society, organizations are able to assist populations in advancing human rights while simultaneously promoting self-determination of the population (Rubenstein, 2004; Zunes, 2010).

The Roles of International Human Rights Organization in Promoting Social Justice.

Social justice organizations may undertake various roles in their attempts to promote human rights. They include partner/supporter, educator, researcher/monitor, negotiator, and advocate.

Partner/Supporter.

Rubenstein (2004) states that the role of partner involves collaborating with other organizations with similar goals, both domestically and internationally, to assist in “lobbying for systems of services that meet needs in a manner consistent with human rights requirements” (p. 845). Rubenstein (2004) and Smith, Pagnucco and Lopez (1998) assert that organizations from more advanced countries, in terms of human rights, can partner with organizations from less developed countries to assist in giving voice to marginalized communities. This collaboration has the potential to increase the legitimacy of claims of human rights violations and put pressure on both domestic and international governments to conform to international human rights norms. Zunes (2010) suggests that partnering with domestic organizations and institutions promotes self-determination and

increases the likelihood that the needs of domestic populations are met. It is important that International Human Rights Organizations take on a supportive position with domestic organizations. Genuine local participation ensures that the approaches of human rights organizations are consistent with the human rights model, which values the principle of self-determination. Yamin (2005) argues, “if participation is to have any bite, it must entail collective action and the authentic transfer of power into the hands of communities and individuals” (p. 1238). Similarly, Kennedy (2002) advocates that human rights organizations must take on a “bottom-up” approach in order to meet the needs of local populations. Local populations, who experience the daily, lived reality of the situation on the ground, are the experts of their own experiences and should be the ones leading the fight for human rights and social justice.

Educator.

Human rights organizations can work to generate public awareness about international human rights legislation (Roth, 2004; Rubenstein, 2004). This can empower international audiences to develop an increased interest in human rights and social justice inadequacies around the world through an appreciation of their own high standard of rights at home. Human rights organizations may travel to sites of chronic human rights violations, informing populations of their rights and how to appeal to powerful global governing bodies such as the United Nations for support in advancing their human rights claims. This is consistent with the principle of self-determination as it encourages people to tell their own stories and appeal to others through their own voice and agency.

Roth (2004) posits that the greatest strength of International Human Rights Organizations is their ability to “investigate misconduct and expose it to public opprobrium” (p. 63). Roth refers to the practice of educating as ‘naming and shaming’. By taking on the role of educator and making use of the media to educate the masses, International Human Rights Organizations can be most effective by generating public outrage, humiliating offending parties, and increasing support for change.

Researcher/Monitor.

According to Rubenstein (2004), “documentation, analysis, and exposure are desperately needed to show how political corruption and abuse of power can violate the requirements [of human rights legislation] and bring devastating harm to the mass population within such systems” (p. 848). Through researching and documenting human rights violations, international organizations can contribute to social change by increasing legitimacy of human rights claims.

The role of monitor increases the ability to evaluate long-term changes in human rights standards. According to Yamin (2005), human rights work must take into account both short and long-term goals. By taking on the role of monitor and publishing detailed accounts of changes happening on the ground, people are better able to identify where and how advancements in human rights are being achieved. Research on human rights violations can lead to increased funding for material aid and human services in order to ensure that basic needs are being met.

Negotiator/Mediator.

International Human Rights Organizations may act as a negotiator/mediator between parties with competing interests. According to Pearlman (2008), negotiating is an important role, “especially when at least one party in a conflict lacks an institutionalized system of legitimate representation” (p. 80) as in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Disagreements often arise within the affected group over what needs are to be prioritized, as well as how to advance those needs within the larger social, political, and international agenda. It is important to ensure impartiality when taking on the role of negotiator/mediator. Power dynamics must be considered as well as an analysis of whether certain needs may be better met elsewhere by another organization or aid provider.

Advocate.

Human rights and social justice organizations may choose to target government or other powerful groups in the country/community in which the conflict is occurring, encouraging direct changes for those communities. Alternatively, human rights organizations may choose to take on the role of advocate in their own countries, putting pressure on domestic institutions with the power to influence social change. For example, an organization may advocate for the boycotting of products from a particular country until a settlement can be reached between the two conflicting parties. This puts pressure on the conflicting parties to work toward resolution.

An enhanced understanding of what human rights are and what human rights organizations do to promote human rights standards provides a critical backdrop for

assessing the human rights situation in Israel/Palestine. The following section establishes the context for examining the work of international human rights and social justice organizations engaged in the promotion of human rights for Palestinians.

Human Rights and the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict

This section will examine the conflict occurring in Israel/Palestine from a human rights perspective. Hence, I outline the consequences of the military occupation of Palestine in accordance with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

Land Expropriation and the Forceful Transfer of Peoples.

Within the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, tension arises out of the Israeli acquisition of Palestinian land through forceful removal of Palestinians from their homes and communities. Dajani (1996) and The Veritas Handbook (2010) assert that the practices of land acquisition by the state of Israel have been illegal under international law. Through practices such as housing demolitions, unjust permit systems, and control over access to resources (Cobban, 1996; Habash & Soueid, 1998; Mushasha & Dear, 2010; Peteet, 2004; Said, 2004; Weizman, 2004), Israeli policies have segregated Palestinians in Israel and the Occupied Territories of Gaza, West Bank, and East Jerusalem. Palestinians fleeing Israel/Palestine now constitute the largest population of refugees worldwide (Mushasha & Dear, 2010; Unger, 2008). Said (2004) proclaims that Israel continues to support the unjust transfer of Palestinians, stating, “half of the present members of the Israeli Knesset openly say that the only solution [to the conflict] is to transfer the Arabs out of Palestine” (p. 23). Researchers have referred to the relentless transfer practices of the Israeli

military as “ethnic cleansing” (Finkelstein, 2009; The Veritas Handbook, 2010). Palestinians living under Israeli Occupation experience immense insecurity in their living accommodations and risk extreme brutalization if they resist transfer.

Cobban (1996) explores the expulsion of West Jerusalem’s 30,000 Palestinian residents in 1948, who were forced to relocate to other Palestinian areas already under Israeli occupation or to neighboring countries such as Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt. Cobban (1996) asserts that, in addition to their initial expulsion from West Jerusalem another 40,000 Palestinians have lost their status as city residents since 1968. Habash and Soueid (1998) cite a similar example of a forceful transfer of Palestinians, exploring the 1948 Israeli expulsion of the Palestinian residents in Jaffa. Cobban (1996), Habash and Soueid (1998), Mushasha and Dear (2010) and Weizman (2004) found these population transfers in violation of international human rights.

Israel continues to claim Palestinian land as its own through the process of settlement development and expansion. Israel has consistently been involved in a process of taking over areas of Palestinian land and building its own settlements, exclusively for Israeli residence. According to Mushasha and Dear (2010), approximately 40% of the land used for Israeli settlement is privately owned by Palestinians. Despite demands from the United Nations and much of the international community to stop the building of settlements and withdraw from existing settlements on Palestinian owned land, Israel continues to expand and expedite their settlement plans. Pearlman (2008) explores past peace negotiations between Israel, Occupied Palestine, and the international community, arguing that peace negotiations have not been successful in stopping illegal settlement

activity. For example, in the years following the signing of the Oslo agreement, within which Israel agreed to halt settlement and withdraw from several settlement areas in Occupied Palestine, the Israeli settler population in the Occupied Territories doubled (Pearlman, 2008). Similarly, Mushasha and Dear (2010) indicate that settlement activity continues illegally in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, stating, “the number of settlers living illegally in the West Bank and East Jerusalem has increased from approximately 426, 487 in 2005 to between 480, 000 and 550, 000 in 2008” (p. 30).

Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) (2010) report that there are currently 121 Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, housing more than 500,000 Israeli settlers on Palestinian land. The Veritas Handbook (2010) describes the settlement demographic as predominantly right-winged, militaristic and Zionist. According to Mushasha and Dear (2010), “settler harassment of Palestinian communities ranges from taunting, stone throwing, shooting of children and farm animals, and harassment and violence against international aid workers” (p. 103). Palestinians are reluctant to report such harassment to Israeli authorities as they are often accused of false complaints and risk violence and imprisonment.

The naming of settlements differs according to Israelis and Palestinians, illuminating the harsh reality of unequal and unjust power dynamics between the two populations. CJPME (2010) suggest that Palestinians refer to the settlements as colonies and settlers as colonizers whereas Israelis refer to these settlements as neighborhoods. This is the view of settlements that is often presented in Western media. Israel’s power to form popular perception of settlements as neighborhoods, “glosses over the international

legal context of the occupation in which the Israeli/Palestinian conflict takes place, where settlements are illegal [...] and Palestinians are denied basic human rights” (Peteet, 2005: p. 163). For peace and human rights to be realized for Palestinians, the true nature of settlement activity must be exposed in international media and Israel must stop settlement activity and withdraw Israeli residents from colonies in the Occupied Territories.

The practice of housing demolitions is also considered to be in violation of international human rights with regard to land expropriation and forceful transfer of peoples (Said, 2004). Housing demolitions have led to mass homelessness and limits Palestinians’ ability to maintain residence in their communities. CJPME (2010) estimate that during Operation Cast Lead – an Israeli military offensive against the Palestinian Hamas in Gaza – more than 3,000 homes in the Gaza Strip were demolished in less than one month. Mushasha and Dear (2010) estimate the number of homes that have been demolished in the Occupied Territories is over 25,000 in total, with an additional 60,000 Palestinians in East Jerusalem living in constant threat of having their homes demolished and their land expropriated for the purpose of continued Israeli settlements.

The Israeli government appears to have intentions to further fragment Palestinian society. Not only is there a geographical divide between the Palestinian Territories of Gaza and the West Bank, Israeli residential policies also have the power to create social divisions among Palestinians. For example, Palestinian families are often separated from each other because of an unjust permit system as well as laws governing residency rights based on social relationships. Cobban (1996) describes how Palestinians are limited in their freedom to choose their place of residence. They are at risk of forceful transfer

when choosing to marry. Palestinian women in the West Bank face difficulties in keeping their residency if they choose to marry a man in Gaza. They will likely be forced to relocate to Gaza.

Excessive Use of Force and Collective Punishment.

The Israeli Occupation of Palestine constitutes forms of collective punishment as all Palestinians are persecuted through unjust Israeli government and military policies. Mushasha and Dear (2010) explore how the Occupation can be considered collective punishment, arguing, “the multifaceted system of occupation employed by the State of Israel impacts negatively on every aspect of ordinary Palestinian life through curtailing freedom of movement and compromising individual and communal capacities to engage in economic and social life” (p. 19-20).

The situation in Gaza and the West Bank is a unique conflict in that the civilian Palestinian population in Gaza and the West Bank are completely fenced in by a security wall erected by Israel, along with strict restrictions of movement for Palestinians, leaving Palestinian civilians no chance of escape or refuge. In breach of the Geneva Convention and international humanitarian law, the excessive use of force by the Israeli military has led to severe devastation of civilian land and infrastructure. According to CJPME (2009), Israeli defense forces in the Occupied Territories have been responsible for destroying hundreds of public, commercial, and industrial buildings, devastated farms and pastures, and for tearing down entire neighborhoods. Mushasha and Dear (2010) suggest that Israel is responsible for damage to a wide range of infrastructure necessary for the provision of such social services as charities, schools, clinics, and orphanages, worsening

an already dire situation for the Palestinian civilian population. Damage to water sanitation networks, energy supplies and facilities, irrigation networks, and other productive assets, resulting in 98% of industrial operations in Gaza unable to function (Mushasha & Dear, 2010), constitutes additional examples of excessive force and collective punishment in that they prevent the Palestinian population from developing self-sustenance.

Palestinians are subject to violence and torture practiced by the Israeli military, especially within the prison system, constituting an additional violation of human rights in regards to excessive use of force. Palestinians risk arbitrary arrest and violent punishment for a wide range of activity including peaceful protest/resistance against occupation. According to Hajjar (2001), “punishable crimes have included not only acts of violence and open rebellion against the occupation, but also any expression of Palestinian nationalism and a range of non-violent activities related to public life” (p. 23). The Israeli government has legitimized the use of torture against prisoners suspected of being involved with extremist Palestinian terrorist organizations; however, torture practices have been reportedly used within the prison system against Palestinian prisoners (Alston, 1997; Mushasha, 2010; Wishah, 2006). Wishah (2006) reports that political prisoners are frequently beaten with sticks, have tear gas thrown into their cells, and isolated in solitary confinement in small underground cells.

Barriers to Trade and Economic Progress.

The Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip constitutes a barrier to economic sustainability. According to Mushasha and Dear (2010), sanctions of the blockade consist

of “withholding tax revenues collected in the occupied territories, cutting off international aid, imposing restrictions on Palestinians freedom of movement and the movement of goods, and imposing US banking restrictions” (p. 27). The Gaza Strip is home to approximately 1.4 million Palestinians, making the geographical area one of the most densely populated areas in the entire world, and more than 80% of the residents of Gaza are refugees from other communities now inhabited by Israeli settlers (Finkelstein, 2009, Mushasha & Dear, 2010). It is nearly impossible to support the people of Gaza without the inflow of resources from other areas of the world. Israel controls the flow of international aid into the Occupied Territories of Palestine. The amount of aid resources entering the Occupied Territories is insufficient to rebuild necessary infrastructure for effective economic functioning and fails to provide necessary life sustaining resources such as food and water to the people of Gaza (Marcus, 2010). Finkelstein (2009) describes the actions of the Israeli government and the Israeli Defense Forces in the Gaza Strip as “de-development practices” (p. 173) and argues that Palestinians are intentionally cut off from resources such as water, land, and labour.

Roads leading to places of work have been destroyed, leaving people unable to get to their place of employment. Many factories were turned to rubble during Operation Cast Lead, and resources necessary for rebuilding, such as cement and steel, are prevented from entering the Gaza Strip under the policies of the Israeli blockade. The Israeli Occupation of Palestine and the subsequent extensive Israeli control over resources in Gaza and the West Bank has limited the capacity of Palestinians to develop and maintain their economy. According to Mushasha and Dear (2010), “Israel controls

Palestinian airspace, territorial waters, natural resources, movement, and the macro-economic instruments that enable economic autonomy” (p. 15-16). Palestinians have lost their ability to earn income within the Occupied Territories, particularly in Gaza, leading to ever increasing inequalities between Palestinians and their Israeli settler neighbours. Weizman (2004) writes, “huge economic disparities exist between Israeli settlers and Palestinians in the OPT [...] The Israeli per capita GDP is 20x larger than that of Palestinians; the economic disparity between the two groups is higher than between any two other neighboring populations worldwide” (p. 237).

Palestinians who used to work outside of the Occupied Territories in neighboring Israeli communities have had an increasingly difficult time maintaining employment. This is largely due to the construction of the wall and other Israeli security measures such as checkpoints and road segregation that restrict the mobility of Palestinians. Israel began the construction of the wall in 2000 as a security measure against what they referred to as Palestinian violence and terrorism. The wall consists of eight-meter high concrete fortifications, often surrounded by additional sections of electric fencing, barbed wire, trenches, and armed sniper towers (Mushasha & Dear, 2010). Several researchers (Cobban, 1996; Habash & Soueid, 1998; Hallward, 2009; Macintyre, 2006; Mushasha & Dear, 2010; Said, 2004; Weizman, 2004) identify physical separations between Israel and Palestine and between Palestinian communities in the Occupied Territories as a barrier to peace and the fulfillment of human rights for Palestinians. Israeli construction of the wall has destroyed a great deal of Palestinian farmland used in the production of food crops (Weizman, 2004). This has led to increased economic insecurity for farmers who rely on

food production for income through domestic trade as well as exporting goods. Irving (2009) suggests that what is needed to support the Palestinian economy in a meaningful way is a change in how Western governments view Palestine. Therefore, international human rights and social justice organizations can therefore have a role to play in advocating domestic governments to see Palestine as a legitimate state and worthy of the development of sustainable international trade relationships.

Lost Sense of Security.

Palestinians living under Occupation, as a result of barriers to the fulfillment of human rights, are subject to ever increasing feelings of insecurity. Article 25 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) stipulates:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services.

Palestinians are experiencing growing financial insecurity. In addition, other human rights violations such as inability to import food, building supplies, medical equipment, and other material and financial resources have left Palestinians with increasing food and health insecurities.

According to the United Nations Report on Human Development in the Occupied Territories, food insecurity is a growing concern, affecting 56% of the population in Gaza and 25% of the population in the West Bank (Mushasha & Dear, 2010). With a large number of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories located on prime agricultural

land (Said, 2004; Shlaim, 2009; Pearlman, 2008; Peteet, 2005), Palestinians are unable to cultivate the necessary food resources to sustain the population. The blockade of Gaza worsens the situation as it increases the inability of Palestinians to import supplementary food resources. Peteet (2005) argues that the construction of the wall increases the risk of food insecurity, “uprooting acres of olive groves” (p. 162), limiting both food and income resources for Palestinians.

Water is another resource in decreasing supply for the Palestinians. Mushasha and Dear (2010) posit that Palestinians currently experience one of the highest levels of water insecurity in the world, with only one third of Palestinian communities connected to water networks. Israel controls the mountain aquifer below Palestinian soil (Weizman, 2004), and Israeli settlers use most of the water extracted. The cost of water for Palestinians is nearly five times that for Israeli settlers (Barghouti, 2010). Israeli policies resulting in the deterioration of food and water resources in Palestine are a direct violation of Palestinian human rights.

Health insecurity results from the continued Israeli Occupation of Palestine and the unjust policies that accompany it. Macintyre (2006) suggests that the physical and mental health of Palestinians is at risk, arguing, “Palestinian health services are facing a full scale emergency because of the funding cuts by Israel and other donor countries” (p. 1231). Much-needed medical supplies continue to be denied to Palestinians. The destruction of hospitals, clinics, and other health services during Operation Cast Lead, coupled with increasingly limited mobility for Palestinians, mean Palestinians will continue to experience deterioration in both physical and mental health. The mental

health effects of living under occupation are substantial. According to Mushasha and Dear (2010), approximately 81% of Palestinian youth residing in the Occupied Territories suffer from depression. It is crucial that restrictive practices be stopped immediately.

With the development of internationally defined human rights such as the United Nations Charter of Rights and Freedoms, social justice organizations can more easily link with international causes advocating for the advancement of civil, economic, social, and cultural rights. International policies outlining standards for social justice in the form of human rights have assisted in increasing the legitimacy of international involvement in a variety of social issues (Tsutsui & Wotipka, 2004). Several researchers (Smith, Pagnucco, & Lopez, 1998; Tsutsui & Wotipka, 2004) suggest that the increasing interconnectedness of countries around the world will create a breeding ground for progressive ideas such as global human rights norms and provide incentive for countries to create social policy consistent with a human rights framework. International Human Rights Organizations have an important role to play in the promotion of social justice principles around the world.

Need for International Involvement

With the advancement of globalization, and the increase in information and communication technologies, more people are able to inform themselves about international human rights issues. This increased international awareness has contributed to a growth in the global human rights movement. Research suggests that globalization has been a key factor in increasing the motivation of the international community to

become involved in the struggle for Palestinian rights and has assisted in generating legitimacy for the Palestinian cause. For instance, Tsutsui and Wotipka (2004) argue that International Human Rights Organizations have become increasingly instrumental in the promotion of human rights worldwide, suggesting, “their [International Human Rights Organizations’] unsparing reports of local human rights practice all over the world have been essential in the proceedings of UN human rights instruments such as the Commission on Human Rights and the Human Rights Committee” (p. 588). Similarly, Said (2004) posits, “globalization has led to an increased awareness and increased activism to promote human rights in the Occupied Territories of Palestine [...] and that, through international activism, Palestinian self-determination has acquired an unbudgeable place on the world’s agenda for liberation, sustainability, and resistance” (p. 21, 26). The need to involve the international community and International Human Rights Organizations is also supported by Satloff (1995) and Zunes (2010), who argue that international solidarity is increasing and will play an important role in legitimizing and enhancing Palestine’s chances of political change, promoting equality and the fulfillment of human rights in the Occupied Territories.

Increasingly, information about the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is being presented within a discourse of human rights. Hajjar (2001) posits that, “efforts to frame the struggle for Palestinian rights in a human rights discourse serves to internationalize the conflict in new ways by inviting- even demanding- the attention and involvement of the international community” (p. 26). Habash and Soueid (1998) also point to the importance of international involvement and increasing international solidarity, arguing, “Palestinians

are trying to reach out to an international audience in order to promote change” (p. 93). Tsutsui and Wotipka (2004) suggest that, “oppressed citizens use international channels to publicize human rights violations and pressure governments for change” (p. 595), while at the same time, such publicity works to increase global awareness, solidarity, and involvement in the struggle for the realization of human rights of Palestinians under Israeli Occupation. According to Halper (2010), taking on the role of educator may be of particular importance for human rights organizations in North America as, “the way the conflict is [inaccurately] portrayed needs to be put under scrutiny as many of the larger news corporations play into biases that impede the general population from seeing the reality on the ground” (p. 193). It is crucial for International Human Rights Organizations to remain impartial and encourage media sources to report factual and unbiased information. This will assist in legitimating the Palestinian voice and ensuring that both the Israeli and the Palestinian perspectives on the conflict are being shared with international audiences.

According to Hajjar (2001), the use of a human rights discourse around the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, “sustains opportunities and the need to look to the international human rights movement and the international community to support local struggles for rights” (p. 36). International organizational involvement and solidarity in the fight for Palestinian rights have already proven beneficial in the Occupied Territories. Mushasha and Dear (2010), in their report on human security in the Occupied Territories, suggest that International Human Rights Organizations are an important contributor to the promotion of human rights, positing, “international and regional organizations; civil

Organizations in the struggle for Palestinian rights will play a crucial role in helping Palestinians realize their goals of equality.

Limitations of International Human Rights and International Human Rights Organizations

As discussed earlier, human rights discourses and existing international human rights legislation puts the state at the center of human rights responsibility, and sees international cooperation as supplementary to the fulfillment of these rights. However, it is argued that by placing so much power within the government of a state, factors other than state repression may be neglected. For instance, Yamin (2005) argues, “there are other actors, in addition to the state, that influence the conditions under which human rights are enjoyed or violated [...] and there is a tendency to ignore or even enhance the powers of non-state actors” (p. 1223). Other factors might include civil war, lack of resources, severe disproportionate distributions of wealth and other resources, and cultural or religious institutionalized norms that are inconsistent with the human rights discourse. Additionally, international responsibility is diverted, even though it is conceivable, especially in an increasingly globalized world, that the actions of states are embedded in larger global processes. As such, human rights and social justice organizations may fail to recognize other important arenas that may be better able to address Palestinian human rights. If appealing to nation-state governments/actors, either locally (in Palestine) or domestically, is the only route deemed legitimate by the human

society, and non-governmental actors play a pivotal role in shielding people from menaces” (p. 21), in the Occupied Territories of Palestine. This is largely because international organizations are able to develop creative and flexible strategies that go beyond the borders of nation-states and include a variety of voices in their promotion of human rights. According to Tsutsui and Wotipka (2004), “International Human Rights Organizations, because of their flexibility and their ability to work across borders, have been able to aggressively push the international human rights movement forward” (p. 613). Palestinians, being the less powerful population within the conflict, rely on the power of the international community to assist in building a voice for their cause. This is not to suggest that domestic human rights organizations in the Occupied Territories are not important. However, it is important to recognize that within the complex power dynamics of the Israeli Occupation, attempts to resolve the conflict and promote human rights often neglect to include Palestinian voices. Barak (2005), argues that the lack of recognition of Palestinian voices results in the need to include the international community, stating, “if the parties do not recognize one another, they can meet together only with outside help” (p. 732). International Human Rights Organizations can provide monitoring and reporting of human rights violations, as well as advocate on behalf of Palestinians for the promotion of human rights and the acquisition of resources to fulfill human rights in the Occupied Territories. International Human Rights Organizations can play a key role in raising awareness about human rights violations and increase support amidst an international audience. The presence of International Human Rights

rights framework, creativity in the development of new strategies of change may be hindered.

Ethical concerns arise out of human rights discourses as well. Those who experience violations of their rights are often positioned and defined within the identity of victim. Kennedy (2002) argues, “the person, as well as the group, imagined and brought to life by human rights agitation, is both abstract and general in ways that have bad consequences” (p. 111). By positioning those who experience violations of human rights as victims, thereby forfeiting other possible identities, can lead to limitations in the imaginative space for resolution or emancipation from oppressive systems. Kennedy (2002) elaborates on this claim positing, “differences among victims, the experience of their particularity and hope for their creative and surprising self-expression, are erased under the power of an internationally sanctified vocabulary for their self-understanding and self-presentation” (p. 112). This points to the importance for human rights organizations to find, value, and legitimate voices of domestic populations lacking human rights and allowing them to define their own situations and solutions. In this case, International Human Rights Organizations act as allies. However, a paradox exists in that, often, International Human Rights Organizations must try to identify a ‘victim’ before seeking out their voice.

Another critique of the international human rights discourse pertains to Western dominance in international relations. It has been argued by several researchers (Artz, 1990; Kennedy, 2002; Waldren, 2000) that human rights are an extension of Western colonialism, promoting Western ideals of human and societal development world-wide.

Though this is a commonly cited argument, it is important to consider that many different countries with diverse religious and cultural backgrounds participated in the development and promotion of human right norms through the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. According to Twiss (1998), “with regards to the claim that international human rights norms are a product of Western liberalism, the international human rights agreements and the priority interests agreed upon therein are not exclusively Western political and moral values” (p. 273). The language of the human rights treaties discussed in this study appears purposefully vague, allowing for multiple interpretations and implementation mechanisms. Therefore, different countries are free to make use of the human rights discourse in a manner that is culturally and socially relevant to them. Human rights organizations working in diverse countries must be conscious of the potential difference in interpretation and be careful not to impose Western values upon a population.

Another important consideration of the Western dominance in international affairs arises out of the power of the West choosing how to distribute foreign aid in the form of material and human resources. This is particularly true of the United States, who provides Israel with millions of dollars in aid each year (Shlaim, 2009). Currently, over 80% of the population of Occupied Palestine relies on foreign aid to meet their basic needs (The Veritas Handbook, 2010). Western nations (particularly the United States and Canada) have a vested national interest in preserving a good relationship with Israel, meaning that this flow of resources continues. However, if the West withdrew aid resources from Israel/Palestine, human rights organizations from the West may also no

longer have access to the resources necessary to continue their work. Resources available to human rights organizations are often dependent on the support of greater civil society. Without a constant political and media presence, the issue may be lost in the eyes of the masses, seeing the issue as too far removed from their daily lives. This has a compounding negative impact on Palestinians dependant on such support.

As discussed earlier, Palestinians are heavily reliant on aid in the form of both material and human resources. Many human rights and social justice organizations advocate for the dissemination of resources in Palestine and an end to the blockade of Gaza (which will be discussed in more detail in the next section). However, this has led to what some researchers refer to as the ‘aid industry’ and has the potential to create dependence on donor countries, furthering the disadvantage of the population (Abunimah, 2009; Kennedy, 2002; Yamin, 2005). Though ensuring that people have their immediate needs met is very important, it is crucial, at the same time, to ensure that the Palestinian population feels empowered to develop a sustainable economy of their own, meeting the needs of the Palestinian people internally. As Abunimah (2009) suggests with regards to the situation in Israel/Palestine, “aid functioned not as a catalyst but as a substitute for politics. Donor policies were not driven by Palestinian needs as much as by dynamics among donors, on the one hand, and between donors and Israel, on the other” (p. 204). This reiterates the need for international human rights and social justice organizations working to provide aid relief to Palestinians to incorporate the principles of self-determination and meaningful participation in order to ensure that their efforts work to enhance, rather than detract from, Palestinian life.

As the information in the literature review suggests, there is a need for the involvement of International Human Rights Organizations to assist in social change activities in Israel/Palestine. The need for international involvement appears to be supported by the Palestinian community living under Israeli occupation. Therefore, the goal of my research is to consider how Canadian-based International Human Rights Organizations (with branches in the greater Toronto area) operate to promote Palestinian human rights and consider the implications for international human rights policy and practice.

Chapter Three: Methodology

In this chapter, I provide a detailed account of my research process including the theoretical framework influencing the research, the research design, data collection and analytic strategies, and ethical considerations.

Theoretical Framework

According to Corbin and Strauss (2008: p. 39), “theoretical frameworks [...] provide a conceptual guide for choosing concepts to be investigated, for suggesting research questions, and for framing research findings”. In order for readers to better understand how my research has been developed, I would like to provide some background information on the theoretical framework guiding my research project. My research is strongly influenced by human rights theory and assumes the universality and impartiality of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the subsequent Covenants of Civil and Political Rights (1967) and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1967). Different discourses of human rights were considered, but the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was selected as the primary basis to evaluate and critique the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. According to this framework, all people, regardless of their social or geographic location, are deserving of certain basic rights. It is the responsibility of each state, in cooperation with the international community – at least those who are signatories of this agreement – to ensure that the human rights of all people are respected (United Nations, 1948). Therefore, within this perspective social justice is defined as the fulfillment of human rights standards as outlined by the Universal

Declaration of Human Rights (1948) or the active engagement of government and peoples toward a greater attainment of human rights.

Research Design

This research is a qualitative, exploratory study of the work of International Human Rights Organizations and their promotion of human rights in Israel and the Occupied Territories of Palestine. According to Whipp (1998) and Corbin and Strauss (2008), qualitative research methods are designed to be flexible and are most appropriate to use when engaged in an exploratory study. Whipp (1998) recommends qualitative research methods for studies seeking to, “draw attention to the ability of social actors to influence behaviour and alter premises of action and to how interest groups form around issues and compete for resources” (p. 59). Because the goals of my research are to increase understanding about the involvement of International Human Rights Organizations in promoting human rights in Israel/Palestine and to contribute to a growing body of literature surrounding international support/intervention with regards to the Israel/Palestine peace movement, I felt that the use of qualitative research methods would allow me the flexibility needed to explore such a complex issue. Rather than beginning with a predetermined hypothesis, qualitative research methods start off with no preconceived concepts and are more hypothesis-generating in nature (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Rubin & Babbie, 2007).

My research occurs in two phases: 1) a web search of International Human Rights Organizations in Canada promoting Palestinian human rights; and 2) in-depth interviews

with individuals working in Canadian-based International Human Rights Organizations promoting Palestinian human rights.

Phase I: Web Search.

My research began with an online search of international social justice and human rights organizations engaged in the promotion of human rights in Israel/Palestine. I began by reading through vision and mission statements of human rights organizations operating in Canada. The purpose of this web search was to a) learn what organizations exist that engage in the promotion of Palestinian human rights; b) determine what organizations are located in the greater Toronto area; c) decide which organizations I would recruit participants from; d) increase my understanding of the types of activities organizations advertised involvement in; and, e) assist me in developing the concepts and themes for participant interviews.

An online search of human rights organizations was conducted and 28 organizations were chosen for review (See Appendix A for list of organizations). Organizations were selected based on a their website's promotion of Palestinian human rights within their vision and mission statements. For example, Jews for a Just Peace, an International Human Rights Organizations based in Vancouver, Canada, describes their mission:

Jews for a Just Peace is an organization... whose purpose is to build support in our community for a fair and just solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Recognizing the inequality in the power of the two parties, we believe such a solution will be found through co-operation and dialogue, not through violence and intransigence...We support the principles of human rights and self determination. We oppose all violence against civilians, whether perpetrated by the state or by other civilians. We oppose all racism and ethnic hatred, whether directed against Jews, Arabs or any other group. – Jews for a Just Peace (2010).

An analysis of the commonalities and differences among International Human Rights Organizations allowed me to gain insight into how social justice is defined within the human rights community and how this influences the type of work they do. It allowed me to develop themes for in-depth participant interviews that were relevant to the work organizations advertised to be engaged in.

Within the community of international human rights and social justice organizations working to promote human rights for Palestinians living under Israeli Occupation, there is evidence that many are rooted in similar principles and values. Primarily, the work of International Human Rights Organizations stems from the principles of social justice, equality, peace, coexistence and respect (Meretz USA, 2010; New Israel Fund of Canada, 2010; Salaam Canada, 2010). With these values at the core of the organization, they influence all policy, procedure, and program design and evaluation. Though social justice is frequently cited by organizations as a core value, it is rarely defined. Organizations may define social justice differently, resulting in differences in the way social problems are defined within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and how social change initiatives are designed and implemented. During my interviews with research participants, I wanted to learn how their organizations defined social justice and how social justice principles influenced their work.

Numerous human rights organizations operating in Canada claim to engage in work both domestically and internationally to help promote social justice and human rights for Palestinians (Canadian Friends of Peace Now, 2010; Coalition to End Israeli Apartheid, 2010; Israeli Committee Against Housing Demolitions, 2010; Peace Now

USA, 2010; The New Israel Fund of Canada, 2010). Organizations advertise using solidarity and collaboration with organizations within Israel/Palestine to deliver aid resources and get direction for their domestic activities. For example, The Tikkun Community supports the principle of solidarity and defines this commitment as follows:

Solidarity means that we affirm out towards each other... beyond the narrow boundaries of ethnicity, religion, and geography. We affirm the obligation to actively resist injustice and refuse to take part in it even when we can't prove that our resistance will produce changes (Tikkun Community Toronto, 2010).

This information led me to develop questions about how human rights organizations in Canada engage with communities and other organizations in Israel/Palestine and how this relationship influences the work of Canadian human rights organizations.

My questions resulting from this web-search were organized into themes and probing questions to examine during in-depth interviews with participants from International Human Rights Organizations in the greater Toronto area.

Phase II: In-depth Interviews.

Consistent with a qualitative approach to research, in-depth interviews were conducted with individuals working with Canadian International Human Rights Organizations with branches located in the greater Toronto area (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Interviews with participants lasted approximately one hour. The purpose of conducting in-depth interviews was to a) develop an understanding of the work done by International Human Rights Organizations; b) gain insight into how participants defined their experiences in engaging in human rights work; c) to gain information that would allow me to determine the consistency between what organizations advertised that they do, and

the actual work being done; and d) to enhance my understanding of the effectiveness of International Human Rights Organizations promoting Palestinian human rights.

Recruitment

Criterion sampling was used to recruit organizations that would provide relevant data for the study (Coyne, 2008). The organizational criteria for this study include engagement in social justice work to support the peace process and the attainment of human rights in Israel/Palestine. For the purposes of this study, social justice and human rights work refers to any activity to encourage/support the fulfilling of human rights as identified by the United Nations Charter of Rights and Freedoms, including social, civil and political, economic, and cultural rights. Participating organizations must have a webpage providing contact information and must advertise in their webpage that they are engaged in social justice work supporting the peace process or the attainment of human rights in Israel/Palestine. This was determined during Phase I of the research design. Individual criteria for participation in this study include employment in an identified international human rights organization, proficiency in English language, and must be of the age of consent (18 or older). Organizations and participants had to be located within the greater Toronto area in order to be considered for this research in order to be geographically accessible to the researcher.

A recruitment letter (see Appendix B) was emailed to directors of the International Human Rights Organizations the met the recruitment requirements. This provided directors with detailed information surrounding the purposes of this study and the type of

involvement participants would be asked to engage in. I requested that the director or other leadership of each organization speak as a representative of the organization he/she is employed with, though the name of both the individual and the organization is treated as confidential. In the event that the director or other leader of each organization was unable to participate, I requested that an alternative letter of invitation be circulated to all employees of each organization. In the event that the participant was not a leader of an organization, employees of that organization were not asked to speak as a representative, but rather as a member of the human rights social movement community. In addition to a recruitment letter, I sent a Letter of Information and Informed Consent (see Appendix D) so that organizations and participants could learn more about my research before deciding to participate. One follow-up email was sent to each target organization two-weeks after the initial contact. Four individuals responded with a desire to participate. I requested that each individual participant contact me if he/she was interested in being interviewed for this research. All participation in this study was voluntary and the choice of whether an individual from an organization chose to participate was kept confidential.

Participants

Participants responded from four different International Human Rights Organizations in the greater Toronto area. Three participants were male, and one female. Participants ranged in age from early 20's to 50's. Two participants identified as Palestinian, one Jewish, and one Canadian. The diversity in participants allowed for multiple perspectives and motivations in involvement the human rights social movement.

Data Collection

Data was collected through in-depth interviews with employee representatives from four International Human Rights Organizations in Canada, more specifically Ontario.

According to Whipp (1998), “an interview is the primary means of accessing the experiences and subjective views of actors. Detailed, vivid, and inclusive accounts of events and processes may be generated” (p. 54). Consistent with the exploratory nature of my study, a semi-structured interview was constructed. The formulation for the interview themes drew from existing literature of the work of international humanitarian organizations in relation to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Topics addressed in the interview included mandate and goals of the organization; organizational conceptualizations of social justice; how organizations become educated about human rights violations in Israel and the Occupied Territories of Palestine; strategies used by organizations to promote human rights with a particular focus on self-determination; and, how the organization evaluates the effectiveness of their work (see Appendix C for Interview Guide). Interview questions were open-ended, allowing participants to direct and define their own responses.

Data Analysis

Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for the purposes of analysis. Transcripts were read several times and coded according to line-by-line coding in grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Thematic analysis was used to make sense of the data collected.

The first phase of analysis was concept coding. Concepts are, “words that stand for groups or classes of objects, events, and actions that share some major common properties, though the properties can vary dimensionally” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008: p. 45). During concept coding, the concepts I identified represented my own understanding of the experiences and issues addressed by the research participants.

Once the concepts in the interviews were identified, they were grouped into themes. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), “researchers attempt to make sense out of data by organizing them according to a classificatory scheme” (p. 55). By organizing concepts into themes, I was able to determine areas of importance, commonalities and differences in the experiences of research participants. The examination of commonalities and differences was accomplished using a technique in grounded theory known as constant comparisons. During comparative analysis, “each incident in the data is compared with other incidents for similarities and differences... allowing the researcher to differentiate one category/theme from another and to identify properties and dimensions specific to that category or theme” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008: p. 73). As I engaged in the coding process for concepts and themes, I wrote memos to maintain a record of my own feelings while engaging in the data, as well as to keep track of questions and ideas that emerged.

Once I had completed the process of coding data into themes, I engaged in a thorough analysis of those themes, asking questions (as suggested by Corbin & Strauss, 2008) such as: What are the problems or situations as defined by the participants? What are the structural conditions that give rise to those situations? How are persons

responding? How are these changing over time? What conditions/activities connect one sequence of events to another? How do the consequences of one set of inter/actions/emotions play into the next? The answers to these questions were then written into findings. However, the analysis process also led to new questions that will be considered further in Chapter Five.

Ethical Considerations

This research was reviewed by McMaster University Research Ethics Board and received a *Certificate of Ethics Clearance to Involve Human Participants* (see Appendix E) was issued before data collection began. The choice to treat the data collected through participating organizations and individuals as confidential arose out of ethical considerations. The conflict between Israel and the Occupied Territories of Palestine is controversial and many people have differing views on the matter. Because not all people are supportive of Palestinian human rights and the peace processes between the two populations, it was important to respect the safety of those participating in interviews as well as not to jeopardize the important work they are engaged in to promote Palestinian human rights on the ground.

In order to ensure my own safety, limited personal information was given to research participants. Interviews were most often arranged to be in a public place, for example, a coffee shop. I did interview one participant in their home. However, there was a great deal of communication between that participant and myself before this decision was made. For this interview, I made sure that I had a safety plan. The location

of the interview was written down and I was to call a friend at a specified time after the interview had been completed. If I did not call, the friend had directions to inform police of my whereabouts.

Participants shared their stories and experiences with me to benefit my research project. I wanted to ensure that participants and their organizations also benefited from their participation in my research. An executive summary was prepared outlining key findings of the research project, and a copy was sent to each of the participating organizations. In addition, participants and their organizations could request an electronic copy of the full thesis. This has the potential to influence individuals involved in human rights work and to encourage International Human Rights Organizations to re-examine their practices in the international community.

Chapter Four: Findings

My intention in undertaking this research project was to develop an understanding of the work of International Human Rights Organizations in Canada that are promoting Palestinian human rights. I was interested in how organizations developed strategies and action plans to assist in the promotion of international human rights. However, after engaging in the interview process with participants, I ended up with something different. What I found was another story: a story of the perceptions and meanings assigned to this work by those engaged within Canadian human rights organizations. Though I did learn about some of the types of activities International Human Rights Organizations in Canada are involved in at phase one and through the in-depth interviews, all four participants re-focused the interviews so that they centred on a number of themes that were more closely aligned with their personal views, experiences and values. The participants' motivation for involvement is both personal and political, and their commitment to social justice is personal. The policies and practices of the organizations in which individuals engage in the promotion of human rights act to reinforce the personal commitment to social justice. The research participants evaluated the success of their organizations' activities from a personal values perspective that did not necessarily align with the evaluation of success that the organization formally engages in.

The Personal is Political

In my conversations with participants from four International Human Rights Organizations operating in Canada, interviewees reoriented the conversation from the organizations' motivations and values toward their own personal ideas of social justice

and the experiences and thoughts that led to their original involvement with their respective organizations.

Values and Principles of Research Participants.

During the interview process, I engaged participants in a conversation about the values and principles of their organizations. However, rather than a discussion of organizational values, a discussion of personal definitions of social justice ensued. Ideas of equality, resource sharing, and freedom from unjust harassment and persecution are evident in the following statements from research participants:

“Social justice to me is the rights of people to live a decent life, as little hampered by others as possible, and that they respect the rights of others. People should have the rights to live a decent life and should be given every opportunity to live that decent life. It’s important, not just because it’s a moral issue, but the world won’t survive long unless we respect those rights.” – Participant B

“Social justice is standing up for minorities, the small people in the world who are just trying to become equal [...] Everybody deserves the same rights and everybody deserves the same justice”. – Participant C

“The most basic justice is the constitution, the freedoms of individuals. Every developed country has a constitution, which protects individuals as human beings. Palestine doesn’t have one. They are not treated as human beings. They are treated worse than animals. They live in a very unjust society.” – Participant D

It appears that participants are more committed to their own values and political perspectives as opposed to organizational definitions of social justice. Perhaps it is their views of social justice that led to their involvement within human rights organizations.

The values and principles identified by research participants focused on their personal ideas of social justice, which were consistent with the values and principles of

the international human rights paradigm, and, in particular, of the values and principles inherent in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. For example, research participants view the violation of Palestinian human rights as a social justice issue, using the discourse of human rights to outline their personal perceptions of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict:

“Social justice is standing up for the minorities, the small people in the world who are trying to just become equal. But they aren’t allowed to be equal because of the upper powers. Countries like Israel don’t let Palestine have power. They are in charge of how much power it has [...] Everybody deserves equal rights. Everybody deserves the same rights. And, everybody deserves the same justice.” – Participant C

“The most basic justice is the constitution, the freedoms of individuals [...] which protects individuals as human beings.” – Participant D

It is evident from these participant responses that personal ideas of social justice are highly influential motivating factors for involvement in the human rights community.

Personal Connection to the Israeli/Palestinian Peace Process.

Three out of four participants interviewed for this research demonstrated a strong personal connection with the situation in Israel/Palestine. These participants either immigrated from Israel/Palestine or have family living in that part of the world. One research participant spent several years living in Israel. All of these participants identified their personal affiliation with Israel/Palestine as the most important motivating factor in their involvement with human rights organizations. The following quotations demonstrate the strong personal ties discussed by research participants:

“I’m very much concerned about conflicts in the world and I lived in Israel for seven years. And, the importance of promoting peace between the people who live

in that part of the world is very important to me. I lived in Israel. My children and grandchildren live in this world.” – Participant B

“Having a family history affected by the Palestinian situation definitely helped. I have many family members who have fought for Palestinian human rights, and many of them have given up. I feel that it is my turn to carry that on.” – Participant C

“I’m Palestinian. I’ve never been there. I wasn’t born there. I’m Canadian, but my roots are Palestinian. I know that being Palestinian is probably not sufficient in itself to motivate me. I definitely have an interest in justice... So one, because I am Palestinian, and two, because I am interested in social justice.” – Participant D

It is interesting to consider the strong personal relationships that interview participants identify with regarding the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Though the conflict is happening in another part of the world, individuals in Canada feel as though they are personally affected by the violations of Palestinian human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Beyond an awareness of the human rights issues of Palestinians is a personal reaction leading to a personal and political commitment to social change. Participants feel a deep empathy for the Palestinians. Some of them also indicate a direct relationship with Palestinians as family members, friends and associates. They identify as “insiders” with a community that is suffering, and as a result of their empathic understanding, they feel their pain.

Personal Commitment to Social Justice.

One participant interviewed for this research, though not necessarily motivated by a personal connection to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, did appear to have a personal commitment to ideas of democracy and the promotion of social justice more broadly, leading to involvement in an international human rights organization:

“There’s blood on our hands. It’s our responsibility to take this unruly government by the reins. And, I feel that this [working with an international human rights organization] is one small way that I have the power to do that.” – Participant A

This research participant identifies a connection to the conflict as a member of the international community whose country is involved in foreign funding of Israel and the Israeli Defense Force. The participant sees his/her identity as a Canadian citizen and voter of government as positioning him/her in a direct relationship with the conflict overseas. The understanding of social justice and the motivation for involvement in an organization promoting Palestinian human rights stems from this personal connection to the issue as a social justice concern.

How do International Human Rights Organizations in Canada Promote Palestinian Human Rights?

During interviews, participants discussed the work of the organizations, focusing on specific initiatives they have been involved in. Rather than looking at the work of the organization as a whole, participants discussed their personal experiences of working within Canadian International Human Rights Organizations. The work of participants focused on three types of human rights activities. They include: 1) fundraising and aid; 2) education and awareness-raising; and 3) advocacy. Their perceptions about the effectiveness of such activities was also evaluated from a personal/political perspective, rather than based on the objectives of the organization.

Aid.

The majority of participants demonstrated how engaging in fundraising and the dissemination of aid resources is a significant focus of the work of International Human Rights Organizations operating in Canada. For example, Participant B demonstrated how his organization is involved in the dissemination of aid to Israeli and Palestinian organizations:

“Our objective is to try to promote peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis. We solicit funds to help them [organization in Israel] with their work and we get information from them about what they’re doing and what’s going on [...] When we get a good response to our solicitation of funds, that’s an indication [of success], particularly when we get a good response in solicitation when there’s been a negative swamp of publicity.” – Participant B

Participant B indicates that his organization is involved in raising funds and contributing aid resources to an organization in Israel, however, when considering the success of their work, he suggests that the organizational evaluation focuses on the Canadian context. For example, his response indicates that the organization measures success based on the amount of money raised, as opposed to what the money is providing Palestinians.

Similarly, Participant C considers how individuals within his organization focus on the collecting and disseminating of aid, suggesting that it is left to the discretion of another outside organization to determine where and how to disseminate the funds raised in Canada:

“We provide funds to affiliated organizations who travel there every year with students and other people. They take the money directly and make sure that it is in

good hands. We donate money to groups in Palestine who help, specifically the children in Gaza. These groups help kids get clothing, food and water, anything they need. Many homes get raided everyday so a lot of people don't have these things... People there benefit when we donate money, because they are getting the aid, water and food, that that money is going towards. They're benefitting directly that way." – Participant C

Aid describes both material and human resources. Some organizations use funds raised in Canada to contribute to resources for both Israeli and Palestinian human rights and peace promoting organizations in the Middle East. Though aid is important for the disenfranchised Palestinian population, increasing the availability of important resources, it is accomplished through minimal interactions and engagement with those organizations overseas. There does not appear to be a clear mechanism for determining whether the aid resources are reaching the desired population or having the desired outcome intended by Canadian based human rights groups.

The assumption behind these two participant responses is that aid in the form of monetary and material resources is achieving the desired outcome of improving access to resources and therefore, improving the human rights situation for Palestinians. However, both organizations do not appear to engage with people beyond the actual provision of resources. They suggest a lack of follow-up or evaluation of the actual benefit to the Palestinian people. These assumptions are problematic because they limit organizations' ability to ascertain the full impact of their work, particularly their impact within the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Education.

Education and awareness-raising activities were discussed by all research participants as a crucial element of the work of International Human Rights Organizations operating in Canada. Research participants described their engagement in education and awareness-raising initiatives as follows:

“We have a newsletter, a quarterly newsletter. It goes to all of our membership. We bring in speakers and we invite the public to hear the speakers, speakers from the Middle East, speakers from other parts of the world who have a particular knowledge about what’s going on in the Middle East.” – Participant B

“So what we do is we set up a table, and sometimes we just do this on the street outside of our office and then we just talk to people. We just start engaging them. We’re tabling. We’re not just there standing at a table talking; We’re really trying to engage people, and to hear what people are believing and what they think.” – Participant A

“Education! We have to educate people. We have to try to put a face on each individual person and find that thing that will make people say, maybe this is important, maybe I should get involved.” – Participant C

The participants suggested that their organizations define Canadians as their target audience, but in fact, these organizations do not appear to be educating Canadians about how the international conflict is implicated within the local Canadian context. In effect, the information organizations are disseminating may actually work to feed the dyadic relationship of us vs. them. By focusing on the conflict as something that is isolated to another part of the world, Canadian populations may not see the implications of the conflict in their own communities. As Participant C suggests, the information being disseminated needs to be relevant to the target audience for it to lead to involvement in social action. What is absent from the education and awareness-raising initiatives of

International Human Rights Organizations participating in this research is twofold. First, education and awareness-raising are not directed at the Palestinian and Israeli populations. This may involve education on differing perceptions of human rights issues between these two populations as well as education focusing on human rights and social justice more broadly. There appears to be no actual engagement with the people affected by human rights violations within Israel/Palestine. Additionally, by focusing education on the ‘other’, people in Canada may actually feel further removed from the issues. If the goal of education is to promote awareness and therefore engagement in social action, education and awareness-raising should be relevant to the target audience. Based on participant responses, it appears that what is not being considered within education and awareness-raising activities is how this conflict is influencing local politics and social practices in Canada.

Advocacy.

Another strategy that the participants highlighted as being a central aim of their organization was advocacy. One participant noted that, more so than education strategies, advocacy work is often specifically targeted towards an influential audience. As indicated by Participant B, it is not just the general public, but politicians and policy-makers that are the target of the work. The following description of advocacy illustrates the approach by one organization interviewed for this research:

“Another thing that we’ve done is we’ve met with representatives of the Canadian government to make them aware of the facts as we see them to encourage the government to take positions and promote peace between the two sides.” – Participant B

In his experience, Participant B indicates that the focus of advocacy considers the conflict as it directly impacts populations in the Middle East. Again, this focus fails to consider the local implications of the conflict within the Canadian context. The focus of advocacy by International Human Rights Organizations operating in Canada appears to be social change in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Yet, the responsibility for this change still lies in the hands of powerful players acting overseas.

The research participants perceive the work of organizations as focused on the international context. By centering on the international context, organizations appear limited in their ability to invoke a sense of connectedness amidst Canadians. The consequences of this are: 1) a lack of involvement by international audiences in the promotion of Palestinian human rights; and 2) a lack of awareness about the implications of international conflict on domestic social and political processes.

Glocalization of Human Rights Work

Interviews with three of the four research participants suggested that, rather than human rights organizations focusing on making change internationally, they should focus their efforts on raising awareness and contributing to social change activity locally. As citizens of a democratic Canada, the power of actors within the Canadian context lies in making local social change with the expectation that changes in Canadian social policy and foreign policy will have a positive influence on the human rights situation in Israel/Palestine. This was echoed by one research participant who describes this process with conviction:

“The solution is at home. The local example is the Pride March in Toronto. They banned the anti-Israeli Apartheid group from Gay Pride. It was local officials who banned it. It was the primary organizers and municipal leaders and the presidents of universities who said you said you can’t use Israeli Apartheid. International conflict is now in your backyard. Here we are trying to change international leaders, which is just not going to happen because they have too much money and power. But, we are not making the change in our own backyard. Forget about who the prime minister of Israel is. Start with what’s going on in your own backyard and work from there. They are not thinking broad enough. We have got to start at home. They don’t care about the mayor of their own city; they care about the prime minister of Israel. That is ridiculous. You have got to start and home. Education is about universal education. If you have a leader who neglects the poor, women, in your own city, in all likelihood, he’s neglecting social justice everywhere, including the rights of Palestinians, the rights of all oppressed people all over the world. You can’t go out without first going through your front door. That’s the key issue.” – Participant D

Participant D illustrates how global issues affect local communities, pointing to the need to think globally, but act locally. This is the process of glocalization. It is crucial to consider the international influence in the local social context. Lyons (2006) suggests the need to conceptualize the world as a global community in which there is a need for direct local and global interaction. This brings into question where efforts of Canadian organizations are best focused.

Participants also indicated that efforts of Canadian-based International Human Rights Organizations are best made in Canada:

“[There is a] blatant and increasing militarization of the Canadian state. So the way that funding has been divested from social programming, and health, education [in Canada], and redirected towards military is criminal in my estimation. And, I feel very passionately about this.” – Participant A

“The best way [to get people involved] is to somehow relate it to them- relate the issue that is going on there to them, so that they can put a face on it. If I tell you

one thousand Palestinians died yesterday because of an air-raid, you might think that's tragic or sad, but continue going on with your life.” – Participant C

The response of Participant A illustrates how the Canadian public may experience the effects of international conflict in the local Canadian context. The respondent statements indicate that, again, participants are responding as individuals reflecting on the work of International Human Rights Organizations from their own personal and political perspectives. Participants indicate that, in their opinions, it is important to consider how the international conflict in Israel/Palestine is experienced by the Canadian population as a way to increase involvement in social change activities. Therefore, action directed at creating social change and improving human rights should focus on the local implications of the international conflict, and this, in turn, will likely produce social change internationally as well.

There was some contradiction to the idea of glocalization in the responses of research participants. Respondents indicated that organizations continue to view the Israeli/Palestinian conflict in a dyadic relationship to Canadians. For example, the participants stated that their organizations focus on activities such as, “the legacy of displaced people who are living in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan...” (Participant A), which served to create the us/them dualism. Other indicators of the us/them narrative emerged through responses such as,

“We are making our own version of those [posters] [...] something that will grab peoples’ attention- something that will make people say, ‘wow, this is really going on *there*?’” (Participant C) and,

“Our goal is to try to get as much information about what’s really going on *there* to the general public” (Participant B).

Therefore, it appears that participants reflecting on the work of their respective organizations may feel that the current social change activities are not as effective as they could be. In the participants’ view, organizations are focusing on the international issue as it is experienced by Palestinians living under Israeli Occupation. However, what respondents suggest organizations should be doing is focusing on the local implications of the international conflict, and that, through glocalization those working in Canadian-based International Human Rights Organizations can improve social justice both at home and in the international arena.

Absence and Exclusion of the Palestinian Voice

When engaging in this research, one of my main goals was to find the Palestinian voice within the realm of International Human Rights Organizations operating in Canada. Consistent with the human rights paradigm, I was interested in learning how International Human Rights Organizations – that promote Palestinian self-determination as a core value – engaged people within occupied Palestine in their work. What I found is that there is a clear absence and exclusion of the Palestinian voice in Canadian government and media, and within human rights organizations.

Lack of Palestinian Voice in Canadian Government and Media.

When discussing the challenges of Palestinian human rights work in Canada, the research participants involved in this study indicated they experienced difficulties because of lack of Palestinian voice within two major institutions of Canadian society:

government and media. This includes their perception of a pro-Israeli bias in Canadian government and media communication, leading to a general ignorance among the Canadian population regarding global and local issues pertaining to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. The participants stated that a major challenge for their organizations is the effect of bias in government and media, which tends to be skewed against Palestinians. For example, research participants noted:

“It’s problematic where we have a narrative where Palestinians and Israeli Jews are seen as being weighed equally on the table when you’re dealing with systemic power that [...] You couldn’t even compare one to the other.” – Participant A

“Sometimes the [media] reports that we get are superficial so that you don’t get the full picture. Not necessarily a dishonest picture, but not a full picture. Very often, when you don’t get a full picture, you get a dishonest picture.” – Participant B

According to Jensen (2009), media relating to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is filtered at least four levels:

The first level involves the owners of large American media firms who are who are driven by corporate interests. The second level involves political elites who are influenced by powerful Israeli lobby groups who operate internationally. As well, the Israeli government has launched a extensive public relations campaign to support Israeli nationalism. Finally, in addition to these powerful filters, watchdog groups are positioned to pressure North American media with respect to coverage of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict (Jenson, 2009).

According to participant responses, this filtering of the media resulting in a pro-Israeli bias skews public perception of the human rights situation in Israel/Palestine and works to marginalize the voices of both Palestinians and the international organizations advocating of behalf of Palestinian populations.

Not only does it appear that the Palestinian voice is excluded within the media institutions, but they also appear to lack political recognition within Canadian government. This was illustrated by a personal story of one of the research participants:

“When Netanyahu [the Prime Minister of Israel] was supposed to come to Canada, I was in Ottawa running the Ottawa marathon that weekend. I was running down Sussex Avenue, and it was lined with Israeli flags, and I couldn't believe it. I was just totally shocked that that's how blatantly one sided this country is right now, and towards the conflict.” – Participant A

The lack of Palestinian voice and recognition within Canadian government and media poses a challenge to International Human Rights Organizations operating in Canada because it leads to a misinformed Canadian public. The public is indoctrinated with narratives of terrorism and Islamophobia, contributing to a lack of willingness to engage in conversations promoting the Palestinian perspective.

Research participants felt that one of the challenges in their work is that most Canadians don't deal with the Israeli/Palestinian conflict in their everyday lives. Participants explain:

“Getting people interested in an international issue that is long and complex and far away is a huge challenge. More and more people are finding it hard to manage in the so-called luxurious life in Canada. Tuition is far too expensive. Students can't make ends meet, trying to work part-time jobs and go to school. They are barely scraping by and graduating with thousands of dollars in debt. They have their own challenges. There are no jobs when they graduate. They can't afford housing. These are real challenges.” – Participant D

“I think that people generally are very busy, and unless they have a special interest in something, will accept as a given whatever they hear on the radio or television or read in the newspapers.” – Participant B

According to these participant responses, people are concerned about the issues that affect their daily lives as Canadians. Their primary source of information about Israeli/Palestinian conflict is the media. The participants believed that Canadians know what the mainstream media wants them to know. As one of the research participants noted, “people don’t do their own research. They just believe what CNN tells them. CNN tells them that terrorists were on that boat, they believe it like [snap]” (Participant C).

Another important insight shared by a research participant is the tendency of individuals to equate anti-Israeli policy with anti-Israel as a state. This stems from the tremendous power of Israel’s public relations campaign (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007). One participant suggests:

“People confuse criticism of Israeli government policy with criticism of Israel. It’s tantamount to the same in their minds and they can’t appreciate that you can criticize a policy of a government without being against the country as a whole [...] I think that people generally are very busy, and unless they have a special interest in something, will accept as a given whatever they hear on the radio or television or read in the newspapers. Sometimes what they get is not true, or it’s not the full picture, so they have a slanted view.” – Participant B

Racism and ignorance provide opportunity for media influence and manipulation. As suggested by research participants, Canadians are generally ignorant about these facts because they do not deal with them in their daily lives.

Lack of Palestinian Voice within International Human Rights Organizations in Canada.

Although lack of Palestinian voice in Canadian government and media has been identified by research participants as a challenge to the promotion of Palestinian human rights, they felt that their organizations failed to incorporate meaningful Palestinian participation in their own initiatives. With the exception of one respondent, all of the research participants in this study indicated a lack of Palestinian voice within their respective organizations. The one organization that did incorporate Israeli/Palestinian voice still focused on the Israeli perspective of human rights violations committed against Palestinians living under Israeli Occupation. This organization was developed in Canada as a funder, providing resources to its sister organization located in Israel.

Despite its connection to an Israel-based organization and consistent engagement with the Israeli/Palestinian population, the participants believed that the evaluation of the work of the organization focused on the Canadian experiences. Participant B explains:

“[The organization] in Israel is one of our sources of information. [That organization] has investigators who are constantly on the move looking at what’s going on in the West Bank and Israel generally- on the ground and by air. So, we get reports from them. And, reports from the general media and also the more selective media; journals, articles written by people who have a reputation for honesty. [We feel our initiatives are successful] when we get a good response to our solicitation of funds [...] particularly when we get a good response in solicitation when there’s been a negative swamp of publicity, whether it’s news that you can’t trust the Arabs or their intent is to destroy the Israeli government or the State of Israel- when things like that happen and we’re still able to see positive results in our fundraising is another indication that we’re having some degree of success.” – Participant B

In this scenario, Palestinians do not appear to be consulted about the value of the work of this organization. However, the organization may still deem their work to be contributing to positive international change based on their evaluation measures. It is not known whether Palestinians living under Israeli Occupation actually derive a benefit from the raising of Canadian funds.

In my search for the Palestinian voice within International Human Rights Organizations operating in Canada, there was little direct reference to involvement or participation of Palestinian communities. This was reflected in one research participant description of the process in which their organization initiates a protest:

“I’ll give you kind of a timeline. Something will happen and the group gets angry. We’ve already decided that this is what we’re here for, to do something about it. So then we think, what do we do now? We’ve protested in the past. It’s not a new thing at all to protest. When things happen, protesting is our way of letting people know that we are taking a moral stance.” – Participant C

Another research participant discussed how the organization does consider movements in Israel/Palestine in their own program development; however, this knowledge does not appear to come from direct communication between members of the organization and the Palestinian population affected by human rights violations:

“We’re very interested and set on being informed by the struggles that are going on in the occupied settlements in Palestine. We’re taking our directive from them without question. For example, the boycott divestment and sanctions campaign, which came out of Haifa in Palestine, we’re taking our directives from the source there.” – Participant A

The disconnect between human rights organizations in Canada and the Israeli/Palestinian populations and organizations hinders their ability to engage in more participatory models to promoting human rights. Moreover, this disconnect makes it virtually impossible to adhere to principles of self-determination. The Palestinian voice is but a whisper in the Canadian context.

Summary of Findings

Clearly, some of the individuals engaged in these human rights organizations have a personal vested interest in providing support. Their investment of time, energy, and money is driven by a personal passion and commitment to the cause they support. This is important learning that helps to inform fundraising initiatives and targets, and membership drives.

The participants state that the organizations in which they work focus their efforts on three strategic approaches, including aid, education and advocacy. The challenge is to ascertain the effectiveness of the organizations' strategies. In the view of research participants, there is a disconnect between why people choose to become involved in the promotion of human rights, and how they engage in social action within organizations.

Participants interviewed for this research indicate a tension between the local and global context of human rights work. Organizations focus their efforts in education, aid, and advocacy on what is happening in the international context. However, it is argued by participants that the power to create meaningful social change comes from our democratic citizenship rights in Canada, and as such, change initiatives should focus on the local

implications of the international issue. Social change in Canada will be reverberated in the international context of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

Ironically, what is missing from the organizing efforts of the research participants is the voice of Palestinians. In Canadian government and media and in International Human Rights Organizations in Canada, there is very little evidence of direct input by Palestinians into the strategic choices made by these groups. Participants identify the silencing of Palestinian voices within Canadian institutions as a challenge to their work within International Human Rights Organizations in Canada. Yet, in internal education strategies, program design, and evaluation of human rights initiatives, research participants indicate that the Palestinian voice is muted within Canadian human rights organizations also. These findings have important implications for social workers developing policies and engaging in human rights practice for International Human Rights Organizations operating in Canada.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Implications

Three central concerns emerge from the findings of my research. First, individuals working within International Human Rights Organizations feel personally connected to violations of Palestinian human rights and therefore feel personally affected by the conflict. As such, individuals are more committed to their own personal ideas of social justice than to the mandate and goals of the International Human Rights Organizations through which they act. Second, the exclusion of Palestinian voices in the work of International Human Rights Organizations operating in Canada mirrors the social exclusion of Palestinian voices within the larger Canadian social and political context. Lastly, a shift needs to occur in the way these organizations view the issue of Palestinian human rights. Because involvement stems from a perception of the conflict as personally relevant, social change efforts targeted at the Canadian population must consider the domestic implications of the international conflict for organizations to be effective in the Canadian context.

The Personal is Political

People choose to become involved in the fight for Palestinian human rights based on a strong personal connection to the Palestinian community and a strong personal commitment to ideas of social justice. Individuals are committed to their own personal ideas of justice and peace, which lead them to become involved in social action consistent with their personal values. Getting involved in the Palestinian struggle is a way to solidify and share personal values of social justice, peace, and human rights. In other words, involvement in International Human Rights Organizations appears to be an

individuals' way to translate personal values into social values and a collective consciousness.

Participants believe that when people feel connected and affected by an issue, they are more likely to get involved in social change efforts. The current approaches of International Human Rights Organizations involved in this study focus solely on human rights violations that affect Palestinians. The focus on the 'other' may actually work to create separation between Canadian and Palestinian populations. Re-focusing on how the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is represented in Canadian society, is more likely to enable the Canadian public to see this conflict as personally relevant. By increasing awareness of Canadians of how Canada is involved and affected by the Palestinian struggle, people are more likely to feel personally connected to the issues. Further research is necessary to determine how social change in Canada impacts Palestinian communities in Israel/Palestine.

In focusing on the Canadian implications of the international conflict, the community development and social change focus become localized within Canadian communities. By re-focusing the agenda of International Human Rights Organizations in this way, community participation involves the action of the Canadian public.

Finding the Palestinian Voice

From a human rights perspective, issues of power and self-determination should be a central focus of the work of international human rights communities. Based on this premise, the efforts to create social change within a target population should involve the

active participation of that population. The definitions of key issues and needs should come from the affected community themselves. People are the experts of their own lives, and often, societies share a collective consciousness based on historical and current experiences. Outsiders attempting to affect social change must value such experience and allow the community to define important issues to be addressed. The voice of Palestinians continues to be muted within the major institutions of Canadian society such as government and media.

Within the discourse of human rights, equality, power, and self-determination are the guiding principles (United Nations, 1948). This means that all people should be seen as capable of defining their own experiences and should possess the power and legitimacy to define and implement their own ideas and strategies for social change. Arnstein (1969) suggests that citizen participation is, “the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future” (p. 216). This suggests that the goal of community work targeted at promoting the human rights of Palestinians should locate power and control within the hands of the disenfranchised community, the Palestinians. In order to value the principles of equality, power, and self-determination, citizen control and participation in community development efforts is crucial.

In response to areas highlighted above, community social work has much to bring to the work of International Human Rights Organizations. Areas of community practice that would be of most interest include a focus on models of citizen participation. A strong example of this is the *Ladder of Participation* (Appendix F) developed by

Arnstein (1969). Arnstein's ladder includes eight categories of community participation that range from manipulation to citizen control which, based on the interviews from this study, may be useful for IHR organization to consider as they move forward in their work. Arnstein (1969) suggests that in order for community development work to be participatory, and congruent with the principle of self-determination in human rights discourses, the direction, decision-making, and evaluation of efforts must come from the affected community. Based on my literature review and interviews with individuals engaged in human rights work, I suggest that organizations can be positioned along a continuum of Palestinian participation in human rights practices. As illustrated in Figure 1, these practices advance from aid to building reciprocal working relationships and collaborating with local Palestinian and Israeli organizations.

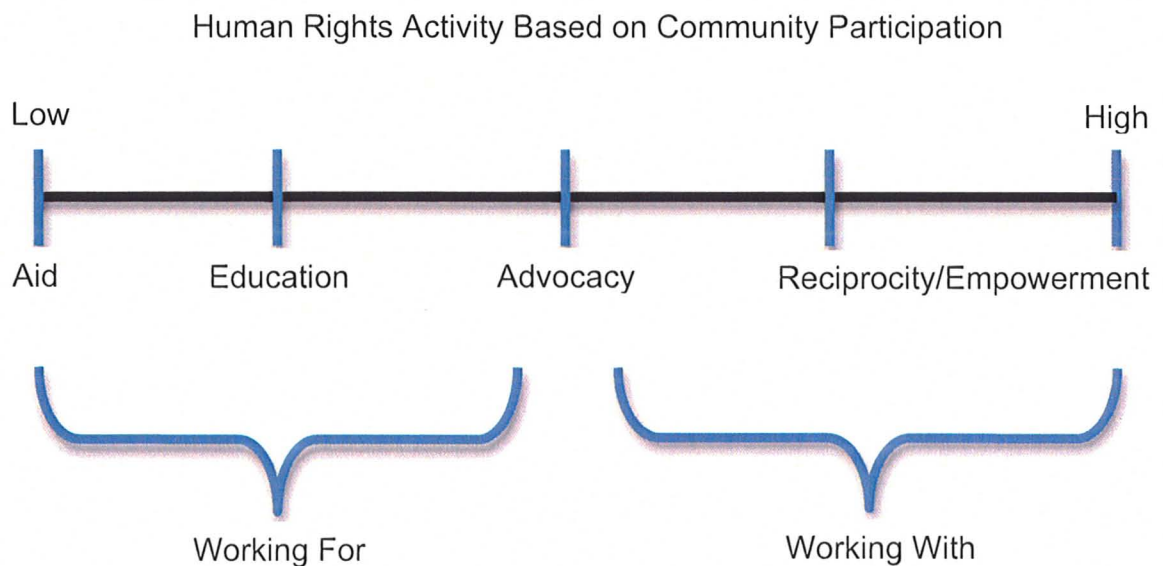


Figure 1: Community Participation in International Human Rights Organizations

Based on this model, aid appears at the lowest end of the continuum. Aid describes both material and human resources. Some organizations use funds raised in Canada to contribute resources to both Israeli and Palestinian organizations in the Middle East. Though this appears to promote human rights through the increased availability of important resources, minimal interaction is actually occurring within organizations and populations in Israel/Palestine. The people receiving the aid are not being empowered or learning new skills to fight their own battles. Based on the interviews conducted for this study, the human rights organizations are not in communication with the Palestinian population in the Middle East when determining what aid resources to collect and disseminate. Additionally, Canadian human rights organizations do not base their evaluation on the perceptions of Palestinians who are actually receiving aid. Measures of effectiveness are based on how much aid is actually collected. This raises the question of how effective aid actually is from the perspective of Palestinians. Further research is necessary to obtain this feedback. Power lies in the hands of the organizations. It is not being transferred to the Palestinian population. This is not consistent with the human rights paradigm, which argues that decision-making power should be held by the community itself.

Education also appears at the lower end of the continuum. In the Canadian context, education involves raising awareness of the Canadian population. The information being disseminated to the Canadian population by all of these human rights organizations centres on what is going on in Israel/Palestine, feeding the dyadic

relationship between us and them. Palestinian populations are not consulted about what issues should be taught or how. At this level, there is little power afforded to the Palestinians. Current practices of human rights activity directed at educating the Canadian population do not involve the participation of the Palestinian community and, as such, “their real objective is not to enable people to participate in planning or conducting programs, but to enable power-holders to educate or cure the participants” (Arnstein, 1969: p. 217). On the other hand, if the target population is the Canadian community, and it is Canadian human rights organizations that are involved in the education of that population, work should focus on how the international conflict is affecting Canadians. Specifically, it should focus on how this conflict is influencing local politics and social practices.

Advocacy appears in the mid-level of human rights activity and occurs at both the local and international level. However, the focus of advocacy is on social change in Israel/Palestine. For those advocating within the Canadian context, the power to affect change is limited by geography, and more importantly, by a lack of international political influence. For advocacy to be truly participatory, the Palestinian population must be involved in determining what issues that need to be addressed and how to go about advocating within the Israeli/Palestinian context. As Canadians, power comes from democratic citizenship. Consistent with human rights discourses and Arnstein’s model of participation, the community development strategies promoting Palestinian human rights in Canada that do not take their directives from Palestinian populations, should focus on changes in Canadian communities.

Empowerment and reciprocity have high levels of citizen participation, yet the participants' view of the current work of International Human Rights Organizations they are working with is that this area of community practice is lacking. This was evident in the lack of collaboration and engagement with Palestinian communities as discussed by research participants. This suggests that local International Human Rights Organizations should consider developing reciprocal relationships with the Palestinian community. Reciprocity involves working in direct collaboration with Palestinians and Israelis to engage in social change activities to promote human rights. Direct involvement and participation leads to the advancement of skills and knowledge for both populations. The goal of empowerment is to leave the community in control of its own decision making. Empowerment enables affected local populations on both Israel and Palestinian lands to develop tools and strategies to achieve social change themselves. Empowerment and reciprocity contribute to sustainable advancement of human rights. To achieve substantial participation by Palestinians, organizations must recognize Palestinians as decision makers and leaders. Arnstein (1969) suggests that citizen control is at the highest level of community participation. In this scenario, Palestinians, "govern programs and institutions, [are] in full charge of [organizational] policies and managerial aspects, and are in control of how outsiders are able to influence change in organizational policy and practices" (p. 223). Empowerment and reciprocity can assist in the redistribution of power. Through citizen control, the value of self-determination is realized and Palestinians can ensure that community needs are being addressed in

culturally relevant and meaningful ways. Further research is needed to ascertain best practices for engaging Palestinians at the high level of the participation continuum.

In examining how Canadians are implicated in and affected by the international conflict, the focus for change becomes Canadian social and political practices. Education, advocacy, and empowerment of the Canadian public to create social change in Canada are more likely to be successful. Because Canadians have rights as citizens to dissent and protest injustices in their own communities, it is crucial to consider how the violations of Palestinian human rights are interwoven in Canadian foreign and domestic policy and social practices.

Implications

These findings have implications for social work and community development practice when working in International Human Rights Organizations. Research participants suggest that current practices of Canadian-based International Human Rights Organizations have limited connections and communications with the community in which they claim to represent. Until these lines of communication and interaction become strengthened, human rights activities may not be truly reflective of the needs and ideas in Israel/Palestine.

In Canada, social workers and International Human Rights Organizations engaged in the promotion of Palestinian human rights have struggled to achieve even minimal social change in Israel/Palestine. On the other hand, by focusing their energies on what they could potentially influence within Canada, these organizations could harness their

power as citizens of a democratic nation. By focusing on the Canadian context, International Human Rights Organizations have more power to create local change. Ideally, the changes in Canada will then lead to changes in Israel and the Occupied Territories of Palestine.

Further research is needed to address the implications of glocalization for Palestinian communities and determine connections between social change in Canada and social change abroad.

Summary

Canadian International Human Rights Organizations involved in this study suggest that the core value of their work is Palestinian self-determination. However, organizations that do not communicate with Palestinian communities in the development of policy, programs and evaluation strategies are not creating space for Palestinian self-determination to be realized. There is a need for increased communication and collaboration with Palestinian and Israeli organizations before meaningful participation to be achieved.

Individuals working within International Human Rights Organizations are motivated by their own personal views of social justice and feel a sense of connectedness to the Palestinian communities affected by the occupation. Efforts to raise awareness and promote citizen involvement in Canada need to be relevant to the Canadian public. Participants suggest that this can be achieved by re-focusing activities to incorporate how Canadian society is implicated in and affected by the international issue.

Glocalization of human rights activity is one way of addressing these issues. Research participants suggest that social change will be more successful if issues affecting Canadian communities are addressed. By thinking globally and acting locally, organizations will be able to use their power within Canadian society to influence Canadian social and political practices related to the violations of Palestinian human rights occurring as a result of the Israeli occupation. It has been posited by participants that the political climate overseas is sustained largely because of support from Western nations such as Canada and the United States. Therefore, changes in Canadian practices will have consequences for social and political practices of Israelis and Palestinians.

Concluding Remarks

The human rights movement continues to promote and advance the human rights of individuals all over the world. International Human Rights Organizations have an important role to play in the global normalization of human rights principles. International Human Rights Organizations and their members are constantly exploring and developing new strategies to be most effective in their work. This thesis is my contribution to that exploration.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Review of Websites of International Human Rights Organizations

- Israeli Committee Against Housing Demolitions (www.icahd.org)
- Jews for a Just Peace (www.jewsforajustpeace.com)
- Canadian Friends of Peace Now (www.peacenowcanada.org)
- Peace Now USA (www.peacenow.org)
- New Israel Fund of Canada (www.nif.org)
- Salaam Canada (www.salaamcanada.org)
- Meretz USA (www.meretzusa.org)
- Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (www.cjpme.org)
- International Solidarity Movement (www.palsolidarity.org)
- B'Tselem (www.btselem.org)
- American's For Middle East Understanding (www.ameu.org)
- Tikkun Community Toronto (www.tikkuntoronto.com)
- Jewish Voice for Peace (www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org)
- Palestinian and Jewish Unity (www.pajumontreal.org)
- Peace in the Middle East (www.fmep.org)
- Tadamon! (www.tadamon.ca)
- Alliance of Concerned Jewish Canadians (www.jewsforajustpeace.com)
- Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (www.sphr.org)
- Al-Awda: A Palestinian Right to Return Coalition (www.al-awda.org)
- Canadian Peace Congress (www.canadianpeaceconference.ca)
- Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid (www.caiaweb.org)
- Human Concern International (www.humanconcern.org)
- Mississauga Coalition for Peace and Justice (www.cpcml.ca)
- No One is Illegal (www.toronto.nooneisillegal.org)
- Toronto Coalition to Stop the War (www.nowar.ca)
- Women Against Occupation (www.nonprofitnet.ca/wao)
- Resistance Art(www.resistanceart.com)
- Canadian International Peace Project (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Canadian-International-Peace-Project/136854813000554>)

Appendix B: Letter of Invitation



Contact Name
Community Organization Name
Address

**RE: Supporting Human Rights in Israel and the Occupied Territories of Palestine:
An International Social Justice Response**

Date

Dear _____

My name is Keri Okanik. I am a Masters Candidate in the School of Social Work at McMaster University. As part of the Master of Social Work and Social Policy Analysis Program at McMaster University, I am conducting interviews to understand how international social justice organizations work towards supporting peace through the promotion of human rights in Israel and the Occupied Territories of Palestine. I have selected your organization based on online research of international social justice organizations, including your organization's website.

I am interested in speaking to you with regards to your organizational mandate, research/education/training, the types of activities engaged in to promote human rights, and how your organization engages in evaluation of interventions/supports. In the event that you are unable to participate in the interview, I would like to extend the invitation to personnel from your organization. Interviews will last approximately 45 to 60 minutes.

If you cannot do the interview personally, I have prepared an alternative letter of invitation. I would greatly appreciate that you circulate the invitation to participate in this research to all employees of your organization. Please note that staff will not be acting as

representatives of your organization, but rather as members of the human rights social movement.

The interview will focus on the following four themes:

- 1) How your organization understands the concept of social justice;
- 2) How your organization identifies accurate information about historical and current developments in the Israeli/Palestinian peace movement;
- 3) The ways that your organization engages in social work activities aimed at promoting the Israeli/Palestinian human rights movement;
- 4) How your organization evaluates its work, both locally and internationally.

It is expected that this study will not pose any risks to you and you can withdraw at any time. I have attached a copy of a letter of information about the study that provides full details. This study has been reviewed and approved by the McMaster Research Ethics Board. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study the study is conducted you may contact:

McMaster Research Ethics Board Secretariat
Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142
c/o Office of Research Services
E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

Participation in the interview is voluntary and all information obtained will be treated as confidential. Neither the interviewee's name nor the name of the organization will be identified in any report on the findings of this project. It will be up to each participant to contact me directly through email, and the choice of whether to participate will be treated as confidential. I hope that you will be able to assist me in promoting this study through your organization and help me to recruit a participant to interview.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Keri Okanik, BA/BSW, MSW Candidate
McMaster University
School of Social Work
Hamilton, ON
okanikk@mcmaster.ca

Appendix C: Interview Guide

Supporting Human Rights in Israel and the Occupied Territories of Palestine: An International Social Justice Response

Introduction

My name is Keri Okanik. I am a student enrolled in the Master of Social Work program at McMaster University in Canada. I am currently working on my thesis. Data collected from this interview will provide me with enhanced understanding and insights about how international social justice organizations support the peace process in Israel and Palestine. I am interested in examining the advocacy and aid strategies that support the movement towards peace.

I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. As we proceed with the interview, you may choose not to respond to a question(s). You also have the right to withdraw from this study at any point in time prior to the publication of my thesis. In the event that you choose to withdraw, any data collected from you will be destroyed and not used for any purpose.

Question Guide

Personal Information

- 1) What is your name?
- 2) What is the name of your organization?
- 3) What is your position within the organization?
- 4) How long have you been involved with this organization?
- 5) What motivated you to become involved? Can you tell me why participation within this organization interests you?

Organizational Information

- 6) How does your organization define social justice?
- 7) Can you tell me briefly what the mandate of your organization is?
- 8) Is there a specific theoretical framework that your organization has adopted to guide its work?
- 9) Does your organization work with individuals, institutions or other organizations, or at a broad base policy level?

- 10) How would you describe your role within the organization? What are your primary functions?
- 11) What types of programs/supports/interventions are offered through the organization? How are best practices for support/intervention identified?
- 12) How are needs in Israel and Palestine identified by your organization?
 - a. How do you ensure that these are consistent with the needs identified by the people experiencing the conflict in Israel and Palestine?
- 13) What do you consider to be the most important skills for employees/volunteers involved in this type of work?
- 14) What type of training/education is available to develop these skills?
- 15) Is collaboration among organizations encouraged? If yes, how does collaboration happen? Locally? Internationally?
- 16) How does the organization recruit/encourage others to become involved?
- 17) What resources are available to support organizations like yours?
- 18) How does your organization measure the effectiveness of their work?
- 19) What are the benefits of involvement for you?
- 20) How do you think others benefit from the work of your organization?
- 21) What plans relating to this issue do you have for support, advocacy or policy change over the next three years?

Appendix D: Letter of Information and Informed Consent

Letter of Information and Consent Form



Supporting Human Rights in Israel and the Occupied Territories of Palestine: An International Social Justice Response

About the Researcher

The researcher is a student enrolled in the Master of Social Work program at McMaster University in Canada, pursuing the policy stream.

About This Project

The purpose of this study is to explore how international social justice organizations, operating in Canada and the United States, support the Israeli/Palestinian peace movement through the promotion of human rights in the Occupied Territories of Palestine. Through this study I hope to:

- 1) Increase my understanding about the involvement of international social justice organizations in promoting the Israeli/Palestinian peace movement, whose mission statement reflects a commitment to addressing social justice issues between Israel and Palestine.
- 2) Contribute to a growing body of literature surrounding international support/intervention with regards to the Israel/Palestine peace process.

I am interested in exploring how international organizations become informed about the conflict and developing issues, as well as the advocacy, direct intervention, and support strategies they participate in in their commitment to addressing issues related to promoting peace and human rights with Israelis and Palestinians.

I would like to invite you to participate in this research. In the event that a director or chair of an organization cannot do the interview, it will be requested that the invitation to

participate be shared with all appropriate employees from the organization, being interview as a representative of the organization.

Participant's Role

Individuals are invited to share information about their organization's policies, strategies and actions relating to supporting the peace process through the promotion of human rights. Participants will be asked to engage in one face-to-face interview lasting approximately 45-60 minutes depending on the participants' availability. Interviews will cover specific themes, but will remain open-ended. Themes addressed in the interview will include: goals of the organization, types of change-oriented activities in which the organization is engaged, recommendations for organizational policy, procedures and design, as well as intervention/support evaluation. Interviews will be approximately 45 to 60 minutes in length, depending on the availability of the participants. Our interview will take place in a mutually agreed upon location.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time prior to the publication of the finished report. In the event of participant withdrawal, all information obtained through that participant will be shredded and no longer used in the research project. A participant's choice to withdraw from the study will be treated as confidential.

With permission of the participants, I will audio-record the interview.

Confidentiality

The only person that will have access to the recording and transcript of this interview is the researcher, Keri Okanik. The information you share during this interview will be kept confidential, and will be used to identify themes and issues about the social justice policies and practices that guide the work of international organizations in supporting the Israeli/Palestinian peace movement. I will make every effort to remove identifying information so that neither you, nor your organization can be recognized in my report. However, because of the small number of individuals and organizations involved, it is possible that someone else working in this area might guess your identity based on the nature of your remarks. This should be kept in mind when decided what to reveal during the interview.

Your identity and contact information will not be linked with the interview data. The recording of the interview will be copied into a locked folder on my computer, and subsequently erased from the audio-recorder. Only I will have the password to access the interviews. Transcripts of the interviews will be stored by the principle investigator, Keri Okanik, in a password-protected computer folder.

If a participant chooses to withdraw, all information collected from that participant will be destroyed and not used in this or any other research. Participants will be asked to contact me directly, and their choice of whether or not to participate in the study will not be shared with the organization.

Risks and Benefits

I do not anticipate any physical or psychological risks to the research participants. However, minimal social risks may be associated with participation in this study given that the community which participants will be recruited from is quite small and participants may know each other. In order to minimize this risk, all participant information will be kept confidential. Interviews will be conducted at a location that is convenient and identified as safe by each participant. It is important to note that not everyone is supportive of the peace process and it is possible that your organization may choose to keep specific operational details of the work of your organization confidential.

There are no direct benefits to participants involved in this study. While you may not benefit directly from this study, the information you share may assist educators and policy-makers to better understand current practices of international social justice organizations in supporting peace and promoting human rights in Israel/Palestine.

Participants will have the opportunity to review their interview transcripts and request the removal of any information and request the removal of information that they feel may be identifiable or pose a security risk.

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this research or if you are interested in participating, please contact:

Keri Okanik

okanikk@mcmaster.ca

My faculty supervisor, Dr. Greene, can be reached at:

greenes@mcmaster.ca

The results of this research will be available in 2011. You may contact the researcher for a copy of the thesis. As well, an Executive Summary of findings will be available to participants of this research and their organizations.

Your Rights as Participants

If you have any questions, or want more information about this study, please contact Keri Okanik (see my contact information above).

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance from the McMaster Research Ethics Board. If you have concerns about the way this study has been conducted, please contact:

McMaster Research Ethics Board Secretariat
 Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142
 c/o Office of Research Services
 E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

Consent Form

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study being done by Keri Okanik of McMaster University. I have had a chance to ask questions about being part of this study, in addition to receiving information about the study. I understand that I can choose to withdraw from the study at any time.

I agree to take part in this study. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Name/Signature of Participant

Date

I agree to have my interview audio-recorded and transcribed, and understand that I will have the opportunity to review my interview transcripts and request information be removed and not used in the study.

Name/Signature of Participant

Date

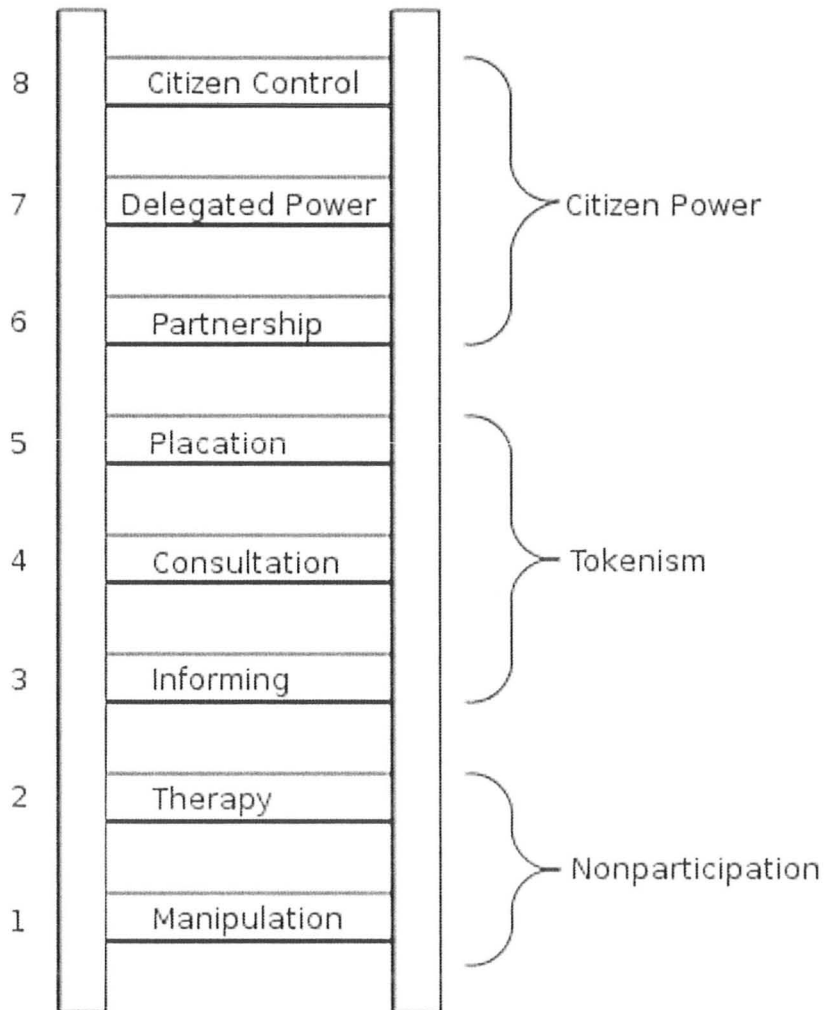
Name/Signature of Researcher

Date

Appendix E: McMaster University Ethics Board Certificate of Ethics Clearance to Involve Human Participants in Research

 <p style="font-size: small;">Inspiring Innovation and Discovery</p>	<p>McMaster University Research Ethics Board (MREB)</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">c/o Office of Research Services, MREB Secretariat, GH-305/H, e-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca</p> <p>CERTIFICATE OF ETHICS CLEARANCE TO INVOLVE HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH</p>		
<p>Application Status: New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Addendum <input type="checkbox"/> Project Number: 2010 081</p>			
<p>TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Supporting Peace in Israel and the Occupied Territories of Palestine: An International Social Justice Response</p>			
Faculty Investigator (s)/ Supervisor(s)	Dept./Address	Phone	E-Mail
S. Greene	Social Work		greenes@mcmaster.ca
Student Investigator(s)	Dept./Address	Phone	E-Mail
K. Okanik	Social Work	905-971-8551	okanikk@mcmaster.ca
<p>The application in support of the above research project has been reviewed by the MREB to ensure compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the McMaster University Policies and Guidelines for Research Involving Human Participants. The following ethics certification is provided by the MREB:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The application protocol is approved as presented without questions or requests for modification.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The application protocol is approved as revised without questions or requests for modification.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The application protocol is approved subject to clarification and/or modification as appended or identified below:</p>			
<p>COMMENTS AND CONDITIONS: Ongoing approval is contingent on completing the annual completed/status report. A "Change Request" or amendment must be made and approved before any alterations are made to the research.</p>			
Reporting Frequency:		Annual: Jul-12-2011	Other:
<p>Date: Jul-12-2010 Chair, Dr. R. Storey / Vice-Chairs, Dr. Tina Moffat & Dr. Bruce Milliken:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>[Handwritten Signature]</i></p>			

Appendix F: Arnstein's Ladder of Participation



Source: Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *AIP Journal*, 35(4), 216-224.