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A Rhetorical Frame Analysis of Palestinian-Led Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) Movement Discourse

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**A RHETORICAL FRAME ANALYSIS OF PALESTINIAN-LED
BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT, SANCTIONS (BDS) MOVEMENT
DISCOURSE**

by

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B.A. May 1999, Virginia Tech
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ABSTRACT

A RHETORICAL FRAME ANALYSIS OF PALESTINIAN-LED BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT, SANCTIONS (BDS) MOVEMENT DISCOURSE

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Old Dominion University, 2020
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This rhetorical frame analysis uses a combination of rhetorical theory and frame analysis to examine the rhetorical framing strategies of the Palestinian-led boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement. This project investigates how both official and vernacular BDS activist-rhetors frame the movement and their goals, how they frame their responses to evolving rhetorical situations and challenges, how they tailor these frames for different audiences, and how resonant these frames are likely to be for targeted audiences. The results of this study suggest that BDS activist-rhetors typically frame the BDS movement as a nonviolent movement to achieve Palestinian rights and hold Israel accountable for an ongoing system of oppression, discrimination, and settler colonialism against Palestinians. This framing relies on the values of justice, freedom, equality, joint struggle, and individual and collective agency—values that strongly overlap with social and racial justice activist discourses that focus on intersectionality and justice for marginalized and oppressed peoples. Thus, these framing strategies likely resonate most strongly with audiences comprised of networks of social and racial justice activists, especially black American activists and other activists of color in the US, and to a significant degree with younger liberal and leftist Americans, including many young Jewish American racial justice activists. In response to the shifting rhetorical situations and challenges they face, including sensitivity to antisemitism, BDS activists regularly denounce antisemitism, emphasize Jewish support for the BDS movement, and draw comparisons to other familiar

struggles for justice and liberation. BDS activists emphasize certain frames for particular audiences while maintaining a strong consistency in overall framing strategies between Palestinian official BDS discourse and the more vernacular student-generated discourse of US college activists. To address common critiques of the movement and expand support for BDS, BDS activist-rhetors could express more empathy with Jewish fears of antisemitism and clarify some BDS goals and demands, both of which could help wider audiences transcend the affective rhetorical obstacles and predictable uptakes to promote more productive discussions about Palestinian rights and help achieve a more just and sustainable resolution to this intractable conflict.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my husband and children who supported me throughout my years-long work on this project. I also want to dedicate this project to all of the Palestinian, Israeli, American, and transnational activists who continue to struggle for justice and peace in Palestine/Israel and around the world.

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NOMENCLATURE

The following acronyms for various terms and activist organizations are used repeatedly throughout this dissertation:

ACLU = American Civil Liberties Union

AIPAC = American Israel Public Affairs Committee

AMP = American Muslims for Palestine

ATL = All That's Left: Anti-Occupation Collective

BDS = Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions

BNC = Palestinian BDS National Committee

CJNV = Center for Jewish Nonviolence

IAW = Israeli Apartheid Week

IDF = Israeli Defense Forces

IHRA = International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance

INN = IfNotNow

ISM = International Solidarity Movement

JFREJ = Jews for Racial & Economic Justice

JVP = Jewish Voice for Peace

PACBI = Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel

PSC = Palestinian Solidarity Campaign UK

SJP = Students for Justice in Palestine

SAIA = Students Against Israeli Apartheid (at George Mason University)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Chapter | Page |
|---|------|
| I. INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| SITUATING MYSELF | 2 |
| BRIEF HISTORY OF PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE AND ISRAELI RESPONSES | 5 |
| THE 2005 BDS CALL..... | 7 |
| RISKS OF SUPPORTING BDS AND PALESTINIAN RIGHTS | 10 |
| RESEARCH STATEMENT: LOOKING AT BDS DISCOURSE THROUGH A RHETORICAL LENS | 13 |
| FRAMING PALESTINE/ISRAEL | 16 |
| CHAPTER DESCRIPTIONS | 24 |
| II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS FOR UNDERSTANDING PALESTINE/ISRAEL DISCOURSE AND THE BDS MOVEMENT | 27 |
| RHETORICAL SCHOLARSHIP ON PALESTINE/ISRAEL AND THE BDS MOVEMENT..... | 30 |
| POSTCOLONIAL THEORY AND PALESTINE/ISRAEL..... | 35 |
| INTERDISCIPLINARY SCHOLARSHIP ON THE BDS MOVEMENT AND PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE..... | 43 |
| SOCIAL MOVEMENT STUDIES AND MOVEMENT RHETORICS..... | 53 |
| RESEARCH ON PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE, SOLIDARITY, AND BDS MOVEMENT DISCOURSE | 57 |
| CONCLUSION..... | 63 |
| III. METHODOLOGY | 65 |
| WHY FRAME ANALYSIS?..... | 66 |
| SELECTING CORPORA OF TEXTS: BOTH OFFICIAL AND VERNACULAR | 72 |
| DEVELOPING AN INTERDISCIPLINARY HEURISTIC FOR CODING..... | 77 |
| RHETORICAL SITUATION AND ECOLOGY | 79 |
| IDENTIFYING FRAMES | 85 |
| MASTER FRAMES VS. PRIMARY, ISSUE, AND COLLECTIVE ACTION FRAMES | 87 |
| ETHOS AND CREDIBILITY OF FRAMES..... | 90 |
| HOW FRAMES REVEAL BELIEFS, VALUES, ASSUMPTIONS, AND IDEOLOGY | 91 |
| BURKEAN IDENTIFICATION | 92 |
| COUNTERFRAMING | 94 |
| ROLE ANALYSIS | 95 |
| FITNESS AND RESONANCE | 96 |

| Chapter | Page |
|---|------|
| EMOTIONAL APPEALS | 98 |
| CODING EXAMPLE | 100 |
| CODING PROCESS | 103 |
| CONCLUSION | 108 |
| IV. RHETORICAL FRAME ANALYSIS OF OFFICIAL PRO-BDS TEXTS | 110 |
| RHETORICAL SITUATIONS AND ECOLOGIES FOR OFFICIAL BDS MOVEMENT DISCOURSE | 111 |
| OFFICIAL BNC STATEMENTS | 112 |
| THE 2005 BDS CALL | 112 |
| FRAMING STRATEGIES IN THE 2005 BDS CALL | 122 |
| 2017 BNC STATEMENT AGAINST RACISM | 141 |
| USE OF EMOTIONAL APPEALS FOR GAZA | 148 |
| STATEMENTS FROM BDS MOVEMENT CO-FOUNDER OMAR BARGHOUTI | 153 |
| RHETORICAL SITUATION AND ECOLOGY FOR BARGHOUTI TEXTS | 155 |
| <i>BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT, SANCTIONS: THE GLOBAL STRUGGLE FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS</i> | 157 |
| “THE BDS MOVEMENT EXPLAINED” | 163 |
| CONCLUSION | 169 |
| V. RHETORICAL FRAME ANALYSIS OF VERNACULAR STUDENT PRO-BDS TEXTS | 172 |
| RHETORICAL SITUATION AND ECOLOGY FOR VERNACULAR TEXTS | 173 |
| THE APARTHEID FRAME AND SOUTH AFRICA ANALOGY | 178 |
| INTERSECTIONALITY AND JOINT STRUGGLE | 186 |
| SETTLER COLONIALISM, ETHNIC CLEANSING, AND REFUGEE RIGHTS | 193 |
| JEWISH SOLIDARITY, ANTI-ZIONISM, AND ANTISEMITISM | 197 |
| EMOTIONAL APPEALS IN PRO-BDS DISCOURSE | 205 |
| BDS AND AGENCY | 209 |
| QUANTITATIVE TEXTUAL ANALYSIS | 210 |
| CONCLUSION | 211 |
| VI. CONCLUSIONS | 216 |
| OVERVIEW OF RHETORICAL FRAME ANALYSIS RESULTS | 216 |
| BDS FRAMING RESONANCE WITH AUDIENCES | 220 |
| LIMITATIONS ON PRO-BDS FRAME RESONANCE | 231 |
| THE ROLE OF TRANSFERENCE, BELATEDNESS, AND AFFECT | 236 |
| WAYS BDS DISCOURSE COULD BECOME MORE RESONANT WITH A WIDER AUDIENCE | 239 |
| WHAT NEXT FOR BDS? | 250 |

| Chapter | Page |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| APPLICATIONS FOR THIS RESEARCH | 253 |
| WORKS CITED | 257 |
| APPENDIX..... | 325 |
| VITA..... | 343 |

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“BDS will unavoidably contribute to the global social movement’s challenge to neoliberal Western hegemony and the tyrannical rule of multi/transnational corporations. In that sense, the Palestinian boycott against Israel and its partners in crime becomes a small but critical part in an international struggle to counter injustice, racism, poverty, environmental devastation, and gender oppression, among other social and economic ills.”

—Omar Barghouti, *Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions: The Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights* (58-59).

“The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement (BDS) is a global campaign against Israel. It is the newest weapon in the ongoing effort to eliminate Israel and deny the Jewish people their right to self-determination. BDS brands itself as a progressive human rights movement, but nothing could be further from the truth. In reality, BDS undermines hopes for peace, justice, and human rights in the region. . . BDS is bigoted. It calls for the elimination of Israel and the violation of Jewish rights.”

—StandWithUs, “Fact Sheet: BDS Movement”

“The trouble is that once you see it, you can't unsee it. And once you've seen it, keeping quiet, saying nothing, becomes as political an act as speaking out. There is no innocence. Either way, you're accountable.”

—Arundhati Roy, *Power Politics* (7).

While many Americans mistakenly believe that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an ancient religious feud dating back thousands of years, others assume the Zionist project to create a Jewish state in Palestine only began in the wake of the Nazi Holocaust. The reality is that tensions in the region between Jewish Zionist immigrants and indigenous Palestinian Arabs arose in the early twentieth century as Zionist immigration to Palestine swelled in the wake of increasing antisemitic persecution in Europe. Inspired by other nationalist movements of the late nineteenth century, European Jewish Zionists sought to solve the problem of antisemitic discrimination and violence by establishing a Jewish state in Palestine (Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*; Morris). In order to secure a Jewish homeland in Palestine, Zionist immigrants and

militias, and later the Israeli government and military forces, have sought to acquire as much of the land of Palestine as possible while limiting the number of Palestinians even though Palestinian Arabs had inhabited the land for many generations, leading to ongoing repression of the Palestinian population (Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*; Morris; Makdisi; Pappé, *The Ethnic*). Since before the founding of Israel, Palestinians have resisted their dispossession and oppression. This resistance, like the resistance of other colonized and occupied peoples, has taken the form of both violent and nonviolent methods, including armed resistance, terrorism, and nonviolent strikes, boycotts, marches, and many other forms of protest (Pearlman; Sharp; Mishal and Aharoni). While Jewish Zionists have succeeded in establishing Israel as a Jewish-majority state, Palestinians remain stateless and occupied. In recent years, Palestinians have sought international support and solidarity for their cause through boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) targeting Israel. As this growing nonviolent movement has gained support, it has also faced harsh criticism from supporters of Israel.

Situating Myself

In the interest of transparency and to situate myself as a scholar of this topic to which I bring my own experiences and biases, it may be helpful for me to reveal how and why I began studying discourse relating to the contentious Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I have no direct familial, ethnic, or religious ties to the region, which means that while some people may question my interest in this issue, I also have the privilege of not having people automatically assume I am biased because of ethnic ties. Like most Americans, I first learned about the situation in Israel and Palestine through a combination of cultural and familial sources through which I absorbed a common and overly simplistic view of Israel as having been created after the Holocaust to provide a home for Jewish refugees who had nowhere else to go after the end of WWII. I was

also raised in a very conservative Christian Zionist household in which my parents presented the idea of Jewish return to Israel as being biblically ordained and prophesied, and I have several family members who are staunch supporters of Israel and represent a right-wing Christian Zionist perspective¹. As I discovered through later research, however, none of these limited perspectives account for the full history of Zionism or the Palestinians.

As an undergraduate student, I studied the rise of Nazism in Germany and the Holocaust, and since then, I have also studied antisemitic discourse and the history of antisemitic violence and Jewish persecution. This knowledge, along with my parental and cultural education, gave me an interest in and sympathy with the Zionist project to create a safe-haven for persecuted diaspora Jews. Studying the Holocaust in depth also sparked my concern for human rights around the world. The more I studied the history of Palestine/Israel² and Orientalist and Islamophobic discourses, however, the more I also came to understand the extent to which the Zionist project to create a Jewish state has also prevented and impeded Palestinians from achieving human rights and self-determination—a reality often obscured in mainstream Western and US discourse on the subject.

In 2009, to pursue my interest in the subject and take concrete action to support “peace,” I visited parts of Israel and the West Bank to produce a documentary about Israeli and

¹ Christian Zionists have come to exert greater dominance over US policy toward Israel in recent decades, especially under Republican leaders, which has been reflected in President Trump’s decision to officially recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital without precondition and relocate the US embassy. Christian Zionists tend to view events in the region through a lens of biblical interpretation of end-times prophecy and believe that God gave the land to the Jewish people, whose gathering in the biblical land of Israel is a prerequisite for the end times and the return of the Messiah.

² Throughout this dissertation, I usually use the term “Palestine/Israel” to refer to the area between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River, including both the state of Israel inside the Green Line and the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. I have chosen to use this particular term listing “Palestine” first because “Palestine” was the earlier name for this entire area during the British Mandate period, while “Israel” became the name of the area within the current state of Israel after 1948. I also use this joint term to avoid preferencing one historical narrative over the other.

Palestinian nonviolent activism against the ongoing Israeli Occupation, titled *Dreams Deferred: The Struggle for Peace and Justice in Israel and Palestine* (2011). It was during this first-hand experience that I was struck by the stark differences between what I witnessed there and the common narrative and framing presented about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in most mainstream US news media sources. Even extensive reading about the Israeli Occupation and unarmed Palestinian popular resistance to the West Bank separation barrier left me unprepared for the harsh realities I observed in the West Bank: checkpoints, sniper towers, 25-ft walls, ubiquitous settlements, aggressive Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers and Border Police, all-day curfews imposed on Palestinian villages, and the violent repression of unarmed Palestinian and international solidarity activists. Witnessing Israel's military occupation of the West Bank and getting to know many Israeli and Palestinian peace and justice activists not only challenged my prior liberal Zionist perspective but also increased my interest in the discourses about the situation, including the rhetoric of the growing transnational Palestinian-led Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement.

I noticed that even though the Palestinian-led BDS movement advocates the same nonviolent tactics and universal principles of human rights that were the focus of the South African anti-apartheid movement, the movement often gets labeled as threatening and antisemitic in a way that is distinct from other human and civil rights movements. I wanted to discover why pro-BDS activists have faced so many unique rhetorical constraints and obstacles in their quest to raise awareness about Palestinian oppression and pressure the Israeli government to change its discriminatory and repressive policies. I also sought to find out how BDS activists have tried to navigate this challenging and evolving rhetorical situation and ecology and to determine when and how they may have been successful and unsuccessful.

Brief History of Palestinian Resistance and Israeli Responses

The inevitable path to conflict in the region emerged after Britain, the colonial power that gained control of Palestine after WWI, promised a “Jewish home” in Palestine to the growing European Zionist settler movement with the 1917 Balfour Declaration (Harms and Ferry 67-71; Morris 73-82, 88-151; Avishai 141-142; Pappé, *The Ethnic* 13-17). After decades of increasing conflict, the 1947 UN Partition plan allotted the majority of the land of Mandatory Palestine to a Jewish state, at which point Zionist forces began forcibly expelling and encouraging Palestinians to flee in order to strengthen the fragile Jewish majority and establish and maintain a Jewish state. By the time Israel declared independence in 1948 after defeating the combined armies of the neighboring Arab states and taking possession of 78% of Palestine, the percentage of Palestinians residing within Israel declined from approximately 45% of the population to only 15% of the population of the new Jewish State (Harms and Ferry 94-102; Morris 184, 222-259). Even after the 1949 armistice, Israel prevented Palestinians from returning to their homes and denied them compensation for lost properties (Harms and Ferry 100-102; Morris 269-281; Pappé, *The Ethnic* 187-190). Palestinians living within Israel remained under martial law until 1966, and the majority of Palestinian refugees and residents of the West Bank and Gaza became subject to Israeli military occupation following the 1967 War (Berger; Harms and Ferry 112; Laron; Morris 336-343; Munayyer; Thrall, *The Only Language* 88). While Palestinians living in Israel have enjoyed greater freedoms and most basic rights when compared to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, many Israeli laws and policies—both *de facto* and *de jure*—still privilege Jewish Israelis in land rights, government funding, marriage laws, and immigration policies, etc. (Berger; “Discrimination”; Makdisi; Munayyer). This situation has only gotten worse for Palestinian citizens of Israel since the passage of the 2018 “Nation-State Bill” in the Israeli

Knesset (i.e., their parliament) that encourages continued Jewish settlement and reserves the right to self-determination in Israel for Jews only (Green, Emma, “Israel’s Nation-State Law”). For those living under military occupation in the West Bank and Gaza, Israel restricts Palestinians’ freedom of speech and protest, denies them the ability to travel, routinely confiscates Palestinian lands (for the construction of the separation barrier or for “security” reasons); and in the West Bank, Israel imposes checkpoints, curfews, administrative detentions without trial, night raids, home demolitions, etc. (Thrall, “BDS”; Makdisi). Israeli forces have also harshly repressed Palestinian protests and uprisings in both the West Bank and Gaza, and the Israeli government has worked with Egypt to impose a blockade on most travel and goods going in and out of Gaza since 2007³ (“Israel: 50”; Thrall, “BDS”). Israel has continued to justify all of these policies as necessary for Israeli “security” and the long-term maintenance of a Jewish demographic majority (“Israel: 50”; Morris 329-331).

Though most Arab and Muslim leaders in the region have opposed Israel’s ongoing oppression of Palestinians and denial of their basic rights (going back to their opposition to the 1947 UN partition plan and the establishment of Israel), most Western countries have supported Israel throughout the years, despite its human rights violations. The US government has been a consistently strong champion and patron of Israel for decades, with US support increasing after the 1967 war and staying strong ever since (Said, *The Question* 188-192; Khalidi, *Brokers* xii, xxvii-xxxvii; Thrall, “BDS,” *The Only Language* 68, 72-73; Harms and Ferry 108; Mearsheimer and Walt). Despite claims to being an impartial peace-broker between Israelis and Palestinians, the US not only provides Israel with approximately \$3 billion annually in military aid but also

³ After the 1993 Oslo Accords, and especially in recent decades, the Palestinian Authority has also harshly repressed Palestinian protest in the West Bank, sometimes in concert with Israeli security forces and increasingly on their own; Hamas also cracks down on dissent in Gaza (“Palestine: Authorities”).

regularly vetoes UN security-council resolutions critical of Israel and has blocked Palestinian attempts in recent years to bring the Palestinian case to the UN (Khalidi, *Brokers* xii, xxvii-xxxvii; Wilner; Eisenstadt & Pollock; Oren, “The Ultimate”; Mearsheimer and Walt). In recent years, the Trump administration has gone even farther than past US governments by enacting several US policy changes and statements that support Israel and seek to suppress pro-Palestinian and pro-BDS activism in the US, changes which also cater to the policy preferences of evangelical Christian Zionists, an important base of support for the Republican Party. These rhetorical and policy shifts include officially designating Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and moving the US Embassy there in 2018; declaring, in contravention of international law, that Israeli Jewish-only settlements in the West Bank are not illegal; and suggesting that Israel has the right to annex parts of the West Bank (Wadhams; Halbfinger, “US Ambassador”; Jakes and Halbfinger). These changes to US government policies and statements highlight the strength of US support for Israel even as it continues to deny many basic human rights to the Palestinians.

The 2005 BDS Call

In response to the lack of progress toward reaching a negotiated resolution with Israel, the continued growth of Israeli Jewish-only settlements on occupied Palestinian land in the West Bank (widely considered illegal under the 4th Geneva Convention), and in light of the failure of the international community to hold Israel accountable for its ongoing violations of international law and denial of basic Palestinian human rights, in 2005, a committee of Palestinian activists and 170 Palestinian civil society organizations launched an official call for international solidarity in the form of a nonviolent boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement modeled after the anti-apartheid BDS campaign targeting South Africa (UN Security Council; “Palestinian Civil”). Since then, the BDS movement has racked up successes in pressuring artists

and musicians to cancel performances in Israel, several churches and academic organizations to support boycott and divestment, and some multinational corporations to cancel their Israeli contracts (Barghouti, *Boycott* 24-30).

In response, Israel and its supporters in the US and Europe, including US politicians, have also taken steps to curb the growth of BDS despite First-Amendment concerns. For example, during her speech to AIPAC in 2016, US Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton denounced BDS and vowed to fight it. Several US state legislatures have recently passed anti-BDS legislation that deny government contracts to businesses or individuals who promote or participate in certain boycotts of Israel, and pro-Israel advocates have pushed for anti-bills in both the Senate and House, though none have passed both houses of Congress to date, largely because of concerns with their restriction of First-Amendment rights to free expression and protest (“Anti-BDS Legislation”; “The Palestine Exception”; Greenwald; Hauss).

Policy initiatives seeking to restrict pro-Palestinian and pro-BDS activism are partly a response to the fact that the BDS movement for Palestinian rights has been one of the fastest growing student-led movements on college campuses in the US in recent years (Maltz, “The Pro-Palestinian”; Ziri; Thrall, “BDS,” “How the Battle”). Even as pro-BDS activism has faced push back from many pro-Israel and mainstream Jewish organizations, BDS campaigns have gained the support of many other student activists on campus, especially those led by students of color. As more mainstream pro-Israel Jewish student organizations (including Hillel, StandWithUs, and J-Street) have taken strong stands against BDS, newer progressive Jewish organizations that include a wider range of voices on Palestine/Israel and BDS—including Open Hillel, Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ), and IfNotNow (INN)—

have sprung up in recent years to challenge the traditionally limited parameters of the debate about Palestine/Israel within the US Jewish community.

The BDS call includes academic, cultural, and consumer boycotts of the Israeli government, institutions, and corporations (rather than individuals), and it also asks international organizations and governments to sanction and divest from Israel in the same way that was widely applied to South Africa's Apartheid regime until it abides by international law and grants Palestinians human rights ("Palestinian Civil"). The BDS call and the rhetoric of the campaign is rooted in international law, universal principles of human rights, and UN resolutions, and it demands that Israel end three major forms of injustice against all three sectors of the Palestinian people:

- (1) ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands occupied in 1967 and dismantling the wall;
- (2) recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; and
- (3) respecting, protecting, and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties, as stipulated in UN Resolution 194 ("Palestinian Civil").

Opinion polls indicate the international BDS movement is widely supported by over 80% of the Palestinian public (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, "Palestinian Public").

While BDS is often referred to as a "movement," it has also been described as "a loosely organized network" of grassroots activists who devise campaigns that are often sensitive to the context of local values and needs (Hallward, *Transnational* 33-34). BDS has become an increasingly polarizing issue, with supporters seeing it as a tool of nonviolent Palestinian

liberation from Israeli settler colonialism and opponents charging BDS activists with anti-Semitism for allegedly singling out the only Jewish state.

Risks of Supporting BDS and Palestinian Rights

After a few years of increasing popularity of BDS on college campuses, along with BDS successes at pressuring companies to cancel contracts in Israel and to convince artists and musicians to not perform there, pro-Israel and anti-BDS advocates have undertaken increasingly aggressive steps to hamper the growth of BDS activism. Websites like Canary Mission have sprung up to publicize blacklists of students and faculty who have engaged in pro-BDS activism (Nathan-Kazis, “Revealed”). Organizations like the AMCHA Initiative include lists of faculty who have publicly supported BDS or been critical of Israel, and, in some cases, college administrators have been pressured to censure or even terminate faculty who have been outspoken in their support for BDS and Palestinian rights (Abraham, *Out of Bounds*; Salaita, *Uncivil*; “AMCHA Publishes”). Abraham describes cases of scholars critical of the Israeli narrative facing vilification and abuse both from within and without the academy. He argues that publicized cases, such as Norman Finkelstein’s denial of tenure from DePaul, have led to a perceived risk associated with doing Israel-Palestine scholarship (79-82). Steven Salaita also discusses his own case of having his tenure-track position at UIUC rescinded after the discovery of a handful of critical tweets he made during the 2014 Gaza War. Abu-Laban and Bakan echo the argument of many pro-BDS activists by asserting that claiming critics of Israel are motivated by antisemitism “serves to silence public discourse and limit freedom of expression” (323). It is possible that this perception of risk may discourage some scholars in various disciplines, including rhetorical theory, from pursuing the in-depth study of pro-Palestinian or pro-BDS discourse.

Regarding legal attempts to stifle pro-BDS activism, the ACLU has publicly criticized anti-BDS bills as unconstitutional infringements on the First Amendment, and subsequent to their critique, a few senators who had previously supported such legislation have come out publicly against it (Hauss; Eidelman; Stanley-Becker). The ACLU has also taken up multiple cases of state government contractors who have been forced to sign oaths to not boycott Israel as a requirement for employment, including teachers in Kansas and Texas (Eidelman; Stanley-Becker). And in October of 2017, a Texas anti-BDS law attracted attention on social media because a clause in the law required people to sign a pledge to not boycott Israel in order to receive government relief after hurricane Harvey, which apparently confused many people who had been otherwise unaware of the existence of anti-BDS legislation or even the BDS movement itself; the clause was later removed and the law challenged on First-Amendment grounds (@ACLU; “Texas Town”). The recent watered down anti-BDS House Resolution 246, which was passed with overwhelming bipartisan support (only 16 Democratic representatives voting against it), condemned the BDS movement but did not include any penalties for BDS support (Kampeas; Stolberg). Immediately after passage of this anti-BDS bill, however, several mainstream US news outlets published articles about BDS, some of which included the views of BDS leaders and supporters in addition to critics (Halbfinger et al.).

In 2019, the Trump administration directed federal agencies to apply an expanded definition of antisemitism from the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) that includes examples of speech critical of Israel when investigating claims of discrimination under Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act; critics contend that this change is intended to crack down on pro-BDS activism on US college campuses in the name of fighting antisemitism, and Jared Kushner even explicitly asserts that this new policy directive equates anti-Zionism with

antisemitism (Kushner; Redden, “Trump Order”; Myers and Seidler-Feller). In response to this controversial Trump administration action, several Jewish journalists, scholars, and activists have criticized such heavy-handed attempts to broaden the definition of antisemitism to target pro-BDS and pro-Palestinian activism, critiques which have found their way into major mainstream publications like *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and others (Gessen; Bokan-Lindell; Myers and Seidler-Feller). In one example, Jewish-American journalist and *New Yorker* columnist Masha Gessen argues that comparisons between Israel actions in the West Bank and Nazi-style persecution are not necessarily antisemitic and are also “not outlandish.” She recounts in detail what she witnessed on a Breaking the Silence tour in the West Bank⁴:

This particular tour ended in a Palestinian village which has been largely overtaken by an Israeli settlement that is illegal under international law. One of the Palestinian houses ended up on territory claimed by the settlers, so the settlers built a chain-link cage around the house, the yard, and the driveway. A young Palestinian child, who is growing up in a house inside a cage, waved to us through the fencing. Comparing this sort of approach to Nazi policies may not make for the most useful argument, but it is certainly not outlandish. The memory of the Holocaust stands as a warning to humanity about the dangers of dehumanizing the other—and invoking that warning in Palestine is warranted.

These cases of anti-BDS legislation and policy changes not only highlight the political effectiveness of organized pro-Israel BDS critics, but also reveal that anti-BDS legislation often backfires by calling attention to the BDS movement and creating a backlash against such pro-

⁴ Breaking the Silence is an Israeli non-profit organization run by former Israeli soldiers who “have taken it upon themselves to expose the public to the reality of everyday life in the occupied territories” by leading guided tours of various parts of the West Bank to Israelis and international visitors (“Organization”).

Israel legislation for its perceived infringement on the US Constitution and First-Amendment freedom of speech. Legal restrictions on BDS activism can, however, also serve to restrain popular participation in such campaigns when people fear political or social repercussions or the loss of job opportunities for doing so.

Research Statement: Looking at BDS Discourse through a Rhetorical Lens

In the absence of any alternative path to a peaceful resolution in Palestine/Israel or international accountability for Israel's actions, the nonviolent BDS movement seems to offer a potentially productive avenue for pressuring Israel to comply with international laws. The BDS movement, however, also faces unique rhetorical obstacles that prevent it from gaining wider support in the West, including sensitivity to antisemitism and ingrained stereotypes about Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims, especially in the post-9/11 era.

Since social movements, including the transnational BDS movement, are themselves largely rhetorical actions designed to persuade audiences to support the movement's cause, a rhetorical perspective is necessary for a comprehensive understanding of the movement itself. Rhetoric scholars have long advocated for using a rhetorical lens to study social movements because, as Cathcart argues, "movements are rhetorical acts" in which collectives of individuals seek social change (361). Morris and Browne also contend that social movements "are by their nature rhetorical. . . they organize symbols to persuasive ends"; social movements also "seek change not through violence or coercion but through force of argument and appeal" (1-2). Stevens and Malesh argue that studying the rhetoric of social movements can help scholars understand the nature of these movements (12-13).

Even though the BDS movement has been examined by scholars in multiple disciplines, such as postcolonial theory, political science, peace studies, and conflict resolution, it has

received very little attention so far from rhetoric scholars (Hallward, *Transnational*; Pearlman; Bakan and Abu-Laban; Siapera; Omer; Abraham, “Editor’s Introduction,” *Out of Bounds*). Thus, the rhetorical situation, rhetorical strategies and appeals, audiences, constraints, and rhetorical effectiveness or “fitness” of BDS discourse have not been investigated in-depth. Such a rhetorical investigation of BDS movement discourse can yield insights into the rhetorical strategies used by BDS movement activist-rhetors and the nature of constraints and obstacles that may prevent pro-BDS discourse from resonating with wider audiences. This is also a useful perspective from which to study a social movement as it attempts to address an ongoing conflict and injustice that has so far eluded all other attempts at resolution.

In order to determine how BDS activist-rhetors use rhetorical moves and framing strategies to persuade their audiences, why the BDS movement has been more successful at gaining support from certain sectors while evoking opprobrium from others, why critiques of BDS from Israel’s advocates have been so harsh, and whether common criticisms of the movement are valid, I have chosen to analyze pro-BDS discourse to examine what BDS activist-rhetors are saying and how resonant (or not) their framing strategies and messages may be with different audiences, considering the evolving rhetorical situations and ecologies they face. My analysis will employ rhetorical frame analysis, combining rhetorical analysis and frame analysis to focus on the underlying framing strategies—both official and vernacular—used by Palestinian leaders of the movement as well as student activists in the US. In order to address the gap in the rhetorical study of BDS movement discourse and discover how BDS activist-rhetors have responded to this unique rhetorical situation, I use rhetorical frame analysis to investigate the following research questions: *How do official and vernacular pro-BDS activist-rhetors frame the movement and their goals? How do they frame their responses to the evolving rhetorical*

situations and challenges (including Western sensitivity to antisemitism)? How do they tailor these frames for different audiences? And how resonant are these rhetorical framing strategies likely to be for targeted audiences?

I intend for this rhetorical frame analysis project to contribute predominantly to the field of rhetoric but also to discourse studies and social movement studies. Though my project primarily uses a rhetorical perspective, it is also interdisciplinary because I use frame analysis, which has mostly been used in the fields of sociology and discourse analysis (Goffman; Benford and Snow; Johnston and Klandermans; Kuypers; Zald; Hope). The rhetorical study of social movement discourse could benefit from the use of frame analysis because frame analysis can help reveal underlying ideologies at work and break down arguments to their most basic level, which can help rhetoric scholars understand how discourse may resonate with audiences' beliefs and assumptions. Frames are the building blocks that audiences use to understand the foundational issues and unstated assumptions, and when these foundations are missing, audiences cannot be receptive to higher-level arguments, evidence, etc. Incompatible or contradictory framing on opposing sides can also be an obstacle to audience reception.

An examination of pro-BDS discourse is important because the transnational Palestinian-led BDS movement is currently the most successful nonviolent Palestinian strategy for raising awareness internationally about Palestinians' lack of human rights, and yet the BDS movement is often maligned and misunderstood in the US. Such a project could not only help Western and American audiences better understand pro-BDS rhetoric, its rhetorical situation, the BDS movement itself, and contemporary social movement discourse more generally, but it could also encourage BDS activists to reflect on and adjust their rhetorical strategies and framing when appropriate. In addition, without an effective nonviolent strategy for achieving their rights

through the power of persuasion, for what is one of the most difficult and contentious human rights debates, it seems inevitable that a small number of Palestinians will continue to resort to violent resistance—as many other oppressed peoples have done in similar situations (Rabkin, *What Is* 175; Freire 46, 55).

Framing Palestine/Israel

Throughout the Israeli-Palestinian conflict between Zionist Jewish settlers and the state of Israel on one hand and the indigenous Palestinian Arab inhabitants of the area on the other, both sides have sought to frame the situation from their perspectives to sway other countries and potential supporters to their cause. In regard to the nature of the Zionist project to create a Jewish state in Palestine, Raef Zreik brings the two perspectives together to assert that what Jewish Zionists view as a nationalist movement for Jewish liberation and self-determination is simultaneously experienced by the indigenous inhabitants of Palestine as a settler-colonial project to dispossess Palestinians and take their land:

Zionism is a settler-colonial project, but not only that. It combines the image of the refugee with the image of the soldier, the powerless with the powerful, the victim with the victimizer, the colonizer with the colonized, a settler project and a national project at the same time. The Europeans see the back of the Jewish refugee fleeing for his life. The Palestinian sees the face of the settler colonialist taking over his land. (358-359)

It is important to recognize how Israel and the Zionist movement have framed the Zionist project in Palestine in order to understand the way some audiences respond to the Palestinian-led BDS movement, which is often perceived as a threat to not only the Zionist project but to the very existence of the Jewish people. For my project, however, it is necessary to examine how

Palestinians have framed the situation in Palestine/Israel to understand the context and rhetorical situation for pro-BDS movement discourse and framing strategies.

Since the early work of Edward Said, postcolonial scholars and pro-Palestinian activists have historically and rhetorically situated Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation within an anti-colonial framework (Said, *The Question*, “Zionism”; Barghouti, *Boycott*, “Putting”; Abunimah, “Palestinian Writer’s”). Contextualizing Palestine/Israel in a settler-colonial paradigm is also helpful for understanding much of Israeli policy and Palestinian resistance, which often parallel the colonial policies and indigenous resistance found in other settler-colonial societies. Like most Palestinians, the BDS movement frames the situation not as a “conflict” between two equal sides but rather as an example of settler-colonialism that reflects an unequal power imbalance between the Israeli settler-colonial society and the indigenous Palestinian Arab inhabitants.

Zionist framing of the goals and nature of the Zionist project and Palestinian resistance differs significantly from Palestinian framing and has evolved over time in response to changing geopolitical conditions. In the early twentieth century, Zionist leaders tended to borrow from colonial discourse to make their case to Western officials by arguing that Zionist development of Palestine would help civilize the land and the native population (Said, “Zionism” 12). Edward Said describes the rhetorical strategies of the Zionist leaders as adaptive to the Western rhetorical context of the period:

Everything they did in Palestine was enacted on the world-stage so to speak in a rhetoric and costume fundamentally of the same sort as the cultural currency of the period. Thus Zionism initially portrayed itself as a movement bringing civilization to a barbaric and/or

empty locale. . . Later of course Zionism transformed itself into a movement bringing Western democracy to the East. (“Zionism” 12)

Though public attitudes in the West are starting to shift, sympathy and support for Israel has remained high in the US and many other Western countries for decades largely because of the perceived alignment of national interests, shared values, and similar histories, especially in the case of the US and other settler-colonial societies (Khalidi, *Brokers* xii, xvi-xxxvii; Telhami, “Americans Are”; “Voters Show”). In the post-9/11 era, Israeli leaders, beginning with Ariel Sharon, have also succeeded in rhetorically linking Israeli repression against Palestinian resistance with the US’s global War on Terror, with Israeli leaders claiming to be fighting Islamic terrorism just as the US has fought al Qaeda and ISIS (Bakan and Abu-Laban 48; Bazian 1059-1064; Verter).

Just as in the early days of Zionist immigration to Palestine, both violent and nonviolent Palestinian resistance, including the BDS movement, are often rhetorically framed and perceived as *existential threats* to Israel and the Jewish people (Reut Institute; StandWithUs). Though anti- or non-Zionism was common among diaspora Jews for the first few decades of Zionist immigration to Palestine, including after the 1917 Balfour Declaration, Hitler’s rise to power in Germany and the subsequent Nazi Holocaust bolstered diaspora Jewish support for Zionism (“Protest”; Morris 171-172; American Jewish Committee, *American Jewish Yearbook* 206-214; Rose). Western nations’ support for Zionism also increased in the years after Hitler’s rise to power in Germany, and especially after the extent of the Holocaust became known, partly because of Western sympathy with the Jewish people but also partly because most Western countries favored sending Jewish refugees to Palestine rather than accepting significant numbers of refugees themselves (Morris 161-164, 170-171; Rose 3). In the wake of the Nazi Holocaust

and after the establishment of Israel, the idea and later reality of Jewish self-determination in the form of a Jewish state in Palestine also became increasingly connected to Jewish identity, including for many diaspora Jews. Zionist rhetoric that stresses the Jewish people's right to *self-determination* continues to be a central argument for Israel's existence as a Jewish-majority state.

Despite Israel's rhetorical success among Western and American audiences, and its continued military, economic, and political domination over the stateless and occupied Palestinians, most Israelis and many of its supporters still view Israel in terms of perpetual endangerment and *victimhood*, with the modern Israeli state being frequently linked to the history of Jewish persecution. Given the lack of parity between the power of the occupier and the occupied in this situation, some Palestinians and their supporters cannot understand why so many Israelis and their Zionist diaspora Jewish supporters still feel like victims, and thus, critics of Israel sometimes suspect that Jewish fears and allegations of antisemitism are not genuine.

But the rhetorical and psychological processes that create this fear and sense of victimhood become more comprehensible in light of Jewish history and past traumatic experiences with antisemitism and antisemitic violence that have either been directly experienced or recounted to subsequent generations. Upon first arriving in Palestine in the late 1800s, Zionist immigrants often viewed their interactions with the local indigenous Palestinians through the lens of their experiences in Europe where Jews had faced harsh discrimination, persecution, and pogroms for hundreds of years. Thus, Zionist Jewish immigrants in Palestine frequently interpreted Palestinian hostility as resulting from a pre-existing cultural antisemitism rather than as a common reaction to displacement, dispossession, and perceived economic threats, which is very similar to the indigenous resistance against other settler-colonial projects around the world throughout history (Said, "Zionism" 29; Morris 43-45; Rabkin, *What Is* 175).

Since Pinsker's and Herzl's early Zionist writings, Zionist leaders have often framed the Zionist project to create a Jewish state as the only way to have a *safe haven* and long-term *security* for the Jewish people who have faced centuries of persecution, especially in Europe (Morris 15-17, 20-25). Not only is Israel viewed as a safe haven by many Israeli Jews, but also many diaspora Jews see Israel and its Law of Return as an insurance policy against future outbreaks of antisemitic violence (*Defamation*; Green, David, "This Day").

Through the Burkean rhetorical process of "us vs. them" identification and division, growing Jewish identification with Zionism and Israel has also led to the indigenous Palestinian "Others" being viewed as dangerous and antisemitic obstacles standing in the way of Jewish safety, security, and salvation; thus, Palestinian resistance becomes associated with familiar hateful and violent attacks on the Jewish people (Burke 20-27; Rowland and Frank 1-17). Within this context, it becomes understandable how Zionists came to believe that establishing a Jewish state in Palestine required any means necessary and how Zionist leaders' talk of the "transfer" or ethnic cleansing of significant numbers of indigenous Palestinians outside of the boundaries of a new Jewish state while denying them the right to return could be framed as an unfortunate but necessary evil (Pappé, *The Ethnic*; Morris 21-22, 253-254). And then later Israeli military actions and state repression, including the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, have also been presented as necessary for "security" reasons (Morris 329-331). The fact that some Palestinian factions have supported and carried out violent attacks against Israelis, including civilians, also serves to bolster such security claims.

This line of reasoning and discourse continues to lead many Israelis and their supporters to believe the following narrative, more or less: that Israel wants peace and has no desire to oppress and occupy Palestinians, but Israel unfortunately has no choice and "no partner for

peace,” nor is a two-state solution currently feasible, because violent and antisemitic Palestinian/Arab/Islamic terrorists will continue to commit acts of violent terrorism, fire rockets, and attempt to “drive the Jews into the sea” if the Palestinians are not effectively controlled for necessary “security” reasons (StandWithUs; Said, *The Question* xxi). From the beginning of Zionist immigration to Palestine until today, the Orientalist and Islamophobic attitudes of many Westerners also lead many people to favor the Zionist narrative and have enabled some of Israel’s supporters to frame Palestinians as bloodthirsty *Islamic terrorists* who have no desire to live in peace, only understand violence, etc. This type of rhetorical framing became even more widespread and resonant after 9/11 and the US War on Terror.

Palestinians tend to perceive and frame events very differently from most Israeli Jews, mainstream diaspora Jewish organizations, and other advocates for Israel. Similarly to the indigenous Native American inhabitants of North America, when Zionist immigrants began arriving in Palestine, the Palestinian Arabs were a largely agrarian people with strong attachments to the land who felt threatened by the increasing numbers of European Jewish immigrants whose arrival also often led to their dispossession from lands where they had lived and worked for generations⁵ (Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity* 96-117). After years of dispossession, violence, and repression, “us versus them” rhetoric and discursive processes of identification and division further led the indigenous Palestinians Arabs to develop a stronger national identity and view Zionist Israeli Jews as an existential and daily threat to their lives and well being (Khalidi,

⁵ While there are many valid similarities between the settler colonial policies of European colonists in US history and Zionist and Israeli policies, no two situations are the same, and there are also many differences between the cases, as each case of settler colonialism has unique features. In the case of Palestine/Israel, this process of Palestinian dispossession first began when early Zionists purchased land from Ottoman landlords who then evicted Palestinian tenant farmers (at the time of the 1947 UN Partition Plan, Zionists owned approximately 7% of the land); Palestinian dispossession was later accelerated through war and forced ethnic cleansing during 1947-48 (Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity* 96-117; Makdisi; Pappé, *The Ethnic* 187-190; Harms and Ferry 94-102; Morris 184, 222-259, 269-281).

Palestinian Identity; Rotberg). While Israeli leaders often blame alleged antisemitic Palestinian incitement for Palestinian violence against Israel, Palestinians point to many years of continuing *Israeli repression and dispossession* as the cause for Palestinian resentment and frustration (Ehrenreich; Hotovely; Rotberg). And when radical Israeli settlers commit terrorist attacks against West Bank Palestinians, Palestinians argue that Israeli settlement policies and *racist incitement* against Palestinians by Israeli leaders are at fault (Khalek, “US Media”; Abunimah, “Anti-Arab”; Melhem).

Omar Barghouti, one of the founders of the BDS movement, member of the Palestinian Boycott National Committee (BNC), and drafter of the 2005 BDS Call, summarizes what he sees as the most important rhetorical and framing strategy for the BDS movement and pro-BDS discourse: “the indisputable Palestinian claim to equal humanity should be the primary slogan raised, because it lays the proper moral and political foundation for effectively addressing the myriad injustices against all three segments of the Palestinian people. It is also based on universal values that resonate with people the world over” (Barghouti, “Putting” 56). It is these values promoted in pro-BDS discourse that have resonated with many racial and social justice activists around the world, including in the US and Europe, leading to the growth of the BDS movement in recent years.

Most American audiences have historically tended to sympathize with Israel more than the Palestinians, partly as a reflection of the shared values and history of both countries as settler-colonies and also mirroring political discourse and mainstream news media coverage of the situation. The pro-Israel consensus in the US, however, has started to shift in recent years as criticism of Israel and sympathy with Palestinians becomes more common, especially on the progressive left (“Americans’ Views”; Horovitz, “Israel Losing”; Telhami, “Americans Are,”

“American Attitudes”; Tibon). For example, 2016 and 2020 US Democratic primary candidate and senator, Bernie Sanders (who is also Jewish), has publicly criticized Israeli policies and the Netanyahu government and expressed sympathy for Palestinians on multiple occasions (Beinart, “Bernie Sanders”; Yglesias; Zonszein). Even though he has stated his personal opposition to BDS, the public acceptance of Sanders’ criticisms of Israel could portend a wider openness among liberal audiences for pro-BDS discourse and framing in the future, which is already reflected in recent statements made by other 2020 Democratic presidential primary candidates, Elizabeth Warren and Pete Buttigieg at J-Street’s 2019 conference (Kristof; Cohen, Roger; Beinart, “Bernie Sanders,” “How to Stop”; Zonszein; Sanders).

Criticism of Israel is becoming more common not only among liberal Americans but also younger generations of Jews in the diaspora as well, and many younger diaspora Jews who have only known Israel as an occupying power rather than a fledgling state are gravitating to Palestinian solidarity activism (Beinart, *The Crisis*; Borschel-Dan; Maltz, “Vast Numbers,” “The Pro-Palestinian”; Omer, *Days of Awe*; Sunshine). American Jews are also disproportionately represented in pro-BDS activist groups, especially on US college campuses (Beinart, “How to Stop”; Omer, *Days of Awe*; Maltz, “The Pro-Palestinian”). For an increasing number of young progressive Jewish American students, their Jewish identity is connected to support for intersectional movements for justice, and their perception of Jewish history is that of supporting struggles for justice and civil rights rather than supporting Israel, which is increasingly viewed as a belligerent and oppressive settler-colonial state much like the US (Horovitz, “Israel Losing”; Omer, *Days of Awe*; Sunshine; Maltz; Waxman, “As Israel Turns,” *Trouble*).

While there are two distinct narratives and dueling discourses in regard to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, and both peoples have committed violent acts against each

other throughout the years, the situation is not a conflict of two equal sides. Since Israel's founding in 1948, and especially after the 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, Israel has maintained its power and control over the Palestinians, while the Palestinians continue to struggle and resist from the position of an oppressed, stateless, and occupied people. Despite the limited autonomy given to the Israeli-approved Palestinian Authority (PA) under the Oslo Accords and the 2005 Israeli withdrawal of its military and settlers from inside of Gaza, Israel still has ultimate control and military domination over the daily lives of Palestinians through its ongoing occupation of the West Bank and siege of Gaza. Understanding this historical and rhetorical context is an important step to understanding the rhetorical situation and rhetorical strategies of the BDS movement.

Chapter Descriptions

In Chapter 2 I review scholarship pertinent to understanding the rhetorical situation and rhetorical framing strategies for pro-BDS discourse, especially relevant rhetorical scholarship, but also interdisciplinary research on the BDS movement, Palestinian resistance, postcolonial theory, peace and nonviolence studies, social movement studies, social movement rhetoric, and the discourse of Palestine/Israel more generally in order to provide useful context to set up my later rhetorical frame analysis. In Chapter 3, I develop and discuss the methodology for my project, which focuses on rhetorical frame analysis of selected pro-BDS texts with micro-rhetorical frame analysis of a selection of the most representative and important texts. I also discuss and develop my primary framework for analysis that takes the form of a heuristic I use to code my selected texts for analysis. This heuristic framework includes concepts from rhetorical theory, social movement rhetoric, and frame analysis. I use this framework to analyze selected texts in the following case study chapters.

Chapters 4 and 5 include my in-depth rhetorical frame analysis and discussion of the specific framing strategies for the official (Chapter 4) and vernacular (Chapter 5) texts I examine. In these chapters, after some discussion of patterns found in my initial coding, I go more in-depth to do a micro-rhetorical frame analysis of selected representative texts. In Chapter 4, I analyze the rhetorical situations and framing for official pro-BDS rhetoric (including the original 2005 BDS call put out by the Palestinian Boycott National Committee (BNC)). In addition to examining the BDS call, I also look at selected official statements from the BNC and op-eds from BDS co-founder and BNC spokesperson, Omar Barghouti. In Chapter 5, I build on Hauser's discussion of the importance of examining the vernacular rhetoric of social movements to see how this discourse may differ from the more official leaders' discourse. I gathered and analyzed texts that represent the pro-BDS discourse of student activists taking part in the annual Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) actions at universities in the Washington D.C. area (including Georgetown, George Washington University, George Mason University, and American University). I examine dozens of leaflets, posters, displays, flyers, and online statements from student members of Students for Justice in Palestine and/or other Palestinian solidarity groups at these universities.

In Chapter 6, my concluding chapter, I review the results of my analysis and discuss the potential resonance or fitness of pro-BDS discourse framing for its audiences in light of my results. Using Hauser's discussion of "fitting" rhetorical responses and sociological frame analysts' discussion of frame resonance (Benford and Snow), I attempt to discuss how resonant, fitting, and potentially effective this body of pro-BDS discourse would likely be for their targeted audiences, considering what is knowable about those audiences beliefs, values, prior knowledge, etc. While it is impossible to accurately determine how persuasive particular texts

are for their intended audiences, I use the concepts of fitness and resonance to establish a probability of rhetorical resonance (similar to effectiveness) in light of the rhetorical situations and context. I also describe strategies that pro-BDS rhetors could potentially adopt in order to more effectively address the rhetorical situation, obstacles, and constraints.

Hopefully my project can help scholars of rhetoric and other fields to gain a better understanding of contemporary social movement rhetoric, pro-BDS discourse in particular, its rhetorical situation and framing, and the challenges faced by activist-rhetors. I also hope this research can assist BDS activists and rhetors to critically examine their rhetorical strategies and consider adjusting them when appropriate in order to reach wider audiences and avoid triggering affective responses when possible. My project can also serve as a blueprint for scholars wishing to develop and apply a similar rhetorical framing analysis heuristic to other social movements' discourses.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS FOR UNDERSTANDING PALESTINE/ISRAEL DISCOURSE AND THE BDS MOVEMENT

In order to provide some context and justification for my rhetorical frame analysis of BDS discourse and the coding heuristic I have developed, I will first review the various perspectives from which different scholars and disciplines have approached the topic of the BDS movement and the Palestine/Israel. I will review relevant scholarship to date, discuss the limitations of this scholarship for a complete understanding of BDS movement rhetoric, and propose examining framing strategies with a rhetorical lens as a corrective to existing gaps in the research. This literature review will reveal not only why rhetorical frame analysis is a useful method to help fill gaps in the extant research on these topics, but it will also serve to set up my later rhetorical frame analysis and discussion of the rhetorical situation and rhetorical framing strategies for pro-BDS discourse.

First, I will present a general overview of scholarship that relates most closely to rhetorical analysis of BDS discourse, including analyses of Palestine/Israel rhetoric, some from the field of rhetoric and composition and communications, and some from related fields (including linguistic discourse analysis, etc.), to review the various approaches to analyzing discourse on this topic to help me locate existing gaps that may warrant further exploration and also to provide some useful examples as I develop my methods and heuristic for analysis. This review will also provide me with some useful background and context as I consider various aspects of the rhetorical situation and ecologies for pro-BDS discourse in later chapters. I then discuss the foundational role of postcolonial theory in the study of Palestine/Israel discourse,

especially since the field has helped elucidate colonial and anti-colonial discourses, including discourses around Palestine/Israel. After this, I explore interdisciplinary approaches to the topic of the BDS movement and present scholarship about the history, rhetorical situation, and common arguments on both sides of the BDS debate. I then discuss how social movement studies and movement rhetorics can offer useful examples for my own research. Finally, toward the end of this chapter, I review the small number of BDS movement discourse analyses performed by peace studies and conflict resolution scholars that relate most closely to my own project. These studies offer some productive avenues for studying BDS movement rhetoric, but because they come from outside of the rhetorical field, they also leave out some elements that a rhetorical frame analysis could address more in depth to achieve a deeper understanding of the BDS movement, its framing and rhetorical strategies, and how resonant these strategies may be for targeted audiences.

The situation in Palestine/Israel and Palestinian resistance to the Zionist project have been studied by various disciplines and scholarly perspectives. Scholars from fields such as postcolonial theory (Said; Feldman; Salaita); peace studies and conflict resolution (Chaitin et al.; Hallward; Omer); political science (Pearlman; Roy; Bakan and Abu-Laban; Morrison); history (Khalidi; Morris); cultural studies (Bakan and Abu-Laban; Butler; Siapera); communications and discourse studies (Wolfsfeld; Bazzi; Beckerman; Kampf; Rowland and Frank; Gavriely-Nuri); internet and new media studies (Nabulsi; Najjar; Aouragh; Siapera); and other disciplines have all tackled this deep-seated “conflict” from various angles. Existing scholarship has addressed myriad aspects of the situation, including mass media coverage (Wolfsfeld; Bazzi; Bekerman; Kampf); Israeli and Palestinian symbol use and narratives (Adwan et al.; Rowland and Frank; Rotberg); Palestinian resistance (both nonviolent and violent) (Pearlman; Sharp; Mishal and

Aharoni); anti-colonial discourse and postcolonial theory (Said; Feldman; Salaita); Palestinian internet activism (Nabulsi; Najjar; Aouragh; Tawil-Souri and Aouragh; Siapera); the question of antisemitism and its contemporary definitions (Bronner; Hirsh; Klug; Kiewe); the history and material effects of Zionism and Israel's settler-colonial policies (Said; Khalidi; Roy; Zreik; Makdisi; Morris; Pappé); and transnational Palestinian solidarity activism (Chaitin et al.; Hallward; Ananth; Omer; Bakan and Abu-Laban; Siapera; Morrison). While a few rhetorical scholars have examined the discourse of Palestine/Israel (Abraham; Kiewe; Bawarshi; Kleine; Bernard-Donals; Rowland; Frank; Ginsburg; Crosswhite), none so far have focused on BDS movement discourse specifically, and the few scholars who have studied the BDS movement and its discourse come from outside of the field of rhetorical studies (Hallward; Omer; Yi and Phillips; Bakan and Abu-Laban; Morrison; Chaitin et al.). Thus, my research could help play a role in filling this gap in the study of pro-BDS discourse from a rhetorical perspective.

Though I will discuss the concepts and functions of “frames” and “framing” more in depth in Chapter 3, some of the scholarship I review in this chapter also addresses frames, so it will be useful to include a brief definition here. According to Kuypers, frames can be found in the concepts, key words, symbols, metaphors, visual images, and names assigned to ideas, people, and actions; frames are used “to define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies”; and frames function as “central organizing ideas within a narrative account of an issue or event” that serve as “interpretive cues for otherwise neutral facts” (*Rhetorical Criticism* 185, 182). It may be helpful to think of framing like the frame of a picture or painting: only certain images appear within the frame while others are excluded, and what appears inside of the frame affects how viewers understand and interpret the events or subjects depicted. In regard to how frames are used by social movements, Benford and Snow

argue that the most important framing tasks of social movement actors are to diagnose problems, propose solutions, and motivate supporters (615). Ultimately, to a greater extent than rhetorical criticism or frame analysis alone, rhetorical frame analysis can help scholars identify the assumptions, beliefs, and ideology underlying the rhetorical appeals and arguments used by activist-rhetors and the lenses through which activist-rhetors hope audiences will view the problem and potential solutions. Identifying and analyzing these frames can also help us more fully understand the resonance or fitness of social movement discourse by determining how consistent such frames are with the material realities of the situation and common perceptions promoted in the public sphere. Analyzing frames can also help shed light on aspects of the rhetorical situation for pro-BDS discourse without relying on a biased version of controversial historical events.

Rhetorical Scholarship on Palestine/Israel and the BDS Movement

To understand Palestinian resistance rhetoric and framing, including that of the BDS movement, it is important to look at how Palestinians have both materially and discursively resisted the Zionist project, along with how the situation in Palestine/Israel has been presented by mass media and public figures on all sides. Reviewing scholarship related to Palestine/Israel discourse can serve to both identify gaps in rhetorical research on this topic and also provide a useful sampling of approaches that I can apply to developing my own methods and heuristic for coding pro-BDS texts.

While scholars from the fields of rhetoric and discourse studies have examined various aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its discourse, rhetoric scholars have so far largely overlooked BDS movement discourse (Abraham, “Recognizing” 121-123). Though her work often focuses on critical theory and gender studies, Judith Butler has also written about BDS and

critiqued Zionism in ways that sometimes overlap with rhetorical theory (*Parting Ways*). The discourse of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict more generally has been examined by several disciplines, including communications, political science, discourse analysis, and critical discourse analysis, scholarship which can provide useful context for understanding the rhetorical situation for pro-BDS discourse (Bazzi; Roy; Bekerman; Kampf; Mandelbaum; Peled-Elhanan and Yellin; Richardson and Barkho; Gavriely-Nuri; Rowland and Frank; Shupak). Though communications scholars have not rhetorically analyzed pro-BDS discourse, several studies from the communications field have examined news media accounts and political rhetoric of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the US, Europe, the Arab world, and in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian territories (Bazzi; Rowland and Frank; Richardson and Barkho; Kampf; Gavriely-Nuri; Wolfsfeld; Gamson; Shupak).

Several studies from the fields of communications, discourse analysis, and social movement studies examine rhetoric and discourse relating to the broader issue of Palestine/Israel and thus demonstrate a variety of productive approaches. For example, Bazzi uses comparative discourse analysis to examine Western English-language and Arabic news sources covering the conflict, and Sudeshna Roy applies critical discourse analysis to *The New York Times*' opinion pieces about Palestine/Israel. Bekerman performs a rhetorical cultural analysis of intergroup Jewish-Palestinian dialogue encounters, Kampf analyzes official Israeli and Palestinian recognition statements and discusses their role in the peace process, and Mandelbaum examines the new Zionist "national left" discourse in Israel and compares it to some emerging alternative discourses. While these studies serve as useful examples of a variety of ways to approach analysis of discourse related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, none of them focuses specifically on Palestinian solidarity or pro-BDS rhetoric.

Some scholars have also taken a multimodal approach to researching Palestine/Israel discourse, looking not just at linguistic elements of discourse but also at visual elements. These researchers include Peled-Elhanan and Yellin in their multimodal semiotic analysis of Israeli geography textbooks and Richardson and Barkho's multimodal critical discourse analysis of BBC broadcasts relating to the conflict. Another related approach to analyzing discourse of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the cultural critical discourse analysis (CCDA) of Gavriely-Nuri, whose studies of the term "peace" and other cultural codes and metaphors in Israeli discourse use a cultural approach to CDA that ultimately seeks to "remove unique obstacles and cultural barriers to the realization of peace processes" (Gavriely-Nuri, "The Idiosyncratic" 565).

Though not all of her scholarship is strictly rhetorical, Judith Butler's writings on Zionism and Palestine/Israel, including her book *Parting Ways: Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism*, touch on rhetorical theory and engage with Jewish philosophers, including Buber, Levinas, Arendt, and others to offer a discursive Jewish critique of Zionism and promote a vision of future coexistence of Israelis and Palestinians in a binational state. Butler is also known as a prominent Jewish academic supporter of BDS, and she discusses the BDS movement and the discourse around it in several interviews and appearances, including talks in which she analyzes arguments for and against BDS and argues that support for BDS is not inherently antisemitic (Jewish Voice for Peace, *Judith Butler*; Butler, "Judith Butler's Remarks").

While BDS movement discourse itself has not been the focus of rhetorical scholarship, the most in-depth rhetorical study of discourse related to Palestine/Israel is found in the collection of essays, *Toward a Critical Rhetoric on the Israel-Palestine Conflict*, edited by Matthew Abraham. In "Developing Activist Rhetorics on Israel-Palestine: Resisting the Depoliticization of the American Academy" and his book, *Out of Bounds: Academic Freedom*

and the Question of Palestine, Abraham examines how pro-Israel bias has served to stifle criticism of Israeli policy in the US academy and public sphere. With his contributions in *Toward a Critical Rhetoric*, Abraham argues that rhetoricians should turn more attention to the discourse of the Israel-Palestine conflict in order to understand why participants in discussions of Palestine/Israel so frequently devolve into unproductive position-taking and the “desire to prove the Other wrong,” when a more useful discursive strategy would involve Ratcliffe’s “rhetorical listening” as a step toward “moving a conversation about the conflict forward, while avoiding the discursive pitfalls hampering the peace process” (“Editor’s Introduction” 4-5). Abraham argues that affectiveness, belatedness, and transference all tend to intervene, often unconsciously, to disrupt potentially productive discussions of Palestine/Israel:

While confluences of Jewish memory leading up to Nazi Holocaust with the supposed present-day security threats Israel faces are natural and difficult to avoid, critical rhetoricians should work to differentiate the relevant contexts to reduce the affective, transference, and belated effects of the past, which all too frequently are deformed in the present in the service of a partisan politics. Attempts to hold the present hostage to the past prevent meaningful rhetorical interventions around crucial issues” (“Reluctant” 187).

Studying the rhetorical framing strategies and frames found in pro-BDS discourse can help scholars differentiate some of the contexts relevant to understanding the current debates around BDS and Palestine/Israel.

Other chapters in *Toward a Critical Rhetoric* build on Abraham’s contributions and seek to discover how rhetoricians can contribute to a greater understanding of rhetorical obstacles in regard to Palestine/Israel and how to overcome them. In “Discourse on the Israel-Palestine Conflict: Rhetorical Memory and Uptake,” Bawarshi also connects current rhetorical challenges

in discussing Palestine/Israel with past memories that serve as “uptakes” triggered by certain words and phrases that recall past traumas or are similar to antisemitic tropes, leading some people to assume antisemitic intent even when there may be none: “Our uptake memory is what we bring to a rhetorical encounter, and it is what helps us select from, define, and make sense of that encounter” (13). In other essays in Abraham’s book, Kiewe argues for the importance of understanding the roots of historical antisemitism as they relate to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; Bernard-Donals proposes taking an exilic rhetorical position which reflects the historical experiences of exile shared by both Jews and Palestinians; Kleine advocates for combining Ratcliffe’s “rhetorical listening” with Freire’s notion of mutually liberatory discourse; Rowland analyzes speeches by Netanyahu and Obama to reveal how Netanyahu’s worldview is unhelpfully limited by a “terministic screen” that interprets events through the memory of the Holocaust; Frank argues for the adoption of the “middle voice” in order to resolve conflicts between dueling narratives; Ginsburg examines Israeli poetry to show how Israelis are often limited in being able to understand the Palestinian perspective; and Crosswhite argues that to change the distorted discourse around Palestine/Israel we must seek out examples of discursive practices that model cooperation and productive conflict. Each essay in this book touches on similar themes and patterns in rhetorical practices regarding Palestine/Israel, which Abraham summarizes thusly: “The essays in this collection advance an ambitious goal: a comprehensive and careful treatment of the often divisive rhetorics surrounding the Israel-Palestine conflict that is focused on producing empathic understanding and increasing cross-cultural identification” (“Conclusion” 186).

Some other scholarship that is relevant to a rhetorical perspective on Palestine/Israel includes research on the narratives, symbol use, and mythologies of both Israelis and

Palestinians. In addition to their contributions to *Toward a Critical Rhetoric on the Israel-Palestine Conflict*, Rowland and Frank also collaborated on an earlier book, *Shared Land/Conflicting Identity: Trajectories of Israeli and Palestinian Symbol Use*, in which they draw on Kenneth Burke's work on identification and division to examine Israeli and Palestinian use of symbols and myths in the public sphere that work to paint the other side as evil, a discursive pattern that the authors argue must be disrupted and transformed in order to pave the way for future peace and coexistence. They argue that, "Each myth defined identity based on contact with the land and denied the legitimate rights of any other group," and these conflicting symbol systems have up until now prevented Israelis and Palestinians from making peace (14). In *Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict: History's Double Helix*, edited by Rotberg, both Israeli and Palestinian authors discuss the competing historical narratives of both sides that serve to undermine prospects for a resolution of grievances. Even though the contributors to this book approach these dueling narratives mostly as historical scholars, their accounts of the competing narratives and their context in contemporary relations between Israelis and Palestinians help elucidate the historical context and rhetorical framing patterns found in the discourse of both Israelis and Palestinians.

Postcolonial Theory and Palestine/Israel

Since Edward Said's early writings on Palestine and Zionism in the 1970s, postcolonial scholars have been elucidating colonial and anti-colonial discourses, including examining the situation in Palestine/Israel in addition to other colonial and postcolonial societies. Thus, a review of how postcolonial theory has contributed to the understanding of Palestine/Israel and Palestinian solidarity and resistance rhetorics, along with pro-Israel discourse, is essential for any study of BDS movement rhetoric and framing strategies. Postcolonialism addresses the situation in Palestine/Israel aptly because the Zionist project has achieved and maintained the goal of

establishing a Jewish state in the ancient Jewish homeland through a settler-colonial project that was initially supported by Britain and other twentieth-century imperial powers, and which continues to be supported by the US and other Western nations today. The Zionist project, and later Israel, have also carried out various policies that have dispossessed and repressed the indigenous Palestinians in ways that parallel other settler-colonial projects (Morris 38-39; Said, “Zionism” 9-10, 23; Busbridge; Zreik; Wolfe; Veracini; Tapper and Sucharov 61-62). Thus, postcolonial theory is an essential area of scholarship that can help elucidate Palestinian motivations and historicize their discourses of struggle against Zionism.

Originating from Edward Said’s work in colonial discourse analysis, postcolonial theory developed out of analyses of colonial, imperial, and neo-imperial discourses (Williams and Chrisman 5). Postcolonial scholars examine the discourses of the colonized and formerly colonized subjects, as well as that of the colonizers and later neo-imperialist powers. Shome summarizes postcolonialism as a critical perspective that tries to reveal the imperialism and Eurocentrism in both public and academic western discourses (592). Williams and Chrisman explain the purpose and motivation behind postcolonial theory and analysis thusly:

“If texts exist in . . . a dialectical relationship with their social and historical context—produced by, but also productive of, particular forms of knowledge, ideologies, power relations, institutions and practices—then an analysis of the texts of imperialism has a particular urgency, given their implication in far-reaching, and continuing, systems of domination and economic exploitation. This involves an understanding of present circumstances as well as the ways in which these are informed by, perpetuate, and differ from situations which preceded them, and the complex interrelation of history and the present moment provides the terrain on which colonial discourse analysis and post-colonial theory operate” (4).

Williams and Chrisman also discuss postcolonial theory in light of Said's concept of Orientalism and Foucault's discussion about the relationship between power and knowledge, asserting that "colonial discourse analysis and post-colonial theory are thus critiques of the process of production of knowledge about the Other," and colonial discourse analysis and postcolonial analysis are often concerned with "the ways in which the 'subaltern'⁶ native subject is constructed within these discourses" (8, 16).

Postcolonial scholars, like many Palestinian activists, have situated the Palestinian struggle as a settler-colonial project rather than using a conflict paradigm that typically presents both sides as equally at fault for any hostilities (Said, *The Question*, "Zionism"; Abunimah, "Finkelstein"; Barghouti, *Boycott*, "Putting"; Taraki 449; Busbridge; Zreik; Wolfe; Veracini; Feldman; Pappé, *The Ethnic, Israel and South Africa*). Postcolonial scholars have also revealed how Zionist policies and Palestinian oppression have often been justified with Orientalist, Islamophobic, and colonialist discourses that present the Palestinians as barbaric, blood-thirsty terrorist "Others" driven by antisemitism to kill Jews (Said, "Zionism" 9-10).

Edward Said was not only a founder of postcolonial theory but also a Palestinian exile from a refugee family who wrote frequently about the Palestinian struggle against Zionism, and his works are important for understanding the history of Palestinian resistance discourse, much of which has influenced the contemporary BDS movement. Two of his most seminal works include *Orientalism* (1978) and *The Question of Palestine* (1979), both of which deal with how Muslims, Arabs, and Palestinians in particular are represented by the West as violent, barbaric, terrorist "Others," which denies their humanity, ignores their oppression, and delegitimizes their struggles for liberation. In his preface to the 1992 edition of *The Question of Palestine*, Said

⁶ The postcolonial use of the term "subaltern," which can be traced originally to Antonio Gramsci, refers to the native subject in the developing world who is often represented as a secondary "Other" by colonial discourses (Williams and Chrisman 16-17). Also see Gayatri Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?"

summarizes how he views the ongoing colonial situation as portrayed in Western discourse—a narrative that still holds sway today:

Ever since its founding in 1948, Israel has enjoyed an astonishing dominance in matters of scholarship, political discourse, international presence, and valorization. . . In all this, Palestinians were either ‘Arabs,’ or anonymous creatures of the sort that could only disrupt and disfigure a wonderfully idyllic narrative. Still more important, Israel represented (if it did not always play the role of) a nation in search of peace, while the Arabs were warlike, bloodthirsty, bent on extermination, and prey to irrational violence, more or less forever. (xiv)

Despite the increasing right-wing radicalization of Israeli politics and policy and the turn toward nonviolent resistance in recent years by many Palestinians, the Orientalist Israeli Zionist narrative still dominates media coverage and perceptions in the West, and especially in the U.S. Said’s work and that of other postcolonial scholars continues to be useful for understanding the context of the BDS movement, which was conceived in an ongoing colonial context and within a larger global anti-colonial struggle for social justice and human rights (*The Question* x).

Like many other postcolonial scholars and Palestinian solidarity activists affiliated with the BDS movement, Said uses historical examples of Zionist and Israeli policies of violence, repression, and ethnic cleansing against Palestinians to support his claim that Zionism is an unjust settler-colonial project that has sought to create a Jewish-majority state on Palestinian land at the expense of the indigenous Palestinian inhabitants (Said, “Zionism” 9-10). He also points out that early Zionist leaders openly framed Zionism “as a Jewish movement for colonial settlement in the Orient,” during the era when colonialism was still practiced and accepted by most of Europe (“Zionism” 23). And while he repeatedly condemns Palestinian terrorism against

Israeli civilians and argues for the efficacy and moral authority of nonviolent resistance, Said also explains Palestinian violence using analogies to other anti-colonial struggles in which violence against colonial occupation has often been excused or tolerated by Westerners, including in regard to the situations in South Africa, Algeria, and other anti-colonial struggles (“Zionism” 11-12; *The Question* x, xx-xxx). Said also expresses an understanding of Jewish fears and acknowledges the extent of historical antisemitism in Europe and elsewhere (“Zionism” 17-18). But he, like many other critics of Israel, emphasizes that Palestinians played no part in the Holocaust or European antisemitism and thus do not deserve to have their human rights and right to self-determination denied to make way for the Jewish state (“Zionism” 23-29).

Other postcolonial scholars, along with a few historians, have offered various analyses of Israeli settler-colonialism and the discourse of Palestine/Israel. Feldman discusses the history of anti-colonial and antiracist movements in the US and their relationship to Palestine/Israel, and he traces the theoretical history of Zionism as a racist settler-colonial state to an earlier era, in particular Faye Sayegh’s scholarship for the Palestine Research Center, including the 1965 pamphlet “Zionist Colonialism of Palestine” (Feldman 37). According to Makdisi, “most Palestinians understand that Zionism wasn’t only a colonial project, but in addition a response to the legacy of European anti-Semitism that culminated in the Holocaust, and an expression of the need that Jews felt for a homeland of their own” (287). He further argues, however, that, “the creation of a Jewish majority in any part of an historically multicultural and religiously heterogeneous Palestine has always required—and its maintenance will always require—the use of violence” (288). Israeli Jewish historian Ilan Pappé also situates Israel as a settler-colonial state: “Although the Zionist project had its own specific features, it can quite comfortably be located within nineteenth-century colonialisms” (*Israel and South Africa* 6).

Following in Said's footsteps, several other scholars use postcolonial theory to explain the context for the BDS movement and Palestinian resistance to Zionist settler-colonialism. For example, Bakan and Abu-Laban echo Said when they blame entrenched Orientalism as a major reason for the suspicion of Palestinian solidarity discourses in much of the academic and political establishments (33). They paint the BDS movement as a counter-hegemonic movement that has served as "an anti-racist challenge to the Orientalist and Islamophobic messaging associated with the George [W.] Bush era and the war on terror" (Bakan and Abu-Laban 48). Hasian and Flores use postcolonialism and critical rhetoric to examine the discourse of the First Palestinian Intifada (1987-1991) and explore how the intifada helped reinforce and constitute an evolving Palestinian identity (89-106). In their discussion of the academic boycott component of the BDS movement, Lloyd and Schueller also explain the situation in Palestine/Israel using a postcolonial frame: "in the time-honored manner of settler colonialism, a powerful and well-armed state seeks to extinguish the cultural life and identity of an indigenous people" (9).

Another example of recent scholarship that includes a post-colonial perspective on Palestine/Israel is the 2019 special edition of the *Journal of Palestine Studies* that focuses on Black-Palestinian transnational solidarity (BPTS). In this edition, various scholars discuss the historical and contemporary connections between black activism in the US and Palestinian solidarity activism going back decades. Erakat and Hill review the history of links between the Black radical tradition and pro-Palestinian activism and situate this linkage within the history of anti-colonial struggles:

Elements of the Black radical tradition that allied with the Palestinian struggle understood it not only as a principled response to a specific historical injustice, but also as the signpost of an analytical understanding of imperialism, colonialism, and white supremacy as global phenomena that subsume the Black American condition. Palestine, which

represents the fulcrum of U.S. imperial exploits in the Middle East, vividly evokes this internationalist analytic and has thus been a touchstone of multiple Black radical movements. (Erakat and Lamont Hill 8)

The authors argue that while this linkage has a long history, the current renewal of BPTS can be traced to 2014 when both black and Palestinian activists began to discursively link activism around the protest movement in Ferguson to Palestinian protest against the 2014 Israeli attacks on Gaza (8). As editor Rashid Khalidi explains, the various essays in this issue discuss the historical and recent connections between the black and Palestinian struggles and “chart new avenues for both intellectual and political engagement around these issues” (Khalidi, “From” 5). This issue includes some useful historical context that helps reveal why and how pro-BDS framing and rhetorical strategies tend to resonate with not only black activists in the US but also with other audiences who hold anti-colonial beliefs.

Although Zionism and the creation of Israel are often presented as a case of settler-colonialism, some scholars question the applicability of the settler-colonial paradigm in the case of Palestine/Israel. For example, Fleischacker points out that, unlike most other settler-colonial societies, Zionist Jews lacked a “metropole” to which they could return if and when the Zionist project failed (whereas French Algerians could have returned to France, English colonists to England, and so on) (67). Polakow-Suransky discusses how “many Israelis saw their independence as a postcolonial triumph akin to the successful liberation struggles of newly independent African and Asian countries and they bristled at any attempt to equate Zionism with European colonialism” (5). Raef Zreik argues that what the indigenous inhabitants of Palestine have experienced as a settler-colonial project to dispossess Palestinians and take their land, Jewish Zionists have simultaneously viewed as a nationalist movement for Jewish liberation and self-determination:

Zionism is a settler-colonial project, but not only that. It combines the image of the refugee with the image of the soldier, the powerless with the powerful, the victim with the victimizer, the colonizer with the colonized, a settler project and a national project at the same time. The Europeans see the back of the Jewish refugee fleeing for his life. The Palestinian sees the face of the settler colonialist taking over his land. (358-359)

A few scholars have also disputed the settler-colonial characterization. These scholars often argue that the influence of postcolonial theory in the academy has led to an ideological bias against Israel since many postcolonial scholars often see the colonizer/colonized dichotomy in black and white terms, with Palestinians represented as the oppressed subaltern “Others” and Israel and Zionism as the oppressive colonizers (Shimoni 859-860; Sicher 1; Rynhold 16; Grossman). Shimoni argues that the settler-colonial perspective oversimplifies the conflict and that some aspects of postcolonial theory can apply to early Zionism, with Zionist Jews being the oppressed subalterns in Europe (860-862). Many of these critiques of the settler-colonial paradigm overlook the dramatic power imbalance in Palestine/Israel since 1948, an imbalance which supports the characterization of Palestine/Israel as a settler-colonial society, especially after the post-1967 growth of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, the annexation of East Jerusalem, and recent proposals to annex more Palestinian land (Thrall, “Trump’s Middle East”).

When examining the rhetorical situation and ecology for the Palestinian rights struggle and pro-BDS movement discourse, postcolonial theory can offer much useful historical, political, and discursive context, especially since the BDS Movement uses the settler-colonial frame when describing the situation in Palestine/Israel. Postcolonial scholarship, however, lacks an in-depth focus on the rhetorical situation and rhetorical strategies used by Palestinians and their supporters in resistance discourse, including pro-BDS rhetoric. Though Said and other

postcolonial scholars acknowledge some of the rhetorical obstacles faced by Palestinian activists, including that “no other movement in history has had so difficult an opponent: a people recognized as the classical victim of history,” postcolonial scholarship has not fully investigated and explained the rhetorical constraints faced by the Palestinian-led BDS movement nor the rhetorical and framing strategies used by BDS movement activist-rhetors (Said, *Question* xxii). An in-depth exploration of the rhetorical situation and framing of pro-BDS discourse thus requires scholars to go beyond the postcolonial approach and examine the situation from a rhetorical perspective, which also demands a stronger focus on audience and the fitness or resonance of rhetorical moves and framing. A rhetorical lens that reveals common pro-BDS framing strategies can also elucidate the content of pro-BDS discourse for audiences that are more often exposed to the frames used by Israel’s advocates, which can, in turn, help people understand where discussions of the situation in Palestine/Israel too often fall back into pro-Israel and anti-Palestinian narratives that ignore the Palestinian perspective and framing.

Interdisciplinary Scholarship on the BDS Movement and Palestinian Resistance

In addition to postcolonial scholarship, interdisciplinary scholarship about Palestinian resistance to Israeli settler-colonialism and BDS movement discourse can not only help shed light on the history, political context, and rhetorical situation and ecology for pro-BDS discourse, but also present the common arguments on both sides of the BDS debate. This research from the fields of peace studies, conflict resolution, political science, cultural studies, internet studies, and other fields can help fill in the outlines of the BDS debate and BDS-related scholarship and thus help provide context to set up my rhetorical frame analysis (Hallward; Pearlman; Bakan and Abu-Laban; Siapera; Omer; Butler; Morrison). For example, some elements of the immediate historical context and *kairos*, or timing, for the BDS call can be found in interdisciplinary

scholarship and include the ending of the violent and ineffective Second Intifada (or “al-Aqsa Intifada”) and the construction of Israel’s separation barrier in the West Bank, which has confiscated Palestinian lands, separated many Palestinians from their farms and livelihoods, and made travel between West Bank cities much more difficult for Palestinians (Bakan and Abu-Laban 39; Morrison, “The Emergence” 231-237). Among the rest of Israel’s ongoing policies of occupation, including checkpoints, curfews, night raids, detentions without trials, home demolitions, etc., Israel’s separation barrier was a significant impetus for the 2005 BDS Call, which was issued on the one-year anniversary of the International Court of Justice ruling declaring the wall illegal (Bakan and Abu-Laban 39; Morrison, “The Emergence” 231-237). Hassan argues that since the end of the Oslo era and the death of esteemed Palestinian figures like Arafat, Edward Said, and the poet Mahmoud Darwish, the BDS movement fills “a political vacuum, taking on the role once held by the PLO to build Palestinian unity around a common goal and mobilize international solidarity” in the quest for Palestinian liberation (27). Other, more recent events have spurred the growth of BDS activism, including the 2008-2009 and 2014 Israeli assaults on Gaza, the Goldstone Report, the flotillas for Gaza, the 2015 reelection of Netanyahu, and other events in the region⁷ (UN Human Rights Council; “Whitewash Protocol”; Nabulsi 106; Booth).

Other scholars from multiple disciplines offer contextualization for BDS discourse in their discussion of earlier initiatives that used BDS tactics but predated the official Palestinian

⁷ Each of the following events have been referenced as formative for spurring increased Palestinian solidarity activism and support for BDS: the 2008-2009 Israeli war on Gaza (also known as Operation Cast Lead); the 2009 UN Human Rights Council’s “Goldstone Report” on Operation Cast Lead by the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict headed by Justice Richard Goldstone that determined that both Israel and Hamas may have committed war crimes against civilians during the conflict; Israel’s 2014 war on Gaza (Operation Protective Edge) for which Israel was heavily criticized for causing the high number of civilian casualties since 1967; and the widely condemned 2010 Israeli attack on the Turkish Mavi Marmara, part of the flotilla of ships full of Palestinian solidarity activists seeking to break the Israeli siege to deliver aid to Gaza (UN Human Rights Council; “Whitewash Protocol”; Nabulsi 106; Booth).

BDS Call in 2005. According to Feld, many activists from the US, Europe, and even Israel, called for boycotts of Israeli or settlement products beginning in the 1980s and going through the 2000s up until the official Palestinian BDS call in 2005 (134). The 2001 World Conference Against Racism held in Durban, South Africa, during the height of the Al-Aqsa Intifada (or Second Intifada) was one of the first times that NGOs and activists united in advocating use of the apartheid analogy and the BDS strategy in relation to the situation in Palestine/Israel (Erakat; Morrison, "The Emergence" 238-239). Feld includes a detailed discussion of the competing narratives around the Durban I and II conferences in relation to the debates over Palestine/Israel (134-143). Even though the final draft resolutions were toned down quite a bit, pro-Israel organizations and US government representatives harshly criticized the conference and walked out of Durban I after claiming it was anti-Israel and antisemitic for its criticism of Israel and for equating Israel's discriminatory treatment of Palestinians with "apartheid," in early draft language (Feld 137). Kiewe explains another reason why some supporters of Israel viewed the 2001 Durban conference as antisemitic: because several virulently anti-Semitic flyers and posters were displayed or passed out by some protestors (70). According to Clarke, early divestment campaigns in the US began on American and European college campuses during the Al-Aqsa Intifada; by 2003, more than 50 campuses had joined this new divestment movement (Clarke 45; Morrison "The Emergence" 241-246). One of the earliest divestment "battles" occurred in 2002 when professors at Harvard and MIT petitioned the universities to divest from Israel (Clarke 45; Morrison, "The Emergence" 245-246). Clarke points out that the student movement then went into decline after the US invasion of Iraq as energies shifted to opposition to the war until it was reborn in 2004 when the Presbyterian Church voted for divestment (46). McMahon also discusses the 2004 call from the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) as an important precursor to the 2005 BDS Call (69). Morrison describes the

PACBI call for boycott as precedent for the 2005 Call, and she also reviews other early examples of boycott initiatives between 2000 and 2005, including several initiatives during the Al-Aqsa Intifada from churches, college students in the US, and community-based organizations: Students for Justice in Palestine’s first divestment campaign in 2001, Hilary and Steve Rose’s 2002 open letter in *The Guardian* calling for an academic boycott of Israel, 2002 MIT and Harvard divestment petitions, and several church-related divestment campaigns after the death of American activist Rachel Corrie in 2003⁸ (“The Emergence” 241-247).

Some common counter arguments and critiques of BDS from Israel advocates also originated during this earlier period and include charges of antisemitism and complaints of “delegitimizing” the Jewish state, “singling out” Jews and Israel, and applying a “double-standard” to Israel by not focusing on other worse human-rights abusers (the latter two charges were similarly levied against supporters of the boycott of apartheid South Africa) (Brackman; Clarke 48; Ananth 129-131; Reut Institute, “Building a Political” 13-14; Rosenfeld; Kriek; Dohi; Khalek, “How Today’s”; Bueckert). For the 2002 Harvard-MIT and 2004 Presbyterian calls for divestment, critics and pro-Israel advocates argued that it was representative of a form of “new anti-Semitism” that denies Jews the right to self-determination through a two-state solution and focuses unfairly on Israel as a target of criticism (Clarke 45-46; Rosenfeld). Rabbi Abraham Cooper of the Simon Wiesenthal Center referred to the 2004 Presbyterian action as being “functionally anti-Semitic,” similarly to Summers and Foxman’s claim of “effective anti-Semitism”—a claim still frequently made about BDS today (Clarke 48). Fishman presents a common anti-BDS view by arguing that pro-BDS discourse “combines anti-Semitism with anti-Zionism,” which “is all the more dangerous because under the guise of a quest for justice its advocates skillfully conceal the strategic objective of isolating and destroying the Jewish state”

⁸ Rachel Corrie was an International Solidarity Movement (ISM) activist who was killed in 2003 by an Israeli bulldozer while trying to protect a Palestinian home from demolition in Gaza (Gordon).

(412). This equating of anti-Zionism with antisemitism is also prominently featured in the 2019 *The New Anti-Semites* report co-authored by StopAntiSemitism.org and the Zachar Legal Institute and endorsed by several right-leaning pro-Israel organizations (*The New Anti-Semites*). This report relies on a series of anecdotal examples to link the BDS Movement with antisemitism by using the controversial expanded International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism that equates anti-Zionism with antisemitism and includes harsh critiques of Israel in its definition of antisemitism (e.g., making comparisons with Israel and Nazism). These arguments painting the BDS movement as antisemitic are an important part of the context and constraints faced by pro-BDS activist-rhetors as they attempt to present their own arguments and counterframing in support of Palestinian rights.

Several scholars attempt to define the problem of how the BDS movement and Palestinian solidarity activists should address the frequent antisemitism charge against BDS. For example, in *Parting Ways: Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism*, Judith Butler counters the argument that BDS is anti-Semitic by drawing on the writings of Levinas, Benjamin, Arendt, and others to separate Jewishness and Judaism from Zionism and explore how Jewish philosophy and the history of Jewish struggles for social justice can be used to support a critique of Israeli policy that is not antisemitic in either function or intent (1-4). On the other hand, Omer argues that trying to distinguish Judaism from Zionism, and thus avoid charges of antisemitism, sometimes leads the Palestine solidarity movement to “dismiss Judaism and Jewish histories as irrelevant to its critique of Israeli policies,” which she sees as counterproductive (“It’s Nothing” 503). Omer also argues that the global Palestinian solidarity movement, which includes BDS, should incorporate conflict resolution strategies that recognize the Jewish Zionist narrative in addition to the Palestinian one—rather than oversimplifying the conflict into an easy “oppressor” vs. “oppressed” framework—if it is to be more effective and avoid charges of antisemitism (“It’s

Nothing” 502). Yi and Phillips argue that those on both sides of the BDS debate, “are locked in competing narratives of victimization,” and thus, “the moralistic BDS campaign against Israeli ‘oppression’ predictably meets a counter-campaign that charges BDS supporters with implicit or explicit ‘anti-Semitism’” (307). They further argue that “this Manichean contest erodes mutual trust and security, hardens each party’s position, and shrinks the space for internal dissent” (307). Lloyd and Schueller counter the antisemitism charge against BDS by explaining why they believe Israel is an appropriate target for boycott: Israel is dependent on other nations, it has a relatively open public sphere and ability for citizens to influence the government because of their desire to be seen as a “democratic” and civilized nation, Palestinians support the boycott, Israel could conceivably adhere to the stated BDS principles, and the boycott is based on nonviolent principles (2).

The debate over the political outcome of a one-state versus a two-state solution is also relevant to the antisemitism charge against the BDS movement. The BDS movement and call is conceived as a “rights-based” approach that deliberately avoids taking a stand on the political outcome of a one-state or two-state solution and instead focuses on the acquisition of human rights for all sectors of the Palestinian people. However, because some BDS leaders, including Omar Barghouti, have personally advocated for a one-state solution, many critics of BDS paint the entire movement as advocating a one-state solution, which is seen by many Jews and Israel advocates as an inherently antisemitic attempt to deny Jews the right to self-determination (Barghouti, “Putting” 57; Reut Institute, “Building a Political” 14; Erakat; Chaitin et al., “BDS”). This association weakens the credibility or *ethos* of the BDS movement and pro-BDS activist-rhetors in the eyes of many liberal Zionists and supporters of a two-state solution. This connection between BDS and the one-state solution by BDS critics further overlooks the fact that many Palestinians and BDS activists also favor a two-state solution, including about half of

Palestinians living in Gaza and the West Bank, as a 2015 survey indicated (Sawafta). These critics also often present the call for the right of return as merely an attempt to “destroy” Israel, an argument which ignores the precedent and justifications for the right of return in international law and overlooks the fact that many Palestinians believe this right could be implemented in a practical way as part of a two-state solution (Hallward, *Transnational* 110; Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, “Results”; Fishman).

Several scholars have discussed the implications of BDS activists’ frequent use of the term “apartheid” and the South Africa analogy in reference to Israeli policies toward the Palestinians, which can also provide useful context for my rhetorical frame analysis of pro-BDS discourse. Di Stefano and Henaway examine parallels between the South African and Palestinian-led BDS campaigns and argue that, like the anti-apartheid BDS campaign targeting South Africa, BDS for Palestinians is also an effective way to nonviolently campaign for human rights, build international solidarity, and end Israel’s colonial occupation (19). The annual Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) events on US and European college campuses in recent years have been one avenue for BDS activists to discursively connect the situation in Palestine/Israel to a familiar analogy and reframe the issue as one of racial oppression and discrimination rather than a “conflict” between two equal sides (Erakat). Though it can be a useful analogy to link the situation in Palestine/Israel to an earlier struggle for equality that most older Americans remember well, the use of the apartheid framework also incites fear in many supporters of Israel that BDS seeks a one-state solution and thus the end of Jewish self-determination in Israel similar to the end of white rule in South Africa through the “one person, one vote” strategy of the anti-apartheid struggle (Erakat; Morrison, “The Emergence” 249-250; Reut Institute, “Building a Political” 13). Some supporters of Israel have even claimed that the apartheid analogy is inherently anti-Semitic because it “demonizes” Israel, and opposition to IAW organizing has

even led to some cases in which university administrators have labeled IAW discourse as hate speech and even banned IAW activism altogether, which has occurred at Exeter and Central Lancashire universities in the UK in 2017, Northeastern University in Boston and Barnard College in 2014, Fordham University in 2017 where the university banned Students for Justice in Palestine from Fordham campus altogether, and a handful of Canadian universities where IAW posters were banned in 2009 (Weale and Morris; Butnick; Redden, “Fordham Denies”; Abu-Laban and Bakan 323-325).

In addition to analyses of the apartheid analogy and framing, some scholars have also written about the relationship between the Israeli government and apartheid South Africa—including both a discussion of similarities and differences between Israeli discriminatory policies and South African apartheid and a description of the official relationship between the two governments during the apartheid era. In the introduction to their edited collection, Soske and Jacobs summarize the debate about whether it is appropriate to apply the apartheid label to Israeli policies:

On one level, the parallels are unmistakable. Apartheid South Africa and Israel both originated through a process of conquest and settlement justified largely on the grounds of religion and ethnic nationalism. Both pursued a legalized, large-scale program of displacing the earlier inhabitants from their land. Both instituted a variety of discriminatory laws based on racial or ethnic grounds. In South Africa itself, the comparison is so widely accepted. . . that it is generally uncontroversial. Leading members of the antiapartheid struggle, including the Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Jewish activists such as Ronnie Kasrils, have repeatedly averred that the conditions in the West Bank and Gaza are ‘worse’ than apartheid. (4)

They go on to explain that, “no historical analogy is ever exact” and “comparisons reveal differences even as they underline similarities” (4). Other scholarship that examines the links between South Africa and Israel includes the collection edited by Israeli historian Ilan Pappé, *Israel and South Africa: The Many Faces of Apartheid*, which also investigates the similarities and differences between the colonialisms of these two cases. Sasha Polakow-Suransky goes beyond the apartheid analogy to describe the close alliance that developed between Israel and the South African apartheid regime.

Other interdisciplinary scholarship addresses the issue of academic freedom and the perceived risks of speaking out in favor of BDS and Palestinian rights in American higher education—a discussion that is relevant to understanding some of the constraints on pro-BDS discourse. While critics of BDS and the academic boycott of Israel claim that such a boycott hurts academic freedom for Israeli academics, supporters counter that Israeli academic institutions are complicit in Israeli abuses against the Palestinians and that Israel’s policies harm the academic freedom of Palestinians (PACBI). Abu-Laban and Bakan echo the argument of many pro-BDS and pro-Palestinian activists and assert that to claim critics of Israel are motivated by antisemitism “serves to silence public discourse and limit freedom of expression” (323). In *Uncivil Rites: Palestine and the Limits of Academic Freedom*, Steven Salaita discusses his own loss of academic freedom when his tenure-track position at UIUC was rescinded because of his outspoken critiques of Israel and activism on behalf of Palestinian rights. In *Out of Bounds: Academic Freedom and the Question of Palestine*, Abraham describes cases of U.S. scholars critical of the Israeli narrative facing vilification and abuse both from within and without the academy, leading to a perceived risk associated with doing Israel-Palestine scholarship (79-82). This risk has been heightened recently by the Trump administration’s official adoption of the controversial IHRA definition of antisemitism in its efforts to define anti-

Zionist advocacy for Palestinian rights as antisemitic, which will likely lead to further repression of pro-Palestinian and pro-BDS activism on college campuses as some aspects of BDS activism and rhetoric can be restricted and punished under this new interpretation of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (Kushner; Redden, “Trump Order”)⁹.

Some scholars of Palestinian and BDS activism focus on how the internet and social media is used both as a tool and as a virtual public sphere for transnational organizing and activism. Nabulsi and Aouragh both highlight the ways that digital activism, including in the BDS movement, has enabled a virtual mobility for Palestinians living in the occupied territories and the diaspora (Nabulsi 116; Aouragh 75). In her study of the use of #Palestine on Twitter, Siopera found that the BDS campaign was the topic of many activist-related tweets that were “not only factual/informational, but also emotive, rhetorical and offering encouragement” about BDS and Palestinian solidarity activism, suggesting implications for further rhetorical study of BDS-related social media (550-551). Hitchcock rhetorically analyzes BDS movement social media discourse and argues that the movement’s social media usage facilitates on-the-ground actions and delivers information to supporters while mostly avoiding the emotional connection and audience interactivity common to some other recent movements. Abu-Ayyash examines how Palestinian solidarity activists in the UK and Ireland used Twitter during Israel’s 2014 war on Gaza to introduce Palestinian stories to an international audience, provide information, and organize local solidarity actions while promoting human rights discourse about the situation. Aouragh brings together Habermas and Anderson to argue that, “with greater diversification of media structures, citizens have become attached to a (mediated) ‘global’ public sphere and transnational imagined community” in which “online mobility became part of the alternatives to overcome that lack of mobility” (Aouragh 26, 75).

⁹ A few weeks after the Trump Administration announced this new policy, the Harvard Law Review published a Note arguing that student activism on behalf of BDS and Palestinian rights is not a form of discrimination that should fall under civil rights protections (“Wielding Antidiscrimination Law”).

Some recent texts present overviews of various issues and debates related to Palestine/Israel and the BDS movement and are useful resources to help scholars understand various perspectives on different elements of the debates over Palestine/Israel and BDS. For example, *Social Justice and Israel/Palestine*, edited by Tapper and Sucharov, incorporates many short essays by contributing scholars discussing a range of issues relevant to how Palestine/Israel fits into contemporary social justice activism, including essays on settler-colonialism, international law, refugees, apartheid, intersectionality, and the BDS movement. This text includes contributions offering a variety of perspectives on the issues included, some from a pro-Israel view and some that take a pro-Palestinian and pro-BDS perspective. For a review of Zionist arguments against the BDS movement and in defense of Israel and the two-state solution, Cary Nelson's *Dreams Deferred: A Concise Guide to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict & the Movement to Boycott Israel* strives to be an anti-BDS encyclopedia and includes contributions on a range of topics related to the history of Israel, Zionism, the BDS movement, and other Israel and BDS-related issues. Nelson intends for his book to function as "a concise, accessible guide to the key terms and issues at stake," and he asserts that the book's contributors are "unequivocally opposed to the effort to boycott and eliminate the State of Israel" (5-6). These two texts offer insights into some of the arguments both for and against BDS.

Social Movement Studies and Movement Rhetorics

In the absence of significant rhetorical scholarship on the discourse and actions of the Palestinian-led BDS movement, it is useful to examine how social movement research can offer productive strategies and examples that can be incorporated into a rhetorical framing study of pro-BDS discourse. Social movement studies typically take two directions—one being a subfield of sociology, and the other, a subfield of rhetoric. Thus, social movement theory offers a way to connect social movement rhetorics with the sociological study of social movements and

interdisciplinary research on Palestinian resistance discourse, which can help elucidate the context for various rhetorical strategies, appeals, and framing choices of the BDS movement. While I will go more in-depth into the larger field of social movement rhetoric in the next chapter, in this section I review how social movement rhetorical studies and multidisciplinary social movement research address similar human rights movements to that of the BDS movement in order to help construct my own rhetorical framing analysis.

One angle from which scholars could approach pro-BDS discourse is to draw upon the analogy between Palestine/Israel and South Africa to look at the similarities and differences between the discourses in each case. While several scholars mentioned earlier have also promoted or investigated the apartheid comparison, some rhetorical social movement scholarship has examined the discourse of the South African anti-apartheid movement in depth, thus offering examples of how rhetorical theory can be useful for understanding the role social movement discourse plays in resolving long-term injustices like the situation in Palestine/Israel. Because the South African anti-apartheid movement is also a stated inspiration for the Palestinian-led BDS movement, such research is useful and relevant to my study and can help me develop my heuristic questions for analysis. For example, in *Finding the Words: A Rhetorical History of South Africa's Transition from Apartheid to Democracy*, Moriarty examines how Burkean identification relates to the changing discourse of leaders of both the ANC and the apartheid government of South Africa to argue that, "South Africa's rhetoric of violent conflict rested on constructions of the opposition as mortal enemies, violent foes who not only wanted to share political power, but wanted to destroy the other group as well" (9). Moriarty argues that the main reason why South Africa avoided the violent civil wars that accompanied the transition from white minority rule in other African countries is that "its political leaders changed the way they talked about the political scene" (3). He argues that the primary ways in which leaders on both

sides shifted how they discussed the situation included how they used identification and division to define the opposition versus the “us,” along with how they characterized relationships between important actors and identified who the major actors were in the first place (3). In another rhetorical study of South African discourse, *An African Athens: Rhetoric and the Shaping of Democracy in South Africa*, Salazar discusses the rhetorical aspects of South Africa’s transition to democracy at the end of apartheid. He focuses on the rhetoric of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report and the 1996 South African constitution after the end of apartheid, and his discussion can, in some ways, be seen as a blueprint for the deliberative discourse of democratic decolonization in Palestine/Israel. I will discuss my heuristic questions for coding more in-depth in Chapter 3, including how I incorporate Moriarty’s focus on Burkean identification and division as part of my own analysis of pro-BDS discourse.

Social movement scholars who take a sociological approach can also offer useful methods and theories to help ground a rhetorical study of social movement discourse. For example, Keck and Sikkink’s research on transnational advocacy networks suggests that the failure of Palestinians and their supporters to achieve any significant gains via traditional channels of domestic and international advocacy may be a primary reason for the emergence of the transnational BDS movement:

Transnational advocacy networks appear most likely to emerge around those issues where (1) channels between domestic groups and their governments are blocked or hampered or where such channels are ineffective for resolving a conflict, setting into motion the ‘boomerang’ pattern of influence characteristic of these networks. . . . Where channels of participation are blocked, the international arena may be the only means that domestic activists have to gain attention to their issues. (12)

Thus, rather than a unique example of unfairly singling out the Jewish state, as BDS critics claim, international solidarity with the Palestinian-led BDS movement may instead reflect a common occurrence and feature of international human rights campaigns that seek international solidarity when domestic protest and pressure is blocked or ineffective, which is the case for Palestinians living under the harsh repression of both Israel's occupying forces and, more recently, the Palestinian Authority as well (*Israel and Palestine*; "Palestine: Authorities").

Other social movement scholars focus on how counterpublics develop social movement and human rights frames and define conceptions of "justice." Kennedy discusses the role of a transnational public sphere for international activist discourses and the problem of the competing narratives (similar to frames) of "human rights" versus "security," a narrative battle that often arises in discussions of Palestine/Israel and one that is relevant to my study of framing (72-73). Amartya Sen examines the concept of "justice" and the role of the public sphere in determining what is "just," arguing that, "The role of unrestricted public reasoning is quite central to democratic politics in general and to the pursuit of social justice in particular" (44). He also connects "justice" to the concept of "fairness," and emphasizes the necessity of avoiding bias in our determinations of justice, as well as "taking note of the interests and concerns of others as well, and in particular the need to avoid being influenced by our respective vested interests, or by our personal priorities or eccentricities or prejudices" (54). In addition to her important work on counterpublics, Nancy Fraser discusses the limitations of defining justice based on the artificial Westphalian borders of nation states. She argues that "misframing" happening when people cast "what are actually transnational injustices as national matters" and when "affected non-citizens are wrongly excluded from consideration" (6). Her discussion is reminiscent of the "misframing" that occurs when the injustices faced by Palestinians are divided up and diluted through the process of separating the Palestinian people into the distinct categories of refugees, those living

under occupation, and Palestinian citizens of Israel, even though the source of injustice is the same for all three segments of the Palestinian population.

Research on Palestinian Resistance, Solidarity, and BDS Movement Discourse

In this last section, I review the small number analyses of BDS movement discourse that relate most closely to my own project and thus help provide some useful examples for my research. These studies offer some productive avenues for studying BDS movement rhetoric, but because they come primarily from the fields of peace studies and conflict resolution and are thus outside of the rhetorical field, they overlook some discursive components that a rhetorical frame analysis could address to achieve a deeper understanding of pro-BDS framing and rhetorical strategies, including how resonant and fitting these strategies may be for targeted audiences.

Studies of the history of Palestinian nonviolent activism provide useful background for understanding how the BDS movement emerged out of a tradition of Palestinian popular resistance and demonstrate that nonviolent tactics, including boycotts, have been part of the Palestinian struggle since before the founding of Israel. Scholarship about the history of Palestinian nonviolent activism often focus on the First Intifada, in which the vast majority of organized actions, including boycotts, strikes, tax refusal, mass protests, etc., were nonviolent in nature, even though some participants also threw stones and Molotov cocktails (Sharp 3; Abu-Nimer 90; Mishal and Aharoni 39-43; Hallward and Shaver 541; Grant). Mishal and Aharoni emphasize that the majority of official communiqués issued by Palestinian leaders of the First Intifada advocated for nonviolent forms of resistance (39-43). Several other peace and conflict resolution scholars also discuss Palestinian nonviolent activism in more recent decades (Hallward; Kaufman et al.; Pearlman; Darweish and Rigby; Abu-Nimer; Chaitin et al.). Arens and Kaufman analyze Israeli perceptions of Palestinian resistance actions in light of collective

Jewish memories of victimhood and conclude by arguing that purely nonviolent Palestinian actions are most effective for a Jewish audience (231). In her study of the Palestinian national movement's use of both violent and nonviolent strategies, Pearlman emphasizes that mass nonviolent protest requires that a movement "have or create internal cohesion," which fragmented Palestinian political institutions have typically lacked because they are divided between Hamas, Fatah, and other rival Palestinian factions and split between the West Bank and Gaza, thus making a coordinated nonviolent movement based in the Occupied Territories difficult (16).

Chaitin et al. bring a conflict resolution perspective to one of the very few studies of both pro- and anti-BDS movement discourse in "'BDS – It's Complicated': Israeli, Jewish, and Others' Views on the Boycott of Israel" and "Polarized Words: Discourse on the Boycott of Israel, Social Justice and Conflict Resolution." In "'BDS – It's Complicated,'" Chaitin et al. surveyed attitudes of Jews and non-Jews from Israel and other western countries regarding BDS and antisemitism and found that non-Jews were less likely to view BDS as being antisemitic and more likely to favor BDS when compared with Jewish respondents. In "Polarized Words," the authors again analyzed attitudes toward BDS, this time by analyzing the language used to discuss the issue, and they found that both supporters and opponents of BDS often used polarizing language of attack, ethnocentrism, "us" vs. "them" rhetoric, and emotionally loaded terms, all of which amounts to "rhetorical violence that expressed opposite ideological-political perspectives, with each side disregarding the legitimacy of the 'other'" (287). The authors further argue that a social justice perspective on BDS tends to focus only on Palestinian rights while ignoring Israeli Jewish rights, and they advocate for a conflict-resolution approach to the subject of BDS that would include dialogue to educate people on both sides of the debate, encourage more nuanced intellectual discussion, and avoid the current unproductive polarization around BDS (287-289).

While Chaitin et al. examine discourse and attitudes on both sides of the BDS debate, and they include a useful literature review of other research on the BDS movement, they do not focus on framing, nor do they consider other rhetorical aspects of BDS discourse.

Atalia Omer considers identity and framing in relation to Palestinian solidarity activism and discourses in her study of American Jews who are redefining their Jewish identity by questioning Zionism and supporting Palestinian rights in *Days of Awe: Reimagining Jewishness in Solidarity with Palestinians*. Omer, an Israeli scholar of religion, conflict, and peace studies, conducted in-depth interviews with dozens of Jewish Palestinian solidarity activists to find out how their understandings and common framings of Palestine/Israel changed as a result of their questioning of mainstream Jewish and Zionist *doxa* regarding Palestine/Israel. She finds that “ethical outrage, solidarity with Palestinians, and struggles for social justice in other areas motivate activists to reimagine Jewishness through liturgical and hermeneutical innovation and social protest” (7). Though Omer does not focus in depth on framing, her research offers a useful exploration of how some American Jews come to understand the Palestinian perspective and decide to become activists in solidarity with Palestinians—and how they end up moving from accepting a pro-Israel framing of the situation to instead understand the situation in terms of *oppression, human rights, and injustice*. Omer argues that many of these Jewish Palestinian solidarity activists, who belong to groups like JVP, JFREJ, INN, CJNV, ATL, Open Hillel, and other groups that support Palestinian rights and an end to the occupation (and in some cases who support the BDS movement as well), have often experienced cognitive dissonance resulting from their encounters with the Palestinian perspective after having been incubated in Zionist pro-Israel narratives for much of their lives: “The psychological stress caused by such dissonance often drives them to a transformative process that ultimately disrupts ontological and epistemological certainties as well as the narratives that undergird them” (71). Omer’s research also reveals how

many Jewish activists came to Palestinian solidarity through intersectional organizing and activism after being politicized through other social movements, including LGBTQ+ rights, antiracism, anti-war activism, women's rights, etc., thus emphasizing the role of intersectionality in linking many social movements to Palestinian solidarity and BDS (79-94). Omer's work sheds light on the mechanisms that induce many American Jews to support Palestinians and the BDS movement, including the important roles played by identity, solidarity, and framing.

One study that does touch on framing in relation to BDS discourse is Suzanne Morrison's examination of the early development of the BDS movement and her in-depth look at the "We Divest" campaign, in which she looks at social movement framing in relation to the BDS movement (Morrison, "The Emergence"; Morrison, "Organizing the Boycott"). In "The Emergence of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement," after reviewing some aspects of the political and social context that served as opportunities to mobilize supporters for the BDS movement, Morrison devotes a few paragraphs to a brief overview of the early BDS movement's use of collective action frames to justify targeting Israel with a South African model of BDS as a remedy for Israel's violations of international law, infringement of Palestinian human rights, and apartheid-like policies (247-250). While Morrison's study considers BDS framing and offers some useful discussion of BDS frames that I also examine in my own research, she approaches her analysis from a political science perspective rather than a rhetorical one, and her work does not address my own particular research questions.

Another scholar of BDS discourse who comes closest to a rhetorical approach to Palestinian solidarity discourse is Maia Carter Hallward. In *Transnational Activism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, Hallward uses a peace studies lens and applies discourse analysis to case studies of BDS initiatives in order to examine the controversies and debates on both sides regarding specific BDS campaigns. Rather than looking at the effectiveness of claims on either

side of the debate, however, she examines BDS discourse “to demonstrate how sets of assumptions about the issues at hand in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, vary in their conception of ‘peace,’ and draw upon different forms of rhetorical, material, and relational power” (2). Though she doesn’t cite Burke’s work on identification and division, Hallward also touches on issues of identification in her analysis of BDS discourse on both sides of the debate:

The BDS movement is so contentious in the United States because of the centrality of debates about identity, and the mobilization of fear regarding the safety of the identities in question. Polarization surrounding BDS tactics is emphasized by opponents of BDS who portray pro-BDS activists as part of a coherent, homogenized ‘out-group’ that poses a threat to a particular ‘in-group.’ (33)

Some of Hallward’s work sometimes directly or indirectly touches on elements of audience and rhetorical strategies, though she does not investigate either issue in depth. For example, her argument echoes Abraham’s and Bawarshi’s discussion of affect, transference, belatedness, and uptake memories in their contributions to *Toward a Critical Rhetoric on the Israel-Palestine Conflict* by pointing out how BDS opponents “have drawn on collective memories of Jewish victimhood and trauma to frame BDS efforts as a threat not only to Jewish identity but also to the State of Israel” (36). She also describes how BDS activists tend to focus on the grassroots level while anti-BDS activists often prefer to target figures of power and authority, such as college administrators, politicians, and other officials (59). She also emphasizes the differences between the peace studies approach that aligns with postcolonial theory and pro-BDS discourse versus a conflict resolution approach that is more typical of Israel’s advocates:

Nonviolent resistance tends to seek fundamental system-level change and generally operates in situations of asymmetric power. Consequently, the focus and language of

nonviolence is different from that used for dialog and conflict resolution, which often presumes symmetrical parties and often seeks to preserve the status quo with slight modifications to end overt conflict. (105)

Hallward even briefly addresses audience and potential rhetorical effectiveness or fitness:

By connecting the values of their audiences—peace, justice, environmental sustainability, and human rights—with their BDS campaigns, activists hoped their audiences would experience cognitive dissonance, rethink their views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the US role in sustaining Israel’s occupation, and engage in concrete action for change. (189)

Hallward’s research also illustrates how Orientalism and Islamophobia work in the context of the BDS debate in the US, such that “anti-Muslim bias and the negative stereotypes of Muslims especially prevalent in the United States since the September 11, 2001, attacks” have led to Jewish voices often being privileged in BDS debates and Jews being frequently “sought out for their opinions on BDS campaigns, whereas Muslim and Arab community members often felt silenced” (183).

As indicated by this review of interdisciplinary research on discourse related to Palestine/Israel and the BDS movement, while some useful and productive scholarship has investigated the history of Palestinian resistance to Israeli settler colonialism and the discourse of the Palestinian solidarity movement, there has been very little attention from rhetoric scholars specifically to the discourse of pro-BDS movement activist-rhetors. Neither the rhetoric of official movement leaders, nor that of rank-and-file supporters has been investigated in depth from a rhetorical perspective, which leaves a significant gap in the study of this transnational social movement.

Conclusion

This review of interdisciplinary scholarship on the BDS movement has helped me, and hopefully other scholars as well, discern where gaps in scholarly approaches exist, provide some useful examples to help me develop my heuristic for analysis, and furnish me with some useful background and context as I consider various aspects of the rhetorical situation and ecologies for pro-BDS discourse in later chapters. Reviewing this research demonstrates that while much is known about BDS, there are still significant gaps in the rhetorical understanding of pro-BDS discourse. Extant scholarship from various disciplines reveals some important elements of the historical and political context for BDS and transnational nonviolent Palestinian solidarity activism, including some aspects of the *kairos* of why the BDS call was launched when it was (after the end of the Second Intifada and the ICJ ruling that declared the Israeli separation barrier illegal) and how changing events in the region and internationally have impacted audience reaction and support for pro-BDS discourse (including the Gaza Wars in 2008-2009 and 2014, etc.); the basic arguments for and against BDS and its focus on Palestinian rights; how some audiences in the West have perceived the BDS movement so far; and some rhetorical challenges and obstacles faced by BDS activists, including Islamophobia, Western sensitivity to antisemitism and memory of past Jewish trauma, and the competing narratives and framing of “human rights” versus “security.” Social movement theory also offers a useful complement to rhetorical and interdisciplinary approaches to the study of pro-BDS discourse. The existing interdisciplinary scholarship, however, neglects in-depth rhetorical analysis of the strategies and appeals used by BDS leaders and grassroots-level activists and the resonance of these appeals with the BDS movement’s audiences given the constraints of the evolving rhetorical situation and ecology. Thus, investigating pro-BDS discourse more holistically requires a rhetorical lens, and, as I argue more in-depth in the next chapter, rhetorical frame analysis is a particularly

productive approach that will address these gaps and help scholars come to a deeper understanding of the BDS movement and its rhetorical moves.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

My review of existing relevant interdisciplinary research into Palestine/Israel and BDS movement-related discourse in Chapter 2 demonstrates that no rhetorical studies have yet focused on analyzing the discourse of the Palestinian-led BDS movement.¹⁰ Therefore, in order to investigate pro-BDS discourse in depth to answer my research questions about how official and vernacular pro-BDS activist-rhetors frame the BDS movement, their goals, and their responses to evolving rhetorical situations and challenges, including sensitivity to antisemitism, as well as to look at how they tailor these frames for different audiences and how resonant or fitting these framing strategies are likely to be for these audiences, I have built my own approach to rhetorical frame analysis by developing a multidisciplinary heuristic list of questions for coding that borrows concepts and methods from rhetorical theory and criticism, social movement rhetorics, and both sociological and communications-related frame analysis. This rhetorical frame analysis study can enable academic audiences and rhetoric scholars to gain a deeper understanding of the ideology, arguments, assumptions, and potential effectiveness and resonance of this controversial social movement's rhetoric and, in the process, examine a large enough corpora of pro-BDS texts to be able to draw generalizable conclusions about pro-BDS

¹⁰ Though it does not approach the topic from a rhetorical perspective, one study that does touch on framing in relation to BDS discourse that I also mention in Chapter 2 is Suzanne Morrison's examination of the early development of the BDS movement and her analysis of the "We Divest" campaign, in which she touches on social movement framing in relation to the BDS movement (Morrison, "The Emergence"; Morrison, "Organizing the Boycott"). In "The Emergence of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement," after reviewing some aspects of the political and social context that served as opportunities to mobilize supporters for the BDS movement, Morrison devotes a few paragraphs to a brief overview of the early BDS movement's use of collective action frames to justify targeting Israel with a South African model of BDS as a remedy for Israel's violations of international law, infringement of Palestinian human rights, and apartheid-like policies (247-250). These frames discussed by Morrison also match with the common more recent framing strategies I have found in my research of pro-BDS texts.

framing. In this chapter, I describe the methodology and methods I have developed and employed in my rhetorical frame analysis of both official and vernacular pro-BDS texts. I will describe my process step by step in order to present my approach as a possible blueprint for similar rhetorical frame analyses that could be applied to the discourse of other social movements as well.

Why Frame Analysis?

Before settling on frame analysis as a central part of my rhetorical analysis methodology, I examined other aspects of rhetorical theory and methods for analysis. Because the BDS movement is part of a larger transnational social movement for Palestinian rights, social movement criticism, sometimes also called movement rhetorics or movement studies, would be the methodology and subfield of rhetorical studies most relevant to the study of pro-BDS discourse. Brock links social movement criticism with other sociological approaches, including sociolinguistic, feminist, and generic approaches (21). Cathcart asserts that movements themselves are rhetorical acts, and so understanding the rhetoric of a social movement will enable scholars to understand the movement itself and the ways movements use language to induce individuals in the audience to identify with the movement (361). According to Griffin, in order to analyze a rhetorical movement, it needs to be “isolated, analyzed, evaluated, and described, so that [the critic] can say, for the particular historical movement which he investigates: this was the pattern of public discussion, the configuration of discourse, the physiognomy of persuasion, peculiar to the movement” (185). There are multiple approaches within movement criticism, and Riches and Sillars admit that rhetorical movement studies lack a clear form, definition, or methodology (287).

While doing research into methods of social movement rhetorical criticism and ideological criticism, I discovered that the subfield of social movement criticism lacks a specific agreed-upon set of methods for analysis. During my research, I was also introduced to frame analysis as a possible method for studying social movement rhetoric. One of the sources that drew my attention to frame analysis as a possible methodology for my project was Stevens and Malesh's *Active Voices: Composing a Rhetoric of Social Movements*. In their introduction, Malesh and Stevens review some of the multidisciplinary theories relevant to the rhetorical study of social movements and argue for the inclusion of framing analysis to "offer an interdisciplinary portal through which rhetoricians can engage social movement scholarship" (10). The authors briefly discuss the history of how Goffman's sociological frame analysis was first applied to the study of social movement discourse when social movement scholars like Snow et al. began studying social movement frames in order "to account for how individuals come to align their often apparently divergent understandings into shared interpretations that can support collective action" (10). From this first brief account of frame analysis, I then investigated social movement frame analysis scholarship more in depth and determined that it could be fruitfully combined with some other concepts and methods from rhetorical theory to serve as a useful method for answering my research questions. Another text from social movement rhetoric I drew from when developing my coding heuristic is *What Democracy Looks Like: The Rhetoric of Social Movements and Counterpublics* edited by Foust et al. This text reviews various theories and research from the rhetorical study of counterpublics and social movements, and later chapters include case study analyses of social movements and campaigns related to women's health clinics, gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights, Latinx vernacular discourse, activism in China, and rhetoric about Wikileaks. In addition to Stevens and Malesh's call to include framing analysis in

the rhetorical study of social movements, I have also incorporated several relevant methods and questions for analysis from these chapters and case studies into my heuristic for rhetorical frame analysis. After briefly reviewing some important applications of frame analysis to the study of social movements and their discourse, I will then describe my own methods and processes for research and coding in detail.

While rhetorical analysis is useful for attending to rhetorical situation, audience, and other aspects of discourse and language use in context, frame analysis can reveal the underlying frames that have come to be regarded “as a central dynamic in understanding the character and course of social movements” (Benford and Snow 611). Originally derived from Erving Goffman’s sociological scholarship, frame analysis has often been used in the field of sociology to analyze social movement discourse (Goffman; Benford and Snow; Johnston and Klandermans; Kuypers; Zald; Hope; Tarrow). In addition to the sociological study of social movement discourse, the concept of framing processes has also been applied in the fields of cognitive psychology, social psychology, linguistics, communications and media studies, political science (Benford and Snow 611; Lakoff; Noakes and Johnston 3)¹¹. Kuypers describes “framing” as “the process whereby communicators act. . . to construct a particular point of view

¹¹ Some useful studies of political and social movement framing strategies from the field of cognitive science can also be found in the work of cognitive linguist George Lakoff. In addition to his scholarly publications, Lakoff’s *The Political Mind: A Cognitive Scientist’s Guide to Your Brain and its Politics* and *Don’t Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate* are written for a wider audience and have been used by many progressive activists as handbooks for how to successfully frame a variety of progressive issues (Parrot; Bai). Lakoff has long argued that conservative politicians and activists in the US have been more effective at framing political issues to support their views and that progressives need to focus more on framing if they are to be politically successful in the future (*Political Mind, Don’t Think*). Lakoff’s view of framing is based on cognitive linguistics, and he argues that “within the brain itself, frames are natural structures that have evolved from what brains do and are put together out of simple units” and that narratives are more complex stories made of smaller units of frames that “use cultural prototypes, themes, images, and icons” to tell stories about people and events (*Political Mind* 23). Lakoff’s discussion of the use of frames and metaphors in political narratives is also useful for my rhetorical frame analysis of pro-BDS discourse by offering methods for identifying frames and discerning the ideologies behind framing choices.

that encourages the facts of a given situation to be viewed in a particular manner, with some facts made more or less noticeable (even ignored) than others” (182). Noakes and Johnston offer a simple explanation of the utility of the framing concept for understanding social movement discourse:

In the simplest of terms, framing functions in much the same way as a frame around a picture: attention gets focused on what is relevant and important and away from extraneous items in the field of view. Even when oppression is intense or when leaders’ tactics open up clear opportunities for action, individuals must be convinced that an injustice has occurred, persuaded that collective action is called for, and motivated to act if a social movement is to occur. (Noakes and Johnston 2)

Two of the most important scholars of social movement framing are Benford and Snow, who, along with several other important scholars, have developed many of the accepted theories about the nature and functions of framing in social movement discourse. They describe “collective action frames” as being used by social movements to simplify and condense aspects of the world in order to mobilize supporters, gain bystander converts, and refute opponents—all clearly rhetorical goals of social movement rhetors (614). Benford and Snow also argue that the most important framing tasks of social movement actors are to diagnose problems, propose solutions, and motivate supporters (615). Through his work on transnational social movements, Sidney Tarrow also emphasizes the importance of framing and the difficulty in using frames to overcome preexisting *doxa*: “Presenting frames that are new and challenging but still resonate with existing cultural understandings is a delicate balancing act, especially since society’s ‘common sense’ buttresses the position of elites and defends inherited inequalities” (61). For example, though it seemed natural for some people to translate the *equality* or *equal rights* frame

from the founders' concept of white men landowners' *equality* (i.e., "all men are created equal") to the US civil rights movement and then later to the women's movement, others' "common sense" did not view these later civil rights movements as analogous because of racist and sexist beliefs that African Americans and women were inherently different and unequal to white men. This challenge seems especially applicable to pro-BDS discourse that has to contend with preexisting anti-Palestinian, Orientalist, and Islamophobic beliefs and stereotypes among US and Western audiences that promote views of Palestinians as hateful and violent and of Jews and Israelis as perpetual victims. Keck and Sikkink also highlight the importance of framing for what they refer to as "transnational advocacy networks." They argue that effective framing is essential to the success of transnational networks of human rights activists:

An effective frame must show that a given state of affairs is neither natural nor accidental, identify the responsible party or parties, and propose credible solutions. These aims require clear, powerful messages that appeal to shared principles. . . . To be credible the information produced must be reliable and well documented. To gain attention, the information must be timely and dramatic. (19)

In *Speaking Rights to Power: Constructing Political Will*, Brysk examines the discourse and framing strategies used by human rights struggles and emphasizes the importance of persuasion and rhetoric to human rights work:

The struggle for human rights depends on recognizing suffering, connecting to its victims, and mobilizing political will to transform the power structures that are the source of abuse or neglect. . . . In our times, the struggle for human rights depends increasingly on mobilizing persuasive rhetoric to garner global solidarity—speaking rights to power. (1)

She further argues that in order to understand why certain human rights struggles succeed when others fail, “we need to analyze the successful strategies and appeals that have defied the odds and brought attention and action to far-flung human rights struggles” (1). Her studies have led her to the conclusion that successful human rights campaigns “follow the same rhetorical strategies of successful political campaigns: employing charismatic or authoritative speakers, compelling narratives, plots performed in public space, well-framed messages, skillful use of appropriate media, and targeting audiences” (3). Brysk’s study of human rights campaigns illustrates the importance of framing for a study of pro-BDS discourse.

Johnston’s and Noakes’ collection, *Frames of Protest: Social Movements and the Framing Perspective*, provides a historical review of how frame analysis has been applied to social movement discourse and a few useful examples of social movement frame analysis. The book’s introduction brings together research on framing from the past 20 years and asserts that frame analysis was first applied to social movement discourse in Todd Gitlin’s 1980 text on media framing of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) (Noakes and Johnston 3; Gitlin). Noakes and Johnston also highlight Gamson et al.’s 1982 *Encounters with Unjust Authority* for introducing the idea that social movement actors often have to “break the frame” or reframe situations and events in a different way from the dominant elite media and political frames, which some other social movement scholars would refer to as “counterframing” (Noakes and Johnston 3; Gamson et al.). Subsequent chapters discuss the framing processes of various social movements, including the suffragist movement, gay liberation, Eastern European social movements, the Puerto Rican identity movement, and others. Some of these studies focus on media frames and some focus on the framing of social movement leaders and/or participants. This collection demonstrates some methods for doing frame analysis of social movement

discourse, including how to identify frames from the language used, analyze counterframing, and discern ideology from frames, all of which I have incorporated into my heuristic for analysis.

Another benefit of combining a frame analysis approach with concepts from rhetorical theory to investigate pro-BDS discourse is that focusing on framing can help me avoid having to proffer an unbiased version of Palestine/Israel history when discussing events relevant to pro-BDS discourse. Because the history of Palestine/Israel is so contested, selecting which historical events to highlight and taking the role of arbiter of “the facts” of the situation becomes an impossible task that compromises my own position as a researcher rather than a proponent of a particular perspective on the situation. By focusing on framing, I can let the pro-BDS texts themselves reveal what historical events, policies, etc. are viewed as relevant context and exigencies through the frames chosen by pro-BDS rhetors. For example, as part of the framing strategies in the original 2005 BDS Call, the newly-formed BDS movement indicates what recent and ongoing events serve as exigencies that explain and justify the creation of the 2005 Call and the BDS movement itself (for a more in-depth discussion of the 2005 BDS Call, see Chapter 4).

Selecting Corpora of Texts: Both Official and Vernacular

Before I could develop and apply a heuristic list of questions for coding, I first had to select a corpora of pro-BDS texts to code and analyze that would be representative of pro-BDS discourse more generally. My use of “discourse” adheres to Foucault’s use of the term, which includes multiple texts of different formats that represent a community of speakers, sometimes called a “discourse community,” that produces, maintains, and polices what counts as truth or not (Foucault). For example, both pro-BDS leaders and grassroots student activists would be part of a larger transnational BDS movement discourse community. Thus, I tried to select a sample of

texts for my corpora that are representative of texts produced by the larger BDS movement discourse community.

While many rhetorical scholars of social movements traditionally focus on the rhetoric of movement leaders (Griffin; Simons), other rhetoricians advocate for analyzing the vernacular rhetoric of rank-and-file members (Hauser, *Vernacular Voices*; Hauser and McClellan). I have chosen to study the discourse of both leaders and grassroots members of the BDS movement to provide a more comprehensive picture of BDS movement discourse than would be gained from examining the discourse of movement leaders alone. In *Active Voices*, DeGenero argues that, “Too many times, scholars of rhetoric “have constructed ‘great man’ narratives that focus on leaders and elites” (199). Hauser and McClellan build on this assertion to argue that “a mature theory of social movements must account for resistance performed in the intertextual symbolic exchanges of everyday discourse” (26). They further explain that, “National and international discourse communities, and—more importantly for movement studies—counterpublic and subaltern spheres, all speak a distinct language and perform a specific cultural inscription in their everyday interactions: this is what we refer to as a community’s vernacular rhetoric” (29). Taking a cue from DeGenero and Hauser and McClellan, I have chosen to analyze the discourse of official BDS movement leaders along with the more vernacular rhetoric of pro-BDS student activist-rhetors on US college campuses in order to get a more well-rounded understanding of the rhetorical moves made by this BDS movement discourse community. Comparing the framing strategies of both official and vernacular pro-BDS discourse enables me to determine the consistency of frames used by leaders and grassroots activists in the US, as the BDS movement is in reality a loose network of many local organizations in addition to the official Palestinian leadership. For example, if different and contradictory frames are used by varied groups at the

leadership versus grassroots levels, then such a lack of consistency could affect the resonance of BDS framing for various audiences. I also recognize and discuss instances when the line between official and vernacular rhetoric becomes blurred, including when student activists borrow materials from the leadership of Palestinian or other BDS organizations.

In selecting my corpora, I used a sampling method similar to the initial sampling method commonly used in grounded theory, even though I do not adopt grounded theory as my entire methodology. As Corbin and Strauss explain, researchers should take the idea or phenomenon they want to study and then look for “groups of individuals, an organization, or community representative of that phenomenon can be selected for study. For example, if a researcher wants to study nurses' work, he or she would go to where nurses are working—a hospital, clinic, or home (or all three)—to watch what they do” (8). Therefore, since I wanted to study both official and vernacular student-created pro-BDS discourse, I had to figure out where and when BDS leaders and student activists engage in their pro-BDS activism—where and when I would find pro-BDS rhetors and their pro-BDS texts. In the case of BDS movement leaders, I looked to the official website of the BDS Movement and texts written by Omar Barghouti, the co-founder, frequent spokesperson for the BDS Movement, and member of the BNC. For student discourse, I decided to focus on the most important time of the year for Palestinian solidarity activism on US college campuses: Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW).

To select my sample of official pro-BDS texts, I turned to both the Palestinian Boycott National Committee (BNC) official leadership body of the Palestinian-led BDS Movement and BDS co-founder and spokesperson Omar Barghouti. In addition to examining the 2005 BDS Call statement put out by the BNC and later published on the official BDS Movement website, I also examined over 200 official statements from the BNC found on the BDS Movement website from

the earliest posts in 2008 up to posts from May 2017 when I finished collecting BNC statements for my analysis, along with the pages “Intro to BDS,” “Israel Settler Colonialism and Apartheid,” and “FAQs” (all found at www.bdsmovement.net and listed in the Appendix). I also analyze several Omar Barghouti op-eds, articles, and interviews published in Western and American news sources between 2006 and 2017 (including texts found in the *New York Times*, *New York Daily News*, *The Nation*, and *The Intercept*) and an article from the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, along with his 2011 book, *Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions: The Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights*, which has been referred to as the BDS handbook or “manifesto” (“Boycott, Divestment”). I chose all of these texts in order to find samples that would best represent the official positions of the Palestinian leadership of the BDS movement. I tried to select a large enough corpora of texts so that my findings would be more generalizable and be most likely to accurately represent the typical framing and rhetorical strategies of BDS movement leaders.

In addition to analyzing official BDS movement discourse, I also wanted to look at more vernacular pro-BDS discourse, so I used convenience sampling and turned to local BDS activism in the Washington D.C. metro area where I lived at the time. To maximize the pro-BDS texts I could gather in a limited time frame and target the time of year with the highest level of Palestinian solidarity activism on US college campuses, I chose to attend annual Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) actions at four local universities, including Georgetown, George Mason University, George Washington University, and American University, all of which had active pro-BDS student organizations [Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) for three of them and Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA) at George Mason]. During March and April of 2017, I attended IAW events at each of these universities, and I took careful notes on speakers and

discussions and gathered physical copies or photographs of dozens of leaflets, posters, displays, flyers, etc. I also gathered all Facebook posts from each student group that either related to IAW events or were posted during each university's designated IAW. Because of limits to my own schedule and the fact that some universities' IAW events overlapped, I was only able to attend one or two events at each university (two at all universities except American University, where I was only able to attend one event).

I have chosen not to include the names of any student activists I encountered in my research because of the risks associated with pro-BDS activism in the US, partly due to online blacklists like the websites Canary Mission and the AMCHA Initiative, along with anti-BDS legislation that has passed or been introduced in several US states and at the federal level. Though I do not include any identifying information about student activists, I do at times include the names of well known outside speakers or public figures associated with these events since they are already renowned and public about their Palestine advocacy.

For both official and vernacular pro-BDS discourse, I chose to analyze English language texts because the BDS movement primarily publishes its materials in English. The BNC and its spokespersons target an international audience of supporters and potential participants who are united by English as the most common international language. The BDS movement's website is published in English, as are Barghouti's op-eds and interviews. Not only does the BDS movement use English to target an international audience, but also English is the primary language of Americans, an important intended audience for BDS discourse because the US government is Israel's main ally and sponsor and provides Israel with over \$3 billion per year in military and other foreign aid, more than any other ally (Spetalnick; United States).

Developing an Interdisciplinary Heuristic for Coding

Because frame analysis, ideological rhetorical criticism, social movement rhetoric, and several other methods of rhetorical criticism all attempt to investigate and discern the ideologies and messages incorporated in social movements' rhetorical strategies, these various theories all fit together well for analyzing the rhetorical strategies of BDS movement discourse. Therefore, I decided to use interdisciplinary concepts from all of the above theories and methodologies to develop my own heuristic list of questions to guide my coding and analysis of my corpora of pro-BDS texts to help decipher the rhetorical and framing strategies of the BDS movement and answer my research questions: *How do official and vernacular pro-BDS activist-rhetors frame the movement and their goals? How do they frame their responses to the evolving rhetorical situations and challenges (including Western sensitivity to antisemitism)? How do they tailor these frames for different audiences? And how resonant are these rhetorical framing strategies likely to be for targeted audiences?*

After introducing my list of heuristic questions, in the sections that follow, I discuss the theories and concepts on which the questions are based, explain how and why I developed each one, and describe what I hoped to learn from using them as a basis for coding my corpora of pro-BDS texts. After discussing each heuristic question, I then explain my process for gathering, coding, and analyzing my corpora of texts. The questions are as follows:

1. Rhetorical situation and ecology: what are the *exigencies, constraints, kairos*, and *intended audiences* of pro-BDS rhetoric and its framing? (Rhetorical situation: Bitzer; Vatz; Cosigny; Edbauer; Kuypers) What contextual factors work to facilitate or constrain framing processes? (Benford and Snow 611).

2. How does pro-BDS movement discourse frame the BDS movement and the situation in Palestine/Israel? How do these discursive texts “define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies”? (Kuypers, “Framing Analysis” in *Rhetorical Criticism* 195).
3. What master and primary/issue frames does pro-BDS discourse rely on? (Goffman; Benford & Snow 619).
4. Regarding *ethos*/credibility: How consistent and empirically credible is pro-BDS framing? (Benford & Snow 619-620).
5. What *beliefs*, *values*, and *assumptions* are revealed by pro-BDS frames? (Ideological criticism: Foss; etc.).
6. How do BDS activist-rhetors use language and framing to try to compel their audiences to *identify* with the movement and with the Palestinian struggle? (Social movement criticism: Cathcart; Burke. Frame analysis: Benford and Snow 631; Gamson, “Constructing” 90).
7. How does pro-BDS discourse use “counterframing” to respond to the frequent charges of anti-Semitism and that BDS is a “war by other means” seeking to “destroy” Israel? (Benford and Snow 617).
8. What role(s) does the speaker/writer adopt throughout the text, and is this role consistent? How do these roles affect the framing of the text at different points? (Johnston, “A Methodology” 224-226).
9. How “fitting” and “resonant” are common frames likely to be for the intended audiences? (Benford and Snow 619-622; Hauser, *Introduction* 57-58).

10. How do pro-BDS rhetors use *pathos* or emotional language and appeals to motivate potential supporters and audiences? (Snow et al., “The Framing Perspective” 397; Aristotle).

Rhetorical Situation and Ecology

The first question comprising my heuristic involves an essential component of any rhetorical study, the rhetorical situation: what are the exigencies, constraints, *kairos*, and intended audiences of pro-BDS rhetoric and framing, and what contextual factors work to facilitate or constrain framing processes? (Bitzer; Vatz; Cosigny; Edbauer; Kuypers; Benford and Snow 611). Edbauer’s theory of rhetorical ecologies is an appropriate framework for understanding the rhetorical situation, exigencies, and constraints for social movement rhetorics, including pro-BDS discourse, because not only is social movement discourse a form of public rhetoric, but, especially in the case of pro-BDS discourse, rhetors’ texts and framing tend to be frequently re-read in different “temporal, historical, and lived fluxes” (Edbauer 9). For example, pro-BDS discourse involves many different speakers and audiences—both local and transnational—making it impossible to discreetly separate out these elements of the rhetorical situation. In the case of the Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC), it is not even clear how many rhetors are involved in creating official BNC statements. Moreover, because regional and global events regularly arise to direct media and audiences’ attention to Palestine/Israel at unexpected times (e.g., Trump’s 2017 Jerusalem embassy move announcement, the 2018 Great Return March in Gaza, and Trump’s proposed 2020 *Peace to Prosperity* plan that allows Israel to annex large portions of the West Bank, etc.), the situation for pro-BDS texts often functions as more of an ecology than a static rhetorical situation (Halbfinger, “Netanyahu”; Thrall, “Trump’s Middle East”; *Peace to Prosperity*). Thus, individual pro-BDS texts are situated within a

changing ecology against which the texts and their audiences, exigencies, and constraints shift over time as they are circulated across digital networks and re-read at different times and places. As Edbauer describes, “the social field is not comprised of discrete sites but from events that are shifting and moving, grafted onto and connected with other events” (10). This moving and shifting in connection with events is especially true for pro-BDS discourse, which tends to take on new importance and gain new supporters (and critics) every time local, regional, or global events draw attention to Palestine/Israel. For example, when transnational audiences encounter the 2005 BDS Call years after it was created, the ecology for pro-BDS discourse may have changed significantly, and the exigencies, audiences, and constraints may look very different now than they did in 2005.

Edbauer’s discussion of rhetorical ecologies also fits well with a study of discourse related to Palestine/Israel because of the ways that belatedness and transference end up importing much of the Jewish history of trauma into contemporary discussions, including in discussions relating to the BDS movement (Abraham, “Recognizing the Effects,” “Reluctant”; Bawarshi). Abraham’s argument about the roles of affect, transference, and belatedness and Bawarshi’s discussion of “uptake memories” both suggest that Edbauer’s concept of rhetorical ecologies is a more useful model for understanding the rhetorical situation than previous models describing a rhetorical situation more fixed in place and time (Abraham, “Reluctant”). In the case of Palestine/Israel, because thousands of years of Jewish history are often brought into current discussions of the contemporary State of Israel and Zionism, pro-BDS rhetors often find themselves forced to confront otherwise unrelated past Jewish trauma. This helps explain why many contemporary discussions of current events in Palestine/Israel get sidetracked by accusations of antisemitism: because pro-BDS or pro-Palestinian rhetors are not only dealing

with the current situation, which is one of an extreme power imbalance between Israel and the Palestinians, but also confronting past traumas that invoke strong emotions and often make conversations difficult.

While I rely on Edbauer's rhetorical ecology model in my discussions of the rhetorical situations for pro-BDS discourse and to help me develop my coding heuristic, I also use Bitzer's common terminology for the elements of the rhetorical situation while acknowledging that these elements and their boundaries are not static and fixed but rather change over time in different contexts in which pro-BDS texts circulate. To analyze the audiences and evolving rhetorical situations and ecologies for BDS movement discourse and framing strategies, I must consider not only how exigencies, *kairos*, constraints, and audiences may affect rhetors' framing choices but also how the elements of the rhetorical situation shift and flow across time and transnational networks of activist-rhetors who both respond to and create exigencies. Framing relates most closely to exigence, constraints, context, and purposes. An examination of frames alone, however, would leave much of the rhetorical situation and context out. Thus, to get the full picture of all elements of the rhetorical situation and framing, rhetorical frame analysis must consider both.

To understand the different exigencies for pro-BDS discourse, it is important to examine the historical and political contexts, including factors that are long-term, global, regional, local, and immediate. Considering the different interpretations of rhetorical situation and exigencies coming from Bitzer, Vatz, Cosigny, and Edbauer, some of the exigencies demand a response and are external, some exigencies are created by activists for a given time, place, and *kairos*, and some exigencies shift and change and may be re-read later at different times and in different contexts. According to Edbauer's discussion of rhetorical ecologies, the exigence is less of a

distinct element of a fixed rhetorical situation and is instead “a complex of various audience/speaker perceptions and institutional or material constraints”; she also argues that, “there can be no pure exigence that does not involve various mixes of felt interests” (8). In order to try to capture as much relevant information as possible about the various exigencies for pro-BDS discourse, I try to consider some of these audience and rhetor perceptions, constraints, and “mixes of felt interests.” (Edbauer 8). I also consider how exigencies can be shaped by external and rhetor-created events and interests. For example, statements from the official Palestinian leadership of the BDS movement are often created by necessity to respond to specific and newsworthy global or regional events, but BDS movement leaders also choose to take advantage of anniversaries, deaths of supporters, or international actions to craft statements and responses in a certain time and context to emphasize the importance of the BDS movement and one of its primary exigencies and frames—to address the ongoing failure of the international community to hold Israel accountable for its violations of Palestinian human rights (see Chapter 4 for more in-depth discussion of this and other frames). Some of the longer-term external exigencies for BDS movement discourse include the ongoing oppressive and discriminatory settler-colonial policies that Palestinians have endured since the 1947-1948 founding of Israel, which involved the dispossession of Palestinians by Zionist forces during what is referred to by Israelis as their War of Independence and by Palestinians as their Nakba (“catastrophe”).

An accounting of the rhetorical situation also requires attention to the classical Greek concepts of *kairos* and *phronesis*—“timeliness” and “appropriateness,” which assumes knowledge about context and audience expectations and helps connect the audience, context, and text (Leach 212). When it comes to pro-BDS discourse, the concept of *kairos* not only relates to the immediate timing and exigence for particular pro-BDS texts but also calls to mind Omar

Barghouti's repeated invocation of the idea that the BDS movement is on the cusp of its "South Africa moment" (Barghouti, *Boycott* 215; Mamdani). In his discussions of the "South Africa moment," Barghouti suggests that as support for Palestinian rights and BDS grows alongside criticism of Israel, at some point, BDS will acquire a similar level of global public support to the South African anti-apartheid struggle. The relevance of *kairos* to pro-BDS discourse is also evident in the 2009 Palestinian Christian call to BDS directed to Christians around the world, titled "Kairos Palestine," which argues that the time has come for Christians to support Palestinian rights ("Kairos Document").

In addition to these other factors, rhetorical analysis and consideration of the rhetorical situation must also attend to the audience for a text or rhetorical act, a focus that is also essential for understanding pro-BDS movement rhetoric, framing strategies, and their potential resonance or fitness. Rhetorical critics typically try to figure out what the audience already knows about the speaker, the subject, and current related events (Andrews 29). A main intention of BDS activists' rhetoric is to persuade audiences to become sympathetic with and even join in their struggle for justice and human rights for Palestinians, so the appropriateness of the movement's rhetorical strategies for their intended audiences and rhetorical situation and ecology is important. Especially for a discourse of the marginalized rather than the hegemonic discourse of those in power, the ideas, beliefs, attitudes, and arguments contained in the discourse matter mainly to the degree they are potentially persuasive to the intended audiences of mostly Western potential allies and solidarity activists. Discourses of the powerful tend to already be accepted, repeated endlessly in the public sphere, and acted upon by the majority of a society, but discourses of resistance to power need to be able to break through the dominant narratives and framing to persuade intended audiences. In this case, the dominant narrative is often the pro-Israel or Zionist

narrative. In the case of pro-BDS rhetoric, it is also important to recognize how Western and especially American audiences' sensitivity to antisemitism serves as an important element of audiences' beliefs as part of the larger context, as well as a rhetorical constraint. As Said argues about the Palestinian struggle for liberation, "no other movement in history has had so difficult an opponent: a people recognized as the classical victim of history" (*The Question* xxii).

Pre-existing dominant media frames are also a part of the rhetorical situation that function as constraints on what frames can be used successfully and how resonant those frames will be for audiences. For example, the frames most commonly used by the mainstream news media will act as constraints on the frames that can be used in current coverage. News media outlets rarely contradict common, familiar frames used in the past, though they may introduce new ones or make changes when events demand. Common pre-existing frames found in the public sphere also affect what frames audiences will be open-minded to, thus serving as constraints on audiences' understanding of news and social movement discourse. A few communications scholars have used frame analysis to examine media coverage of events in Palestine/Israel, and their findings reveal some of the common media frames with which audiences for BDS discourse would likely be familiar. For example, Wolfsfeld investigates the mass media frames most commonly used in unequal political conflicts, including the Palestinian First Intifada, in which the common frames of *law and order* (with Israel imposing law and order on unruly Palestinians) and *injustice and defiance* (with Palestinians defying Israel's injustice) dominated news coverage of the uprising. Gamson's 1992 study of mass media frames, which includes a section on Palestine/Israel, found that the most commonly repeated media frames of the conflict by focus group participants include *feuding neighbors*, *Arab intransigence*, *Israeli expansionism*, and *strategic interests* (*Talking* 54-56). In his 2018 book, *The Wrong Story*:

Palestine, Israel and the Media, media studies scholar Greg Shupak analyzes *The New York Times* coverage during the most recent Gaza wars (2008-2009 and 2014) and finds that the most commonly used frames favor the Israeli narrative and include *both sides*, *moderates vs. extremists*, and the *right to self-defense*. It is these commonly repeated frames, especially *feuding neighbors*, *both sides*, and *Israel's right to self-defense* that often tend to direct many Americans toward an understanding of the situation in recent years that favors the Israeli perspective and overlooks or ignores the occupation and oppression of Palestinians, whose grievances fuel Palestinian resistance and the BDS movement. While these framing analyses related to Palestine/Israel discourse do not address the BDS movement specifically, they can help scholars understand some of the common media frames that audiences for pro-BDS discourse would likely be familiar with and which may also serve as constraints on audience receptivity to pro-BDS discourse.

Understanding pro-BDS discourse also requires gaining insight into the central long-term exigence for BDS movement discourse: Israel's ongoing oppressive and discriminatory policies against Palestinians. Therefore, my first heuristic question examines historical facts and events related to oppressive Israeli policies that are referenced directly or inferred in much pro-BDS discourse and may serve as either external or activist-created exigencies. This question also leads me to discover what relevant immediate and local external exigencies occurred in the region that helped give birth to the 2005 BDS Call and movement in the first place (discussed more in depth in Chapter 4).

Identifying Frames

For my second heuristic question, in order to identify the common frames used by pro-BDS rhetors, I ask how pro-BDS movement discourse frames the BDS movement and the

situation in Palestine/Israel, and how pro-BDS texts “define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies”? (Kuypers, “Framing Analysis” in *Rhetorical Criticism* 195). Before I could identify frames in pro-BDS texts, I first had to understand what exactly I would be looking for and how I would discern frames in the texts. Goffman’s original definition of “frames” posits them as “definitions of a situation” or “schemata of interpretation” that “are built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern events—at least social ones—and our subjective involvement in them” and allow individuals “to locate, perceive, identify, and label” events in the world (10-11, 21). Frames point people to a particular understanding of the answer to “what is it that’s going on here?” (Goffman 8). Goffman describes “frame analysis” as “the examination in these terms of the organization of experience” (11). Zald refers to frames as “the specific metaphors, symbolic representations, and cognitive cues used to render or cast behavior and events in an evaluative mode and to suggest alternative modes of action” (262).

Few rhetorical scholars have combined frame analysis with rhetorical analysis, but Kuypers is one communication researcher who has taken a distinctly rhetorical approach to frame analysis and thus offers some useful discussion and examples. He defines the functions of frames in a way that provides clues for where and how to look for frames in a text:

When highlighting some aspect of reality over other aspects, frames act to define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies. They are located in the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture at large. Frames are central organizing ideas within a narrative account of an issue or event; they provide the interpretive cues for otherwise neutral facts. (Kuypers, “Framing Analysis” in *Rhetorical Criticism* 182)

Kuypers goes on to argue that frames reside in certain properties of the language use in rhetorical narratives and offers helpful details about how to identify frames in rhetorical texts by looking at key words, concepts, symbols, metaphors, visual images, and names assigned to actions, ideas, and people (185). Kuypers suggests that frame analysts should ask how “language choices invite us to understand an issue or event,” and he directs scholars to first look for themes and then determine how those themes are framed (Kuypers “Framing Analysis” in *Doing News* 298). He distinguishes between themes and frames this way: “A theme is the subject of discussion, or that which is the subject of the thought expressed. The frame, of course, is suggesting a particular interpretation of the theme” (“Framing Analysis” in *Doing News* 302). Kuypers further suggests close textual reading to discern themes and frames (“Framing Analysis” in *Doing News* 302).

Using the various definitions of frames from these scholars, I use close reading of pro-BDS texts to examine patterns in pro-BDS rhetors’ language to look for how these texts use symbols, metaphors, explicit words and phrases, and implicit assumptions and suggestions to present events and Israeli policies in a way that suggests “what is it that’s going on here?” in terms of the definition of problems, causes, moral judgments, and suggested remedies, which also includes the justifications presented for the BDS movement itself (Kuypers “Framing Analysis” in *Rhetorical Criticism* 195; Goffman 8; Zald 262). To identify frames, I also incorporate a method similar to cluster-based rhetorical criticism in which I identify the most frequently repeated words and themes and the words associated with these frequently repeated words to help identify the frames related to these important concepts (Foss).

Master Frames Vs. Primary, Issue, and Collective Action Frames

Once I identify various common frames used, I also want to distinguish between different types or levels of frames and how they relate to each other by asking what master and primary,

issue, or collective action frames pro-BDS discourse relies on (Goffman; Benford & Snow 619). According to various frame analysis scholars of social movement discourse, frames can be categorized on different levels, with the lower, more specific levels being sometimes referred to as “primary,” “issue,” or “collective action frames,” and the broader, more general higher-level frames being referred to as “master frames” (and sometimes “meta-frames”) (Benford and Snow 614-619; Hope 5-6; Zald 262; Goffman 21-27). Because different frame analysis scholars use different terms for different types of frames, I decided to focus primarily on distinguishing between the more specific issue-oriented frames (i.e., primary, issue, collective action) and the more general frames (i.e., master frames or meta-frames) that encompass the other more specific frames.

While “primary” and “issue” frames can be found in regard to any discourse, it is “collective action frames” that are most important for mobilizing supporters of social movements. Benford and Snow define “collective action frames” as “action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization” (614). They argue that “collective action frames are constructed in part as movement adherents negotiate a shared understanding of some problematic condition or situation they define as in need of change, make attributions regarding who or what is to blame, articulate an alternative set of arrangements, and urge others to act in concert to affect change” (615). Because they are more specific to various events, situations, and issues, scholars may find several primary, issue, and collective action frames in the discourse of a social movement (Hope 5-6).

Master frames, on the other hand, are “quite broad in terms of scope, functioning as a kind of master algorithm that colors and constrains the orientations and activities of other

movements” (Benford and Snow 618). Master frames are more general umbrella frames that may be applicable across many movements. Zald argues that large movements, or progenitor movements, may provide master frames, which later movements may draw on (262). For instance, the civil rights movement provides a “rights frame” that other later human rights or civil rights movements often draw from (Benford and Snow 619; Gamson, *Encounters* 123, *Talking Politics* 85; Zald 262). Master frames have also sometimes been referred to as “meta-frames,” though “master frame” is the more common terms in recent scholarship (Hope 5-6). Gamson argues that the most important master frame is the “injustice frame,” which he sees as an essential part of any successful social movement that opposes an unjust authority: “An injustice frame is an interpretation of what is happening that supports the conclusion that an authority system is violating the shared moral principles of the participants. An alternative to the legitimating frame, it provides a reason for noncompliance” (Gamson, *Encounters* 123).

To identify and distinguish between the more specific issue-based frames and the higher-level, more general master frames, I begin by identifying all of the lower-level frames I can find in the texts, and I then look for how they relate together and can be categorized under the larger categories of the common master frames of *injustice*, *human rights*, and *oppression*. The process for distinguishing between master frames and the lower-level primary or issue frames is also similar to the way Corbin and Strauss describe the process of identifying higher-level and lower-level concepts in grounded theory: “Categories are higher in level and more abstract than the concepts they represent. They are generated through the same analytic process of making comparisons to highlight similarities and differences that is used to produce lower level concepts” (7).

Ethos and Credibility of Frames

In order to help understand how pro-BDS rhetors attempt to gain supporters through rhetorical and framing strategies and how resonant those strategies may be, I also ask how consistent and empirically credible pro-BDS frames may be for their intended audiences (Benford and Snow 619-620). While *ethos* is a common rhetorical appeal that rhetorical critics often attend to in traditional rhetorical analysis, in regard to framing, empirical credibility of a frame “refers to the apparent fit between the framings and events in the world” (Benford and Snow 620). In determining this, it is important to ask whether there is “culturally believable” evidence in the real world for the claim(s) found in the frames; in particular, would the frames likely be believable for intended audiences or “some segment of prospective or actual adherents” (620). When considering this question, it is also important to consider that different audiences will have been exposed to different information about the situation in Palestine/Israel, and this background knowledge, including familiar mass media frames of Palestine/Israel, would affect whether pro-BDS frames may appear empirically credible or not. For example, the existence of Israel’s over 50-year-long military occupation of the West Bank would lend empirical credibility for the *occupation* frame for audiences who are aware of this factual situation. In contrast, the real-world Israeli policies that would support framing the situation as *apartheid* may be less well-known or more contested for certain audiences, which could make this frame less empirically credible than the *occupation* frame for a wider audience, though some audiences may find the *apartheid* frame credible based on their particular background knowledge or experiences.

In regard to determining empirical credibility, I also have to take care and be reflective of my own position as both a researcher and someone who has my own particular background

knowledge and experiences in relation to Palestine/Israel. Because I traveled to Israel and the West Bank in 2009 while producing a documentary, I met and got to know many Israeli and Palestinian activists, and I also experienced Israeli checkpoints, curfews, and crackdowns on popular protests. When considering the empirical credibility of frames and potential resonance for various audiences, I have to try to separate my own personal experiences from those of intended audiences for pro-BDS discourse. My perspective, however, can also help me understand why audiences who have actually been to the West Bank would likely find pro-BDS framing more credible than audiences who have only heard about the situation from mainstream US news media.

The empirical credibility of frames can also be related to the *ethos* or credibility of pro-BDS rhetors, and it can influence the overall resonance or fitness of pro-BDS framing for different audiences, which is addressed in a later heuristic question that focuses on resonance. Based on the controversy and debates around the BDS movement discussed in Chapter 1, perceptions of the BDS movement as being antisemitic likely undermines the credibility of pro-BDS rhetors, which may then also detract from the perceived empirical credibility of pro-BDS framing. Thus, I consider both the degree to which real-world facts and events support pro-BDS framing but also how various audiences' beliefs and background knowledge may affect perceptions of the credibility of pro-BDS frames.

How Frames Reveal Beliefs, Values, Assumptions, and Ideology

To understand what pro-BDS framing and rhetorical strategies reveal about the ideology of the BDS movement, I also ask what beliefs, values, and assumptions are revealed by pro-BDS frames. This heuristic question not only overlaps with the focus on ideology in frame analysis, but it is also closely related to ideological rhetorical criticism, which is a suitable method for

examining pro-BDS discourse because it is typically grounded in a political ideology influenced by postcolonial theory that uses international law and human rights to frame the Israeli-Palestinian conflict primarily in terms of a settler-colonial state oppressing and ethnically cleansing the indigenous Palestinian population (Benford and Snow 612-614; Foss 209-212). According to Foss, “when rhetorical critics are interested in rhetoric primarily for what it suggests about beliefs and values, their focus is on ideology,” and when doing ideological analysis, a rhetorical critic “looks beyond the surface structure of an artifact to discover the beliefs, values, and assumptions it suggests” (209). Foss references semiotics and the work of Roland Barthes as a foundation for ideological criticism, along with Marxism and Marxist critics including Adorno, Althusser, Habermas, and Marcuse (211-212). In order to understand how and why the BDS movement represents itself in certain ways for various audiences, an ideological analysis is a necessary component.

Similarly to how I identify frames themselves, to identify beliefs, values, assumptions, and ideology, I examine patterns in the language used (and not used) in pro-BDS texts. For example, by using terms like “colonialism” and “settler-colonialism” and associating them with descriptions of harmful and oppressive Israeli policies and violations of international law, rather than using the term “conflict,” pro-BDS rhetors reveal an anti-colonial ideology. Thus, various patterns of common language use and word choices can reveal the ideologies behind them.

Burkean Identification

In addition to ideological rhetorical criticism, Burke’s concept of identification also offers a productive avenue for understanding how pro-BDS movement discourse works, leading me to ask how BDS activist-rhetors use language and framing to try to compel their audiences to identify with the movement and with the Palestinian struggle (Cathcart; Burke; Benford and

Snow 631; Gamson, “Constructing” 90). Burke describes how rhetors attempt to make audiences identify with them:

As for the relation between ‘identification’ and ‘persuasion’: we might well keep in mind that a speaker persuades an audience by the use of stylistic identifications; his act of persuasion may be for the purpose of causing the audience to identify itself with the speaker’s interests; and the speaker draws on identification of interests to establish rapport between himself and the audience. (46)

Burke further explains how the process of identification works: “You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your ways with his” (55). He also explains how the other side of identification is division when the rhetor separates people into “us” and “them” and attempts to make the audience identify and become “consubstantial” with the rhetor—“us”—while also dividing the audience from an Other—“them” (21-23). Examining how pro-BDS movement rhetors use identification and division is another productive element of an in-depth rhetorical frame analysis of BDS movement discourse.

In addition to Burkean identification, frame analysis scholars have also focused on identification as an important component of framing processes and frame analysis (Benford and Snow 631; Gamson, “Constructing” 90, *Talking Politics* 7). Gamson names identity, or the “process of defining this ‘we,’ typically in opposition to some ‘they’ who have different interests or values,” along with injustice and agency, as one of the three essential components of collective action frames (“Constructing” 90, *Talking Politics* 7). Gamson further argues that collective action frames must necessarily be adversarial and involve frames in which “we stand in opposition to or conflict with some *they*. *They* are responsible for some objectionable situation

and have the power to change it by acting differently in some fashion. *We* and *they* are differentiated rather than conflated” (italics added) (*Talking Politics* 85). While some BDS critics may find pro-BDS rhetors’ attempts to encourage audiences to identify with Palestinians and in opposition to Israel as a form of “demonizing” Israel and thus antisemitic, Gamson argues that this “us” versus “them” identification and division is a necessary part of any social movement’s discourse against a situation of injustice.

To analyze how pro-BDS discourse uses identification and division, I look at how pro-BDS rhetors attribute positive or negative qualities to different actors discussed. For example, if Israel and supporters of Israel are portrayed as “oppressors” who are committing violations of international law and human rights against Palestinians who are portrayed as victims, then such language choices suggest pro-BDS rhetors are encouraging audiences to identify with Palestinians as the “us” and against Israelis as “them.” Using analogies to the US civil rights movement and the anti-apartheid movement can also promote such identification with US audiences and those sympathetic to the anti-apartheid struggle against South Africa.

Counterframing

As part of determining how pro-BDS discourse attempts to overcome rhetorical challenges, including frequent charges of antisemitism, I ask how pro-BDS discourse uses “counterframing” to respond to the frequent charges of antisemitism and claims that BDS is a “war by other means” seeking to “destroy” Israel (Benford and Snow 617; Hallward, *Transnational* 2, 36, 110). According to Benford and Snow, “counterframing” refers to the “refutations of the logic or efficacy of solutions advocated by opponents as well as a rationale for its own remedies” (617). They explain how the frames used by opponents can “affect a movement’s framings, on the one hand, by putting movement activists on the defensive, at least

temporarily, and, on the other hand, by frequently forcing it to develop and elaborate prognoses more clearly than otherwise might have been the case” (617). This discussion of counterframing seems very applicable to the rhetorical situation faced by pro-BDS rhetors who are often portrayed by their critics as being motivated by antisemitic hatred and engaged in a “war” to “destroy” Israel—charges which require counterframing by the BDS movement in order to refute such charges and gain supporters for the Palestinian cause.

In order to effectively determine how pro-BDS rhetors use counterframing, it is also necessary to be aware of the common themes and frames used by Israel’s advocates to portray the situation in Palestine/Israel and the BDS movement. Some of these common themes and frames, which are often found in the mass media as well, include negative portrayals of the BDS movement that charge BDS leaders and supporters with being antisemitic, waging a war to destroy Israel, and unfairly singling out Israel, etc. (Hallward, *Transnational 2*; StandWithUs; Reut Institute). In addition, other common pro-Israel themes and frames suggest that Israel is a victim of antisemitic hatred from BDS activists, Israel seeks peace while Palestinians favor violence, Israel is a democracy, Israel is a valuable ally to the US, Israel is in a “tough neighborhood,” etc. (StandWithUs; Reut Institute). Thus, when examining pro-BDS counterframing strategies, I will look for ways that pro-BDS texts offer framing to rebut these pro-Israel themes. For example, one common type of counterframing that pro-BDS texts often use involves attempts to counter the frequent charge that BDS is antisemitic (see Chapters 4-6 for more discussion of this).

Role Analysis

To see if the speakers take various roles throughout the texts and how these roles may affect framing choices, I ask what roles the speaker or writer adopts, whether these roles are

consistent, and how these roles seem to affect the framing of the text at different points (Johnston 224-226). According to Johnston, role analysis is another important aspect of framing to consider and involves discerning what role the speaker or writer is taking on in a particular text or passage and whether that role may shift during a text, which can then provide clues as to why the text's messages and framing may also shift (224-226). For example, sometimes speakers may step out of their role as merely a spokesperson for activists or a group and instead take on the role of a parent, child, teacher, doctor, or other role that can affect framing. Thus, I also consider how pro-BDS speakers and writers take on various roles as part of my heuristic for coding.

Fitness and Resonance

Because both rhetorical critics and frame analysts are concerned with the potential effects of rhetorical texts on audiences, I also sought to ask how “fitting” and “resonant” framing strategies are likely to be for the intended audiences (Benford and Snow 619-622; Hauser, *Introduction* 57-58). According to Covino and Jolliffe, “rhetorical analysis is the study of whether and how texts actually do affect, influence, or change auditors” (6). Wichelns says that rhetorical criticism “is not concerned with permanence nor yet with beauty. It is concerned with effect” (qtd. in Andrews 6). Zarefsky argues that rhetorical analysis or criticism “enables one to assess whether and how particular works perform the two principal functions of rhetoric: building community and inspiring people to achieve collective goals” (638). As Zarefsky explains, once a rhetorician analyzes the rhetorical choices made in a text, then they are able to “argue about why the rhetor made the choices that he or she did, to consider what reprisals were invited by those choices, to theorize about the functions and consequences of the choices, and—in light of all these factors—to evaluate the choices in the given case” (634). He further asserts that rhetorical criticism explains texts “by providing answers to two general questions: (a)

What’s going on here? and (b) So what?” (633). At a basic level, these two questions common in rhetorical criticism reflect my goal in examining BDS movement discourse using rhetorical frame analysis—to determine what is going on and why it matters.

Most rhetoricians these days acknowledge the difficulty of determining effectiveness with any precision or certainty and instead seek to examine rhetorical processes while limiting speculation about effectiveness to discussing the potential or probable effectiveness or “fitness” of rhetorical strategies for targeted audiences (Hauser, *Introduction* 57-58; Zarefsky 633-637). Hauser explains rhetorical “fitness” this way: “A fitting response is not necessarily a successful one but one that is addressed to resolving the complex of factors that define the situation . . . Determining whether any response is fitting requires that we understand how the rhetor’s discourse reflects his or her definition of the situation and meshes with that of the audience” (*Introduction* 57). He further explains that, “a fitting response is one that is potentially corrective of the imperfection in the environment” (58). Examples of rhetoric that may correct environmental imperfections would include discursive responses that change audiences’ minds on an issue or go further to persuade elected officials to pass legislation or change policies to address a problem, etc. Hauser explains his notion of rhetorical fitness through an extended discussion of how the U.S. family of Cuban Elián González¹² tailored appeals to gaining custody of the child to various audiences based on each audience’s distinct beliefs, values, and abilities to help them gain legal custody or capability to mediate change and thus “correct the imperfection in the environment” (Hauser, *Introduction* 57-58). In the case of pro-BDS discourse, fitting responses would be ones that help persuade target audiences to not only shift their understanding

¹² González’s case and the international custody battle and political debate associated with it dominated headlines in the US for several months in 1999 and 2000; his case became part of a larger political debate over Cuba and US-Cuba relations, etc. (Padgett).

on the topic of Palestine/Israel to accept pro-BDS framing in place of pro-Israel framing, but also to take action on behalf of Palestinian rights, which could include engaging in acts of protest or solidarity or even changing government policies toward Israel, etc.

When applied to social movement discourse, frame analysis also attends to the potential effects of framing choices by considering framing “resonance” for the target audiences. Benford and Snow argue that scholars can determine the likely resonance of framing by looking at both the potential resonance or *ethos* of the rhetor and the resonance of the frames themselves, given how frames may align with an audience’s social, cultural, and political beliefs, which thus links resonance to heuristic question four’s focus on “empirical credibility” (620-622). According to Benford and Snow, “the greater the status and/or perceived expertise of the frame articulator and/or the organization they represent from the vantage point of potential adherents and constituents, the more plausible and resonant the framings or claims” (621). The authors also focus on “narrative fidelity” as a way to determine frame resonance and encourage frame analysts to ask whether framing is “culturally resonant,” or if frames “resonate with the targets’ cultural narrations,” which they discuss as being similar to cultural myths, assumptions, or ideologies (622). Because rhetorical “fitness” also overlaps with frame “resonance,” I decided to consider this question as part of my rhetorical frame analysis of pro-BDS texts as well.

Emotional Appeals

Another aspect of the rhetorical strategies I chose to consider as part of my heuristic involves asking how pro-BDS rhetors use *pathos* or emotional language and appeals to motivate potential supporters and audiences, which is a concern of both rhetorical critics and frame analysts. Snow et al. argue that emotional appeals are typically “a central feature of motivational framing,” which is the aspect of social movement framing that supports the agency aspect of

collective action frames by “accenting the severity of the problem, the urgency of taking action now rather than later, the probable efficacy of joining others in the cause, the moral priority of doing so, and the enhancement or elevation of one’s status” (396-397). Gamson suggests that effective social movement injustice frames necessarily call forth strong emotions in the audience if they are to successfully motivate supporters to act:

Injustice focuses on the righteous anger that puts fire in the belly and iron in the soul. Injustice, as I argued earlier, is a hot cognition, not merely an abstract intellectual judgment about what is equitable. . . . The heat of a moral judgment is intimately related to beliefs about what acts or conditions have caused people to suffer undeserved hardship or loss. . . . [I]f one attributes undeserved suffering to malicious or selfish acts by clearly identifiable persons or groups, the emotional component of an injustice frame will almost certainly be there. Concreteness in the target. . . is a necessary condition for an injustice frame. (Gamson, *Talking Politics* 32)

While emotional appeals may be commonly used by many social movements to emphasize injustice and spur supporters to action, in the case of Palestine/Israel, emotion can also sometimes serve to undermine discussions. Abraham argues that discussions about Palestine/Israel are often sidetracked by emotions via affect, belatedness, and transference, “the hidden energies and psychological forces at work in our argumentative dynamics about the Israel-Palestine conflict” (“Reluctant Rhetoricians” 37-38). Bawarshi also explains how emotions and their associated “rhetorical memories” can frequently trigger affective “uptakes” and “habitual responses” in regard to Palestine/Israel that may include accusations of antisemitism, so he recommends that to avoid triggering these unproductive responses, rhetors should be “careful in our rhetorical choices so as to avoid loaded, memory triggering words”

(18). Even though emotional appeals are typical of many injustice-focused human rights movements, in the case of Palestine/Israel emotional language and rhetorical choices can backfire as both Abraham and Bawarshi discuss. This tendency, along with the corresponding requirement that social movements highlight injustice as part of campaigns for human rights, puts pro-BDS rhetors in a tricky position and makes emotional appeals also a worthy subject of attention when examining BDS movement framing. Therefore, I also examine pro-BDS rhetors' language choices in regard to emotional appeals and emotionally loaded terms.

Coding Example

The following example was taken from my coding spreadsheet and shows the kinds of notes I made in each column of the table for each text, with each section representing one of my heuristic questions (plus one for initial "Open Coding" and one for "Other" potentially significant information that didn't otherwise fit clearly in one of the other categories). For each text, I started with a brief summary and open coding to notice themes and ideas that seem prominent. Next, I follow my 10-question coding heuristic to make note of rhetorical strategies related to framing, identification, ideology, etc. I added a separate field for "Other" in which I indicated other observations that may not have fit clearly into another category or overall impressions. I performed this coding using an Excel spreadsheet with separate cells/columns devoted to specific heuristic questions for each text. I explain my process in more detail in the section following this example.

Text:

Palestinian BDS National Committee. "No New EU-Israel Action Plan in April 2009!" *BDS Movement*, 9 July 2008, www.bdsmovement.net/news/%E2%80%9Cno-new-eu-israel-action-plan-april-2009%E2%80%9D-1.

Open Coding & Summary:

BNC calls on EU NOT to upgrade its relationship with Israel and to suspend the EU Association agreement. Claims Israel's violations of human rights are a 'breach of Clause

2 of the agreement'. Describes: Israel's 'persistent violations of human rights and international law'; 'illegal occupation'; 'massive colonization'; 'human rights violations'; 'collective punishment'; 'construction of settlements'; (full-length statement included at the bottom includes more detailed descriptions of Israel's violations). At end, also compares arguments for dialogue and 'engagement' with Israel to those of 'constructive engagement' with apartheid SA.

Rhetorical Situation & Ecology:

Exigencies: EU action to upgrade relations with Israel; Israeli actions against Gaza; Ongoing Israel oppression. *Purposes:* To inform potential supporters of this situation and encourage supporters to contact the EU; public shaming of EU for hypocritical decision. *Constraints:* relevance to this particular EU action. Focus on human rights and international law. *Audiences:* International English-speaking solidarity activists and potential supporters; EU citizens and members.

Framing Strategies:

Define Problems: EU Association Council's decision to upgrade the EU-Israel Association Agreement. Israeli human rights violations, colonization, and Apartheid. *Diagnose Causes:* Israel's actions and treatment toward Palestinians, including the Zionist movement and founding of the state. EU decision to upgrade relationship with Israel. *Make Moral Judgments:* Israeli actions and oppression of Palestinians is morally wrong. People of conscience are obligated to support Palestinian rights and BDS. *Suggest Remedies:* Support BDS, reverse decision of EU to upgrade relations with Israel, end Israeli oppression of Palestinians.

Master Frames:

Injustice/Justice; Oppressor/Oppressed; Human rights.

Primary/Issue/Collective Action Frames:

BDS as grassroots movement, Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights and international law, occupation, colonization, illegal settlements, apartheid, collective punishment, ethnic cleansing, Israeli oppression of Palestinians, settler colonialism.

Ethos & Credibility:

BNC says this statement is supported by 100 European civil society orgs. Presents knowledge of clause 2 of agreement; human rights and international law framing.

Ideology—Beliefs, Values, Assumptions:

Oppression is harmful & wrong; Israel and Zionism is oppressive; People who support human rights should support Palestinians; International law matters and should be followed.

Identification & Division:

Israel is oppressor, Palestinians and BDS movement represent the oppressed; people of conscience support Palestinians and not Israel.

Counterframing:

Palestinians as victims, not Israelis (inferred).

Roles:

Human right activist; Representative of Palestinian people and human rights activists; Someone who shames people who offer support to Israel and its policies.

Resonance:

Fits with leftist social justice activist framing; Fits with human rights supporters; fits with international solidarity activists. Doesn't fit with Zionist framing.

Pathos & Emotional Language:

“Massive colonization”; violations of international law are “persistent”; Israel's record of “gravely violating” the EU's human rights regulations; refers to Israel's “human rights violations, collective punishment and construction of settlements and the Wall,” but doesn't use much emotional language to describe these violations; more emotional language later regarding Gaza: “Israel still maintains its criminal one-year-long siege on Gaza – described by the current UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights, Prof. Richard Falk as a ‘prelude to genocide’ – that has already cost the lives of 197 patients, mainly children and elderly”; “malnourishment among children has increased.”

Other:

Only mentions "ethnic cleansing" in relation to the Nakba near the end of the full statement; focuses more on human rights because "human rights" are mentioned in one of the clauses of the EU agreement in question. More logos than pathos. Cites EU and international law. Consistent with commonly used frames.

As the above coding example demonstrates, I use the heuristic questions to guide my coding and analysis of the framing and rhetorical strategies for both official and vernacular pro-BDS discourse. While I initially only performed open coding on a small sample of texts from my larger corpora, once I turned my attention to my full corpora of texts, I also began my coding with an initial open coding and then reread each text to code it again using my heuristic questions to help me label and categorize the key concepts, terms, themes, and frames, etc. This example also reveals that some heuristic questions yield somewhat overlapping results, which not only shows how the heuristic questions tie together, but also demonstrates how rhetorical and framing strategies often coincide. Discovering overlapping results can also reinforce the strength of findings. In the following section, I describe my coding process in more detail.

Coding Process

After selecting my corpora of both official and vernacular pro-BDS texts and developing my heuristic questions for analysis, I then had to code my corpora carefully to identify themes, frames, and various rhetorical strategies according to my heuristic list of questions discussed above. While I do not use grounded theory in its entirety as my primary methodology, I do borrow some coding methods from both cluster criticism and grounded theory to help me identify common patterns of themes and preliminary frames initially through an open coding method in which I consider the frequency of words and phrases and relationship to other words and concepts. Then, I went back and used some of my initial findings to help me refine my heuristic questions and test some of my initial hypotheses about preliminary frames against the rest of my data.

I chose to first code a small selection of my texts using an open coding method commonly used in qualitative analysis and borrowed from grounded theory and generative and cluster criticism (Charmaz; Corbin and Strauss; Foss). According to Charmaz, even when researchers only make superficial use of grounded theory and do not pursue actual theory construction, “its strategies can help qualitative researchers increase the analytic power of their studies” (403). Foss describes an initial coding process similar to open coding as the first step of generative criticism and directs scholars to start with an “initial broad-brush coding of the artifact to discover its central features” (389). To select the BNC statements I would perform open coding on initially, I chose the first statement from every two pages of results from a search for statements from the BNC, which yielded 18 texts, and I also included the original 2005 BDS Call and the “What is BDS?” page from the website as well, which gave me about 10% of the total BNC corpora. For the initial open coding of Barghouti texts I chose to include in my sample the

introduction to Barghout's book and two recent op-eds in which he provides broad justification for the BDS movement because I thought these texts would provide a good representation of my larger corpora. For the vernacular student texts, I selected texts from one IAW event from each university, along with one Facebook post from each university student group during IAW, for a total of two texts from each university. Once I selected my smaller sample for open coding, I then used open coding to discover "significant words and images that mark the artifact" and any repeated themes and patterns that emerged from key words, concepts, metaphors, themes, arguments, evidence, names, etc. to help me develop my initial preliminary hypotheses about themes, frames, and other elements of the language used that appear frequently in pro-BDS texts (Foss 389). I used the criteria of frequency and intensity to identify common words, phrases, themes, concepts, and preliminary frames, and I kept track of my data and coding in an Excel spreadsheet (Foss 389).

Through this initial open coding process, I developed tentative hypotheses about what themes, concepts, arguments, frames, and ideologies seemed to be most common, so I could then test the rest of my data against these initial hypotheses and preliminary frames later on. I also used memo writing to help me interrogate the significance of codes and preliminary categories of themes and frames, as well as to help me identify gaps in the data or themes and concepts that I had expected to find but were missing (Charmaz 405; Corbin and Strauss 10). After every coding session, and sometimes even multiple times during a session, I would write brief dated memos to myself in my research journal to help me think through my coding findings so far.

Another step of my early open coding process was to copy the entirety of the texts in my initial open coding stage into a word cloud program to generate a visual representation of terms that appeared most commonly throughout the texts—as well as terms that did not appear. This

informal visual quantitative analysis of the texts helped me to notice that terms like “rights,” “equality,” and “occupation” were used much more often than the nearly non-existent “peace” and “conflict.” Like with my other open coding, I used this information to give me some ideas and preliminary hypotheses that I could then test when I completed coding the rest of my corpora using my heuristic.

During this recursive process, I also used my preliminary findings through open coding to refine my heuristic list of questions. For example, I added a question focusing on emotional appeal that was not originally in my list because I noticed that a small percentage of the texts I had coded included significant emotional appeals even though most of them did not. I also removed an initial heuristic question focusing on visual images because so few of the texts included images, especially the official texts, so I decided to consider visual themes, arguments, and framing as part of my coding of the printed texts rather than in a separate category of its own. Finally, I also decided to add an “Other” category in my coding spreadsheet in which I could place any other interesting or potentially significant information that did not clearly fit into one of my other coding categories related to my heuristic questions.

Next, I performed subsequent more detailed coding using my updated heuristic questions, the answers to which I coded in separate columns for each question in a table with a row for each text using another Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. During this careful coding process I used my heuristic questions as a guide to help me identify key words, concepts, frames, and rhetorical strategies related to each of my questions, first for official BDS texts and then for vernacular student-created texts. I also continued to write memos to myself in my research journal during and after every coding session to help me refine my categories and findings for framing other

rhetorical strategies. I also used this longer, more comprehensive coding process to test my initial hypotheses about preliminary framing categories.

During this coding process, I also selected a smaller sample of my official and vernacular texts (about 25 texts total) on which to perform a more in-depth microanalysis by choosing texts that seemed representative of the various categories of frames, purposes, and other rhetorical strategies. Johnston proposes using “microanalysis” to analyze important documents more in depth, and he recommends selecting texts for microanalysis “from critical junctures in the movement, or when the text is articulated particularly well, or when the text is highly representative”; he argues that this added level of scrutiny can “increase validity of interpretation, capture data that would otherwise be lost, and reveal connections in different parts of the text that give insight into the thought processes of the producer” (229). For this microanalysis, I reread and re-coded this smaller sample of representative texts again to see if any other frames or themes emerged that I didn’t notice the first time. I also used this microanalysis to help me identify the important and representative quotes and examples I reference and discuss more in depth in my later data chapters.

This iterative, multi-step coding process helped me consider the validity of my early hypotheses about the most common and significant key concepts, themes, and frames I found in my initial open coding as I returned to later stages of coding more texts in my corpora. This aspect of my project shares similarities to aspects of grounded theory, as described by Corbin and Strauss:

Every concept brought into the study or discovered in the research process is at first considered provisional. Each concept earns its way into the theory by repeatedly being present in interviews, documents, and observations in one form or another—or by being

significantly absent (i.e., it should be present, but isn't, so that questions must be asked). Requiring that a concept's relevance to an evolving theory (as a condition, action/interaction, or consequence) be demonstrated is one way that grounded theory helps to guard against researcher bias. No matter how enamored the investigator may be of a particular concept, if its relevance to the phenomenon under question is not proven through continued scrutiny, it must be discarded. Grounding concepts in the reality of data thus gives this method theory-observation congruence or compatibility. (7)

One tricky aspect of qualitative analysis is navigating researcher bias and trying to minimize its effect on the coding, analysis, and interpretation of data. Kuypers argues that analysts seeking to identify frames must “be especially careful to examine the entire rhetorical artifact before determining what frames are operating. That is to say, do not assume a particular frame is operating and then go look for it. The best framing analyses allow the rhetorical artifacts to speak for themselves” (“Framing Analysis” in *Rhetorical Criticism* 198). Acknowledging the impossibility of completely eliminating researcher bias, I tried to be careful when coding to let the texts speak for themselves as much as possible rather than inadvertently imposing frames that I expected to find, which I did partly through my careful iterative coding process and frequent reflective research memos.

Another way I tried to confirm my findings and interpretation of common frames and themes and also help to account for my own possible biases was by incorporating a quantitative element into an otherwise qualitative rhetorical framing analysis. To do this, I copied and pasted the entirety of every text I coded into one document for my official corpora of texts and another for vernacular. I then entered the entire corpora into an online open-source text analyzer (<http://textalyser.net/>) to test the word and phrase frequency counts against my own findings and

to also compare the official and vernacular corpora for any notable differences between the most frequently-repeated words in each, along with another instance when I added them both together to discover the word and phrase frequencies of my entire corpora of pro-BDS texts. Though I did not conduct a rigorous scientific quantitative analysis, discovering what words and phrases were used most often in these texts served to reinforce my own qualitative estimation of which frames were most commonly used and support my findings of strong parallels between the frames emphasized by both official BDS movement leaders and the more vernacular discourse of student activists.

This discussion of my coding process is meant to be an example of my research and thinking process. Because of considerations of space, the scope of the study, and my desire to demonstrate breadth rather than depth, my analyses in chapters 4 and 5 will focus on the most significant findings from the data rather than detailed descriptions of my analysis and coding process for each text.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explain how rhetorical frame analysis can help reveal underlying ideologies and break down arguments to their most basic level, which can enable rhetoric scholars to better understand how social movement discourse may or may not resonate with audiences' beliefs and assumptions. Frames are the basic building blocks that audiences use to understand foundational issues and unstated assumptions, and when these foundations are missing, audiences will not be as receptive to higher-level arguments, evidence, and rhetorical strategies and appeals. Examining the rhetorical framing strategies of a social movement's discourse allows us to understand the lenses through which the activist-rhetors want audiences to view the problem, which include the assumptions and beliefs underlying the rhetorical appeals

and arguments used. Once these frames are identified, we can also better understand the resonance or fitness of social movement discourse by analyzing how empirically consistent such frames are with the material realities of the situation and common perceptions found in the public sphere. Reviewing interdisciplinary frame analysis scholarship reveals that rhetorical analysis and frame analysis overlap significantly and can productively complement each other when researching social movement discourse.

I have tried to describe my methods and processes for performing rhetorical frame analysis so that other scholars and students may be able to replicate my coding and analysis or develop their own original multidisciplinary heuristic for coding. I have explained the relevant theories that I used to develop and adapt each of my heuristic questions, and I have also tried to explain the various steps of my research process, including identifying and gathering my corpora of texts and performing an iterative coding process that draws from elements of grounded theory and generative and cluster criticism. After I completed my coding process, I then went back and reviewed my results and my research memos in order to finish my analysis and interpretation of my data. I will discuss my analysis of data in more detail in the next two chapters. Chapter 4 will include my discussion of official BDS discourse, and Chapter 5 will cover my analysis of vernacular student-created pro-BDS texts.

CHAPTER IV

RHETORICAL FRAME ANALYSIS OF OFFICIAL PRO-BDS TEXTS

For my analysis of the rhetorical framing strategies of official BDS discourse, I turn to the corpora of official statements put out by the Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC) found on the official BDS Movement website (bdsmovement.net), along with several op-eds and a book written by BDS movement co-founder and spokesperson, Omar Barghouti. In addition to using my rhetorical framing analysis heuristic to code and analyze Barghouti's texts, along with the over 200 total official BNC statements released on the website (from the earliest statement released in 2008 until the summer of 2017), I also selected a smaller corpora of these texts (about 10%) on which to perform a more in-depth micro-level rhetorical frame analysis. After initially coding each text using my heuristic questions for rhetorical frame analysis, I then selected two to three representative texts, including the 2005 BDS Call (about 10% of my smaller corpora or 1% of the total texts) to investigate and discuss their rhetorical framing strategies in more depth in this chapter. I use my heuristic questions for rhetorical frame analysis to examine each text and determine their framing strategies by looking at a range of factors related to framing. I also note any other rhetorical or discursive patterns commonly found in my larger corpora that also are manifest in these selected official texts. While many rhetorical scholars of social movements focus on the rhetoric of movement leaders (Griffin; Simons), I take a cue from other rhetoricians who advocate for analyzing the vernacular rhetoric of rank-and-file members in order to get a more nuanced view of how individual members' and supporters' own personal views interact with and complement or contradict movement leaders' own ideologies and framing of issues (discussed more in depth in Chapter 3) (Hauser; Hauser and McClellan). In this chapter, I will

focus on the discourse of official movement leaders, while in Chapter 5, I will turn to analyzing more vernacular student-created pro-BDS texts from Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) events at local universities in the Washington D.C. area.

Rhetorical Situations and Ecologies for Official BDS Movement Discourse

Before getting into a more in-depth discussion of my data and analysis of the framing strategies found in the official pro-BDS texts I studied, I will briefly review some of the most relevant elements of the rhetorical situations and ecologies for official pro-BDS discourse more broadly, including the various short and long-term exigencies referenced or called forth by pro-BDS rhetors, along with relevant political and historical context, rhetors, audiences, constraints. To understand many of the framing and rhetorical choices made by pro-BDS rhetors, it is necessary to first understand how elements of the rhetorical situation and ecology serve to motivate and constrain these choices and affect audiences' potential receptiveness to pro-BDS discourse. Official pro-BDS movement discourse tends to focus on three primary exigencies: the failure of the international community, Israel's violations of international law and denial of Palestinian rights, and Israeli impunity, and these exigencies also overlap with common frames found throughout official pro-BDS discourse, as I will discuss more in depth later in this chapter.

In regard to the specific official pro-BDS texts I focus my analysis on in this chapter, although most of the elements of the rhetorical situation and ecology are the same as those for pro-BDS discourse more generally, a few elements vary somewhat. For example, while Omar Barghouti's audience for his book, *Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions: The Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights*, is almost identical to that of the BNC statements (transnational English-speaking Western Palestinian solidarity activists), his op-eds in several US newspapers are targeted more specifically for an American audience but also more widely to a mainstream

liberal audience, rather than to already sympathetic activists. This explains why his framing strategies (discussed later in this chapter), analogies, arguments, etc. include more frequent references to US history and attitudes than are found in the official BNC statements. His op-eds also more often acknowledge and refute common US and Western critiques of BDS than is the case for BNC statements.

In the following sections of this chapter, I discuss the results of my rhetorical framing analysis with particular focus on my micro-level analysis of selected official pro-BDS texts. The corpora includes texts with purposes such as general justifications for BDS (mostly Barghouti), announcements of BDS successes, statements of solidarity with other struggles for justice around the world, condemnations of complicity with or support for Israel, appeals for Gaza, and responses to critics. In addition to discussing the results of my micro-analysis of these selected representative texts drawn from my larger corpora, in these sections, I also briefly discuss or quote from other relevant texts from the BNC or Barghouti to provide additional examples and evidence of BDS framing strategies.

Official BNC Statements

The 2005 BDS Call

The first official BNC statement released is also the foundational text of the Palestinian-led BDS movement: the 2005 BDS Call. Because the 2005 official BDS Call is arguably the most important text of the BDS movement, I have included it here in its entirety with its original wording and format:

One year after the historic Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) which found Israel's Wall built on occupied Palestinian territory to be illegal; Israel continues its construction of the colonial Wall with total disregard to the Court's decision.

Thirty eight years into Israel's occupation of the Palestinian West Bank (including East Jerusalem), Gaza Strip and the Syrian Golan Heights, Israel continues to expand Jewish colonies. It has unilaterally annexed occupied East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights and is now de facto annexing large parts of the West Bank by means of the Wall. Israel is also preparing - in the shadow of its planned redeployment from the Gaza Strip - to build and expand colonies in the West Bank. Fifty seven years after the state of Israel was built mainly on land ethnically cleansed of its Palestinian owners, a majority of Palestinians are refugees, most of whom are stateless. Moreover, Israel's entrenched system of racial discrimination against its own Arab-Palestinian citizens remains intact.

In light of Israel's persistent violations of international law; and

Given that, since 1948, hundreds of UN resolutions have condemned Israel's colonial and discriminatory policies as illegal and called for immediate, adequate and effective remedies; and

Given that all forms of international intervention and peace-making have until now failed to convince or force Israel to comply with humanitarian law, to respect fundamental human rights and to end its occupation and oppression of the people of Palestine; and

In view of the fact that people of conscience in the international community have historically shouldered the moral responsibility to fight injustice, as exemplified in the struggle to abolish apartheid in South Africa through diverse forms of boycott,

divestment and sanctions; and Inspired by the struggle of South Africans against apartheid and in the spirit of international solidarity, moral consistency and resistance to injustice and oppression;

We, representatives of Palestinian civil society, call upon international civil society organizations and people of conscience all over the world to impose broad boycotts and implement divestment initiatives against Israel similar to those applied to South Africa in the apartheid era. We appeal to you to pressure your respective states to impose embargoes and sanctions against Israel. We also invite conscientious Israelis to support this Call, for the sake of justice and genuine peace.

These non-violent punitive measures should be maintained until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law by:

1. Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall
2. Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; and
3. Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194. (“Palestinian Civil”)

The rhetorical situation for the BDS Call and the birth of the official BDS movement includes some immediate and identifiable external exigencies, many of which are stated within the call itself, including the one-year anniversary of the International Court of Justice (ICJ)

ruling declaring the Israeli separation barrier illegal; the continued construction of the separation barrier; the failure of peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians to produce any significant recent progress (i.e., 2005) toward a two-state solution or resolution to the conflict; the continuing expansion of illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank; and the ongoing problem of the failure of the international community to hold Israel accountable for its continued violations of international law and denial of Palestinian human rights (“Palestinian Civil”). Other external and ongoing exigencies not stated within the text of the call itself consist of the recent end of the violent Second Intifada (2000-2005; also known as the “Al-Aqsa Intifada”), which failed to achieve any significant gains for Palestinians, and the continued and even increasing oppression and settler colonial policies endured by Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza (e.g., increasing number of checkpoints and restrictions on freedom of movement and travel, home demolitions, curfews, administrative detentions, etc.).

Another exigency for the 2005 BDS Call and also the BDS movement itself was the recent movement in the West (especially in Europe and the US) during the Second Intifada to protest Israel’s harsh repression of Palestinians with boycott campaigns and other solidarity actions, which also included requests by Western solidarity activists for Palestinian guidance on principles and goals of boycott campaigns (Barghouti, *Boycott* 19; Clarke; Rose and Rose). Earlier calls for boycott and divestment from Israel arose during the Second Intifada beginning in 2001, including calls originating from US and European college-based activists and academics (Barghouti, *Boycott* 19-20; Rose and Rose; Clarke). Then, in 2004, the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) was launched toward the end of the Second Intifada after the collapse of the Oslo peace process and after Palestinians had been suffering for almost four years from harsh Israeli repression in response to Palestinian suicide

bombings (Barghouti, *Boycott* 19-20; PACBI, “Call”). PACBI was later folded into the Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC) to oversee the academic and cultural boycott aspects of the BDS movement (PACBI, “Call”; “Palestinian Campaign”). Some of the language of the later 2005 BDS Call echoes statements and themes from the 2004 PACBI Call, including references to the failure of the international community to hold Israel accountable, ongoing oppressive Israeli policies, and the South African anti-apartheid movement (PACBI, “Call”). The earlier PACBI statement also includes an acknowledgement that Palestinian solidarity activists calling for boycott campaigns during the Second Intifada had requested that Palestinian activists release their own statement of principles and goals for international solidarity activists to follow: “Recognizing that the growing international boycott movement against Israel has expressed the need for a Palestinian frame of reference outlining guiding principles” (PACBI, “Call”).

The 2005 BDS Call itself is a good example of how rhetorical texts can be re-read over time in different historical fluxes, as Edbauer explains in her discussion of rhetorical ecologies as shifting rather than static rhetorical situations described by Bitzer and other earlier scholars. While the 2005 BDS Call responds to several immediate external exigencies, in the years after the call was released and after the BDS movement has grown and gained international support as well as harsh condemnation from Israel’s advocates, different audiences may re-read the 2005 document and its rhetorical situation and exigencies in a different light. For example, each time Israel has launched a military assault on Gaza since then, the BDS movement has gained new supporters who oppose what they perceive as Israel’s disproportionate response to Hamas rockets and collective punishment of Palestinian civilians living in Gaza (Thrall, “BDS,” “How the Battle”). Someone sympathetic to the suffering of Palestinians in Gaza reading the 2005 Call for the first time after the 2008-2009 or 2014 Israeli assaults on Gaza may see the BDS call and

its demands as extremely reasonable for their focus on nonviolent BDS (as opposed to the rocket attacks from Gaza often discussed in US media) and the fact that the 2005 Call concentrates more on other discriminatory and oppressive policies that deny Palestinian human rights without mentioning the recent violent military assaults on Gaza that resulted in hundreds of civilian deaths. In light of the lack of a strong international response to Israel's Gaza assaults, later readers of the 2005 BDS Call may also find the references to the failure of the international community to intervene and hold Israel accountable particularly apt and salient in the context of later realities. At the same time, later readers who are more sympathetic to Israel may become more critical of the text and perceived exigencies for the 2005 BDS Call after exposure to pro-Israel public relations in the mainstream US news media during the Gaza Wars.

Other examples of real-world events may also affect how audiences perceive the 2005 BDS Call and pro-BDS discourse generally as part of shifting rhetorical ecologies. For example, the Israeli killing of mostly nonviolent Palestinian demonstrators from Gaza during the 2018-2019 Great Return Marches and protests; the Israeli government's increasing anti-democratic and right-wing shifts; and Donald Trump's professed support for Israel's right-wing government and US policy changes, including moving the US embassy to Jerusalem in 2017 and proposing his controversial and one-sided *Peace to Prosperity* plan in 2020¹³, could cause some liberal critics of Trump and Netanyahu in the US and around the world to become more open to pro-BDS discourse than they would have been previously when support for Israel was still considered a bipartisan position shared by conservatives and liberals alike. Moreover, after the

¹³ In addition to this policy change, the Trump administration also recognized the Golan Heights as part of Israel in 2019 and Trump officials have dropped the use of the term "occupation" in administration documents and some have made statements suggesting increased acceptance or tolerance toward Israeli annexation of at least parts of the West Bank (Holland and Mason; "US Envoy"). And in January of 2020, the Trump administration also released its *Peace to Prosperity* plan that involves Israel's annexation of large portions of Palestinian territory that would divide up the West Bank; many critics, including Israelis, have likened the plan to official apartheid (Thrall, "Trump's Middle East"; *Peace to Prosperity*; Sokatch; Levy; "Trump's Peace Sham"; "B'Tselem).

harsh response of pro-Israel advocates to the growth of BDS and the passage of several anti-BDS laws in several US states, the exigencies for the 2005 BDS Call may be re-read again in a new context in which public support for BDS could be seen as a risky legal liability. Thus, there are many ways that pro-BDS texts and their exigencies can be re-read and re-interpreted over time in different historical contexts and fluxes. Understanding these exigencies is necessary for understanding the context for the 2005 BDS Call, the common justification for the use of BDS tactics and the existence of the BDS movement itself, as well as the purpose, framing, and rhetorical strategies and appeals of pro-BDS discourse.

A full rhetorical understanding of pro-BDS discourse and its framing strategies also requires examining the audiences for pro-BDS texts, which applies to the 2005 BDS Call and pro-BDS discourse more generally. According to Bitzer, “a rhetorical audience consists only of those persons who are capable of being influenced by discourse and of being mediators of change” (8). While pro-BDS activist-rhetors, like other social movement rhetors, tend to focus on sympathetic audiences that can be called to action in support of the cause of Palestinian rights, there are a variety of primary and secondary local, regional, and international audiences for pro-BDS discourse as well. Audiences for the 2005 BDS Call are similar to those for all pro-BDS discourse and include international Palestinian solidarity activists; social justice activists who may not currently focus on Palestinian rights but whose values align with those expressed in the call; social and racial justice activists who previously supported the South African anti-apartheid struggle, which is stated as inspiration for the BDS movement in the call itself; and a wider audience of potentially sympathetic Western, international, and even Israeli audiences whom the BDS Call “invite[s] to support this Call, for the sake of justice and genuine peace” (“Palestinian Civil”).

US citizens and activists are an especially important audience for pro-BDS discourse because the US is Israel's primary benefactor in the international arena. The typical rhetorical focus on receptive audiences means that right-wing Christian and Jewish Zionists would not typically be intended audiences for BDS discourse because they are likely not "capable of being influenced by discourse" or being "mediators of change" (Bitzer 8). Some liberal Zionists, on the other hand, profess adherence to universal values such as equality, human rights, etc., values that often conflict with Israel's actual discriminatory policies against Palestinians. Thus, some liberal Zionists may be persuadable by pro-BDS discourse that connects with these common values and beliefs, as evidenced by the growing numbers of Jewish BDS supporters and anti-Zionists in recent years, many of whom previously held more pro-Israel Zionist views (Omer, *Days of Awe* 19-21; Beinart, *The Crisis*). However, because Zionism has become fused with Jewish identity for many liberal Zionists in recent decades, this overlapping sense of identity and the *doxa* that BDS is antisemitic may serve to trigger affective "uptake memories" that import Jewish history and trauma into discussions of Palestine/Israel and BDS, as discussed by Bawarshi and Abraham (Abraham, "Reluctant"). This situation may, in turn, affect the perceptions of BDS among many liberal Zionist Jews and may prevent them from being more open-minded to pro-BDS discourse (Bawarshi; Katz).

The proliferation of messages and texts across transnational social media also means that it is often impossible to limit pro-BDS rhetoric to targeted audiences, which has implications for both audience reception and the circulation of texts. For example, pro-BDS texts and events shared online can often unintentionally reach hostile pro-Israel audiences whose opinions and responses to pro-BDS discourse often take up more space in the public sphere than pro-BDS discourse does. And when video clips of pro-BDS rhetorical acts can be re-edited and shared

across a variety of social media and other online platforms—and even tracked and responded to in real time by pro-Israel activists using sophisticated algorithms—then it is hard to predict which audiences will encounter pro-BDS rhetoric as it circulates (“Watch the Film”; Daro; Kubovich).

Another way that the audiences for pro-BDS discourse are hard to pin down is that pro-BDS activist-rhetors who create pro-BDS rhetoric themselves are also among the intended audiences for pro-BDS discourse: transnational pro-Palestinian activists and college students participating in Palestinian solidarity organizations like Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), college and community activists in Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), and members of other Palestinian solidarity organizations and networks around the world, including the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR), CODEPINK, American Muslims for Palestine (AMP), Palestinian Solidarity Campaign (UK), and others. These transnational activist networks are primary audiences for many official pro-BDS texts intended to spread news of BDS achievements and campaigns, inform activists about possible future campaign targets, remind people about Palestinians’ principles, respond to charges of anti-Semitism, etc. These audiences are usually already in agreement with the BDS movement and its goals and principles, so the primary purposes of pro-BDS texts directed at these activists are to deliver useful information, along with praise for efforts and successes or condemnation of Israeli actions and those individuals or corporations who reject BDS and choose to “cross the picket line.” For these audiences, while official pro-BDS texts may sometimes serve to remind activists of Palestinians’ principles and goals, they generally do not focus on trying to persuade those who already support the cause.

One way to tell that the 2005 BDS Call and other official pro-BDS discourse is intended for a transnational audience is because their statements and website primarily use English. While some documents include translated versions, including Arabic, Hebrew, French, Spanish, etc., the primary language used is English rather than Arabic. English is the primary international language, as well as the current most common language between Palestinians and Israeli Jews (since younger Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, and the diaspora are less likely to learn Hebrew now that fewer Palestinians work or travel inside of Israel). Some official BDS texts are also directed more specifically to audiences in countries where a particular campaign or action is directed. For example, BNC statements have directly responded to BDS-related actions or campaigns in Spain, France, South Africa, Brazil, and other countries, and in those cases, the statements are usually also available in the home language from that particular country even though the primary language for each statement is still English (Palestinian BDS National Committee, “Palestinians and Brazilians”).

Regarding the writers of the 2005 BDS Call, while it does not list specific authors by name, it does include a long list of over 100 Palestinian civil society organizations that have signed onto the call and who represent Palestinians under occupation in the West Bank and Gaza, along with Palestinian citizens of Israel, and Palestinian refugees. Because Omar Barghouti is an official BDS spokesperson and co-founder of the BDS movement, he also surely played a significant role in writing the call, though other Palestinian BNC members may have also had a hand in crafting the text. It is also likely that representatives of the signatory organizations had read and approved of the final text of the July 2005 Call before its release.

Framing Strategies in the 2005 BDS Call

The BDS Call cites the South African anti-apartheid movement and BDS campaign as an inspiration, which indirectly introduces the *apartheid* frame often used in pro-BDS discourse to describe the discrimination faced by Palestinians under Israeli rule. The South African anti-apartheid movement and its discourse may also thus serve as a constraint on how audiences perceive Palestinian pro-BDS discourse. While BDS supporters typically agree that Israel practices a form of apartheid against Palestinians, and many of them also support a one-state solution similar to the end of apartheid in South Africa, critics of BDS who oppose a one-state solution claim the BDS movement promotes only a one-state solution even though the BDS movement does not take a position on the final status of one or two states and instead focuses on specific rights that address all segments of the Palestinian population¹⁴. Despite it being a mostly uncontroversial aspect of the anti-apartheid movement, the “one man, one vote” version of a one-state solution in the case of Palestine/Israel would mean the potential end of Israel as Jewish-majority state, a prospect opposed by most Israelis and supporters of Israel, including many liberal Zionists who may be otherwise critical of Israeli policy. Thus, the rhetorical link between these two movements can serve to both clarify and confuse the goals and rhetorical framing strategies of the Palestinian-led BDS movement for different audiences.

In addition to the introduction of the *apartheid* frame, rather than a “conflict” of two equal sides that requires “peace,” the 2005 BDS Call rejects the conflict paradigm and framing and instead defines the problem as *discrimination*, *colonization*, and *oppression* of Palestinians, which unjustly violate Palestinians’ *human rights*. The statement infers that these problems are

¹⁴ As the BNC and Omar Barghouti have explained on multiple occasions, the reason the BDS movement does not take a position on a final outcome of one state or two is because Palestinians themselves, including signatories to the 2005 Call, are split over their support for one or two states (Beinart and Barghouti, “A Candid Conversation”; Palestinian BDS National Committee and Gaza Student Organizations; Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research “Palestinian-Israeli Pulse,” “Palestinian Public Opinion”).

caused by Israel’s oppressive and colonial policies and actions, but the statement does not mention Zionism or any particular ideology as the ultimate cause of Israel’s behavior. The only other cause mentioned besides Israeli colonialism itself is the *failure of the international community* to hold Israel accountable (also related to the *international complicity* frame), thus leading to *Israeli impunity* as a primary culprit and frame presented for understanding the situation and justifying the necessity of the BDS Call and movement. The 2005 BDS Call judges these problematic and oppressive Israeli actions against the Palestinians to be morally wrong, and the solution offered is for “people of conscience in the international community” to take on “the moral responsibility to fight injustice” by engaging in a transnational *grassroots* BDS movement “inspired by the struggle of South Africans against apartheid” to finally hold Israel accountable for its ongoing *violations of international law* and Palestinian *human rights*.

By discussing the problems, causes, moral judgments, and solutions, the 2005 BDS Call introduces master and issue frames that work together to create common collective action frames commonly found throughout much official pro-BDS discourse and that serve to frame audiences’ understanding of the situation in Palestine/Israel and spur collective action and support for the BDS movement by defining the nature of Israeli oppression of Palestinians, the rights sought, and the BDS movement itself. These frames include the following: *settler-colonialism*, *occupation*, *discrimination*, *ethnic cleansing*, *violations of international law*, *Israeli impunity*, *refugee rights*, *international solidarity*, *nonviolence*, *equality*, *self-determination*, *BDS as a grassroots movement*, *Israeli impunity*, and the *failure of the international community* and related *international complicity*¹⁵.

¹⁵ While the 2005 BDS Call does not directly refer to Israeli policies as apartheid, which is common in other official BDS texts, the 2005 Call does introduce the apartheid framing by emphasizing the need for a BDS remedy similar to the South African anti-apartheid movement.

Even though the term “settler-colonialism” is not included in the BDS Call, the text does reference *colonialism* multiple times in the first paragraph alone to set up the *settler-colonialism* frame: “the colonial Wall,” “Jewish colonies,” “colonies” in the West Bank, and “colonial and discriminatory policies.” And, later, the first of the three central demands of the BDS call is that Israel complies with international law by “ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall.”¹⁶ The other two central demands include (2) “Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality,” and (3) “Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.” The *settler-colonialism* frame positions the BDS call and movement within a long history of anti-colonial struggles going back to the twentieth century and situates Palestine/Israel within the same framing as other settler-colonial societies in which more powerful foreign, typically European, settler-colonists displace and oppress the indigenous inhabitants, such as in the cases of the US, Canada, Australia, Britain (in Northern Ireland), Cyprus, South Africa, Algeria, etc. The *settler-colonialism* frame also serves to contradict and reframe the preferred pro-Israel framing of the situation in Palestine/Israel as a “conflict” between two equal sides (for a more in-depth discussion of the use of settler-colonialism as a paradigm for understanding the situation in Palestine/Israel see Chapter 2).

In addition to the 2005 BDS Call, it is common throughout official BDS discourse to encounter the phrase, “occupation, settler-colonialism, and apartheid” in reference to Israel’s oppressive and discriminatory policies against Palestinians. Most Israelis and pro-Israel advocates reject the *apartheid* and *settler-colonialism* framing and instead claim that the over 52-year-old occupation is only temporary and that many of these seemingly discriminatory policies

¹⁶ Later versions of these three demands include a revised version of this first passage to clarify its focus on Palestinian lands recognized as being occupied by the UN, and so references to the three demands now often state “all Arab lands *occupied in 1967*” (italics added).

are justified and necessary for “security” reasons (Fishman; Morris 329-331). Some of these policies, however, seem to contradict the notion of security, and some Israeli intelligence and military figures have argued that they may even harm Israeli security (Landsmann). For example, building a separation barrier along the internationally-recognized Green Line (the 1949 Armistice Line) separating Israel from the West Bank ostensibly to prevent terrorists from crossing into Israel to carry out attacks, as happened during the Second Intifada, has a security-based justification, but confiscating significant amounts of private Palestinian lands and parts of the West Bank in the process seems to go beyond legitimate security justifications. Likewise, when Israeli authorities demolish the homes of Palestinians who have built additions without proper building permits (because Palestinians face many institutional barriers to acquiring the necessary permits and are not permitted to expand the borders of Palestinian towns), it seems to be a policy designed to make life difficult for Palestinians rather than increase security for Israelis (“Planning Policy”). Collective punishment of whole Palestinian towns, neighborhoods, or even the whole population of the West Bank or Gaza in response to a terror attack carried out by one or more individual Palestinians also seems to contradict legitimate security needs and instead may breed more insecurity (“Civilians Under Siege”; “40,000”; “Home Demolitions”). Even though Israel’s advocates usually disagree with the apartheid label, pro-BDS activists routinely reference Israeli “apartheid” and “settler-colonial” policies not only as common frames for understanding the situation in Palestine/Israel but also as primary and ongoing exigencies for the BDS movement and its discourse as a whole.

The Israeli military *occupation* is also referenced several times in the 2005 BDS Call as another frame for understanding the situation. These references include “occupied Palestinian territory,” “occupation of the Palestinian West Bank (including East Jerusalem), Gaza Strip and

the Syrian Golan Heights,” “occupied East Jerusalem,” “occupation and oppression,” and “occupation and colonization.” The military occupation of the West Bank and the blockade of Gaza also represent another long-term exigence for the BDS movement and its discourse. Both official and vernacular pro-BDS discourse frequently references the various oppressive and discriminatory occupation policies targeting Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. These policies include the following: land confiscation; home demolitions; military closures and curfews imposed on Palestinians cities and villages; military checkpoints inside of the West Bank and between the West Bank and Israel; restrictions on freedom of movement for Palestinians; long-term administrative detention of Palestinians without trial, including the detention of hundreds of Palestinian children and the routine torture and ill-treatment of Palestinian prisoners; harsh repression of popular protest that has led to dozens of deaths and injuries in recent years; the extrajudicial execution of Palestinian suspects; continued illegal Jewish settlement construction inside the West Bank; the construction and maintenance of separate roads for settlers that Palestinians are prohibited from using; the rationing of Palestinian water use in the West Bank; the blockade of Gaza that restricts the importation of many necessary products and materials; and the West Bank separation barrier, whose construction began in 2002 during the Second Intifada, and the route of which has confiscated Palestinian lands near Israeli settlements (“Background”; “Israel: 50 Years”; “Israel and Occupied”; *The Occupation in its 51st Year*; Harms and Ferry 141-144; Makdisi; Thrall, “BDS”).

The 2005 BDS Call’s focus on ending the occupation is another element of the Call and its exigence and *kairos* that can be read differently over time as the rhetorical situation and ecology shifts and evolves. The original text of the 2005 BDS Call said that “Ending its

occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall” was the first required aspect of Israel’s “obligation to recognize the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination” and fully comply with “the precepts of international law” (“Palestinian Civil”). But later statements of the three aspects of Palestinian rights in public statements and on the BDS movement’s website include this revised wording: “Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands *occupied in 1967* and dismantling the Wall” (italics added). It is not clear who decided to revise this phrase or exactly why, but it is likely that this phrase was added to clarify that the statement refers only to the West Bank and Gaza and not to the entirety of Palestine including Israel inside the internationally recognized 1967 Green Line. Because the BDS movement does not take a position on a one-state or two-state solution, the 2005 BDS Call and the three rights corresponding to the three sectors of the Palestinian people (Palestinian citizens of Israel, Palestinians under occupation in the West Bank and Gaza, and Palestinian refugees) leave open the ultimate political solution. It is likely that prior to the revision, the original phrase would have been read differently by different audiences. Supporters of the two-state solution could have read the original wording as only referring to the lands occupied in 1967 while supporters of a one-state solution could have read it as ending the occupation of all of Palestine. While I was unable to find any credible discussion of how this clarifying phrase came to be inserted into later versions of the BDS call, it seems fair to guess that it may have been added after criticism by those who thought it was too suggestive of a one-state solution. The fact that the original 2005 Call text and wording remains publicly available on the BDS movement website and in other locations may still elicit different readings from different audiences, though. Because the elements of a rhetorical ecology are often in flux, while it is important to carefully consider the different contexts, exigencies, and audiences that make up the rhetorical situations

for pro-BDS discourse, we also cannot expect to be able to pin them down completely, as Edbauer suggests.

In regard to *discrimination*, the 2005 Call refers to “Israel's entrenched system of racial discrimination against its own Arab-Palestinian citizens,” and “colonial and discriminatory policies.” In addition to the oppressive and discriminatory policies carried out by Israel against Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza, the third segment of the Palestinian people whose rights the 2005 BDS Call demands are the Palestinian citizens of Israel. Referred to as “Israeli Arabs” or “Arab Israelis” by most Jewish Israelis (even though “Palestinian” is the increasingly preferred term they use to describe themselves), the Palestinian citizens of Israel represent approximately 20% of the population of Israel and are mostly made up of the Palestinians and their descendants who remained inside of the Green Line after the Nakba at the time of Israel’s independence in 1948 (Berger). Until 1966, Palestinian citizens inside Israel lived under oppressive policies of martial law very similar to the experience of Palestinians living under military occupation in the West Bank after 1967 (“Discrimination Against”; Munayyer). To rebut charges that Israel practices apartheid, Israel’s advocates often argue that Palestinian citizens enjoy full equality under the law and even serve in the Knesset. While it is true that Palestinian citizens have many rights equal to those of Israeli Jews, there are also many other rights and restrictions, some *de facto* and some *de jure*, that infringe on Palestinian citizens’ ability to enjoy truly equal rights inside of Israel (“Discrimination Against”; Munayyer). Some examples of the discrimination faced by Palestinian citizens include discrimination in access to housing, jobs, land, marriage, and citizenship. Adalah: The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel asserts that there are over fifty laws in Israel that discriminate against Palestinian citizens or favor Jews, a claim repeatedly echoed in pro-BDS discourse (“Discrimination

Against”). For example, Palestinian Arab citizens, unlike Israeli Jews and Druze, are not required to serve in the Israeli Defense Forces and most choose not to, so they face job discrimination because military service is a requirement for most jobs in Israel (Goldman, Paul). While there are some alternative national service opportunities for Palestinian citizens and religious Jews (since 2005), it is difficult for Palestinian citizens to get these positions, which are limited and do not confer the same prestige for future jobs as military service does (Magnezi; Green, David, “Arab Israelis”). Palestinian citizens also face housing discrimination, which takes various forms, including the much smaller percentage of building permits granted to Palestinian citizens when compared with Israeli Jews and the many small communities that are allowed to deny housing to families or individuals who do not fit within the vaguely defined “social-cultural fabric” of the community, thus blocking most Palestinian citizens from moving in (Zevloff; Bob). In matters of marriage and citizenship, the temporary Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law prohibits Palestinian citizens who marry Palestinians from the West Bank or Gaza from bringing their spouses to live in Israel; though ostensibly a temporary law enacted during the Second Intifada to curb terrorism, the Israeli Knesset has renewed the law every year since 2003 (Munayyer; “The Citizenship and Entry”). These and dozens of other *de facto* and *de jure* forms of discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel constitute another ongoing exigence for pro-BDS discourse and the BDS Call, they are also used as evidence to support pro-BDS claims that Israel practices a form of apartheid. Such examples of injustices against Palestinian citizens of Israel also work to promote a *discrimination* frame for the situation.

References to Israel’s *violations of international law* also occur a few times in the 2005 BDS Call and set up another common frame. This frame begins with the opening reference to the ICJ ruling Israel’s wall illegal, followed by “Israel’s persistent violations of international law”

and the assertion that “hundreds of UN resolutions have condemned Israel's colonial and discriminatory policies as illegal.” Other references to Israel’s international law and *human rights* violations include their denial of “humanitarian law,” “fundamental human rights,” the “inalienable right to self-determination,” “the precepts of international law,” and, finally, the “rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.”

The frame of *Israel's violations of international law* also relates to the frame of *Israeli impunity*, which is referenced indirectly in the 2005 BDS Call but which is also very prevalent in most official BDS discourse and BNC statements. The first reference to this frame occurs in the opening paragraph, which lays out some of the exigencies for the BDS call: that despite the ICJ ruling of the wall as illegal, “Israel continues its construction of the colonial Wall with total disregard to the Court's decision.” The rest of the opening paragraph then presents some of Israel’s past and current actions that are inferred to also be contrary to international law, including ethnic cleansing, expanding colonies (settlements), and annexing parts of occupied territory. After this introduction to some of Israel’s ongoing violations, the next section builds on the *Israeli impunity* frame:

In light of Israel's persistent violations of international law; and

Given that, since 1948, hundreds of UN resolutions have condemned Israel's colonial and discriminatory policies as illegal and called for immediate, adequate and effective remedies; and

Given that all forms of international intervention and peace-making have until now failed to convince or force Israel to comply with humanitarian law, to respect fundamental human rights and to end its occupation and oppression of the people of Palestine. . . . Thus, the *Israeli impunity* frame, along with the related *failure of the international community* and *international complicity* frames, lies at the heart of the BDS Call and the BDS movement's central justification and framing strategy: that BDS is necessary because no other strategy, country, or international body has been successful at making Israel stop *violating international law* in its treatment of Palestinians, which it continues to do with *impunity*. Thus, the official 2005 BDS Call and official BDS discourse more generally argues that there is no other choice left to achieve Palestinian rights than a nonviolent, grassroots boycott campaign like the one against South Africa. The fact that BDS seems to be gaining new supporters and converts every day, despite the harsh public criticism leveled against it, seems to suggest that this framing strategy may have some resonance among its targeted audiences (Beinart, "What the AJC Poll"; Borschel-Dan; Goldberg, Michelle; Maltz; Telhami, "Americans Are"; "Young Americans"; Weisman; Ziri).

To develop the *failure of the international community* and *Israeli impunity* frames, the 2005 Call references UN resolutions and actions (or lack thereof). While there are some examples in earlier decades of the US and UN Security Council holding Israel accountable for its violations of international law, since the 1990s, Israel has faced few material consequences from the international community for its continued oppression and discrimination against Palestinians¹⁷. There also has not been any significant progress made toward a comprehensive

¹⁷ Israel's advocates have painted the UN as being anti-Israel because of several critical resolutions passed by the UN Human Rights Council or the General Assembly (GA), including the 1975 UN GA resolution equating Zionism with racial discrimination, but GA and UN Human Rights Council resolutions are non-binding, and the 1975 resolution was repealed in 1991 under pressure from the US (Lewis). Where other countries have been censured or

peace accord since the 1993 Oslo Accords, which were never fully implemented and which never led to any significant improvement in the lives of Palestinians; in fact, material conditions faced by Palestinians living under occupation in the West Bank and Gaza got worse in many ways after Oslo rather than better (Khalidi, *Brokers* 58-65; Said, *From Oslo* 92-94, 165-167; Thrall, *The Only Language* 143-148). The 2005 BDS Call explains that without any other meaningful way to hold Israel accountable for its actions, Palestinian activists have turned to grassroots transnational activists around the world to launch a BDS campaign similar to the one targeting South African apartheid. As Thrall argues in *The Only Language They Understand: Forcing Compromise in Israel and Palestine*, without any real, tangible international pressure, Israel will likely continue to pursue the oppressive and discriminatory policies it prefers based on Israeli leaders' perception of its demographic and "security" needs—as long the Israeli perception of costs outweigh potential benefits of making sacrifices for a comprehensive peace accord, then Israel, the more powerful partner, has no real incentive to make peace. As long as no other international mechanism or body (including the UN, the US, etc.) intervenes

even harshly sanctioned by the UN Security Council for human rights violations and military aggression, including Iraq, Iran, Russia, Sudan, and others, the US has made a policy of vetoing any Security Council resolution critical of Israel, especially since the 1990s (Campos). The US also provides Israel with more foreign and military aid annually than any other recipient, despite Israel being a strong military power in its own right and possessing nuclear weapons (Bender; United States). In earlier decades, the US, the UN, and the international community had imposed more consequences on Israel for its behavior, including when the UN security council stepped in to end the fighting and restrain Israel's military actions in previous military engagements in the region, including during the 1956 Suez Crisis, the 1967 War, and Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon (UN Security Council, "Resolutions"; Morris 431, 437, 440-441, 521). The most recent instance of a world leader holding Israel accountable to a significant degree is the oft-cited example of US president George H.W. Bush making a loan guarantee package for Israel contingent on the freezing of settlement construction in 1992 (Friedman).

Even though many people thought Obama might put more pressure on Israel than previous US presidents, and he did offer somewhat more public criticism than some previous US governments, the closest his administration came to holding Israel accountable was to abstain from vetoing a UN resolution condemning Israeli settlements, while still providing Israel with the largest aid package in US history (\$38 billion over ten years) (Sengupta and Gladstone; Spetalnick). In early 2020, after years of repeated delays due to pressure from Israel and its supporters, the UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights finally released a list of international companies that conduct business in or with illegal Israeli settlements; while the list has been criticized by Israel and its supporters, it could represent a first step at holding Israel accountable for at least some of its violations (Abunimah, "UN Takes"; Nebahay; Eichner; Hendrix).

substantially to prevent the ongoing denial of Palestinian rights by Israel, then the BDS movement will continue to have an overarching justification and exigence. And as long as this *Israeli impunity* continues without significant international pressure for accountability, then it will continue to serve as both a major exigence for pro-BDS discourse and activism and a common frame found throughout BDS discourse.

The common frames of *ethnic cleansing* and *refugee rights* are also introduced in the 2005 BDS Call and later repeated in many BNC statements. Near the end of the introductory paragraph of the call, this statement frames the history of injustice against Palestinians as one of ethnic cleansing: “Fifty seven years after the state of Israel was built mainly on land ethnically cleansed of its Palestinian owners, a majority of Palestinians are refugees, most of whom are stateless.” Though the term “ethnic cleansing” is still a somewhat controversial way to describe how most of the Palestinians living in pre-1967 Israel ended up leaving their homes and never returning, especially for Israel’s advocates, most contemporary historians, including several Israeli New Historians, agree that most of these Palestinians were either driven out by Jewish forces between 1947 and 1949 or fled during the fighting and were prevented by Israel from returning and never compensated for lost property, facts which are also supported by evidence in documents found in Israeli government archives (Morris; Pappé, *The Ethnic*; Shezaf). The difference of opinion is largely over whether this removal of the majority of the Palestinian population was necessary and justified or not, with most Zionists and advocates for Israel arguing that it was unfortunate but also necessary and thus justified (Morris; Shavit).

The 2005 BDS Call introduces this history of *ethnic cleansing* to diagnose the cause of the persistent refugee problem in order to set up and justify *refugee rights* and the right of return as one of the three central BDS demands: “Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of

Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.”

This historical exigency for this *refugee rights* frame traces back to the 1947-48 Nakba when over 700,000 Palestinians fled or were expelled and later denied the right to return to their homes or be compensated by the new state of Israel, and millions of Palestinians continue to live in exile to this day, many of them living in refugee camps in Lebanon, Jordan, and Gaza (Harms and Ferry 94-102; Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity* 3-4, 178; Pappé, *The Ethnic*; “Israel’s Refusal”; Morris). The right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties inside Israel and be compensated for their losses is one of the most controversial parts of the 2005 BDS Call and the BDS movement itself¹⁸. Supporters of Israel argue that the right of return would overwhelm Israel with Palestinians, thus erasing the Jewish demographic majority and thereby “destroying” Israel (Fishman; Rosenfeld; Reut Institute). The ongoing plight of Palestinian refugees provides another one of the major exigencies for the BDS movement and the BDS Call, and the right of return is stipulated by UN General Assembly Resolution 194, section 11, which states that the

General Assembly

¹⁸ The problem of the Palestinian refugees can be traced back to the 1947 UN Partition Plan, which allotted 55% of the land to the Zionists (even though they made up only 35% of the population at that time), while the remaining 45% of Palestine was to become an Arab state for the indigenous Palestinians who comprised 65% of the inhabitants in 1947 (United Nations Special Committee on Palestine; UN General Assembly, “Resolution 181”; Harms and Ferry 88-92; Morris 180-186). Many Israel advocates argue that Palestinians are to blame for not having a state because Arab leaders at that time chose to reject the UN Partition Plan as unjust, while most Palestinians and BDS activists argue that such a plan would be seen as unjust by any indigenous people. At the time of the partition plan, the land allotted by the UN to the Jewish state also had a high minority Arab Palestinian population of about 45% of the Jewish state, which was recognized by the UN as a challenge but as necessary in order to give the new Jewish state enough land to accommodate a large influx of Jewish refugees from Europe after WWII (United Nations Special Committee on Palestine; UN General Assembly, “Resolution 181”).

After the dispossession of over 700,000 Palestinian Arabs during the war of 1947-1948, the percent of Palestinians residing in the new Jewish state decreased from 45% at the time of the UN Partition Plan to about 15% at the end of Israel’s War of Independence even as the Jewish state expanded its territory from 55% of Mandatory Palestine to approximately 78% according to the 1949 Armistice Line (the “Green Line”) (Harms and Ferry 94-102; Morris 184, 222-259). These Palestinian refugees were never allowed to return to their homes inside of Israel, nor have they been compensated, and most of them continue to live as stateless refugees in camps in the West Bank, Gaza, and surrounding Arab countries (Kossaifi 31-34; “Israel’s Refusal”). In fact, Palestinian refugees make up about half of the total Palestinian population, which includes the family of BDS co-founder Omar Barghouti (Barghouti, “For Palestinians”; Kossaifi 42).

Resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible. (UN General Assembly “Resolution 194”)

The Palestinian *right of return* frame is important to BDS activists not only because it is seen by Palestinians as the initial and most comprehensive tragedy inflicted on them by the Zionist project, but its impact also continues to be felt today by the millions of Palestinians living in refugee camps in the West Bank, Gaza, and surrounding countries, not to mention the impact on many other Palestinians living outside the region in the diaspora who are unable to return to their homes and villages even just for a short visit. Thus, the plight of Palestinian refugees not only reflects a past catastrophic tragedy that defines Palestinian identity, but it continues to inhabit the lives of millions of stateless Palestinians to this day. Not only are Palestinians not allowed to return to their ancestral homes inside of Israel, but also they have never been compensated for their lost homes and properties by Israel, nor has the Israeli government ever acknowledged that Zionist forces bore any responsibility for the Palestinians’ dispossession. Even as Israel has regularly allowed Jewish Israelis to commandeer the homes of Palestinians in East Jerusalem and the West Bank based on Jewish claims to properties going back to before Israel’s founding or the “absentee” property laws, often with the blessing of Israeli courts, Israel and its courts also continue to deny Palestinian property owners’ claims to any land or property inside of the Green Line in Israel proper (Prusher).

The right of return for Palestinian refugees has also been a major sticking point in past peace negotiations between Israel and Palestinian representatives because it is a right valued highly by most Palestinians (especially those who are still refugees). The importance of the right of return to Palestinians was also recently emphasized by the large turnout of Palestinians from Gaza, most of whom are refugees from the Nakba, for the Great Return Marches in 2018 and 2019, during which thousands of unarmed Palestinians were wounded and over a hundred were killed by Israeli snipers as they approached the Gaza border fence to advocate for their right to return and an end to the siege of Gaza (“Six Months On”).

While the *ethnic cleansing* and *refugee rights* frames will likely resonate with social and racial justice activists who are already concerned with human rights and sympathetic to the Palestinian cause and narrative, older and more mainstream liberal American audiences (both Jewish and non-Jewish) who have been exposed to years of pro-Israel framing prevalent in the mass media and among politicians, including the oft-repeated slogan “a land without a people for a people without a land” and the claim that Palestinian left their homes willingly in 1948 at the behest of Arab leaders, may be less receptive to these frames that contradict commonly-held Zionist views about Israel’s origins (Dershowitz, *The Case*; Peters). Even though the *right of return* generates a backlash from supporters of Israel who seek to maintain the Jewish demographic character of the state, it continues to be a common frame and major exigence for the 2005 BDS Call, the BDS movement, and the larger struggle for Palestinian rights.

Other common BDS frames introduced in the BDS Call are *equality*, *self-determination*, and *nonviolence*. Though more often inferred as the other side of the coin of “discrimination” and “oppression” rather than discussed directly, the term “equality” features in the second demand in the BDS call: “Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of

Israel to full equality.” Omar Barghouti argues elsewhere that the most important rhetorical framing strategy for the BDS movement and pro-BDS discourse should be a focus on *equality*: “the indisputable Palestinian claim to equal humanity should be the primary slogan raised, because it lays the proper moral and political foundation for effectively addressing the myriad injustices against all three segments of the Palestinian people. It is also based on universal values that resonate with people the world over” (Barghouti, “Putting” 56). *Self-determination*, which has strong, though conflicting, roots in international law, is framed as another major goal of BDS, with Israel having an “obligation to recognize the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination.”

In addition to the inherently nonviolent nature of BDS tactics, the BDS call also explicitly introduces *nonviolence* as the preferred form of resistance for the BDS movement: “These non-violent punitive measures should be maintained until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law.” All three of these frames—*equality*, *self-determination*, and *nonviolence*—would likely resonate with the BDS movement’s target audiences of social justice-oriented and liberal Americans and Westerners as these frames overlap with values shared by these audiences. The *self-determination* frame is directly tied to international law (Article I of the Charter of the United Nations) and also echoes a common argument made by pro-Israel advocates: that the Jewish people deserve self-determination in the form of a Jewish state¹⁹.

Another frame found in the 2005 BDS Call and that also commonly appears throughout official pro-BDS discourse is that of *international solidarity*, which is closely related to the

¹⁹ There is debate over the precise meaning and application of the UN-sanctioned “right of self-determination” (variously and contradictorily argued as referring to regional, democratic, and/or national rights), and the right of self-determination of one group can sometimes conflict with the rights of another, which has been the case in Palestine/Israel, where the Jewish people have succeeded in winning national and democratic self-determination while Palestinians’ right has been long denied (Kapitan).

frame referred to elsewhere as *joint struggle*. This frame is introduced in the 2005 BDS Call as an obligation of “international civil society organizations and people of conscience all over the world,” who “in the spirit of international solidarity, moral consistency and resistance to injustice and oppression,” are asked to support BDS and Palestinian rights. Throughout the corpora of official BDS texts I analyze, the frames of *international solidarity* and *joint struggle* recur many times. Sometimes others are asked to show international solidarity with Palestinians by engaging in joint struggle with them, and at other times, official BDS texts express solidarity and engage in joint struggle with other movements for justice around the world, including those for workers’ rights and racial justice (Palestinian BDS National Committee, “Occupy Wall Street,” “Palestinians Salute,” “Palestinian Trade Union,” “Racism,” “Remembering Hedy,” “Stop U.S. Repression”; Palestinian BDS National Committee and Gaza Student Organizations). These related frames can also be linked to Crenshaw’s concept of “intersectionality” popular among many contemporary social and racial justice activists who believe that joint struggle is a necessary component of movements for justice so that different forms of oppression are recognized and addressed at the same time, and for whom these frames would be particularly resonant and effective (Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins” and “Why Intersectionality”). The fact that Palestinian solidarity and pro-BDS activism is popular among many activists also affiliated with other social justice causes suggests that not only are these joint struggle and international solidarity frames resonant but that this solidarity already exists to a significant extent (Bailey; Bailey and Petersen-Smith; Erakat and Hill).

The *BDS as a grassroots movement* frame is introduced when the 2005 BDS Call presents itself as originating from Palestinian civil society and asking for international solidarity: “We, representatives of Palestinian civil society, call upon international civil society

organizations and people of conscience all over the world.” The Call also invites “conscientious Israelis to support this Call, for the sake of justice and genuine peace.” In addition to these references to Palestinian and international civil society, the call also includes over a hundred Palestinian signatory organizations at the bottom in a list preceded by this description that emphasizes that the signatories represent the three segments of the Palestinian people: “The Palestinian political parties, unions, associations, coalitions and organizations below represent the three integral parts of the people of Palestine: Palestinian refugees, Palestinians under occupation and Palestinian citizens of Israel.” This *grassroots* frame also relates to another frame for BDS that appears frequently in later BNC statements: that grassroots, transnational pro-BDS activism is more than just a few isolated groups working on a common cause but rather that BDS acts as a *transnational movement* that individuals and organizations can join in their own local contexts in order to exert a form of agency to help achieve justice in Palestine/Israel.

Sometimes the absence of frames can be as revealing as those that are promoted, which is also the case for the 2005 BDS Call and other official pro-BDS texts from the BNC and Barghouti. One example of a frame that is used less frequently in official pro-BDS discourse than might be expected is the *peace* frame. For example, the 2005 BDS Call only mentions the word “peace” twice in the text, as part of the phrases “peace-making” and “for the sake of justice and genuine peace.” As with the rest of the official BNC statements, while “peace” is mentioned occasionally, it is never alone, rather always with a modifier in phrases such as “genuine peace,” “sustainable peace,” “just peace,” “peace with justice,” etc., a pattern also found in other BNC statements and Barghouti texts. On the other hand, the more general *peace* framing is more commonly found in pro-Israel texts that reinforce the “conflict paradigm,” which suggests a “conflict” between two equal sides and presents Israel as seeking “peace” even as many of its

actions and policies may seem to suggest otherwise (Taraki). In a similar way, official pro-BDS discourse, including the 2005 BDS Call, rarely, if ever, employs the *conflict* frame to describe the situation in Palestine/Israel. As discussed in Chapter 2, BDS movement activist-rhetors prefer the *settler-colonialism* frame and paradigm to the *conflict* one because they argue that *settler-colonialism* more accurately describes the policies and actions of Israel and the Zionist movement against the much less powerful indigenous Palestinian people rather than a *conflict* framing that would more often connote a conflict of two roughly equal sides.

All of these primary issue frames introduced in the 2005 BDS Call can also be found throughout official pro-BDS discourse and can be categorized under the more general and widely-used master frames of *injustice* and *human rights*, both of which also encourage identification with the Palestinians against Israel, identified as a perpetrator of injustice. *Injustice* and *human rights* frames have been used successfully and unsuccessfully by many social movements for justice around the world, including the US civil rights movement, the South African anti-apartheid movement, and countless other anti-colonial, civil rights, and racial justice movements (Brysk; Gamson, *Encounters, Talking Politics*; Keck and Sikkink). These master frames also encompass the *oppressor/oppressed* frame with Israel being positioned as the *oppressor* acting with impunity and the Palestinians being the *oppressed* victims who lack human rights. The BDS Call frames Israel's oppressive actions and violations of international law as an *injustice* while achieving a "genuine peace" requires that Israel be held accountable and *justice* achieved.

These master frames not only connect the BDS movement with other social movements seeking justice and human rights, but they also encourage audiences to identify with the Palestinians as the victims and against Israel as the oppressor, colonizer, occupier, and

perpetrator of injustice (Burke). This *oppressor/oppressed* binary of identification and division has been criticized by pro-Israel scholars as a biased oversimplification of a more “complex” situation, but this framing is nevertheless likely to be resonant with audiences who recognize the significant power imbalance between the state of Israel and Palestinians, as well as Palestinians’ current lack of human rights (Shimoni; Fishman). Thus, the 2005 BDS Call, along with official pro-BDS texts generally, encourages identification with the Palestinians rather than with “both sides” as the typical *conflict* framing does.

2017 BNC Statement Against Racism

Among the many BNC statements released after the 2005 Call, one that is representative of much the framing, identification, and counter-framing strategies used by the official Palestinian BDS National Committee is the March 7, 2017 statement, “Racism and Racial Discrimination are the Antithesis of Freedom, Justice & Equality.” This statement was released the day after Israel’s Knesset passed a new law to ban entry to foreigners who publicly express support for BDS, which Israeli lawmakers deem to be antisemitic for singling out the Jewish state and promoting the right of return (Goodstein). The statement was also released right before the start of the 2017 Israeli Apartheid Week events held in universities around the world, and it follows many public attacks on BDS, charges of antisemitism, and attempts to implement anti-BDS legislation in several US states and at the federal level (“Anti-BDS Legislation”). This statement also comes at a time when antiracist activism has been increasing in the US, largely thanks to the Black Lives Matter movement, along with a growing focus on “intersectionality” in Western leftist and social justice movements, and the left/liberal and anti-fascist responses to growing “alt-right” and white nationalist organizing during and after the election of Donald Trump (white nationalist discourse not only espouses racism and other forms of bigotry but also

often promotes antisemitic rhetoric) (“Alt Right”). In addition to these political events in the US, far-right movements have also been gaining support in Europe and other countries, a fact which the statement acknowledges (“Is Europe Seeing”).

After some more general condemnations of racism and racial discrimination, the statement then goes on to list more specific forms of racism and bigotry that the BDS movement opposes:

Adhering to the UN definition of racial discrimination, the BDS movement does not tolerate any act or discourse which adopts or promotes, among others, anti-Black racism, anti-Arab racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, sexism, xenophobia, or homophobia.

We strongly condemn apartheid, genocide, slavery, colonial exploitation and ethnic cleansing, which are crimes against humanity that are founded on racism and racial supremacy, and we call for the right of their victims, including descendants, to full reparation. We equally condemn and stand in solidarity with the victims of other human rights violations including human trafficking, workers’ exploitation, and sexual exploitation.

There seem to be multiple purposes of this statement: to situate the BDS movement as aligned with intersectional antiracist and anti-colonial social justice movements and to offer counterframing for charges of antisemitism from advocates of Israel. This statement clearly locates the BDS movement within a larger global struggle for human rights, joint struggle and against injustice, discrimination, racism, and antisemitism—all values that likely resonate with left-leaning intersectional social and racial justice activist audiences.

In Burkean fashion, the frames emphasized in this statement also serve to identify the BDS movement with positive pro-justice and anti-oppression positions while negatively associating Israel and Zionism with injustice and oppression. Like the 2005 BDS Call, the frames used here include the master frames of *injustice* and *human rights* and issue frames that depict and identify the BDS movement as supporting and engaging in *joint struggle* for *antiracism*, *anti-colonialism*, *freedom*, and *equality*, while Israel and its policies are identified with the negative acts of *oppression*, *discrimination*, *settler colonialism*, and *apartheid*. As discussed previously in relation to the 2005 BDS Call, as opposed to the common “conflict” framing suggesting both sides are at fault, which is used by Israel’s advocates and most mainstream media outlets in the US, the BNC consistently uses an oppressor vs. oppressed *injustice* framing that encourages identification with the Palestinians.

Another one of the most salient frames in this statement is that of *joint struggle* with other oppressed groups of people around the world—a frame also closely aligned with the *intersectionality* frame commonly found in US social justice movements and that also links to the *international solidarity* frame found in the 2005 BDS Call. The statement builds this frame by referencing how the BDS movement’s values require the movement to support other oppressed people:

[T]he principles of the BDS movement include the values of cultural diversity, solidarity and mutual support among victims of racism and racial discrimination.

Based on these values, we stand in solidarity with people of African descent, indigenous peoples, landless people, refugees and migrants, people exploited and oppressed for the economic advancement of a few, and those discriminated against and

persecuted for their beliefs or identity, including caste. We stand with their respective struggles for racial, economic, gender, environmental and social justice.

We extend our support to all marginalized communities, inter alia Arab, Black, indigenous, Muslim, Jewish, Asian, Latino, Roma and Dalit, who are targets of xenophobic and far-right racist movements that have risen or are rising to power, particularly in the US, Europe, South America, India and elsewhere.

We also stand in solidarity with the struggles of all minorities in the Arab world against racism and racial discrimination and for full equality and justice.

The principles of the BDS movement call for proactive solidarity with oppressed communities worldwide and with all the victims of racist acts and rhetoric, as ours is a common cause. We support their resistance, in harmony with international law, against bigotry, racist ideologies and practices.

Racism and racial discrimination are the antithesis of freedom, justice and equality.

This statement against racial discrimination and for *joint struggle* against oppression is consistent with other BNC statements overall, and the frames and values it emphasizes would likely be resonant with most left-leaning social and racial justice activist audiences in the US and the West that focus on antiracism and *intersectionality*. Other BNC statements have also expressed solidarity and *joint struggle* with the Black Lives Matter movement in the US, as well as with Occupy Wall Street, international labor movements, and the indigenous Standing Rock water protector movement in the US (Palestinian BDS National Committee “Occupy Wall Street,” “Palestinians Salute,” “Palestinian Trade Union,” “Racism,” “Remembering Hedy,” “Stop U.S. Repression”; Palestinian BDS National Committee and Gaza Student Organizations). A growing

focus on and belief in *joint struggle* and *intersectionality* has led progressive anti-racist social justice activists and movements to link with other oppressed and marginalized groups and create coalitions that organize against injustice and across racial, ethnic, religious, national, gender, and other group identities. At the same time, however, many pro-Israel advocates have grown increasingly wary of intersectionality and have tried to find ways to undermine this popular concept that threatens the acceptance of pro-Israel and Zionist beliefs among the social justice left. For example, in 2019, the Reut Group published advice for pro-Israel professionals on “Navigating Intersectional Landscapes,” offering further proof that many of Israel’s supporters perceive intersectionality as threatening (Jaffe-Hoffman; “Navigating”).

By explicitly rejecting antisemitism along with other forms of racism and bigotry, this statement seeks to offer counterframing to the antisemitism charges commonly promoted by Israel’s advocates. Whether charging BDS with real antisemitism in the form of a “war by other means” that seeks to “destroy Israel” (Block; Hallward, *Transnational*; NGO Monitor; Goldenberg), a form of “new anti-Semitism,” “anti-Semitism by effect” rather than intent that delegitimizes and unfairly singles out the only Jewish state (Rosenfeld; ADL; Brackman; Fishman; Jewish Telegraphic Agency; Reut Institute; Steinberg; Tommer and Fleischer; Zieve), or inadvertent antisemitism (Hirsh), the antisemitism charge against the BDS movement is so widespread that it has become accepted by many supporters of Israel as *doxa* (Reut Institute; ADL; Jewish Telegraphic Agency; Zieve). The counterframing against the antisemitism charge offered here may resonate with some audiences who were on the fence or already sympathetic to the Palestinian cause, but supporters of Israel who take it as a given that the BDS movement is antisemitic are unlikely to be persuaded.

While most of the other frames, values, and beliefs emphasized in this statement are very consistent with previous BNC statements, this text also goes further to explicitly condemn Zionism as a racist ideology: “We reject Zionism, as it constitutes the racist and discriminatory ideological pillar of Israel’s regime of occupation, settler colonialism and apartheid that has deprived the Palestinian people of its fundamental human rights since 1948.” In addition to overtly associating Zionism with racism, the statement later references the 2001 UN World Conference against Racism held in Durban, South Africa, in which Israel’s and the US’s delegations withdrew from the conference after a draft declaration equated Zionism with racism (though the final version removed this disputed section) (Feld 137; Kiewe 70). While this identification of Zionism with racism is not surprising given the Palestinian experience with ongoing Zionist-driven violence, dispossession, and discriminatory policies, this statement stands out from most others for the way it explicitly names and condemns Zionism. The vast majority of BNC statements do not mention “Zionism” and instead focus attention on Israel’s actions, policies, and violations of international law.

Because of conflicting interpretations and attitudes toward Zionism among Western and American audiences, the explicit condemnation of Zionism in this statement may serve to further bolster the *ethos* and credibility of the BNC for anti-Zionist audiences, while at the same time having the opposite effect on some older, more mainstream liberal audiences (including both Jews and non-Jews) for whom Zionism is more likely viewed as a positive and legitimate movement for Jewish liberation and self-determination. Younger liberal and leftist audiences (again, both Jewish and non-Jewish) who may have less exposure to the positive associations with Zionism and more experience with the negative connotations of Zionism as a form of discriminatory settler-colonialism frequently found on the activist left, many of whom may be

anti-Zionists themselves, may find an open condemnation of Zionism both fitting and resonant in light of Zionism's decreasing support among younger generations who value social justice (Jewish Voice for Peace, "Our Approach"; Omer, *Days of Awe*; Omer-Man; Sunshine). By linking criticism of Zionism with the intersectional joint struggle against antisemitism and other forms of racism and bigotry, this statement may resonate with these antiracist audiences by separating Jewishness from Zionism and suggesting that antiracists can stand against antisemitism and Zionism at the same time, thus undermining the pro-Israel argument that anti-Zionism is inherently antisemitic. In early 2019, after years of ambivalence toward Zionism among some of its leaders and members, the pro-BDS organization, Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), took the step of officially declaring themselves opposed to Zionism, thus providing evidence of the growing acceptance of anti-Zionism on the left and among social-justice oriented American Jews (Jewish Voice for Peace, "Our Approach"; Omer, *Days of Awe*; Omer-Man; Sunshine).

This increasing embrace of anti-Zionism on the left and among younger Jews, however, has also led to backlash among some liberal and conservative Zionist Jews and non-Jews who continue to view anti-Zionism as inherently antisemitic for denying the Jewish people their "right to self-determination" (Block; Hallward, *Transnational*; NGO Monitor; Goldenberg; Rosenfeld). As Palestinian rights and BDS have become more and more accepted as part of transnational intersectional antiracist movements for justice, tensions have also arisen between liberal Zionists and other progressive antiracist activists, which has led to charges of antisemitism and a growing split in the US and European Jewish communities between Jewish anti-Zionists and those more critical of Israel and liberal Zionists who choose to support Israel over other antiracist movements when criticism of Israel or the embrace of Palestinian rights and

BDS becomes more overt (Dolsten; Omer, *Days of Awe*; Maltz; Sunshine; Zieve; Ziri). Thus, denouncing Zionism in the same statement that explicitly denounces antisemitism may bolster the BNC's credibility with anti-Zionists while simultaneously validating the perception of BDS as an antisemitic movement to "destroy Israel" among some Zionist audiences because of their association of anti-Zionism with antisemitism, which could thus undermine the attempt at counterframing against antisemitism charges for some audiences.

Use of Emotional Appeals for Gaza

One surprising pattern I found in the data is that very few official BNC statements rely on the strong use of *pathos* or emotional appeals. The few that do include emotional appeals and personal testimonies, however, are mostly BNC posts written by activists from Gaza either during an Israeli assault or on an anniversary of such events. Israeli actions and policies toward Gaza also serve as an ongoing exigence that periodically comes to the forefront of pro-BDS discourse, especially whenever Israel engages in a military assault on Gaza and Hamas. While Israel ended its official occupation of Gaza in 2005 and removed thousands of Jewish settlers at that time, since Hamas' takeover of Gaza from its political rival, Fatah, in 2007 (after Israel's refusal to recognize the democratically elected Hamas government after the 2006 elections), Israel, with assistance from Egypt, has imposed a harsh blockade on Gaza that has stifled the Gazan economy and left most Gazans in poverty and dependent on aid for basic survival ("Background"; "Israel and Occupied"; *The Occupation in its 51st*). A 2015 UN report determined that because of the Israeli blockade, Gaza would likely become "uninhabitable" by 2020; in 2019, a worsening water crisis in Gaza suggested that this prediction is on track to become reality (Linshi; de Sam Lazaro). In late 2008 and early 2009, and then again in 2014, Israel launched military assaults on Gaza ostensibly to curb Hamas' ability to fire rockets on

Israeli towns and cities. In the process, in both cases, Israeli shelling and missiles not only killed over a thousand Palestinians (with a majority of civilian casualties) but also destroyed billions of dollars of necessary infrastructure, most of which has yet to be rebuilt because the ongoing strict blockade limits the importation of building materials into Gaza (Linshi; de Sam Lazaro; “Whitewash Protocol”).

While strong *pathos* appeals are not typical of most official pro-BDS texts I encountered in my research, when heavy *pathos* was used, it was often in the context of the suffering in Gaza. Scholars of human rights movement discourse have shown that it is common for human rights movements to rely on personal testimonies of suffering in order to gain attention and attract sympathy and support for victims of human rights abuses (Brysk; Kennedy; Keck and Sikkink). According to Brysk, “Life narratives of human rights abuses have become a powerful vehicle for human rights campaigns, tribunals, truth commissions, and cause celebre literary texts. They provide witness, put a human face on massive abuse, and model the protagonist’s emerging awareness of causality and responsibility for their suffering” (109). Contrary to this common pattern, however, most BNC statements are comprised of mostly relatively dry, *logos*-centric discussions of Israeli policies and international law. On the other hand, BNC statements from Gazans during Operation Cast Lead (2008-2009) and Operation Protective Edge (2014) take on a more emotional quality that seems intended to elicit sympathy, empathy, outrage, and a sense of urgency to act. For example the July 13, 2014 BNC statement, “Urgent Call from Gaza Civil Society: Act Now!” reposted by the BNC but authored and signed by representatives of twenty-two Gazan civil society organizations, expresses uncharacteristic emotional language, presents the situation in Gaza during Israel’s Operation Protective Edge assault as dire, and calls for intensifying BDS:

We Palestinians trapped inside the bloodied and besieged Gaza Strip call on conscientious people all over the world to act, protest and intensify the boycotts, divestments and sanctions against Israel until it ends this murderous attack on our people and is held to account. With the world turning their backs on us once again, for the last four days we in Gaza have been left to face massacre after massacre. As you read these words, over 120 Palestinians are dead now, including 25 children. Over 1,000 have been injured including countless horrifying injuries that will limit lives forever—more than two thirds of the injured are women and children. We know for a fact that many more will not make it through the next day. Which of us will be next, as we lie awake from the sound of the carnage in our beds tonight? Will we be the next photo left in an unrecognizable state from Israel’s state-of-the-art flesh-tearing, limb-stripping machinery of destruction? We call for a final end to the crimes and oppression against us.

The focus on the killing of women and children and the emotional language choices, including “bloodied,” “massacre,” “murderous,” and phrases like “Israel’s state-of-the-art flesh-tearing, limb-stripping machinery of destruction,” demonstrate an impassioned, affecting rhetoric that is atypical of the emotional restraint shown in the vast majority of BNC statements. Such emotional rhetoric also reflects the increased international media coverage devoted to Israel’s wars on Gaza that directs attention and sympathy to the Palestinians and highlights their suffering under intensive Israeli military assaults, and which has also led to spikes in support for BDS during these events. A similar emotional tone can be found in the January 10, 2009 BNC statement during Operation Cast Lead, “Stop the Massacre in Gaza – Boycott Israel Now!”:

Today, the Israeli occupation army committed a new massacre in Gaza, causing the death and injury of hundreds of Palestinian civilians, including a yet unknown number of

school children who were headed home from school when the first Israeli military strikes started. This latest bloodbath, although far more ruthless than all its predecessors, is not Israel's first. It culminates months of an Israeli siege of Gaza that should be widely condemned and prosecuted as an act of genocide against the 1.5 million Palestinians in the occupied coastal strip.

In addition to other emotional word choices here, the term “genocide” is rarely, though occasionally, found in official BNC statements. When “genocide” is used by the BNC, it usually only appears in quotes from Israelis or Jews critical of Israeli policy. For example, one repeatedly quoted figure in several BNC statements is the Jewish professor emeritus of international law at Princeton University and former UN Rapporteur for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, Richard Falk, who is quoted as having accused some Israeli lawmakers of “incitement to genocide” and referring to Israeli policy in Gaza as “a holocaust-in-the-making” in order to make a “desperate appeal to the governments of the world. . . to prevent these current genocidal tendencies from culminating in a collective tragedy” (Palestinian BDS National Committee, “Stop the Massacre”; Falk, “Is Israel,” “Slouching”). Some BNC statements have also cited Israeli historian Ilan Pappé’s description of Israel’s policies toward Gaza as “incremental genocide” (Palestinian BDS National Committee, “One Year Since”; Pappé, “Israel’s Incremental”). In a few cases, the BNC has referenced “genocide” when citing Israeli lawmakers who have made statements interpreted as calling for genocide against Palestinians, including the former Israeli Justice Minister from the far-right Jewish Home Party, Ayelet Shaked²⁰ (Palestinian BDS National Committee, “Urgent Call”; Abunimah, “Israeli

²⁰ Former Israeli Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked said in a Facebook post during Israel’s Operation Protective Edge assault on Gaza in 2014 that the entire Palestinian people are Israel’s enemies, “including its elderly and its women, its cities and its villages, its property and its infrastructure” and that Palestinian mothers and their homes were also worthy of destruction so they couldn’t raise more “little snakes,” thereby justifying the mass destruction of

Lawmaker's"; Tharoor, "Israel's New"; Hillel). This pattern reveals that the few times the BNC uses explicitly emotional language to describe Israel's actions toward Palestinians, including the term "genocide," it is usually in the context of Israeli military assaults on or policy toward Gaza.

While *pathos* and emotional language that focuses on human suffering can help elicit empathy and sympathy from audiences and sometimes compel them to act against injustice and for human rights, in the context of discussions of Palestine/Israel and pro-BDS discourse, the efficacy of emotional language is more complicated than is typically the case in many other situations where people suffer from human rights abuses (Brysk; Keck and Sikkink). Because the discursive demonization of Jews has led to antisemitic violence in many instances throughout history, culminating in the Nazi Holocaust, the use of emotionally-loaded language and rhetoric in regard to Israel and its treatment of Palestinians, including and especially references to "genocide" or Nazi atrocities, is often perceived by both Jews and sympathetic non-Jews as another form of antisemitic "demonization" even if similar language used in the context of other human rights abuses would be more acceptable. This may explain why the emotional language found in this particular BNC statement is not used often. If we were able to set aside the history of Jewish trauma and antisemitic violence, however, then language like this may seem more appropriate for describing the traumas inflicted on the residents of Gaza and to emphasize the urgency of international action, which is an attitude shared by some Jewish critics of Israel who employ references to Nazi persecution of Jews in the lead-up to the Holocaust when discussing Palestine/Israel (Omer, *Days of Awe* 3; Barghouti, *Boycott* 12-14). This tendency to import Jewish history in discussions of Palestine/Israel, which often triggers affective transference and "uptake memory," as discussed by Abraham and Bawarshi, serves as a significant constraint on

Palestinian civilians; the post received thousands of likes and shares before being deleted (Abunimah, "Israeli Lawmaker's"; Tharoor, "Israel's New").

pro-Palestinian and pro-BDS discourse, routinely leading to accusations of antisemitism that prevent Palestinians from telling their own stories about their trauma and suffering in a way that would typically be accepted for other oppressed people.

This in-depth microanalysis of representative BNC texts reveals some of the common rhetorical framing patterns found throughout pro-BDS discourse. In the next part of this chapter, I will also discuss the results of my analysis and coding of statements from Omar Barghouti. At the end of the chapter, I will briefly discuss some of the similarities and differences between these two types of official pro-BDS discourse I analyzed.

Statements From BDS Movement Co-Founder Omar Barghouti

In addition to analyzing the rhetorical framing strategies of official BNC statements from the BDS movement website, I have also investigated the public discourse of BDS movement spokesperson and co-founder, Omar Barghouti. I analyzed Barghouti's several op-eds in US newspapers and online publications as well as his 2011 book, *Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions: The Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights*. After coding these texts using my heuristic questions for rhetorical frame analysis, I then selected a few of these statements and chapters for which to analyze his framing strategies and use of rhetorical moves more in depth. I discuss two of these texts in this chapter: the "Introduction" to his book, and his op-ed, "The BDS Movement Explained," published in the *New York Daily News* on February 25, 2013.

While there is strong consistency between how the BNC and Barghouti frame the issues, some subtle differences in Barghouti's framing emphases, along with the inclusion of his own personal views at times, may affect the potential resonance of some of his framing strategies for different US audiences. Because the publications for most of his texts target US audiences, Barghouti tends to focus more on analogies to the US civil rights movement and uses the

nonviolence and *equality* frames more often than the BNC. These frames are likely to be particularly resonant with the values of liberal and left-leaning American audiences, who tend to highly value *nonviolence* and *equality*—both of which were also primary frames used by the US civil rights movement. He also devotes more time to offering counterframing to antisemitism charges than the BNC does, likely because liberal US audiences of both Jews and non-Jews tend to be especially sensitive to charges of antisemitism and have been repeatedly exposed to the pro-Israel frame and *doxa* that the BDS movement is antisemitic. Though Barghouti’s framing strategies seem likely to be highly resonant with social and racial justice activist audiences, some of his discourse and framing may be less resonant for more mainstream liberal US audiences as a result of the success of pro-Israel frames in US media and public discourse and the tendency of many Americans to affectively import the history of Jewish trauma into discussions of Palestine/Israel.

While the BNC regularly references the frames of *justice*, *freedom*, and *equality* as unattained goals sought by Palestinians and their supporters, Omar Barghouti more frequently emphasizes these frames as important values and goals of the BDS movement. In “Putting Palestine Back on the Map: Boycott as Civil Resistance” in the 2006 *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Barghouti emphasizes the *equality* frame as the most important rhetorical strategy for the movement and pro-BDS discourse:

[T]he indisputable Palestinian claim to equal humanity should be the primary slogan raised, because it lays the proper moral and political foundation for effectively addressing the myriad injustices against all three segments of the Palestinian people. It is also based on universal values that resonate with people the world over. (Barghouti, “Putting” 56).

In addition to focusing on *justice, freedom, and equality*, like the BNC, Barghouti also emphasizes *nonviolence, Israeli-settler colonialism, apartheid, and refugee rights* frames. Moreover, he also devotes more time to discussions of BDS strategy, tactics, and best practices than the BNC does.

Rhetorical Situation and Ecology for Barghouti Texts

Barghouti's op-eds are mostly published in US newspapers with a wide liberal-leaning readership, including the *New York Times*, *New York Daily News*, *Salon*, *Newsweek*, and *The Nation*, etc. Compared with the official BNC statements that target an international audience of pro-Palestinian activists, Barghouti's choice of publications indicate that his primary intended audience may be a more mainstream, liberal, US audience, which makes sense considering that the US provides Israel with more aid than any other nation and is Israel's primary supporter in the international arena (Kahl; Mearsheimer and Walt; Spetalnick). Some of his publications, however, including his book, his article in the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, and other op-eds and interviews from the online sources *The Intercept*, *+972 Magazine*, *Mondoweiss*, and *Electronic Intifada* target a more left-leaning activist audience who already support Palestinian rights. Despite the differences in these publications' audiences, Barghouti's framing strategies are very consistent across these various publication venues and audiences.

As a co-founder of the BNC, the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI), and the BDS movement itself, Barghouti also acts as an official Palestinian spokesperson for the BDS movement. While each of his op-eds and interviews has its own specific historical, political, and social context, there is a pattern of his op-eds being published during and immediately after Israeli actions that bring attention to Palestine/Israel, including the 2008-2009 and 2014 Israeli assaults on Gaza (Operation Cast Lead and Protective

Edge), John Kerry's 2014 attempts at reviving the peace process, Israel's 2015 re-election of Netanyahu's Likud party and other right-wing parties, the 2017 passage of Israel's anti-boycott law, and other events in the region. Relevant anniversaries also serve as exigencies for Barghouti's publications in the US press, including the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration and the 50th anniversary of the June 1967 War and the subsequent Israeli Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Barghouti's op-eds usually include brief justifications for the BDS movement even as they address specific exigencies and contexts present at the time they were written. His book, however, provides a more wide-ranging and in-depth justification for the BDS movement and its tactics and strategies, and it is the most likely Barghouti text to be re-read at different times and in shifting rhetorical ecologies.

Barghouti is a well respected advocate for Palestinian rights in the eyes of many antiracist social justice activists, but to some of Israel's vocal supporters and critics of BDS, he is seen as a promoter of anti-Israel hatred and even antisemitism (StandWithUs; Seid and Rothstein; Younis). Born to a Palestinian refugee family, Barghouti spent most of his childhood in Qatar and Egypt and later attended Columbia University in New York, where his activism on behalf of Palestinian rights began while he was also involved in the South African anti-apartheid movement that serves as an inspiration for the BDS movement (Barghouti, "For Palestinians"; "Jim Crow"; Beinart and Barghouti). He later married a Palestinian citizen of Israel and is now a permanent resident of Israel working on his PhD in philosophy at Tel Aviv University while continuing to engage in activism and travel internationally to speak about BDS and Palestinians human rights ("Jim Crow"; Beinart and Barghouti). He was awarded the Gandhi Peace Award in 2017 at Yale University, and has received accolades from well-known social justice and human

rights activists, including South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Naomi Klein, Judith Butler, leaders of Jewish Voice for Peace, CODEPINK, etc. (“Press Release”).

Supporters of Israel, however, have frequently expressed not only their disagreement with Barghouti’s speeches and writings, but some have even charged Barghouti with promoting hatred and antisemitism (StandWithUs; Seid and Rothstein; Younis). For example, according to Seid and Rothstein of the pro-Israel advocacy organization, StandWithUs, Barghouti “is an extremist who opposes peaceful coexistence between Israel and Palestinians and who will violate facts and reason to spread hatred for Israel,” and “if you ever wondered how groups like the Nazis, Hutus, or America’s southern racists incited hatred and prejudice, you have a case study every time Omar Barghouti speaks on a college campus.” Because of his outspoken activism on behalf of Palestinian rights, he has also faced Israeli government repression, including restrictions on his freedom to travel abroad and Israeli governmental “review” of his residency status (Khoury).

Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions: The Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights

Published in 2011, Omar Barghouti’s book, *Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions: The Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights*, has served as a handbook for BDS activists everywhere and has reinforced Barghouti’s role as an official spokesperson for the BDS movement. The book was published six years after the initial 2005 BDS Call during which time the BDS movement continued to grow and gain supporters, two years after Israel’s 2008-2009 Operation Cast Lead assault on Gaza, and one year after the violent Israeli raid on the Mavi Marmara Gaza Freedom Flotilla, among other notable events (Barghouti, *Boycott* 25). The book’s publisher, Haymarket Books of Chicago, is also well known as a publisher of many progressive, leftist, socialist, and social-justice oriented books, including titles by Noam Chomsky, Naomi Klein, Howard Zinn,

Arundhati Roy, Angela Davis, Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, and fellow Palestinian BDS activist and founder and editor of the *Electronic Intifada*, Ali Abunimah, along with many others (“Featured Authors”). Omar Barghouti’s inclusion with these other authors also helps to solidify his position, along with that of the larger BDS movement, within the larger social, racial, and economic justice-oriented left and its associated leftist and activist audiences.

In the “Introduction” to his book, Barghouti connects the 2005 BDS Call and movement to historical Palestinian resistance to Zionist settler-colonialism and other global movements for justice, freedom, and human rights; frames Israeli policies as *apartheid* and *oppression* enabled by *international complicity* and *Israeli impunity*; presents BDS as a growing and successful *grassroots movement*; offers counter-framing for common criticisms of BDS; and discusses obstacles to the greater acceptance of BDS, including the influence of “the Israel lobby.”

Barghouti begins the “Introduction” with quotes from Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish, Brazilian radical educator Paulo Freire, and Mahatma Gandhi, which serve to situate pro-BDS discourse within the traditions of Palestinian resistance to Zionist settler colonialism (Darwish), leftist radical socialism (Freire), and nonviolent anti-colonialism (Gandhi). After providing an anti-colonial rendering of the traditional “Rabbi and the Goat” story²¹, Barghouti offers his summary of the situation in Palestine/Israel:

For more than six decades Israel has enjoyed the best of both worlds, a free hand to implement its extremist colonial agenda of ethnically cleansing as many indigenous

²¹ In the traditional Yiddish story of the rabbi and the goat, which has been told in many different versions and variations, a man seeks help from a rabbi because he lives in a very small house with his wife and family, and they are miserable and poor. The rabbi tells him to bring a goat into the house, after which point things get much worse. After the rabbi tells the man to remove the goat, the whole family is much happier, which is where most versions of the story end (“Get Rid”; Hass). Barghouti’s variation of this story removes the rabbi and instead a cruel man chooses to put a goat into his small house with his abused and enslaved wife, thus making her situation even worse. When he then removes the goat, the woman is happier at first but then eventually remembers the other reasons that she was unhappy and decides to fight to gain her freedom (Barghouti, *Boycott* 1-2).

Palestinians from their homeland and grabbing as much of their land as possible and, simultaneously, a deceptive, mythical reputation for democracy and enlightenment. It has effectively succeeded in cynically exploiting the Nazi genocide of European Jewish communities, transforming the pain and guilt felt across the West into an almost invincible shield from censure and accountability. (2)

He presents the 2005 BDS Call and movement as arising from international criticism of Israel after its harsh response to the Palestinian Second Intifada of 2000-2005 and the US and international community's failure to hold Israel accountable for violating Palestinian rights (4-7). He also argues that Israel's aggressive actions in recent years, including the War on Lebanon (2006), the 2008-2009 War on Gaza, along with Israel's perceived turn toward "fascism" and the ongoing siege of Gaza have all led to increased support for BDS (8-9, 12-13). Barghouti also argues that the "Israel lobby" in the US has tried unsuccessfully to stem the growth of support for BDS by using "McCarthyesque" techniques, which has alienated many younger Americans, including many American Jews (10-11).

Barghouti goes on to summarize what he sees as one of the biggest achievements of the BDS movement in its early years: successful counterframing against the Israeli narrative.

The most consequential achievement of the first five years of the BDS movement was indeed to expose the 'essential nature' of Israel's regime over the Palestinian people as one that combines military occupation, colonization, ethnic cleansing, and apartheid. Israel's mythical and carefully cultivated, decades-old image as a 'democratic' state seeking 'peace' may, as a result, have suffered irreparable damage. (11)

Barghouti's assertion that the BDS movement's greatest success is reframing the situation in Palestine/Israel highlights the importance of framing to BDS activists. In addition to introducing

the *apartheid* frame, he compares BDS to both the South African anti-apartheid movement and the US civil rights movement, saying BDS “appeals to international civil society by evoking the same universal principles of freedom, justice, and equal rights that animated the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and the civil rights movement in the United States” (17-18).

Barghouti also argues the BDS movement continues to grow in popularity and support, largely thanks to Israel’s own aggressive actions in recent years, and he offers several examples of attempted and successful BDS initiatives around the world (19-31).

Barghouti also uses the “Introduction” to refute several common counter-arguments against BDS, including that it is antisemitic, only symbolic, impractical and cannot work, etc., and he points out that many of these same arguments were used against the South African anti-apartheid movement (24-25). He discusses how BDS gives transnational activists *agency* to hold Israel accountable, saying that BDS has already started to “empower activists worldwide, illuminating to them a path with great potential for raising the price of Israel’s intransigence and disregard of international law” (25). Toward the end of the chapter, Barghouti highlights Israeli Jewish support for BDS (31-32). He also emphasizes the BDS movement’s antiracist position:

BDS is categorically opposed to all forms of racism and racist ideologies, including anti-Semitism. Individuals who believe that some are more human or deserve more rights than others based on differences in ethnic, religious, gender, sexual, or any other human identity attributes cannot belong to this consistently antiracist struggle for universal rights. (33)

In his conclusion to the “Introduction,” Barghouti echoes Mearsheimer and Walt by asserting that the “Israel lobby” in the West still serves as an obstacle to more people speaking out against Israeli violations of Palestinian rights (33-34). He ends his conclusion by stating the book’s

purpose: “This book is an attempt to speak truth to power, to encourage others to speak truth to power, and to make a humble analytical, conceptual, and informative contribution to the most effective effort to date aimed at ending Israel’s impunity and realizing Palestinian rights: the global BDS movement” (34).

In the “Introduction,” Barghouti defines the problems, diagnoses their causes, makes moral judgments, and offers BDS as the solution. He presents the main problems as Palestinian *oppression* (in the form of *apartheid, occupation, discrimination, etc.*), and the corresponding Palestinian lack of *freedom, equality, human rights, and self-determination*. Like the BNC, Barghouti presents the primary causes of these problems as Israeli *settler-colonialism, Israeli impunity* or lack of accountability, *international complicity* with Israel’s *violations of international law* through the *failure of the international community* to hold Israel accountable, and particularly US government complicity and support for Israel. Barghouti judges Israeli actions and international complicity in Palestinian oppression as morally wrong and includes *ethos, pathos, and logos*-based justifications for why BDS is a necessary and morally consistent solution that can aid in holding Israel accountable and restoring Palestinian rights. All three rhetorical appeals can be found in passages like this one from the “Introduction” in which Barghouti draws on credible sources to present evidence for his argument while adding occasional emotionally loaded terms to emphasize the severity of the situation:

Coming on the heels of Israel’s devastating war of aggression on Lebanon (2006), its latest bloodbath in the Gaza Strip (2008-9), and its multiyear illegal and immoral siege of the Strip have stimulated a real transformation in world public opinion against Israeli policies. The United Nations and leading human rights organizations have amply documented the devastating consequences of the siege on the health of the Palestinian

population, especially children, among whom stunted growth and anemia have become widespread. A May 2010 report by the BBC in fact reveals how Israel, through its siege, has allowed only the “minimum calorie intake needed by Gaza’s million and a half inhabitants, according to their age and sex,” as a form of severe collective punishment. It has prevented not only candles, various types of medicines, books, crayons, clothing, shoes, blankets, pasta, tea, coffee and chocolate, but also musical instruments from reaching the 1.5 million Palestinians incarcerated in what has been called the world’s largest open-air prison and even a “prison camp,” in the words of British prime minister David Cameron. (9)

In this passage, Barghouti uses the *ethos* appeal when he cites the UN, human rights organizations, the BBC, and the British prime minister using endnote citations; uses *logos* by including specific examples of types of goods prohibited by Israel from entering Gaza; and adds emotional terms to emphasize Palestinian suffering and appeal to pathos, including “bloodbath,” “devastating war of aggression,” and “especially children,” etc. This same pattern of rhetorical moves can be found throughout Barghouti’s book and his other writings, which are full of *logos*-based arguments and evidence—such as, analogies to other settler-colonial situations or non-violent rights-based movements, syllogistic arguments, and credibly sourced facts and statistics that demonstrate the nature of discriminatory policies or BDS successes, etc.—while adding occasional emotional language to emphasize the urgency of BDS.

Barghouti uses issue and master frames that overlap with those presented by the BNC leadership committee of the BDS movement, of which Barghouti is a member. Some of the issue frames Barghouti focuses on in his “Introduction” include *Israeli settler-colonialism*; *ethnic cleansing*; *Israeli impunity*; *BDS as nonviolent movement*; *BDS as grassroots*; Palestinians as

seeking *self-determination, freedom, antiracism, and equality; Israeli fascism; refugee rights; failure of the international community and international complicity*. He also highlights Jewish support for BDS, and his use of issue frames fall under the umbrella of the master frames of *oppression, injustice, and human rights*. While Barghouti's framing strategies in his book overlap strongly with the frames used in official BNC statements, he also spends more time addressing American audiences by rebutting antisemitism charges and critiquing the influence of pro-Israel advocates (which he refers to as "the Israel lobby"), whom he accuses of employing "McCarthyesque" tactics against the BDS movement and supporters of Palestinian rights.

"The BDS Movement Explained"

In addition to his book, Barghouti's op-eds in several mainstream US news sources serve to emphasize common BDS movement framing strategies, provide justification for BDS, and offer rebuttals and counterframing for charges of antisemitism. Barghouti's *New York Daily News* op-ed "The BDS Movement Explained" appeared on February 25, 2013 in the wake of controversy over a February 7th panel on BDS at Brooklyn College that included Barghouti and BDS-supporter Judith Butler as speakers (Yee; Butler, "Judith Butler's Remarks"). A rhetorical frame analysis of this op-ed elucidates the particular rhetorical situation and *kairos* for this text and reveals how Barghouti frames the issues, establishes *ethos*, offers counter-framing, and encourages his audience to identify with Palestinians and BDS; likewise, he wants his audience to position themselves against Israel and its supporters.

The rhetorical situation for this op-ed is similar to that for most of his others that have been published in US mainstream outlets, though the immediate exigence and *kairos* are distinct. *The New York Daily News* has a more centrist audience than that of the more liberal *New York Times*, and *The Daily News* also focuses more exclusively on local New York City issues when

compared with other national publications Barghouti's op-eds have appeared in, such as *The New York Times*, *Salon*, and *The Nation* (Feuer). The *kairos* of this op-ed is tailored specifically to rebutting criticisms of BDS stemming from the recent controversy around the Brooklyn College panel, so the choice of a New York City focused paper is fitting. *The Daily News* also published an op-ed a few weeks earlier by Alan Dershowitz who attacked the Brooklyn College BDS panel as a "propaganda hate orgy" (Dershowitz, "Brooklyn"). Several national and New York-based news outlets covered the BDS panel controversy, and several local political figures spoke out against it, including New York City Council Assemblyman Alan Maisel, who raised the specter of a "second Holocaust" in reference to the panel (qtd. in Schiller). As Barghouti mentions in the text, another recent newsworthy event relating to Israel was, as Barghouti describes, the "Israel-centered bullying of secretary of defense nominee Chuck Hagel," which Barghouti relates to the controversy around the BDS panel. Because it focuses on New York City, *The Daily News's* audience is also likely to have a higher percentage of Jewish readers when compared with other national news outlets, a fact which seems relevant because Barghouti spends a significant amount of the space in this op-ed discussing and rebutting charges of antisemitism, an issue especially relevant to Jewish readers.

Barghouti opens this text by referring to the controversy and pressure to cancel the panel by pro-Israel advocates, which included Alan Dershowitz and the Anti-Defamation League, as part of a "ruthless campaign to demonize and shut down all criticism of Israel" and "further evidence of the rise of a new McCarthyism — one that uses unconditional allegiance to Israel as the litmus test of loyalty" (Barghouti, "BDS Movement"; Yee). After denouncing the BDS panel's critics, Barghouti reiterates that the BDS movement is a "nonviolent, rights-based struggle" inspired by the movements against South African apartheid and for civil rights in the

US. He also links pro-BDS discourse with academic freedom and freedom of speech, questions Israel's democratic image, and asserts that Israel practices "occupation, colonization and apartheid."

Barghouti again emphasizes several common pro-BDS frames in this op-ed, including that the situation in Palestine/Israel is one of *oppression, human rights violations, occupation, colonization, and apartheid*. He further emphasizes the *Israeli impunity and failure of the international community* frames when he asserts not only that "American taxpayers are effectively subsidizing Israel's human rights violations," but also that "Without increasing international pressure and accountability, Israel will carry on with total impunity" in its ongoing human rights violations. Overall, Barghouti's framing strategies are consistent with official BDS discourse, and his issue frames fall under the master frames of *injustice* and *human rights*.

A major rhetorical challenge and obstacle faced by the BDS movement that Barghouti addresses directly in this text is the emerging *doxa* that the BDS movement is antisemitic. After criticizing the "McCarthyist" tactics of BDS critics and laying out common pro-BDS frames for the situation in Palestine/Israel, Barghouti uses two paragraphs to directly rebut antisemitism charges against BDS:

Our opponents call us "Jew haters." That is a lie and a slander. BDS advocates equal rights for all and consistently opposes all forms of racism, including anti-Semitism. In fact, many progressive Jewish activists, intellectuals, students, feminists and others participate in and sometimes lead BDS campaigns in Western countries. The increasing impact of Israeli supporters of BDS has led the Knesset to pass a draconian anti-boycott law banning advocacy of any boycott against Israel or its complicit institutions.

Calling the boycott of Israel anti-Semitic is itself an anti-Semitic statement, as it reduces all Jews to a monolith that is absolutely equivalent to the state of Israel, is entirely represented by Israel and holds collective responsibility for Israel's policies.

Here Barghouti offers counterframing for the charge of antisemitism against BDS in the same way he also does in his book and some other op-eds: by highlighting Jewish support for BDS and trying to detach the association of Israel with world Jewry. In doing so, his arguments echo those made by both Zionist and anti-Zionist Jews that Jews should not automatically be associated with or held responsible for the actions of Israel, for doing so would itself be antisemitic (Butler, "Forward" ix; "What Is"). This counterframing strategy used by Barghouti (and also by the BNC at times) also employs the *settler colonialism* frame to distinguish Judaism and Jews from Zionism, the latter of which is depicted as a settler-colonial movement rather than an ideology linked exclusively to Jewish people (Palestinian BDS National Committee, "Racism").

Barghouti also uses Burkean language choices and framing to encourage audiences to identify with the BDS movement and Palestinians against Israel and its advocates. On one side, Barghouti promotes identification with Palestinians and BDS by painting the BDS movement as a "nonviolent, rights-based struggle for our rights" that is "deeply inspired by the South African anti-apartheid and the U.S. civil rights movements." On the other side, Barghouti associates Israel and its advocates with "bullying," "new McCarthyism," and an "intimidation campaign" on behalf of Israel that engages in "discrimination," "racist laws," and a "system of oppression against the Palestinian people, which takes the form of occupation, colonization and apartheid." Barghouti emphasizes that the BDS movement "advocates equal rights," "opposes all forms of racism, including anti-Semitism," and is supported by "principled defenders of freedom and human rights," including "many progressive Jewish activists, intellectuals, students, feminists."

With these choices in wording and framing, Barghouti makes the divisions between the sides clear: stand with Palestinians on the side of justice or stand with Israel and its supporters on the side of injustice.

Barghouti also uses framing and Burkean identification and division to bolster his *ethos* and the credibility of the BDS movement as a whole, which, at the time of this op-ed, had been, once again, tarnished by accusations of antisemitism. By tying the attacks on the BDS panel to the criticisms of Chuck Hagel during his 2012 confirmation hearing, in which Hagel was accused of antisemitism by some supporters of Israel and members of the GOP for his previous criticisms of AIPAC and his assertion that, “I am a United States senator, not an Israeli senator”—criticisms which were seen as off-base or over the top by many supporters of Hagel and Obama and that didn’t prevent Hagel from eventually being confirmed as Obama’s Secretary of Defense—Barghouti tries to paint Israel’s advocates and BDS critics as part of a larger campaign to silence criticism of Israel (Bloomfield). This rhetorical move may help persuade some American audiences that the BDS movement is merely another victim of politically motivated but otherwise unfounded allegations by pro-Israel advocates rather than a movement with antisemitic intentions.

Early in this text, Barghouti also appeals to *ethos* through his claim to be an authentically Palestinian voice when most Palestinians have been ignored in mainstream coverage of the controversy. His repeated associations in this text and elsewhere between the BDS movement and the South African anti-apartheid movement and the US civil rights movement also attempt to link the BDS movement to prior widely supported movements for justice. Toward the end of the text, he also quotes Martin Luther King Jr. in justifying the tactic of boycott as “withdrawing . . .

cooperation from an evil system” and part of a “profound moral obligation” of “peace-loving U.S. citizens” who wish to end their complicity with Israel’s oppression of Palestinians.

Barghouti introduces the *new McCarthyism* frame to describe the attempts by “Israel and its lobby groups” to silence discussion of BDS and criticism of Israel’s policies. While Barghouti also uses the *new McCarthyism* frame in his book, it is rarely used in official BNC statements, perhaps partly because Barghouti’s writings are targeted more toward audiences in the US (in contrast to the international audiences targeted by most BNC statements) where not only is staunch pro-Israel advocacy more common and influential but also where audiences are more likely to be familiar with the history of anti-communist McCarthyism in the US. Because his op-eds target American audiences, it makes sense for Barghouti to focus more on the influence of pro-Israel advocacy in the US in stifling public support for BDS and Palestinian rights. If he can inform American audiences about the pressure tactics used against pro-BDS activism, then he can better prepare BDS activists and supporters to confront and overcome them more effectively, and this can also serve as counterframing for the common antisemitism charges against the BDS movement by explaining to mainstream liberal audiences why they may have only previously heard a one-sided anti-BDS perspective.

This focus on pro-Israel lobbying and Barghouti’s descriptions of it as “McCarthyist” may also rub some audiences the wrong way, however, and be perceived by some readers (especially some Jews and pro-Israel advocates) as crossing into a discursive grey area that could appear to suggest antisemitic conspiracy theory (Hirsh, “Anti-Zionsim” 83-84). On the other hand, many political analysts have argued that it is accurate to describe pro-Israel advocacy organizations as powerful and affective at stifling legitimate criticisms of Israel (Aridan; Grim; Mearsheimer and Walt; Rossinow; Walt). The tactics and success of pro-Israel advocacy

organizations at pressuring media outlets, university administrators, and other organizations to promote pro-Israel framing and to suppress speech, policies, and activism critical of Israel, especially pro-BDS activism, are demonstrated in two recent documentaries: the Media Education Foundation's *The Occupation of the American Mind: Israel's Public Relations War in the United States* (2016) and Al Jazeera's *The Lobby* (2018) (Grim; *Occupation of the American Mind*; "Watch the Film"). Not surprisingly, in both cases, pro-Israel "lobby" groups and advocates worked hard to suppress these documentaries that show the strategies and tactics used to counter pro-Palestinian and pro-BDS activism and to promote pro-Israel framing in the US; in fact, the Al Jazeera documentary was never aired due to successful pro-Israel pressure on Al Jazeera and the government of Qatar (Grim; *Occupation of the American Mind*; "Watch the Film").

Though it is unlikely that staunch Israel supporters would be swayed by Barghouti's rhetorical framing strategies in this op-ed, his rhetorical moves are more likely to be resonant with audience members who are less attached to Israel or who were already skeptical of US support for Israeli policies. Aside from the use of the *new McCarthyism* frame and more frequent discussion of the tactics of the *Israel lobby*, Barghouti's framing choices in this text are very consistent with those in his other works and with most BNC statements and are likely to be resonant and fitting for audiences of intersectional racial and social justice activists in the US and elsewhere.

Conclusion

This rhetorical frame analysis of official BDS movement discourse reveals that the framing choices and rhetorical moves made by both the Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC) and BDS movement spokesperson and co-founder Omar Barghouti use consistent

rhetorical and framing strategies to portray the situation in Palestine/Israel as one of *oppression* and *injustice* perpetrated with *impunity* by Israel against Palestinians and enabled by the *failure of the international community*. Other primary and issue frames that are common throughout both BNC statements and Barghouti's writings include *settler-colonialism, occupation, discrimination, ethnic cleansing, violations of international law, Israeli impunity, refugee rights, international solidarity, joint struggle, nonviolence, equality, self-determination, and BDS as a grassroots movement*. Both the BNC and Barghouti also rebut antisemitism charges against BDS. In both cases, neither the BNC nor Barghouti include frequent personal or emotional testimony or narratives to bolster human rights claims, which is common for many other human rights movements and campaigns (Brysk; Keck and Sikkink). Perhaps in an attempt to appeal to Western audiences sensitive to antisemitism and to avoid charges of demonizing Israel and Jews, official Palestinian BDS movement discourse only occasionally includes emotional language and instead relies more heavily on *logos*-centric discussions of international law, Israeli policy, justifications for BDS, and examples of BDS successes and campaigns.

Though the rhetorical framing strategies of both Barghouti and the BNC are very similar overall, Barghouti spends more time rebutting and offering counterframing for claims of antisemitism, making analogies to the US civil rights movement, and discussing the "Israel lobby" and the "McCarthyist" tactics used to attack and silence many BDS activists and Israel critics. These framing and rhetorical differences may owe to the fact that his writings are more directly targeted toward Western and American audiences, whereas the BNC statements target a more international audience.

Based on the framing strategies used by both the BNC and Barghouti, it is clear why official BDS movement framing is resonant with the frames used by other intersectional

movements for social and racial justice—a fact which is supported by the growing popularity of BDS on many college campuses in the West and the open support for BDS by racial justice movements, including the Black Lives Matter movement, which has officially endorsed BDS (Bailey and Petersen-Smith; Movement for Black Lives). Even though he takes care to counter antisemitism charges, separate Jewishness from Zionism and Israel, and highlight Jewish support for BDS, by echoing Mearsheimer’s and Walt’s critiques of “the Israel lobby” and labeling anti-BDS discourse and tactics as “McCarthyist,” Barghouti may undermine the potential resonance of his texts with some mainstream US liberal and Jewish audiences who may perceive some of his discussions of “the Israel lobby” as overlapping with antisemitic tropes about Jewish power and behind-the-scenes control—a rhetorical challenge that may prove to be difficult to overcome since pro-Israel advocates often do exert effective pressure to combat pro-BDS activism, making this a topic one that is hard to avoid. Barghouti does effectively counter many common arguments against BDS, however, and increases the potential resonance of his frames for liberal and leftist US audiences by linking the BDS movement for Palestinian rights to other movements for justice, including the anti-apartheid movement and the US civil rights movement. While this chapter focused on analyzing selected texts that represent official BDS movement discourse, the next chapter will investigate vernacular student-created pro-BDS texts.

CHAPTER V

RHETORICAL FRAME ANALYSIS OF VERNACULAR STUDENT PRO-BDS TEXTS

In addition to examining official BDS movement discourse, I have also performed a rhetorical frame analysis of corpora of vernacular pro-BDS student activist-created texts. As suggested by Hauser and McClellan, analyzing the texts of rank-and-file members and supporters of a social movement can help rhetoricians reveal a more holistic picture of movement discourse: “National and international discourse communities, and—more importantly for movement studies—counterpublic and subaltern spheres, all speak a distinct language and perform a specific cultural inscription in their everyday interactions: this is what we refer to as a community’s vernacular rhetoric” (29). Therefore, both official and vernacular rhetoric must be examined to fully understand the framing strategies and rhetorical moves made by social movement activist-rhetors.

Thus, after discussing the official pro-BDS discourse of the BNC and BDS spokesperson Omar Barghouti in Chapter 4, I now turn my attention to the more vernacular student-activist texts that I gathered during Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) events at four Washington D.C.-area universities in the spring of 2017. Though differing in some ways in regard to the framing patterns and appeals used by official BDS movement discourse, including an enhanced focus on the *intersectionality* and *joint struggle* frames, the use of a wider variety of rhetorical appeals and formats, and the targeting of a narrower audience of fellow students, these student-created texts also demonstrated a high level of consistency in the frames used and likely audience fitness or resonance when compared with official movement texts. I will focus here on selected vernacular

pro-BDS student texts that help explicate common patterns in pro-BDS framing and rhetorical moves. In addition to other common issue and master frames used by official BDS discourse, student activist texts also emphasize the *apartheid* frame and South Africa analogy, along with the frames of *joint struggle*, *intersectionality*, *ethnic cleansing*, and *refugee rights*. Student activist-rhetors also use more personal narratives and emotional appeals, and more often explicitly promote anti-Zionism.

Rhetorical Situation and Ecology for Vernacular Texts

While US-based pro-BDS student activists also respond to local, regional, and global events, the annual Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) events are an example of an exigence created by Palestinians BDS movement leaders and transnational solidarity activists themselves to raise awareness about Israel's violations of Palestinian human rights on an annual basis. IAW events typically occur in the spring, but local student activists choose what week and what issues to highlight in their events and actions. During this week of activities, student activists may produce discourse responding to external local, regional, and global events in addition to their own chosen exigencies and responses during IAW (which usually relate to raising awareness about Israel's oppressive policies against Palestinian).

While the rhetorical situation and ecology for vernacular student-activist pro-BDS discourse is similar in many ways to that of official BDS movement discourse (see Chapter 4), there are also some key differences. First, even though both official and vernacular pro-BDS discourse tends to be directed primarily at audiences that value social and racial justice and human rights, the student discourse I examined focuses more narrowly on the student bodies of their respective universities, with secondary audiences being university faculty, administration, and outside observers who student activists hope may be swayed to support Palestinian rights

and BDS either by supporting a BDS resolution on campus or to engage in other forms of pro-BDS activism and discourse. Moreover, the pro-BDS discourse from these student groups also reacts to and calls forth more immediate and local exigencies and *kairos* in addition to the ongoing and longer-term exigencies of BDS movement discourse as a whole. For example, several of the student groups' IAW social media posts related to the anti-AIPAC demonstrations happening in Washington D.C. during IAW events in 2017. A panel at Georgetown focused on Birthright trips, for which some Jewish students would be signing up for around the same time as IAW. And a pro-BDS student group at George Mason University included some direct responses to a pro-Israel group's Israel Awareness Week events that were concurrent with IAW on campus. Other external exigencies during the spring of 2017 were the anti-AIPAC protests that year in which IfNotNow-affiliated Jewish American protestors succeeded in briefly blocking the entrance to the AIPAC conference building ("IfNotNow Protestors"). Because both of these issues gained attention in the Palestinian solidarity community during that time, student activists chose to respond to these external exigencies in addition to their own pre-determined exigencies to raise awareness about Israeli oppression and discrimination against Palestinians. Student-created pro-BDS discourse also follows slightly different paths of circulation when compared with official pro-BDS discourse. While official pro-BDS discourse typically circulates transnationally online, the more vernacular student activist discourse circulates both online and more locally via face-to-face and variety of print-based media on campus.

Regarding the student speakers and writers of pro-BDS vernacular discourse, in the case of pro-BDS US college students, leaders and members of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) and Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA) come from a variety of racial, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. Some student leaders and supporters have Palestinian or Jewish ancestry,

and others were Muslim, Arab, black, white, etc. The student activists were a very diverse group at all of the IAW events I attended, and Jewish ethnic ties were common—a phenomenon that has been observed anecdotally by others and supported by recent polling that demonstrates the increasing support for Palestinians among younger liberal Jewish Americans (Beinart, “How to Stop,” *The Crisis*; Omer, *Days of Awe*; Borschel-Dan). While not all of the student activists made their position on Zionism clear, many of the students, including members of GMU’s SAIA, openly proclaimed themselves to be anti-Zionist. Some student supporters of these pro-BDS organizations and attendees of IAW events are first-year undergraduates new to social justice activism, while others are more seasoned activists and graduate students. A significant number of the student activists were involved in multiple social justice organizations and causes, and almost all of the student activists professed a commitment to “intersectionality” (a concept first developed by critical race theorist and scholar, Kimberlé Crenshaw). For example, at GMU’s SAIA, student activist leaders encouraged discussion attendees to introduce themselves using their preferred pronouns—a nod to trans rights and identity and thus an implicit embrace of intersectionality.

Some pro-BDS student discourse I analyzed was crafted by student leaders of pro-Palestinian organizations, but SJP and SAIA chapters are not typically led by a single individual and instead usually had at least two or more co-leaders in a more non-hierarchical organizational structure. Most student-facilitated meetings and events I attended and analyzed were discussion-focused and included question and answer sessions after the events in which a wide variety of student members and attendees also participated; the discourse I analyzed thus includes a lot of vernacular and unofficial exchanges. Moreover, student activist leaders cannot be considered official leaders of the movement because they primarily work at a smaller scale in their local

campus communities, and they usually create discourse as part of a team of other students rather than as official leaders.

In addition to the students themselves, I analyze the discourse of other speakers invited to participate in IAW events on campus, as well articles posted by these pro-BDS student groups on social media during IAW. These speakers and writers include Palestinian scholars and activists, Palestinian-American activists [from American Muslims for Palestine (AMP), US Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR), etc.], Jewish-American activists [from Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), USCPR, etc.], and some well-known social and racial justice activists, including Angela Davis. While some of these chosen speakers may be considered official leaders in some contexts (e.g., Angela Davis as a leader of black-Palestinian solidarity), none of them would be considered a widely recognized official leader like Omar Barghouti or the BNC. Even though these IAW authors and speakers may have held more official leadership roles in some cases, because the students chose the speakers and texts, these choices also include a vernacular element.

The audiences for pro-BDS students activists on US college campuses are more specific than the audiences for official BDS discourse and include other college students, especially progressive and left-leaning students who are likely to be concerned with human rights issues. In some cases, for larger events, such as Angela Davis's keynote speech for GWU's Palestine Awareness Week, sponsored by GWU's Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) along with the GW Feminist Student Union and GW Black Student Union as co-sponsors, the audience extended beyond the university to include students and activists at neighboring DC-area colleges who were invited by SJP GWU students. And in some cases, IAW events were live streamed through SJP or other pro-BDS organizations' Facebook pages and so reached wider audiences of

people who may not currently be students but who follow the pro-BDS student organizations through social media.

IAW events may primarily target liberal and progressive students to raise awareness about Palestine/Israel and promote BDS, but these events also reach a wider student and faculty community, some of whom may disagree with BDS and even perceive pro-BDS and pro-Palestinian messages as threatening and antisemitic because of exposure to pro-Israel and anti-BDS messages and *doxa*. In some cases, students involved with pro-Israel organizations on campus hold opposing events, such as “Israel Awareness Week,” held simultaneously with IAW events on George Mason University’s campus. And pro-Israel students or faculty may also write op-eds in the campus newspaper that are then shared online by other pro-Israel advocates across the country. Thus, even local events intended for a particular audience sometimes end up with a much wider national or international audience as texts circulate across the internet, often via social media.

Aside from audiences and exigencies, pro-BDS student activist-rhetors also faced both similar and unique constraints when compared with official BDS movement discourse. Like movement leaders, student activists’ discourse is also constrained by audiences’ pre-existing knowledge and exposure to framing on the topic of Palestine/Israel, Western and US sensitivity to antisemitism, as well as anti-Palestinian and Islamophobic attitudes. Even as official BDS discourse is constrained by the values and priorities of contemporary social and racial justice discourse communities, pro-BDS student activists are even more sensitive to such values, with *intersectionality* being a prominent part of US campus-based activism that is often incorporated in the pro-BDS rhetoric of student groups like Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) and Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA) at George Mason University. Each university also

seemed to have their own unique climate for pro-BDS activism, with some schools having a more radical climate for activism that encourages pro-BDS student activists to take a strong anti-Zionist stance and openly advocate for a one-state solution, while other university climates more supportive of Israel and more hostile to BDS may discourage such positions and rather promote more limited and targeted BDS campaigns and discourse. Whether these differences are more the result of past university administrative actions and values, the strength and influence of pro-Israel groups on campus, or merely the result of student group leaders' individual preferences is not always clear.

The Apartheid Frame and South Africa Analogy

Among the frames most commonly used by pro-BDS student activist-rhetors during IAW is, of course, the *apartheid* frame from which IAW draws its title. BDS movement leaders cite the South African anti-apartheid movement as the inspiration for their own BDS call for international solidarity—a struggle against injustice that also similarly relied on international solidarity and a decades-long boycott, divestment, and sanctions campaign that is widely believed to have been a decisive factor in eventually ending apartheid there. Though the *apartheid* frame is still considered a controversial and inaccurate analogy by pro-Israel advocates, Palestinian solidarity activists and critics of Israel have been making the analogy for years now. Even former prime ministers of Israel, including Ehud Olmert and Ehud Barak, and former US Secretary of State John Kerry have warned that Israel will become an apartheid state in the near future if a two-state solution cannot be reached (Beaumont; Hasan). The apartheid analogy and frame was previously popularized in the U.S. by the former president Jimmy Carter's 2006 book, *Palestine: Peace not Apartheid*, and he was heavily criticized by many supporters of Israeli policy for making this comparison (Beaumont). Some critics of Israel,

including Noam Chomsky and several South African anti-apartheid activists, have not only compared Israel's policies to apartheid but also have said the Israeli occupation of the Palestinians is even worse than South African apartheid in many ways (Hasan; "Noam Chomsky"; Tutu). Many Israel advocates, on the other hand, typically focus only on the situation inside of Israel and exclude the occupied territories to argue that the situation is in no way like apartheid and that to even compare the two situations is an antisemitic (Oren, "Israel Isn't"; "Response"). Many opponents of BDS and the apartheid analogy fear that it will lead to calls for "one man, one vote" like in the case of South Africa, which would be a one-state solution that would end Israel's existence as a Jewish-majority state, and thus "destroy Israel" in the eyes of many Israel supporters (Oren, "Israel Isn't"; "Response").

Pro-BDS activists tend to focus on the similarities between the situations in South Africa and in Palestine/Israel and the official UN definition of "apartheid,"²² while Israel advocates focus on the differences between the two situations and reject the apartheid analogy. While there are many similarities between the two cases regarding the ways discriminatory settler-colonial policies favor the dominant group over indigenous residents, no two cases of oppression are exactly the same, including in regard to this comparison, which Omar Barghouti and other BDS leaders and activists themselves admit (Barghouti, *Boycott* 17). In both cases, the Israeli and

²² The UN defines the "crime of apartheid" as "similar policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination as practised in southern Africa," which "shall apply to the following inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them"; the definition then lists several specific examples of policies that constitute apartheid, many of which are the same or similar to Israeli policies, including "infringement of their freedom or dignity," "illegal imprisonment," and in iii (c), "legislative measures . . . calculated to prevent a racial group or groups from participation in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the country and the deliberate creation of conditions preventing the full development of such a group or groups, in particular by denying to members of a racial group or groups basic human rights and freedoms . . . the right to leave and to return to their country, the right to a nationality, the right to freedom of movement and residence, the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association," etc., many of which would seem to apply to Israel's discriminatory policies against Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza (and some of them can also arguably be applied to Palestinian citizens of Israel who face restrictions on who they can marry, where they can live and build, etc. ("Discrimination"; "International Convention").

South African regimes enjoyed the support of US and European leaders even after their populaces began turning against these discriminatory policies and regimes. Both BDS movements were also led by oppressed people who sought and received the transnational support and solidarity of grassroots activists, including college students in the West.

In addition to the similarities between the discriminatory experiences and policies of apartheid in South Africa and those in Palestine/Israel, there are also parallels in the framing strategies of anti-apartheid activists and their apartheid-apologist critics as well. For example, anti-apartheid arguments in favor of equality, freedom, and justice echo the framing strategies of Palestinian BDS activists and their international supporters. And, similarly to anti-BDS criticisms on behalf of Israel, supporters of South Africa also made arguments about the unfairness of singling out South Africa, the need for dialogue and engagement rather than isolation, the focus on potential harm to black South Africans caused by BDS campaigns, and the effectiveness of selective boycotts as opposed to wider boycotts, divestment, or sanctions (Dohi; Khalek, “How Today’s”; Kriek; Williams).

Like IAW events organized by pro-BDS student activist-rhetors at other US and European universities, IAW events at the Washington D.C.-area universities I studied include speakers, information sessions, mock “apartheid walls,” “die-ins,” and other events intended to emphasize the *apartheid* frame and raise awareness about Israel’s discriminatory settler-colonial policies against the Palestinians. These annual events often face strong pushback and criticism from pro-Israel advocates and student organizations that sometimes offer counterframing activities during IAW (e.g., George Mason University’s Israel Awareness Week organized by the campus Israel Student Association). In addition to the frequent appearance of the term “apartheid” in many IAW materials, some IAW texts go more in depth to promote the *apartheid*

frame. Some examples include the mock apartheid wall at Georgetown and the “Divest This Time” campaign at George Washington University—both which will be explained in detail later in this chapter. These examples develop the apartheid frame and analogy using both *logos* and *pathos*-based rhetorical appeals.

Georgetown Students for Justice in Palestine’s (SJP) 2017 mock apartheid wall displayed in the Intercultural Center (ICC) galleria during IAW includes both printed and visual materials, some of which have been reproduced from outside organizations and others created by student activists (“Mock Apartheid Wall”). A paper on the wall includes this hand-written description of the purpose of GU’s SJP mock apartheid wall display:

Georgetown Students for Justice in Palestine presents: An exhibition of graffiti on the separation barrier being constructed by Israel along and within its border with the Palestinian West Bank. The barrier has been declared by the International Court of Justice to be in violation of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. Graffiti is used as a peaceful expression of protest. Questions/comments? Email gusjpalestine@gmail.com

The wall also features several posters from the “Visualizing Palestine” series that emphasize the *apartheid* frame (“Visualizing Palestine”). The “Visualizing Palestine” posters were created in collaboration with the Visualizing Impact (VI) organization, whose mission is stated as “Breaking new ground in socially aware data science, technology, and design” and “Mainstreaming marginalized perspectives on critical social issues” (“Visualizing Impact”). VI is also described as a “laboratory for innovation at the intersection of data science, technology, and design” that “creates impactful tools highlighting critical social issues around the world” (“Visualizing Impact”). The VI organization also includes visual fact sheets on a variety of other

issues, including the persecution of Rohingya in Myanmar, censorship in media around the world, income inequality, and other issues relevant to social justice for marginalized communities (Visualizing Impact, “Offline/Online Rohingya”). The “Visualizing Palestine” posters found on GU’s apartheid wall include texts on the following issues related to the *apartheid* frame:

- Fact sheet about “Institutionalized Discrimination” (with these phrases highlighted: “complete control,” “human hierarchy of inequality,” “discriminated against,” “separate and unequal,” “segregation by citizenship,” “stolen land,” “system of structural inequality,” and “full equality”).
- “Segregated Road System” poster that color codes the different roads that can be used by Palestinians and Israelis in the West Bank.
- Poster about discrimination on buses with a civil rights comparison: “Blacks banned in the USA until 1960” and “Palestinians banned in the West Bank today,” with “Freedom is for everyone no matter their color or ethnicity” at the bottom.
- “Across the Wall: Israeli Settlement Bus Routes” with a color-coded map of the Israeli-only bus routes in the West Bank.
- “Identity Crisis: The Israeli ID System” that shows the different types of IDs that Israelis and Palestinians have and what they signify, including “where Palestinians can live, their access to services and their participation in the political system.”
- “Divesting for Justice: College divestment from South Africa and Israel” showing two overlapping circles with the larger circle for SA divestments and the smaller one for Israel.

- Another “Divesting for Justice: College divestments from South Africa and Israel” with two side-by-side line graphs showing the number of colleges that divested and the years with a description at top saying, “Boycotts and divestments have long been recognized as a legitimate and effective means to protest against injustices.”

These “Visualizing Palestine” posters and leaflets are also commonly distributed and displayed by other pro-BDS student groups at other universities and are a common feature of IAW events and discourse. These posters offer evidence for the accuracy of the apartheid frame and rely primarily on *logos*-based discussions of facts about Israeli policies, international law, and impact on Palestinians. In at least one example, the *apartheid* framing is also linked to the US civil rights movement. Even though these “Visualizing Palestine” posters were not created by the students, I include them in my discussion of vernacular pro-BDS discourse because they have been chosen for display by SJP students and thus represent one aspect of the vernacular pro-BDS discourse of student activist-rhetors.

Other texts found on GU’s apartheid wall that highlight the *apartheid* frame include hand-written definitions and painted graffiti-style words. The wall also includes a shortened version of the UN definition of “apartheid” and the painted words “No Pride in Apartheid.” Another flyer found on the wall is a student-created one that includes the words “This is what apartheid looks like” over a background image of an aerial photo of the West Bank separation barrier. Another apartheid text on the wall is an artistic visual image of a Palestinian with a keffiyeh-covered face superimposed on a map of Palestine next to both a South African and Palestinian flag with these words at the top: “Historically, Boycott has been used by Palestinians as a resistance tactic during the 1936-1939 revolt against the British Mandate, and during the First Intifada during the 1980s,” while the bottom states, “BDS as we know it today was inspired

by the South African boycott and divestment movement, which eventually helped to topple the apartheid regime in South Africa.” While GU’s SJP chapter’s mock apartheid wall repeatedly emphasizes and develops the apartheid frame, the wall also includes several other frames and issues that will be discussed later.

Another IAW event that highlights the apartheid frame is George Washington University SJP’s “Divest This Time” campaign and video. The GWU SJP’s “Divest This Time” campaign is introduced in a short video shown at the end of Angela Davis’ March 27, 2017 keynote speech for GWU’s “Palestine Awareness Week,” the name given to GWU’s events rather than “Israeli Apartheid Week.” Davis’ talk, titled “Freedom is a Constant Struggle: Why Movements for Social Justice Should Support Palestine,” touches on many common primary, issue, and master frames used in both official and vernacular pro-BDS discourse, including the *apartheid* frame²³. In her talk, Davis mentions the recent UN report that described Israeli practices as apartheid and how it was publicly attacked. She also alludes to Richard Gere’s recent trip to Hebron after which he compared it to the Old Jim Crow South. She elaborates on the *apartheid* frame and connects it to Israeli policies toward Palestinians when she asserts that under the Rome Statute, “apartheid” is defined as a “crime against humanity” that consists of an “institutionalized regime” of racial domination. While Davis is a prominent figure in social and racial justice struggles, and she published a recent book connecting the Black Lives Matter movement with Palestinian rights, *Freedom is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine and the Foundations of a Movement*, Davis is not an official leader of the BDS movement.

At the end of Davis’ talk, GWU SJP students projected a short video they created promoting their new BDS campaign at GWU: “Divest This Time.” The “#DivestThisTime”

²³ The title of Davis’ talk, as well as much of the content, is similar to that of her recent 2016 book, *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement* published by Haymarket Books.

campaign video was also posted to GWU SJP's Facebook page on March 29, 2017 (it had received 51 likes/loves, 46 shares, 5.4K views at the time of analysis in July of 2017, which is significantly more than most other GWU SJP FB posts at that time). This video's release kicked off a campaign at GWU to press the student association and university administration to divest from a list of selected multinational corporations that profit from the Israeli occupation, which represents "targeted BDS" rather than a full BDS of all Israeli institutions.

The "#DivestThisTime" (DTT) video and subsequent campaign use the *apartheid* frame to argue that GWU's administration should join the Palestinian call for BDS even though it failed to join the call for BDS against apartheid South Africa in the 1980s. The DTT video promotes nonviolent activism to target companies that profit from illegal occupation. The DTT video opens with the following text: "In the 1980s, GW refused to divest from companies that profited from South African apartheid despite student support and despite the GW mission statement that the university 'dedicates itself to furthering human well-being,'" The video then includes images and audio of students saying their first names and later that they support "#DivestThisTime" at GW. Several students wear Palestinian keffiyehs, the black and white scarves that have come to symbolize Palestinian resistance. One image shows students putting a Palestinian keffiyeh on the statue of George Washington on campus. Then GWU SJP co-leaders explain the purpose of this BDS campaign to nonviolently pressure Israel to end the occupation. One student says, "apartheid was unacceptable in South Africa, and it's still unacceptable in Palestine." Another student explains that G4S, Hewlett-Packard, and Caterpillar all support and profit from the occupation. Another describes Israel as "an apartheid regime" that "violates international law." Another student argues that it is a "moral responsibility" for international community to "put a stop to it" and "call it out for what it is." DTT is also said to stand with

other “freedom fighters” that “have identified Israel's mistreatment of the Palestinians,” who are listed as Angela Davis, Judith Butler, bell hooks, Malcolm X. The video also includes a Nelson Mandela quote in support of Palestine. The accompanying Facebook post description read, “Don't fail Palestine, GW. Join Divest This Time GW as we urge our university through nonviolent activism to divest from companies that profit from the continued illegal occupation. #DivestThisTimeGW.”

The eventual outcome of this campaign also offers a microcosm of the way pro-BDS campaigns and student-backed resolutions often play out at US universities. After a 2017 pro-BDS resolution associated with the DTT campaign initially failed to pass in the GWU Student Association Senate by one vote, the end result of the DTT campaign was to successfully promote the passage of SR-S18-21 in 2018: “The Protection of Palestinian Human Rights Act,” which supports a boycott of several multinationals that are said to profit from Israel’s occupation, including Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, and others, was passed on April 23, 2018 by the GWU SA Senate by a vote of 18-6, following an intense public debate, and it was later denounced by the GWU administration who vowed to not abide by it (Bennett; Cohen, Haley; Roach). The passage of this resolution a little over a year after the beginning of the DTT campaign suggests that the rhetoric of the campaign was resonant with a majority of students involved in the GWU Student Association, though the campaign was less resonant with university administrators.

Intersectionality and Joint Struggle

In addition to focusing on the *apartheid* frame, vernacular pro-BDS student activist-rhetors also frequently employ the *intersectionality* and *joint struggle* frames when advocating for the BDS movement and Palestinian rights. During IAW activities and events, pro-BDS

student activists in SJP and SAIA regularly invoke Crenshaw's concept of *intersectionality* to situate the BDS movement for Palestinian rights among other struggles against racism and injustice, including #BlackLivesMatter, Standing Rock water protector #NoDAPL protests, and other indigenous rights movements, feminism, LGBTQ+ rights, disability rights, critiques of capitalism, etc. In a recent op-ed discussing the relevance of the concept of intersectionality that she developed over two decades ago, Crenshaw explains how intersectional lens is meant to work when applied to movements for social and racial justice:

Intersectionality is an analytic sensibility, a way of thinking about identity and its relationship to power. Originally articulated on behalf of black women, the term brought to light the invisibility of many constituents within groups that claim them as members, but often fail to represent them. Intersectional erasures are not exclusive to black women. People of color within LGBTQ movements; girls of color in the fight against the school-to-prison pipeline; women within immigration movements; trans women within feminist movements; and people with disabilities fighting police abuse — all face vulnerabilities that reflect the intersections of racism, sexism, class oppression, transphobia, able-ism and more. Intersectionality has given many advocates a way to frame their circumstances and to fight for their visibility and inclusion. (Crenshaw, "Why")

At the end of her original 1991 article, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," in which she coined the term "intersectionality," Crenshaw explains that "Through an awareness of intersectionality, we can better acknowledge and ground the differences among us and negotiate the means by which these differences will find expression in conducting group politics" (1299).

From its initial use as an analytical tool to understand how different forms of oppression can overlap and intersect, the concept of intersectionality has grown into an activist imperative for individuals and organizations working for social and racial justice for marginalized peoples to recognize linkages between identity-based movements for justice and engage in joint struggle with other groups and movements against common sources of oppression. Intersectionality has become fused with older ideas about the importance of joint struggle among international struggles for justice that remind activists to not leave anyone behind in the quest for justice and equality and which are echoed in Emma Lazarus's "none of us is free until we are all free" and Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" (Altmann; King, "Letter"). Thus, just as the recent popularity of an intersectional lens means that contemporary feminists are now less likely to exclude concerns from women of color in feminist activism today, so too are Palestinians more likely to be included in other struggles for social and racial justice than they were decades ago. The inclusion of BDS and Palestinian rights in movements for social and racial justice, like the inclusion of LGBTQ+ rights, women's rights, racial justice, etc. in the movement for Palestinian rights, can also be seen in the vernacular discourse created by pro-BDS student activist-rhetors.

The frames of *intersectionality* and *joint struggle* are found throughout vernacular student-activist discourse promoting Palestinian rights and BDS during IAW. Several intersecting struggles highlighted by SJP and SAIA events and texts and connected to the struggle for Palestinian rights include Black Lives Matter and racial justice, LGBTQ+ rights, feminism, and the Standing Rock #NoDAPL movement for indigenous rights. For example, in the SAIA sponsored discussion on "Solidarity" on March 30, 2017 at George Mason University, student co-leaders of SAIA posed several questions for the group that related to *joint struggle*

and *intersectionality*, including “Can you think of a way your activism is tied to Palestinian issues?” and “In what ways do you see other liberation movements (historically and today) relating to Palestine?” (GMU SAIA). The SAIA gatherings I attended during IAW 2017 also began with students introducing themselves and including their preferred pronouns—an intersectional approach that seeks to promote inclusion for trans, queer, and other gender non-conforming individuals. Georgetown SJP’s mock apartheid wall also features various expressions of joint struggle and solidarity with other movements for justice, including the phrases “No War but Class War,” “#TransJusticeNow,” “Queer Solidarity w/ Queer Palestinians,” “BLM,” and “#NoDAPL.” Among all of the dozens of pro-BDS vernacular student activists’ texts I analyzed from IAW events, the *joint struggle* and *intersectionality* frames were often prominent.

Two-way expressions of solidarity between Palestinian rights activists and black racial justice activists are another common intersectional linkage presented within the *joint struggle* frame. Black solidarity with Palestinians can be traced all the way back to the anticolonial movements of the 1960s and 70s, and black-Palestinian solidarity has also increased again in recent years, as manifest in the #Ferguson2Palestine social media campaign and culminating in the endorsement of BDS by over 1,000 black activists and the Movement for Black Lives (Bailey and Petersen-Smith; Feld; Feldman; Lubin; Movement for Black Lives; Erakat and Hill). One example of the *joint struggle* frame in the context of black-Palestinian solidarity is a Facebook post from American University SJP on March 27, 2017, which includes a link to article by Jaquial Durham, titled “Revisiting Black Substantive Solidarity with the People of Palestine.” Though the article doesn’t explicitly promote BDS, the author does offer strong support for

Palestinian rights and connects the Palestinian struggle with the black American struggle for civil rights and equality:

Black people as all people do, have a responsibility to fight for justice and struggle against injustice, wherever it is. At this particular moment, it is more important than ever that African descendants in the U.S. stand in solidarity with those fighting a similar oppressive system. Not only stand in solidarity, but open their eyes and recognize that the kind of historical struggle that black people often liken themselves to dislocation, marginalization, state violence, is the struggle of Palestinians. . . In the words of Dr. Marc Lamont Hill, “Now is the time. Justice cannot wait.”

In addition to promoting the Durham article, other pro-BDS student activists also use IAW events and texts to emphasize black-Palestinian solidarity and draw links between the Palestinian struggle for rights and the black American struggle for civil rights and equality. For example, Georgetown SJP’s mock apartheid wall includes a “Visualizing Palestine” poster comparing discrimination on buses in Palestine/Israel with bus segregation during the Jim Crow era, including the phrases “Blacks banned in the USA until 1960,” “Palestinians banned in the West Bank today,” and “Freedom is for everyone no matter their color or ethnicity” at the bottom. Graffiti-style statements on the wall also include the phrases “BLM,” “This Lie Cannot Live—MLK,” and a quote from black activist and feminist poet Audre Lorde: “The master’s tools will never demolish the master’s house.” Angela Davis’s keynote speech at GWU, which included several references to black-Palestinian solidarity (also the subject of her most recent book), combined with her advocacy for Palestinian rights and BDS, links the Palestinian struggle to the antiracist struggle of black Americans via her own identity and past role as a well known leader and spokesperson for the Black Panthers and the black power movement. Her talk was

also co-sponsored by the GW Feminist Student Union and GW Black Student Union. As these examples show, the *joint struggle* frame and expressions of solidarity between black activists and pro-BDS activists for Palestinian rights are commonly found in the vernacular student activist discourse I examined.

The intersections of BDS and Palestinian rights with women's rights and feminism is also a common vernacular use of the *joint struggle* frame. For example, most of the pro-BDS student groups posted Facebook messages during IAW including links to articles rebutting a recent March 7, 2017 *New York Times* op-ed by Emily Shire, titled "Does Feminism Have Room for Zionists?" In this text, Emily Shire focuses on the Women's March and argues that Palestinian rights and BDS should not be part of feminist movements because these issues are too political and alienate Zionist feminists. In response to Shire's argument, several women supporters of Palestinian rights and BDS penned rebuttals, which were then posted on the SJP chapters' and SAIA's Facebook pages (Davis et al.; Elia; Meyerson; Nevel). For example, on March 24, 2017, GMU's SAIA includes a link on their Facebook page to a *Mondoweiss* op-ed by Angela Davis et al. that rebuts Shire's op-ed and includes this final statement:

Zionist feminism is an oxymoron. It may have had a shared legacy with white-women-only feminism but it does not reflect the conviction of today's activists who refuse to stand by the notion of justice for some of us while denying justice to others. We reject Zionism and Zionist feminism. A growing number of women are recognizing that the feminism that does not confront capitalism, racism, and colonialism will not lead to liberation, just as there is no liberation possible without confronting sexism. Any way forward must overcome the voices of selective feminism that defend systems of oppression and try to silence our voices.

A Facebook post from Georgetown SJP on March 20 includes a link to another article responding to Shire in *Mondoweiss* by Nada Elia, who argues against welcoming Zionists into intersectional feminist movements or other movements against oppression: “Zionists need to stop their mental gymnastics, that would somehow allow them to support apartheid in Israel, while fighting oppression in the rest of the world.” And on April 6, 2017, GWU SJP’s Facebook post for the “Women in Liberation Struggles” event includes discussion of the “role of women in liberation struggles around the world and especially as it relates to Palestine.” This event page also includes a link to a 2015 Dana Olwan essay, “Why BDS is a Feminist Issue,” from the *Al Jazeera* website that SJP encourages event attendees to read prior to the event. Olwan’s text argues that support for BDS belongs in feminist movements, and she situates her argument in the context of the imminent November 2015 vote by the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) to support BDS (which it did) (Redden, “National Women’s”). On March 13, SJP at GWU also shared a post from the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights with a link to an interview in *The Nation* in which Linda Sarsour also rebuts Emily Shire’s op-ed and argues for the necessity of including Palestinian rights in the struggle for women’s rights and against oppression (Meyerson). Based on all of these examples and others, pro-BDS student activists’ vernacular rhetoric and framing reveals their belief in the necessity of including support for Palestinian rights in intersectional movements for justice, which can be discerned through not only their own student-created texts but also through the content of the articles they choose to link to and the quotes and descriptions they select.

In regard to *joint struggle* and *intersectionality* with other indigenous rights movements, pro-BDS student activists also responded to the *kairos* of recent events during the spring of 2017 to express solidarity with the #NoDAPL Standing Rock water protector movement that sought to

block the Dakota Access Pipeline from crossing indigenous tribal lands. Angela Davis highlights the importance of intersectionality in regard to indigenous rights several times in her keynote speech at GWU, including when she opens by emphasizing that the event was taking place on colonized lands and that the US is also a settler-colonial nation. She goes on to connect Flint, Michigan and water issues in Palestine to Dakota Access resistance, and she uses the intersectional lens to connect her point back to women's rights when she asserts, "Water is a feminist issue." Georgetown SJP's mock apartheid wall also expresses solidarity with the Standing Rock protestors in the form of graffiti stating, "No Colonialism. No Genocide. No Settler Terror. #NoDAPL." In addition to referencing indigenous rights as part of a focus on intersectionality, these pro-BDS student groups also used #NoDAPL, Native American indigenous rights, and US settler-colonial history as an analogy to Israel's settler-colonial policies against the indigenous Palestinians and to highlight the frames of *settler colonialism*, *ethnic cleansing*, and *refugee rights*.

Settler Colonialism, Ethnic Cleansing, and Refugee Rights

Pro-BDS student activist-rhetors also frequently emphasize the *settler colonialism* frame as the most accurate way to understand the situation in Palestine/Israel and regularly compare Israeli settler colonialism with other settler colonial societies, including the US, Canada, Australia, and South Africa. For example, at Georgetown SJP's "So You Want to Go on a Birthright Trip?" panel on March 15, 2017, an activist with the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights emphasized the importance of placing the Birthright program within the larger settler-colonial context of Palestine/Israel. She explains that the US is also a settler-colonial society and that we in the US are living on indigenous land. Another one of the panel speakers, a young Jewish activist with Jewish Voice for Peace, also passed around copies of a zine, titled "Whose

Birthright: A Zine Exposing Birthright Israel,” in which an anonymous Jewish student critically recounts her experience on a 2015 Birthright trip in second-person narrative form, describing what is shown by the official tour and what is left out, with facts and sources to provide background and context for the issues discussed. At the end of the zine, the author includes “Colonialism” in a glossary to describe the situation in Palestine/Israel. Since the time of this 2017 panel, both Jewish Voice for Peace and the anti-Occupation direct action group IfNotNow have started campaigns targeting the Birthright organization (Pink; Sommer). Other examples of the use of the *settler colonialism* frame include the “Visualizing Palestine” poster on Georgetown SJP’s mock apartheid wall, “Palestine Shrinking/Expanding Israel,” which shows the maps of land controlled by Zionists versus Palestinians in 1918, 1947, 1960, and 2017 and includes other basic facts about Israeli *settler colonialism* and the ethnic cleansing of Palestine. During SAIA’s *Gaza in Context* documentary showing and discussion on March 29th, a student co-leader of SAIA frames the situation in Palestine/Israel as one of *settler colonialism* that seeks displacement, dispossession, and concentration of the indigenous population, and the SAIA students also repeatedly compare Israeli settler colonialism to the US. The SAIA leaders go on to facilitate a discussion of settler colonialism and distinguish it from colonialism, arguing that one just extracts resources (colonialism), but the other implants settlers (settler colonialism). Later in the discussion, another SAIA leader emphasizes that Israel is not unique in its goals but is similar to other examples of settler colonialism, including the US, and he goes on to argue that the US and Israel share this common history and values as settler-colonial societies.

The *settler colonialism* frame also relates to the *ethnic cleansing* and *refugee rights* issue frames, which are frequently emphasized in several events and texts from IAW. For example, *ethnic cleansing* was the primary frame in the talk by Dr. Osama Abu-Irshaid on March 13, 2017

at Georgetown, “The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine,” sponsored by Georgetown SJP. Dr. Abu-Irshaid, the national policy director for the American Muslims for Palestine (AMP) and scholar with the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, discusses Zionist and Israeli policies of “transfer” and ethnic cleansing during and after the Nakba. Though he acknowledges that both Jews and Palestinians have a right to live there and that Jews also have a historical tie to the region, he emphasizes that their right to be there is as equals, not as occupiers or colonizers. Georgetown SJP’s mock apartheid wall also includes a handwritten statement about the Nakba that emphasizes the *ethnic cleansing* frame: “Al-Nakba = The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine: The creation of Israel meant the expulsion of over 750,000 indigenous Palestinians from their homes and the destruction of over 500 villages by Zionist militias to pave way for an exclusively Jewish state.”

Related to discussions of the Nakba and the *ethnic cleansing* frame is the issue frame of *refugee rights*, usually discussed in the context of the “right of return,” which is the third and most controversial part of the 2005 BDS Call. For example, the *refugee rights* frame was prominent during Georgetown SJP’s “So You Want to Go on a Birthright Trip?” panel discussion on March 15, 2017. During the panel discussion, speakers repeatedly explain that one reason the Birthright program promotes injustice is because Palestinian refugees are prohibited from returning to Israel—even for a visit. One Palestinian speaker and activist with American Muslims for Palestine (AMP) uses a more personal and emotional appeal when he describes his own family’s history of becoming refugees and finding themselves stateless. In “Whose Birthright?: A Zine Exposing Birthright Israel,” the narrative describes the end of the 10-day Birthright trip this way: “Reminiscing on the incredible experience Birthright has afforded you, you do not think twice about calling this land millions of Palestinian refugees only dream of

returning to, your homeland” (16). Another emotional appeal regarding the *refugee rights* frame is presented in the last section of the “Whose Birthright” zine, in which a 2014 *Tufts Daily* article written by six unnamed Palestinian students is reprinted. One paragraph emphasizes the *refugee rights* frame in the context of Birthright this way:

To make Birthright “fun” and “safe” means eradicating an Arab populace. . . It means exiling our brothers and our sisters to refugee camps, prisons or worse. It is important that students at this university understand the implications of their so-called right. Kind reader, understand that our hearts ache when we see photographs of friends and acquaintances swimming in the sea our grandparents once swam in. Our hearts ache when we see photographs of classmates posing in front of the mosques and churches our grandparents once prayed in, but now pray to one day see. Our hearts ache when we see pictures of peers eating the fruits of the land we have grown up hearing of, but never tasted. (“Those without a Birthright”)

Sometimes the *refugee rights* frame is discussed in relation to the 2005 BDS Call, and sometimes it is discussed as an issue important to Palestinians without reference to BDS. As polls of Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank, and the diaspora have shown, the issue of *refugee rights* and the “right of return” are ranked very highly by most Palestinians, even those who still favor a two-state solution (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, “Palestinian-Israeli”; Shiblak). The importance of the right of return to Palestinians was also clearly displayed during the 2018 Great March of Return in Gaza (where the majority of Palestinians residents are refugees from inside the Green Line), during which time thousands of Palestinians were willing to risk death to express their desire for return and an acknowledgement of their rights as refugees.

Jewish Solidarity, Anti-Zionism, and Antisemitism

Similarly to official BDS movement discourse, vernacular pro-BDS student activist-rhetors regularly denounce antisemitism and take care to distinguish between anti-Zionism and antisemitism and between Israel and the Jewish people. Like Palestinian BDS movement leaders, pro-BDS student activists face the rhetorical challenge and familiar *doxa* that the BDS movement is antisemitic for targeting the Jewish state. In the case of IAW events I attended, several included pro-Israel attendees who posed hostile or challenging questions to speakers and student group co-leaders—a regular feature of pro-BDS and pro-Palestinian activism that may not be as common at events promoting other social or racial justice causes on campus. While a majority of American Jews still consider themselves supporters of Israel, polls show that more and more young Jews view Israel more negatively, with only slightly more than half (57%) of US Jewish college students favoring Israel in the conflict with the Palestinians, with many “believing Israel falls short with values such as human rights, tolerance and diversity” (Borschel-Dan; Maltz; Ziri). These changing attitudes toward Israel are also reflected in the growth of anti-Occupation and, in some cases, even explicitly anti-Zionist Jewish activism for Palestinian rights, as found in groups like the anti-Occupation group IfNotNow (INN), the BDS-endorsing and anti-Zionist Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ), and others, as well as the disproportionate number of Jewish students involved in pro-BDS groups like SJP (Maltz, “Pro-Palestinian”; Omer, *Days of Awe*; Sunshine).

In addition to regularly denouncing antisemitism and differentiating between the Jewish people and Israel, both official and vernacular pro-BDS activist-rhetors also seek to offer counter-framing for antisemitism charges and boost the *ethos* of pro-BDS activism by highlighting Jewish support for BDS and Palestinian rights. Some of the explicit and implicit

ways Jewish activism for Palestinian rights is highlighted during the IAW events I studied included the participation of Jewish activists in IAW events, including Jewish members of Jewish Voice for Peace, the US Campaign for Palestinian rights, SJP and SAIA. In addition to the involvement of Jewish activists, pro-BDS student groups also highlighted Jewish criticism of Israel and activism for BDS and against the Occupation. One *kairotic* aspect of IAW discourse in 2017 were the vocal IfNotNow-led protests during the 2017 American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) conference in DC, dubbed the #JewishResistance²⁴, which were publicized by all of the DC-area pro-BDS student groups on their Facebook pages during IAW 2017 (Guttman, “Watch”). For example, Georgetown SJP posted a link to their Facebook page on March 26 about IfNotNow’s (INN) anti-AIPAC protests with this description: “Powerful Jewish resistance from IfNotNow at the AIPAC Conference today! Thank you for your bravery.” The description for this post also includes the quote from rabbinic sage Hillel the Elder, from which INN took their name: “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? If not now, when?” (Rosenberg). GMU’s SAIA also shared another INN post on March 27th accompanied by a reference to the history of Jewish critique of Zionism: “What a great way to kick off Israeli Apartheid Week at GMU. Jewish solidarity with Palestinians is nothing new and #JewishResistance is as old as Zionism itself.” INN’s own description for the original post emphasizes the importance of their Jewish identity to their activism: “IfNotNow brought the #JewishResistance to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) in DC. Together, hundreds of Jews and allies came together to #ResistAIPAC, 50 years of occupation, and the Trump administration. This is what our community looks like.”

²⁴ INN’s use of the term “resistance” may also borrow from the contemporary popular use of “resistance” in the context of the #Resistance to Donald Trump’s presidency.

INN was formed during the 2014 Gaza War (Operation Protective Edge) and uses direct action “to transform the American Jewish Community's support for Occupation into a call for freedom and dignity for all” (IfNotNow, “About Us,” “IfNotNow”). INN does not take a position on BDS, however, because it seeks to be an inclusive organization for all American Jews critical of the Israeli Occupation regardless of their stance on BDS, which is still controversial and often criticized by many American Jews (IfNotNow, “Our Principles”). Despite its agnosticism on BDS, INN reflects the shift among many young Jews away from the reflexive support for Israel more commonly found in older generations and mainstream Jewish organizations. On their website, INN asserts, “While the out-of-touch establishment claims to speak for our community, we know that American Jewry is eager for change” (IfNotNow, “About Us”). In addition to their anti-AIPAC protests, INN has launched direct action campaigns to promote discussion of the Occupation in Jewish summer camps, and it recently gained media attention for its “Not Just a Free Trip” campaign that encourages Birthright participants to walk out of their tours to visit the West Bank, speak to Palestinians, and learn about the Occupation (IfNotNow “Not Just”; Riesman). Even though INN has not officially endorsed BDS and therefore cannot be considered an official part of the BDS movement, their refusal to denounce BDS and their welcoming attitude toward Jews who do support BDS results in some significant overlap between their goals and tactics and those of the BDS movement. The fact that all of the pro-BDS student organizations shared video clips and links to articles about INN’s 2017 anti-AIPAC protests demonstrates both that pro-BDS students support and agree with INN’s anti-AIPAC actions and also that these pro-BDS student groups actively promote examples of Jewish criticism of Israel.

Other examples of pro-BDS student groups highlighting Jewish support for BDS include the Georgetown SJP’s “So You Want to Go on a Birthright Trip?” panel on March 15, 2017. Not

only did the panel include multiple Jewish BDS activists, but also three of them explicitly endorse BDS during their talk. During her GWU SJP-sponsored keynote speech, Angela Davis makes a point to not only distinguish Israel and Zionism from the Jewish people, but she also mentions examples of prominent Jewish BDS supporters in her talk, including Judith Butler. In another case, Georgetown SJP shares Donna Nevel's rebuttal to Emily Shire on their Facebook page, in which Nevel, a Jewish American anti-Zionist activist who also co-founded Jews Say No! and JFREJ, argues that rather than supporting Israel and Zionism, feminists should "stand with the Palestinian-led grassroots movement for justice and with the growing number of women around the globe who are committed to equal rights for all peoples living in Palestine and Israel" (Nevel; "Donna Nevel").

Because the antisemitism charge against the BDS movement is so ubiquitous, it is common to hear pro-BDS speakers—both leaders and rank-and-file activists—take steps to denounce antisemitism even as they harshly critique Israel and Zionism. For example, in her keynote speech at GWU, Angela Davis explains the importance of distinguishing between Jews and Israel by emphasizing that when challenging Israel's ethnic cleansing, etc., it is important to not assign these crimes to every Israeli or every Jew. She goes on to argue that people fear accusations of antisemitism because there has been a conflation between antisemitism and critique of Israel, and she stresses that critiquing Israel also requires "saying 'no' to antisemitism." One of the only examples of antisemitic discourse I witnessed during my study of pro-BDS IAW events was an instance in which an attendee at a GMU SAIA discussion event explained the pro-Israel bias of US media and politicians as being because "Israel controls the US," a statement that suggests the antisemitic trope of nefarious behind-the-scenes Jewish control, which traces back to the early twentieth-century antisemitic hoax text promoted by the

Russian aristocracy, Hitler, and other antisemites, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*²⁵ (Bronner; Rothstein). Immediately after this student's antisemitic statement, however, a Palestinian-American SAIA co-leader intervened by reminding everyone that "there are no Jewish conspiracies" and rebutted the idea of Israel controlling the US by reminding discussion participants that Israel is a settler-colonial state just like other settler-colonial states, including the US. Soon after this exchange, other attendees offered critiques of other oppressive regimes to emphasize that Israel is not unique, including critiques of the US's relationship with Saudi Arabia, the latter of which one Arab-American student described as being "worse than Israel" because of what Saudi Arabia is doing in Yemen.

This example shows that the SAIA group does not tolerate expressions of antisemitism at their events, even though SAIA is an explicitly anti-Zionist organization, and my analysis of their texts during IAW show them to be perhaps the most harshly critical of Israel of any of the pro-BDS student groups I studied. The student attendee who made this antisemitic statement did not make any other such statements during the rest of the event, and subsequent statements and discussion between him and other SAIA attendees suggest that his assertion about Israel controlling the US may have been an example of what contemporary antisemitism scholar David Hirsh argues is a kind of inadvertent antisemitism tied to both the prevalence of antisemitic tropes and ignorance about them, which can lead some leftists to repeat antisemitic discourse out of ignorance rather than true Jew-hatred (Hirsh, "Anti-Zionism" 70-71; Hirsh, "Chip Berlet"). A pro-BDS Georgetown student, whose editorial in *The Hoya* is linked to by Georgetown SJP's

²⁵ *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which is the source of much of contemporary antisemitic conspiracy theory about nefarious Jewish control of the media, international banking, world leaders, etc. was also tacitly endorsed in Hamas' original 1988 charter that invoked several conspiracy theories originating in *The Protocols* (Bronner). In 2017, Hamas updated their charter to remove references to *Protocols*-based conspiracies among other revisions that softened several of their positions and reflected changing attitudes expressed by various Hamas leaders over the years (Mitnick and Abu Alouf; Mughrabi).

Facebook page on March 20th, explains why the antisemitism charge against the BDS movement is unfair:

It is important to remember that, as is the case with all influential political movements, BDS will undoubtedly appeal to individuals who hold extremist views. There will always be truly anti-Semitic individuals who misunderstand the real goals of the movement and use it as an excuse to spread hateful rhetoric. However, it is intellectually dishonest to take the actions of few extremists and use them to reflect an entire movement. (El-Husseini).

Even though pro-BDS students' attempts to rebut and offer counterframing for antisemitism charges may not convince many BDS critics and Israel supporters who insist that Israel is being unfairly targeted, El-Husseini's point highlights the double-standard of associating the BDS movement with the most extreme antisemitic fringe supporters while not making the same generalizations in regard to the most right-wing overtly racist, anti-Palestinian, and Islamophobic supporters of Israel (Aked, "Is Anti-Zionism").

When studying pro-BDS activism and discourse, it is also not uncommon to encounter Jewish pro-BDS activists who also express anti-Zionist attitudes. Prior to the Nazi Holocaust, Zionism was not supported by a majority of world Jewry, more of whom initially supported the socialist and anti-Zionist Jewish Bund; while Nazi antisemitism and the establishment of Israel in 1948 led most diaspora Jews to support Zionism and Israel, a significant minority of leftist Jewish anti-Zionists remained, and their numbers have grown in recent years as memories of the Holocaust fade and violent and discriminatory Israeli policies toward the Palestinians have intensified (American Jewish Committee, *American Jewish* 206-214; Maltz, "Vast Numbers"; Omer, *Days of Awe*; "Protest to Wilson"; Rabkin, *A Threat*; Rose 3-4, 8; Sunshine; Waxman,

“American Jews,” “As Israel Turns,” “Young American”). Both of the Jewish members of Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) at the “So You Want to Go on a Birthright Trip?” panel at Georgetown on March 15th expressed anti-Zionist attitudes (“So You”). One speaker recounts how he began to question his previously held ideas about Israel in 2014 during Operation Protective Edge and asserts that he is no longer a Zionist. Then, in the Q&A, he equates the idea of Zionism to the discriminatory things Europeans were doing to Jews in Europe for many years prior to the Holocaust. The other JVP speaker also declares her anti-Zionism when she says she is ashamed of Zionism and what it has done to Palestinians. In “Whose Birthright?: A Zine Exposing Birthright Israel,” a copy of which was distributed at the Georgetown panel, even though the Jewish authors do not take an explicitly anti-Zionist position, their definition of “Zionism” includes this critical statement about Zionist beliefs: “They believed their need of a refuge from racist persecution in Europe overrode Palestinian counterclaims and resulted, to this day, in the forced eviction, displacement, and destruction of Palestinian populations” (17). Georgetown’s mock apartheid wall includes this hand-written definition of “Zionism”: “Zionism: the project to maintain an exclusionary state with an enforced demographic Jewish majority on stolen Palestinian land.”

While most attendees of the Georgetown panel seemed to tacitly agree with the anti-Zionist views of the Jewish and non-Jewish speakers, a couple of more hostile audience members sought to challenge the speakers and accused them of not being representative of most American Jews because of their anti-Zionist beliefs. One JVP speaker responds to this criticism by comparing her position as an anti-Zionist in the minority among Jews to the fact that, as a white-presenting Ashkenazi Jew, she is also among the minority of white people in the US who are activists against white supremacy. She further argues that in the early years of any social justice

movement, only a minority typically supports the movement until eventually more and more people join the side of justice. Her statements, along with the framing found in the other example texts from the Georgetown panel, offer evidence for what recent polls have also found: that an increasing number of younger, more left-leaning social justice-oriented American Jews are gravitating toward both pro-BDS activism and anti-Zionism (Borschel-Dan; Nathan-Kazis, “Report”; Maltz, “The Pro-Palestinian,” “Vast Numbers”; Sunshine).

Along with the increasing popularity of the *apartheid* frame for the situation in Palestine/Israel, the rightward shift of Israeli politics, the GOP and Trumpian embrace of Israel, and the eroding bipartisan support for Israel in the US, Zionism has also come to be more and more associated with racism and white supremacy, a trend also reflected in many of the pro-BDS texts I analyzed. Black activists’ endorsements of BDS in recent years have also accelerated the prevalence of the “Zionism is racism” attitude among students at US colleges (Bailey and Petersen-Smith; Movement for Black Lives). Along with the association of Zionism and racism, many social and racial justice activists also associate Jewishness with white privilege, especially for white Ashkenazi Jews of European heritage (Goldberg, Emma). At the Georgetown “So You Want To Go on a Birthright Trip?” panel, a Palestinian and Jewish-American speaker from the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights references Israel’s discriminatory treatment of non-Ashkenazi Jews and says that “Zionism includes white supremacy” because it not only discriminates against Palestinians, but also often against Jews of color. Georgetown SJP’s mock apartheid wall includes the statement, “Zionism is Racism,” an attitude which is echoed in materials produced or included by other pro-BDS student groups during IAW. Because most American Jews are also Ashkenazi with European heritage and are usually considered “white” in the US by most Americans, at least in recent years (with the exception of overt white

supremacists, white nationalists, and neo-Nazis, etc.), perhaps coupled with the *apartheid* frame, the belief that Zionism is a form of racism that often overlaps with white supremacy seems to be a common view among leftist social and racial justice activists in the US, including those affiliated with the BDS movement.

Emotional Appeals in Pro-BDS Discourse

Another feature of vernacular pro-BDS student activist discourse I encountered during my study was the occasional appearance of emotional appeals on behalf of Palestinians. Like with official BDS movement discourse, most vernacular pro-BDS texts tended to avoid personal narratives and emotional appeals and instead focused on international laws and general facts and statistics about discriminatory Israeli policies. There were a few events and texts, however, which did include personal and emotional narratives and appeals. For example, a March 16th Facebook post from Georgetown SJP includes a link to an article in remembrance of Rachel Corrie who was killed 14 years earlier by an Israeli bulldozer while protecting a Palestinian home from demolition in Gaza (“Honoring Rachel”). The SJP description of the post says, “14 years ago, Rachel Corrie was murdered by the Israeli Occupation Forces when a Caterpillar D9 bulldozer ran over her as she was protesting the demolition of Palestinian homes.” The accompanying link is to the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) website (www.palsolidarity.org), where readers can find an emotional post on ISM’s page with reprints of emails and poems Corrie had written soon before her death. A March 20th Facebook post links to an article in Georgetown’s *The Hoya* student paper, in which a student BDS supporter pens an emotional appeal for other students to support BDS:

Put yourself in the place of an elderly Palestinian farmer, who just had his house bulldozed, his livestock confiscated and his land stolen. Put yourself in the place of a

Palestinian mother who has just been informed her 6-year-old son was blown to bits by an Israeli missile while playing outside. Put yourself in the place of a Palestinian man who just lost his job and ability to feed his family because numerous Israeli checkpoints caused him to be late for the third time this week. (El-Husseini)

Another example of emotional appeals in IAW discourse includes the “Those Without a Birthright” op-ed, which is originally from *The Tufts Daily* and also reprinted at the end of “Whose Birthright?: A Zine Exposing Birthright Israel,” which is the zine distributed at Georgetown SJP’s “So You Want To Go on a Birthright Trip” panel. In this emotional editorial, six Palestinian pro-BDS Tufts students implore their fellow students to understand their perspective on Birthright trips using very emotional language to elicit empathy:

Our hearts ache when we see photographs of classmates posing in front of the mosques and churches our grandparents once prayed in, but now pray to one day see. Our hearts ache when we see pictures of peers eating the fruits of the land we have grown up hearing of, but never tasted. Our hearts ache when we see our classmates posing next to exotic camels and mysterious Bedouins in a grotesque charade of our culture. Our hearts ache each time we are reminded that we do not share this birthright.

In addition to emphasizing the *refugee rights* frame as discussed earlier, the repetition of the phrase, “Our hearts ache,” bolsters an emotional personal testimony that calls for Jewish students to have empathy with the emotional pain Palestinians feel because they are denied the right to return—and often denied the right to even visit Israel as a tourist. One of the speakers at Georgetown SJP’s “So You Want to Go on a Birthright Trip?” panel also includes a personal and emotional narrative, along with some strong language, when he describes his own family’s history as Palestinians. He describes how his grandfather was born in Be’er Sheva in the 1930s

and built his own home like most Palestinians did then. Then, he recounts how, after 1948, most of his family was expelled to Gaza where his father was born just before the Israeli occupation in 1967, after which point, he became stateless and later came to the US. Later, when explaining his response to the idea of American Jews having a birthright connection to Israel even if they lack any familial or ancestral ties, he bluntly exclaims, “Fuck You.” While a few examples of emotional appeals and personal narratives appeared in the vernacular discourse of pro-BDS students during IAW 2017, these examples were less common than more *logos*-based appeals using facts, statistics, discussions of international law and Israeli policies, and other logical arguments involving syllogisms, enthymemes, etc.²⁶

Another example of emotional appeals used by pro-BDS student activist-rhetors during IAW includes the “die-in” action at GWU²⁷ (SJP at GWU, “Die-In”). During this event, over a dozen SJP-affiliated students lay down on the ground in Kogan Plaza for an unknown period of time pretending to be dead with typed sheets of paper on top of each of them that include descriptions of how they died or what oppression they suffered because of a specific company that profits from the Israeli Occupation. In addition to reinforcing some common pro-BDS frames for the situation in Palestine/Israel, including the *injustice* and *human rights* master frames and the frames of *occupation*, *oppression*, *discrimination*, *apartheid*, *international complicity*, *violations of international law*, etc., the event also serves to promote SJP GWU’s “Divest This Time” campaign. The paper statements include the following example texts with complicit company names in bold type: “My home was destroyed by Caterpillar Corporation

²⁶ For example, the common association of Zionism as racism stems from a syllogism that because Zionism is a settler-colonial movement to establish a Jewish state in Palestine, and settler-colonialism is racist because it always discriminates against and oppresses the indigenous people in favor of a settler population, therefore, “Zionism is racism.”

²⁷ The exact date of the event is unclear because activists didn’t publicize it ahead of time, perhaps to intentionally take students by surprise and pre-emptively avoid counter protests by pro-Israel students.

machinery, to create illegal settlements”; “I am one of the two children killed at a UN School in Gaza during Israeli White Phosphorous Attacks, with phosphorous manufactured by Elbit Systems Ltd”; “I was killed by an unmanned aerial vehicle used to target and maim Palestinians, provided by Elbit Systems Ltd”; “HP Enterprise biometric technology is the reason why me and my cousin have two different ID cards in one land”; “I have no privacy in Palestine because Motorola provides technology for a surveillance system in the West Bank that gives Israel my personal information without my permission”; “Aircraft made by Lockheed Martin have dropped bombs on my family, killing everyone I love”; and “I could not visit my family in Jerusalem because of the Apartheid wall created with cement produced by Cemex.” This event uses stronger emotional appeals than most vernacular pro-BDS texts I analyzed in order to reinforce many common pro-BDS frames and emphasize Palestinian suffering and oppression. GWU’s SJP posted images from this event on its Facebook page, but the images were later removed at some point after the event, likely due to heavy criticism and charges by pro-Israel advocates that the event was antisemitic (“Incident Details”).

As discussed more in depth in Chapter 4, while emotional narratives of suffering are commonly used by human rights and injustice-focused movements, the use of such emotional appeals in pro-BDS discourse can generate a greater backlash because American and Western audiences tend to be especially sensitive to antisemitism both due to historical reasons, but also because of the common *doxa* that the BDS movement is antisemitic, thus undermining the potential resonance of emotional appeals on behalf of Palestinians because they are more likely to trigger affective belatedness and “uptake” memories in some audiences (Abraham, “Reluctant”; Bawarshi).

BDS and Agency

While the main focus of the majority of the vernacular pro-BDS discourse I studied was raising awareness about Israel's oppressive policies toward the Palestinians, another feature I noticed was the often implicit, but sometimes explicit, focus on the *agency* afforded to individuals by their participation in the BDS movement. In general, SAIA and the SJP groups I studied each engaged in discussions of how individuals could enact BDS and support the BDS movement in their own lives. Whether by joining SJP or SAIA or by individually boycotting products targeted for BDS, pro-BDS student activists encouraged other students to take concrete action in support of Palestinians. The #DivestThisTime campaign at GWU was the most organized BDS campaign by a D.C.-area college launched during IAW 2017. The campaign encouraged students to join in pressuring the Student Association to pass a BDS resolution. Though the subsequent 2017 Student Association BDS resolution failed, GWU SJP and #DivestThisTime did succeed the following year when a BDS resolution similar to the 2017 one was passed overwhelmingly by the Student Association in 2018, though the university administration refused to implement it (Cohen, Haley; Bennett). A more explicit later example of the *agency* frame in vernacular student pro-BDS discourse is when a Palestinian GWU student said, in the wake of passage of the student government resolution supporting BDS and Palestinian rights at GWU in April of 2018, "Divesting from Israel has been the only tactic for resisting my occupation that I can grasp in my hands" (qtd. in Bennett). Prior to the 2005 BDS Call, when student activists or others were concerned with Palestinian rights or wished to do something to hold Israel accountable and pressure it to grant Palestinian human rights, there was no clear option for individual agency in regard to this situation thousands of miles away if one was unable to actually visit Palestine/Israel. With BDS, however, Americans and other people of

conscience outside of Israel are offered a tangible way to contribute to the movement for Palestinian rights, even if only in a small and symbolic way.

Quantitative Textual Analysis

In addition to my qualitative analysis of pro-BDS texts using my heuristic questions, as discussed in Chapter 3, I also analyzed my entire corpora of texts using an online text analyzer to check for word and phrase frequency (“Textalyser” at <http://textalyser.net/>). While I did not perform an official quantitative analysis, using a text analysis program helped me to not only eliminate bias in my own results but also ensure I did not overlook any important terms or phrases that I may not have noticed in my qualitative coding. The results of this analysis supported my own analysis of data and revealed strong consistency between the most frequently used words and phrases in both official and vernacular discourse. For example, the terms “rights” and “human rights” were used frequently in both official and vernacular discourse, along with “justice,” “apartheid,” “occupation,” “discrimination,” etc. Other common terms include “solidarity,” “settler colonialism,” “ethnic cleansing,” and “right of return.” When references to the name of the BNC were removed, the two most common 8-word phrases from the BNC and the pages analyzed on the BDS movement’s official website were “the Palestinian struggle for freedom justice and equality” and [the right] “of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes.” The top BNC 7-word phrase is “regime of occupation, settler colonialism and apartheid.” For vernacular IAW texts, the most common single words found, when all articles, prepositions, and forms of either “Israel”/“Israeli” and “Palestine”/“Palestinian” were removed, were “rights,” “justice,” and “occupation.” The single word count for the BNC and BDS Movement website texts also included “rights” as one of the most frequent terms, along with “international,” “law,” “apartheid,” “movement,” and “occupation.” This descriptive quantitative analysis also revealed

that terms like “peace,” “conflict,” and “dialogue” were not very common. It was somewhat surprising that forms of “Zionist” or “Zionism” were not very common either, especially in official BDS movement discourse, even though a handful of texts did express an openly anti-Zionist stance. While this quantitative word frequency analysis was a useful complement to my qualitative rhetorical frame analysis, it was primarily through my qualitative examination and coding of my corpora, along with my later micro-analysis of selected representative texts, that I was able to discern the clearest patterns in rhetorical framing strategies intended to identify problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, propose solutions, and promote identification and division, etc. A more comprehensive and holistic qualitative rhetorical frame analysis was necessary to discern themes and frames that did not necessarily overlap with specific single or multi-word phrases, such as *agency*, *joint struggle*, and *failure of the international community*, frames that were expressed using many different combinations of words and phrases.

Conclusion

My analysis of vernacular pro-BDS discourse reveals a strong consistency in framing strategies among pro-BDS student activists, as well as between official and vernacular discourse, though there were a few differences as well. Both official and vernacular pro-BDS discourse use all three rhetorical appeals to present their arguments and emphasize the master frames of *injustice* and *human rights*, along with common issue frames of *apartheid*, *occupation*, *settler colonialism*, *joint struggle*, *international complicity*, *Israeli impunity*, *ethnic cleansing*, *anti-Zionism*, *BDS as a grassroots movement*, and others. Both official and vernacular texts also used Burkean identification and division to entice audiences to pick a side and identify with the *oppressed* Palestinians against the *oppressor*, Israel. Analogies to the South African anti-apartheid movement and the US civil rights movement were also common. In both cases,

expressions of antisemitic attitudes or statements were very rare among pro-BDS rhetors, and on the infrequent occasions when statements did seem to cross a line into antisemitic or borderline antisemitic conspiracy, pro-BDS student activists pushed back against such claims. Both official BDS movement leaders and student activist-rhetors also regularly condemn antisemitism and highlight Jewish participation and support for BDS as a way to offer counter-framing for charges of antisemitism against BDS. Both types of discourse also frequently reference intersectionality and related concepts popular on the social justice left in order to tie the cause for Palestinian rights to other social and racial justice movements for human rights and equality around the world.

My analysis of vernacular pro-BDS student activist discourse reveals that while there is a high level of consistency between the framing and rhetorical strategies of official and vernacular pro-BDS discourse, student activists in the US tailor their rhetoric to a more specific and local audiences—that of US college students and their respective university communities—as well as more localized rhetorical situations and ecologies. In addition to the long-term and ongoing exigencies and rhetorical ecologies of Palestine/Israel, the pro-BDS student groups whose discourse I studied during IAW events in 2017 responded to the *kairos* of immediate, local, and national events and exigencies, such as the recent #NoDAPL Standing Rock protests, the INN anti-AIPAC protests in Washington D.C., and the debate over the compatibility of feminism and Zionism resulting from recent Zionist critiques of the Women’s March organization. The presence of information and advertisements for free Taglit-Birthright trips to Israel during the spring semester serves as another unique exigence for pro-BDS student activists to offer alternative perspectives on the Birthright program. Aside from raising awareness about Israel’s violations of international law and Palestinian human rights, pro-BDS student activists also use

of a wider variety of rhetorical appeals and formats than official BDS movement discourse, including more personal narratives and emotional appeals and an even stronger focus on the *intersectionality* and *joint struggle* frames. Consistent with the contemporary left's focus on intersectionality, pro-BDS student activists expressed solidarity and joint struggle with other antiracist and social justice movements, including Black Lives Matter, LGBTQ+ rights, feminism, and indigenous rights movements like #NoDAPL. Student activist texts also highlight the *apartheid* frame and South Africa analogy and emphasize the issues of *ethnic cleansing* and *refugee rights* within a *settler colonialism* frame. And like official BDS movement leaders, pro-BDS student activist-rhetors rarely used terms and frames favored by Israel advocates, such as "peace," "coexistence," "dialogue," or the *conflict* frame that typically presents the situation in Palestine/Israel as one of two equal sides in "conflict" with each other. Similarly to official pro-BDS discourse, vernacular student-activist discourse stressed the inequality and power imbalance between the Israeli and Palestinian sides and favored the *settler colonialism* frame over the *conflict* frame.

In addition to the few aspects of pro-BDS student's rhetorical framing strategies that were unique when compared with official BDS movement discourse, these student-created texts also demonstrated a high level of consistency in the frames used and likely audience resonance when compared with official movement texts. Similar to official BDS movement framing strategies, the vernacular pro-BDS discourse I studied included examples of emphasizing antiracism and rebutting antisemitism charges, including by highlighting Jewish supporters of BDS and Palestinian rights, including activists from groups like JVP, SJP, INN, and JFREJ. Even as they regularly denounce antisemitism, pro-BDS student activists also often promote anti-Zionism and equate Zionism with racism and white supremacy, viewing white Ashkenazi

Jews as contemporary beneficiaries of white privilege rather than an oppressed minority. Zionism and Israeli settler colonialism is also frequently portrayed as the primary cause of Palestinian human rights violations and suffering, to which the BDS movement is often portrayed as a solution and source of individual agency.

Also similarly to official BDS movement discourse, pro-BDS student activist rhetoric seems likely to be most resonant with social and racial justice activists who already prioritize fighting injustice through intersectional joint struggle with other marginalized peoples, as evidenced by the multi-racial coalitions of activists who attend, co-sponsor, and speak at SAIA and SJP IAW events. The participation of many progressive Jewish activists in IAW events also demonstrates not only the resonance of pro-BDS discourse with many young Jews, but also reveals the shifting priorities and values that have caused more and more young Jews in recent years to embrace Palestinian rights.

The #DivestThisTime campaign at GWU offers a clear example of which audiences vernacular pro-BDS rhetorical framing strategies appear to resonate most with and which audiences are less likely to be receptive. After a 2017 BDS resolution failed to pass, GWU's Student Association Senate voted in secret ballot—to avoid personal attacks after pro-Israel students and outside supporters criticized the resolution for being antisemitic for unfairly singling out Israel—to pass the nonbinding BDS resolution targeting multinational corporations that profit from Israel's occupation for divestment (Bennett; Cohen, Haley; “George Washington U”). After the Student Association Senate passed the BDS resolution overwhelmingly, the next day GW president Thomas LeBlanc said, “I want to be clear to our university community that this does not represent the university's views and the university will not implement such a proposal” (“George Washington U”). Thus, while pro-BDS rhetorical strategies and framing

seems to resonate with many social and racial justice activists, including many on US college campuses, among older adults who continue to hold most positions of power in the US, support for Israel and opposition to BDS remains resistant to pro-BDS framing, perhaps at least partly due to the continued persistence of the *doxa* that the BDS movement is antisemitic.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

Overview of Rhetorical Frame Analysis Results

My rhetorical frame analysis of pro-BDS discourse has sought to investigate the following questions: 1) How do both official and vernacular BDS activist-rhetors frame the BDS movement and their goals?; 2) How do they frame their responses to the evolving rhetorical situations and challenges (including Western sensitivity to antisemitism)?; and 3) How do they tailor these frames for different audiences? Through my analysis of a corpora of both official and vernacular BDS movement texts, I have found that, despite some minor differences between the audiences and rhetorical moves of official BDS movement leaders versus rank-and-file student activist-rhetors, there is a remarkable consistency in the rhetorical framing strategies used in both discourses. Both official and vernacular BDS activist-rhetors use a variety of rhetorical appeals (primarily *logos* but also *ethos* and *pathos*) to raise awareness about discriminatory Israeli policies and human rights violations against Palestinians and to encourage Burkean identification with the *oppressed* Palestinians and against their Israeli *oppressors*. Pro-BDS activist-rhetors typically frame the BDS movement as a *nonviolent movement* to achieve Palestinian *rights* and hold Israel accountable for its ongoing system of *oppression, discrimination, occupation, apartheid*, and violence against Palestinians. Other common frames emphasize the values of *justice, freedom, equality, joint struggle*, and individual and collective *agency*—values that strongly overlap with current social and racial justice activist discourses around intersectionality and justice for marginalized and oppressed peoples. In regard to the most commonly used frames, both official and vernacular pro-BDS discourse emphasizes the issue and collective

action frames of *apartheid*, *discrimination*, *occupation*, *settler colonialism*, *ethnic cleansing*, *refugee rights*, *freedom*, *equality*, and *joint struggle*, all of which also fall under the umbrella master frames of *injustice*, *oppression*, and *human rights*. This contrasts with the common frames used by pro-Israel advocates that are rarely found in pro-BDS discourse, including *security*, *Palestinian terrorism*, *coexistence*, *dialogue*, *peace* (without modification), and *conflict*.

In response to the evolving rhetorical situations and challenges they face, including charges of antisemitism against the BDS movement in the context of post-9/11 Islamophobia and Western sensitivity to antisemitism, BDS activists offer rebuttals and counter-framing for the *doxa* that the BDS movement is antisemitic for targeting the Jewish state by clearly distinguishing between the Jewish people and Israel to discourage collectively assigning Jewish people the blame for Israel's actions, carefully separating anti-Zionism and criticism of Israel from antisemitism, emphasizing Jewish support for the BDS movement, and drawing comparisons to other familiar struggles for justice and liberation. By emphasizing Jewish support for BDS and Palestinians rights, both official and vernacular pro-BDS discourse not only offers counterframing for antisemitism charges but also bolsters the *ethos* of pro-BDS discourse because US audiences often tend to prefer Jewish opinions over Palestinian ones (Hallward, *Transnational* 183). Even though neither official nor vernacular BDS movement discourse relies heavily on *pathos*-based appeals and rarely includes the personal testimonies commonly found in other human rights campaigns (Brysk; Keck and Sikkink), both types of BDS activist-rhetors do occasionally include emotional appeals and personal narratives from Palestinian victims of Israeli oppression and violence.

While the framing strategies of both official and vernacular pro-BDS discourse are very similar overall, the vernacular pro-BDS texts I studied also reveal a few differences. For

example, while official BDS movement discourse focuses primarily on an international audience, pro-BDS vernacular student-activist discourse attends more to national and local audiences of US college students. This focus on a collegiate audience and the concurrent popularity of other racial and social justice movements on US college campuses leads vernacular pro-BDS student activist-rhetors to emphasize the *intersectionality* and *joint struggle* frames even more frequently than in official BDS movement discourse, though these frames are also increasingly found in official pro-BDS discourse as well. In addition, perhaps partly because US audiences may be less familiar with the nature of Israeli policies toward Palestinians when compared with an international audience as a result of a greater pro-Israel media bias in the US (McGreal; Goldfarb), vernacular pro-BDS discourse more commonly includes personal narratives and emotional appeals about Israeli oppression of Palestinians, even as the majority of pro-BDS appeals are more *logos*-based. A different knowledge base about the situation in Palestine/Israel when compared with international audiences may also explain why the *failure of the international community*, *international complicity*, and *Israeli impunity* frames were less commonly used in the vernacular discourse of US pro-BDS student activists, most of whom focus more on raising awareness about the situation for US collegiate audiences.

My analysis also suggests that while the rhetorical framing strategies used in both official and vernacular discourse resonate with certain audiences, adjusting some rhetorical framing strategies could promote a greater resonance with wider audiences. Pro-BDS rhetorical framing strategies are likely to resonate most strongly with audiences of social and racial justice activists who focus on intersectionality and building coalitions among various marginalized groups seeking justice and equality, especially activists of color in the US, and to a lesser but significant degree with a broader audience of younger liberal and leftist Americans, including many young

Jewish American racial justice activists who are increasingly joining the movement for BDS and Palestinian rights (Maltz; Omer, *Days of Awe*; Sunshine; Waxman, *Trouble*). To increase the resonance of pro-BDS discourse with other potentially-receptive audiences, however, BDS activist-rhetors could more explicitly express empathy with Jewish fears of antisemitism and clarify certain controversial BDS goals and demands (e.g., the “right of return”) to make pro-BDS discourse more resonant and persuasive for a wider liberal-leaning audience who are more likely to have encountered the *doxa* that BDS is antisemitic. Such a strategy could help some Jewish and non-Jewish audiences transcend the affective obstacles and predictable uptakes that often hamper receptiveness to pro-BDS framing and promote more productive discussions about BDS and Palestinian rights (Abraham, “Reluctant”; Bawarshi).

As I have done in this project, combining framing analysis with rhetorical analysis can help rhetoric scholars gain insight into social movement rhetors’ rhetorical moves to a degree that traditional rhetorical analysis or sociological framing analysis alone may not. Combining these two approaches offers scholars a chance to better understand not only how social movement rhetors use rhetorical appeals and other available means of persuasion but also how rhetors use framing to focus audiences’ attention and cognitively direct their understanding and interpretation of an issue or event. Kuypers argues that rhetorical framing analysis is also “particularly well-suited for determining the worldviews of those producing the discourse being studied” as well as rhetoric’s impact, which is especially useful when examining controversial discourse like that of the BDS movement and investigating challenging rhetorical situations like the issue of Palestine/Israel (198, 182).

BDS Framing Resonance with Audiences

Though it is impossible to determine the actual effectiveness of any rhetorical artifact with certainty, it is useful to theorize about the probable effectiveness of discourse given the rhetorical situation and intended audiences (Andrews 8). Many rhetoricians refer to this likely effectiveness as “fitness,” while frame analysts often refer to this as frame “resonance” (Andrews 54; Benford and Snow 619-622; Hauser, *Introduction* 57-60). Rather than trying to pin down how rhetorically effective a text is, Andrews argues that rhetorical critics have traditionally “sought to interpret a speech by assessing the ways in which the data show that the speaker has identified his or her rhetorical problems and opportunities and has adapted the materials of the speech to meet these circumstances” (55). According to Hauser, “Fitting responses are ones that accommodate audience interests and ability to mediate change while addressing the controlling exigence. . . . Ultimately, for a fitting response to be a satisfying one, it must intersect with the values, ethics, and personal commitments of both rhetor and audience” (*Introduction* 60). Social movement theorists Benford and Snow argue that frame resonance can be determined by “credibility of the proffered frame and its relative salience,” while “The credibility of any framing is a function of three factors: frame consistency, empirical credibility, and credibility of the frame articulators or claimsmakers” (619). Even though Benford and Snow’s model of frame resonance overlooks some elements of the rhetorical situation or ecology that rhetorical scholars would deem important for determining rhetorical fitness, their emphasis on the perceived credibility or *ethos* of movement rhetors seems relevant to determining the resonance of BDS movement rhetorical framing strategies. This criteria emphasizing rhetors’ credibility also demonstrates the significance of the rhetorical obstacle posed by the *doxa* that the BDS

movement is antisemitic, which may undermine the resonance of BDS movement framing for certain audiences for whom this *doxa* remains entrenched and resistant to change.

Ascertaining the probable effectiveness or fitness of vernacular social movement rhetoric can be especially difficult because, in some cases, vernacular social movement discourse is often intended to be more indirect than official movement discourse. As Hauser and McClellan explain, “Vernacular rhetoric aimed at resistance seldom is intended to persuade its apparent target” because “those with power do not relinquish it willingly” (Hauser and McClellan 40). Hauser and McClellan reference Habermas to further argue that vernacular resistance rhetoric “requires gaining majority support in order to create a legitimation crisis,” but official social movement rhetors also often use this same strategy, including Martin Luther King Jr. in his “Letter From a Birmingham Jail,” which is referenced by Hauser and McClellan (40). Thus, determining the probable effectiveness of rhetorical acts, otherwise referred to as “fitness” or “resonance,” including for BDS movement discourse, requires examining elements of the rhetorical situation, including audience beliefs and values, and using qualitative data to make an argument for the likelihood of audiences responding to social movement discourse the way official and vernacular activist-rhetors intend.

Even though the overall effectiveness of rhetoric and discourse is very difficult to ascertain with any certainty, the results of my analysis suggest that the framing strategies of both official and vernacular activist-rhetors seem to be most resonant with other social and racial justice activists who value *intersectionality*, *antiracism*, *anti-colonialism*, and *joint struggle*—values that most BDS activists share and that overlap with pro-BDS framing strategies. This resonance is in line with Brysk’s study of human rights campaign discourse showing that other oppressed or formerly oppressed groups are often the best audiences for human rights discourse:

“Disparate groups can become an ongoing attentive constituency for the claims of others who have experienced a similar genre of suffering or defend a common principle. . . . Previously persecuted groups become attentive and receptive to current victims through the projection of a bridging narrative” (164). In the case of the BDS movement, the frequent emphasis on *intersectionality* and *joint struggle*, and the common use of analogies to other antiracist and civil rights movements that appear regularly in both official and vernacular pro-BDS texts (e.g., South Africa, US civil rights movement, etc.) may help function as a bridging narrative that appeals to members of other marginalized groups who may have experienced similar forms of oppression, making them a receptive audience to pro-BDS discourse (Brysk 169). Both official and vernacular pro-BDS rhetors also regularly use frames that invoke the struggle for black liberation and civil rights, including through statements of solidarity with Black Lives Matter and against police brutality, #Ferguson2Palestine, analogies to the US civil rights movement and the South African anti-apartheid movement, statements emphasizing the importance of *intersectionality*, etc. These framing strategies by pro-BDS rhetors also help increase the resonance of BDS framing for black audiences and others who value *intersectionality* as a principle for activism and organizing. The presence of many students of color in pro-BDS student groups like SJP and SAIA and the support for BDS from black antiracist activists and the Movement for Black Lives also attests to the resonance of these frames as well (Bailey and Petersen-Smith; Movement for Black Lives; Erakat and Hill; “Freedom is the Future”).

Other audiences that pro-BDS framing strategies are likely to resonate with include indigenous victims of settler colonialism and progressive audiences in the West who sympathize with other struggles for justice and equality. As discussed in chapters 4 and 5, BDS movement statements in support of other indigenous struggles, including the Standing Rock #NoDAPL

protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline in 2017, along with the frequent emphasis by pro-BDS activists on the commonalities between Israeli policy and other settler-colonial societies (e.g. many BNC statements, Barghouti texts, and IAW events like the SAIA discussion about settler colonialism), would likely encourage people with similar concerns to identify with the BDS movement. In addition to functioning as a rhetorical Burkean identification and division process and a form of Brysk's "bridging narrative," such pro-BDS rhetorical framing strategies focusing on common values and situations of oppression and colonialism also work as "frame alignment" processes, including "frame bridging," a framing strategy which seeks to connect and mobilize groups and individuals with similar values and ideology with a particular social movement; in this case, connecting other people concerned with social and racial justice and anti-colonial struggle with the BDS movement for Palestinian rights (Benford and Snow 624; Snow et al. 467-469). The growing support for Palestinian rights and BDS is also evidenced by the many diverse signatories to the pro-BDS "Freedom is the Future" campaign launched in 2019 by the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR) and the Adalah Justice Project, which include several social and racial justice organizations, along with various other indigenous rights, faith-based, and anti-war groups. Thus, in addition to resonating with other victims of oppression, pro-BDS discourse can also resonate with audiences who share certain values and have supported similar struggles for justice in the past, such as the South African anti-apartheid struggle, the US civil rights movement, Black Lives Matter, #NoDAPL/Standing Rock, immigrant rights struggles, etc.

Moreover, Arab, Muslims, and liberal and leftist Jews who value social justice above Zionism may also be receptive audiences for pro-BDS discourse. For other Arabs and Muslims, sympathizing with the Palestinians likely requires less rhetorical effort on the part of pro-BDS

activists because many Muslims and Arabs may identify with Palestinians at the level of shared identity. The values of democracy, freedom, and justice promoted by pro-BDS framing also likely resonate with Arab and Muslim audiences who were part of the Arab Spring or who were inspired by it. Unlike some earlier pro-Palestinian discourse that often drew on Islamic texts and history to argue for Palestinian rights, official and vernacular BDS movement texts present a secular view of the situation in Palestine/Israel and lack Islamic religious appeals, even though many Muslims support BDS (Rowland and Frank; Mishal and Aharoni). This secular focus of pro-BDS discourse and framing may also help promote its acceptance among secular audiences who may hold conscious or unconscious Islamophobic beliefs.

In regard to Israeli and diaspora Jews, the recent and rapid growth of Jewish social justice organizations that support the struggle for Palestinians rights like Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ), the anti-Occupation groups IfNotNow (INN), the Center for Jewish Nonviolence (CJNV), the All That's Left collective, and non-Zionist synagogues like Tzedek Chicago, along with recent polling data showing increasing criticism of Israel and sympathy for the Palestinians among younger and non-Orthodox American Jews, suggest that many American Jews, especially among younger generations, find resonance in the values and frames promoted by the BDS movement, even in spite of the prevalent *doxa* held by some Jews and others that BDS is antisemitic²⁸ (Beinart, *The Crisis*, “How to Stop,” “What the

²⁸ Among recent polls that show a loss of support for Israel among younger generations of American Jews, a 2016 Brand Israel Group (BIG) study, “Sounding the Alarm: The American-Israeli Relationship,” showed that between 2010 and 2016, on the question of whether they lean toward the Israeli side, Jewish college students dropped 27 percentage points, while at the same time, favorability toward the Palestinians increased by 18% (Borschel-Dan; Ziri). Based on recent polls like these, in 2018, the leader of the Jewish Agency warned that younger American Jews increasingly view Israel as being not aligned with liberal values (Maltz, “Young American”). Omer and Waxman both cite a 2013 Pew study showing that fewer Jewish Americans reported a strong attachment to Israel than in earlier surveys and that younger American Jews report lower levels of support for Israel and higher levels of support for Palestinians to support their arguments that many younger and more liberal American Jews are moving away from support for Israel and toward solidarity with Palestinians (Omer, *Days of Awe* 19-20; Waxman, “Young American”; “A Portrait”). Weisman also notes the growing divide between American and Israeli Jews based on not

AJC Poll”); Borschel-Dan; Goldberg, Michelle; Maltz; Omer, *Days of Awe*; “A Portrait”; Sunshine; Waxman, *Trouble*; Telhami, “Americans Are”; “Young Americans”; Weisman; Ziri).

It is likely that pro-BDS rhetors’ many statements denouncing antisemitism and supporting inclusion and intersectionality have helped to make pro-BDS rhetoric more appealing and resonant with these audiences as well. In addition to BDS framing, however, it may be that shifting elements of the rhetorical ecology for BDS discourse have also played a big role in making BDS more attractive to Jewish audiences. For example, many recent events have eroded the previously bipartisan support for Israel, including Trump’s election and his support for pro-Israel Christian Zionist policies, the rise of far-right antisemitism and violence like the Tree of Life synagogue shooting, the Israeli government’s increasing right-ward shift under Netanyahu, and the growing visibility of pro-Palestinian voices through social media and now in the US Congress with the election of Democrats Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar, etc. Moreover, it is becoming more common for liberal and left-leaning Americans, including American Jews, to criticize Israel’s policies even if they don’t support BDS (e.g. especially Bernie Sanders’ critiques of Israeli policy beginning during the 2016 primary and continuing in 2019 and 2020) (Sanders). This increasing openness to criticize Israel in the US public sphere may, in turn,

only recent poll results but also attitudes toward President Trump and his policies toward Israel that are favored by Israelis but criticized by American Jews to argue that Israeli and American Jews are “headed for a messy break up” (Weisman). A 2018 Pew study, though it didn’t focus on Jewish attitudes, also showed a growing partisan split between Republicans and Democrats in their support for Israel, with Democratic support for Israel dropping significantly in recent years; other 2018 polls showed similar findings (“Republicans and Democrats”; Telhami, “Americans Are”). There has been some debate about the accuracy of some of these polls, especially in light of a recent Gallup Poll from 2019 that indicated a stronger level of support for Israel among Americans and American Jews, but some critics point to the wording of questions, the order of questions, the higher percentage of Republicans in the Gallup sample, and other factors as possibly accounting for the discrepancies (Adkins; Wittes and Shapiro).

encourage more open-mindedness among many liberal Americans, including Jews and non-Jews, toward the BDS movement and its framing²⁹.

Many American Jews who support BDS or otherwise support Palestinian rights and harshly criticize Israel have expressed frustration that the relationship between criticism of Israel and antisemitism is being distorted by recent public discourse and antisemitism charges against supporters of Palestinian rights, including the BDS movement. Some specific issues that Jewish supporters of Palestinian rights have called attention to include the confusion over the meaning of antisemitism that arises when Israel claims to speak for all Jews, when unfounded charges of antisemitism against the BDS movement and critics of Israel serve to weaken the popular understanding of antisemitism in an era in which far-right white supremacist antisemitic violence is on the rise, and when right-wing governments around the world (including the Trump administration, Orban in Hungary, etc.) seek to distract from their connections to far-right antisemitism by touting their support for Israel (Bennis; Omer, *Days of Awe* 19-22, 48, 55; “Jewish Scholars”; Gessen). For example, over one hundred Jewish scholars wrote an open letter to The Trump administration’s Education Secretary, Betsy DeVos, to protest the Education Department’s threats to withhold federal funding for the joint Duke-UNC Consortium for Middle East Studies program, which had been charged with antisemitism by the Education Department (“Jewish Scholars”; Meckler and Strauss). In their letter, these scholars emphasized their

²⁹ A recent 2019 poll by the American Jewish Committee (AJC) sheds light on American Jews’ attitudes toward BDS and reveals that most American Jews do *not* actually believe that the BDS movement is antisemitic (Beinart, “What the AJC Poll”; American Jewish Committee, “AJC Survey”). The AJC, a mainstream pro-Israel Jewish organization, asked American Jews about BDS and found that 35% of American Jews reported believing that BDS is “mostly anti-Semitic” and 47% reported that the BDS movement has at least “some anti-Semitic supporters,” a claim which Beinart describes as an “essentially meaningless formulation since many American Jews would likely say that the Republican and Democratic parties have ‘some anti-Semitic supporters’ too” (Beinart, “What the AJC Poll”; American Jewish Committee, “AJC Survey”).

frustration with what they perceive as the Trump administration's attempts to take advantage of Jewish fears of antisemitism to suppress free speech:

In particular, we take issue with how your letter to Duke and UNC justified its investigation by exploiting Jewish fears of anti-Semitism. This move fits within a clear pattern of the Trump administration using Jews and our concerns over anti-Semitism in order to try and justify repressive policies. We take great offense at this cynical weaponization of our historical trauma, particularly as anti-Semitic attacks on Jews have skyrocketed since Trump came into office. (“Jewish Scholars”)

Many American Jews have been openly critical of Trump administration policies and attempts to suppress free speech and activism for Palestinian rights, but some of them may not necessarily support the BDS movement itself even as they support Americans' right to boycott and harshly criticize Israel without being accused of antisemitism (Dias et al.; Sanders). Polls and anecdotal accounts suggest, however, that increasing numbers of American Jews are moving beyond criticism of Israel and support for the right to boycott to outright BDS support and even anti-Zionism. As Omer discusses in depth in *Days of Awe*, many Jewish anti-Zionists and Palestinian solidarity activists are redefining their Jewish identity through solidarity with Palestinians and other movements for justice—rather than through Zionism and support for Israel (*Days of Awe*). This trend is also evidenced by JVP's recent 2019 decision to take a public stand against Zionism (Jewish Voice for Peace, “Our Approach”). Even though Jewish anti-Zionists and supporters of BDS remain a minority among diaspora Jews, their numbers are growing rapidly, especially among younger generations, which suggests that if this trend continues, increasing numbers of American and diaspora Jews may eventually support BDS or at least become more open-minded to pro-BDS framing.

Despite both official and vernacular pro-BDS activist-rhetors regular statements that denounce antisemitism, promote antiracism, and carefully distinguish between Israeli oppression of Palestinians and the Jewish people, another audience for whom pro-BDS discourse may sometimes unfortunately resonate includes people that hold antisemitic attitudes. Certain subjects and frames related to Palestine/Israel may seem to overlap with antisemitic tropes about Jewish power, including discussions of “the Israel lobby” and pro-Israel media bias, and thus could resonate with people who hold antisemitic beliefs about Jewish power and control—despite pro-BDS rhetors’ repeated attempts to counter such attitudes, which I observed on multiple occasions during the course of my study³⁰ (e.g. SAIA leader’s rebuttal of a statement about Israel controlling the US, multiple BNC and Barghouti statement denouncing antisemitism, etc.). Antisemitic tropes reflecting hatred and stereotypes about Jews have been common for hundreds of years, primarily in Europe but also spreading around the world as popular conspiracy theories via the internet in recent years. These antisemitic tropes have developed over time to paint Jews—and sometimes also “Zionists” or the state of Israel as stand-ins for Jews—as being demonic or conspiring to control the world. These tropes also include “a host of related and unrelated manifestations, piling charges including being cosmopolitan, usurer, capitalist, socialist, communist, arrogant, coward, and parasite” (Kiewe 62).

³⁰ The “Israel lobby” is one topic that often generates backlash and accusations of antisemitism because it can appear to suggest a nefarious conspiracy similar to those found in *The Protocols*. The controversy surrounding Ilhan Omar’s critiques of AIPAC in 2019 are one example of how this topic can trigger affective reactions to audiences sensitive to antisemitism (Barkan). Abraham argues that rhetoricians can play a role in helping to come up with “creative ways to conduct discussions about the Israel Lobby” that are “within good-faith frameworks free of accusation, hyperbole, and name-calling” (“Conclusion” 187). While developing more precise and non-hyperbolic explanations of what activists mean by “the lobby” could avoid triggering as strong of a backlash, activists and other individuals who are targeted by pro-Israel public relations organizations, lobbying organizations and PACs (e.g. AIPAC and NORPAC), blacklists (e.g. Canary Mission and the AMCHA Initiative), “lawfare,” pressure groups, and bad-faith public criticism need a way to talk about their experiences and develop appropriate and effective strategies to respond to such attacks (*Occupation of the American Mind*; Omer, *Days of Awe* 30-31; “Watch the Film”). Finding the balance between legitimate good-faith critiques of the lobby and other sensitive topics that may appear to echo antisemitic tropes is a challenge for both pro-BDS rhetors and BDS critics (see Chapter 4 for more discussion of how the *Israel lobby* frame is used by Omar Barghouti).

While antisemitic discourse is not part of official BDS movement rhetoric, nor was it a significant feature of the vernacular pro-BDS discourse I studied, some people holding antisemitic attitudes can be drawn to support BDS for the wrong reasons. In many cases, BDS movement leaders and pro-BDS student activists have publicly denounced individuals who espouse such views and who have participated in pro-BDS or Palestinian solidarity activism (Abunimah, “A Final Word,” “Palestinian Writers”; Abunimah and Ibish; “Granting No Quarter”; Goldstein; Pessah; Soske and Jacobs 11; Palestinian BDS National Committee, “Palestinian BDS”). Unfortunately for the BDS movement, however, even a small minority of antisemitic individuals and statements associated with BDS support are used by Israel’s advocates as examples to undermine the *ethos* of the BDS movement as a whole and reinforce the *doxa* that BDS is antisemitic because many BDS critics “take the actions of a few extremists and use them to reflect an entire movement (El-Husseini; *The New Anti-Semites*). Despite the presence of individuals who have espoused extremely anti-Palestinian and Islamophobic statements and attitudes among supporters of Israel, including even some members of the Israeli government, this same generalization is not as commonly applied to Israel’s supporters or Zionists as a whole (Aked, *The Undeniable*; Barghouti, *Boycott* 42-44; Bazian; Salaita, *Anti-Arab* 142-144, *Uncivil Rites* 15-16, *Condemnation*; Tesler; Tharoor, “Israel’s New”).

This apparent double-standard regarding generalizations about bigotry’s role in the BDS movement versus pro-Israel advocacy recalls Ibram X. Kendi’s discussion of the way racist ideas manifest in discourse through “*individualizing* White negativity and *generalizing* Black negativity” (42-43). He further argues that, “Negative behavior by any Black person became proof of what was wrong with Black people, while negative behavior by any White person only proved what was wrong with that person” (43). If we substitute “BDS supporter” for “Black” and

“Israel supporter” for “White,” then his argument can also apply to the way BDS is tarred with the brush of antisemitism while Israel and its supporters are not as readily associated with the worst elements among them—a phenomenon that frequently happens whenever a significant power imbalance leads to one group controlling the narrative.

Kendi’s thesis from his book *Stamped from the Beginning* may also be relevant to the way Orientalist and Islamophobic anti-Palestinian discourse has adapted over time from the earliest days of Zionist immigration to Palestine until now. Much like the way racist discourses about black people were developed and transformed throughout the years to justify the exploitation of black labor for profit rather than being the result of pre-existing hatred, anti-Palestinian discourse can be traced to the Zionist need to expropriate land in Palestine in order to establish a Jewish-majority state. Kendi argues that the production of racist ideas comes after the initial discrimination and exploitation in order to justify the actions and policies that have been deemed as necessary:

Their own racist ideas usually did not dictate the decisions of the most powerful Americans when they instituted, defended, and tolerated discriminatory policies that affected millions of Black lives over the course of American history. Racially discriminatory policies have usually sprung from economic, political, and cultural self-interests . . . (9)

Much like how the racist tropes about black people evolved over time to justify continued exploitation and racially discriminatory policies, Orientalist and Islamophobic tropes about Palestinians have similarly evolved from them being portrayed as “barbaric” and “backward” in the late colonial and early Zionist era, to later stereotypes about Palestinians as “terrorists” who “only understand violence,” to more recent assertions that even the nonviolent BDS movement

for Palestinians rights is an antisemitic “war” to “destroy Israel.” This pattern of evolving racist discourse as described by Kendi can also be seen in the relatively recent emergence of virulent antisemitism in the Arab and Muslim world, which was uncommon prior to the advent of Zionism and grew mostly after the founding of Israel in the heart of the Middle East (Kiewe 66-68). For example, Muslims have long considered Jews to be protected “People of the Book” who were allowed to practice their religion openly in Muslim countries (unlike in Christian Europe), but the emergence of conflict between Arab Muslims and Jewish Zionists led some Muslims to reinterpret minor verses in the Quran in an antisemitic way—verses that did not previously inspire Jew-hatred; likewise, antisemitic tropes common in Christian antisemitism were also imported into the region where Israel’s presence and wars with her neighbors had already exacerbated tensions (Kiewe 68-69). This emergence of Muslim antisemitism may also lead some Muslims to support BDS as a way to isolate Israel for the wrong reasons, but, again, just because some antisemites support BDS does not indicate that BDS is inherently antisemitic movement, nor does it suggest that most Muslim supporters of BDS are motivated by antisemitism. In fact, some elements of BDS discourse may serve to tamp down on some supporters’ pre-existing antisemitism via pro-BDS texts that openly denounce antisemitism, refrain from demonizing Israel, and present Israel’s settler-colonial policies not as uniquely evil, but instead portray Israel as one of several settler colonies that operates within a global system of capitalist exploitation and US hegemony.

Limitations on Pro-BDS Frame Resonance

Even though pro-BDS framing strategies and rhetorical moves seem to resonate strongly with the values and experiences of social and racial justice activists and people from other marginalized and oppressed groups, some other audiences are not yet persuaded. More

mainstream Western and US audiences continue to be particularly sensitive to antisemitism, especially since the post-WWII era, and these audiences may have a harder time accepting pro-BDS framing of Palestine/Israel, including the right of return, opposition to Zionism, and framing that depicts the Jewish state as an *oppressor* rather than the more familiar historical *victim*. Orientalist, Islamophobic, and anti-Palestinian *doxa* and bigotry, which have been even more common in the post-9/11 era, also play a part in audiences' resistance to accept pro-BDS framing. Moreover, these attitudes also contribute to the *doxa* of the BDS movement being an antisemitic attempt to "destroy Israel," which adds another significant rhetorical obstacle for the BDS movement to overcome. Audiences for whom pro-BDS rhetorical framing is unlikely to resonate with and to whom BDS activist-rhetors are thus also unlikely to target include right-wing Zionists, including the current majority of Jews in Israel and conservative Christian Evangelical Zionists who usually support the Republican party (Goldman, Samuel). For many of these right-wing Zionists (both Jews and Christians), the Bible dictates Jewish control of the whole of Palestine, making it unlikely that these audiences would ever be open to pro-BDS discourse (Illing).

While analogies to other movements for human rights and social justice can serve as bridging narratives to help pro-BDS discourse resonate with audiences of formerly oppressed people and those who value social justice and intersectionality, connecting the Palestinian struggle and BDS to the former oppression of Jewish people in pro-BDS appeals may have more mixed results. For example, while many Jewish people report that reflecting on the history of Jewish oppression led them to supporting Palestinian rights (Omer, *Days of Awe* 20-21, "Refiguring"), referencing Nazi persecution of Jews in the context of Israel's treatment of Palestinians is also considered offensive to many other Jews. In discussions of the "new anti-

Semitism,” some BDS critics argue that comparing Israel to Nazis in any way is a sign of antisemitism, even though such comparisons are not uncommon for Jewish critics of Israel (“Antisemitism Then”; Barghouti, *Boycott* 12-14; Rosenfeld 8, 13; “Working Definition”; *The New Anti-Semites*; Gessen). Though Nazi analogies were uncommon in the pro-BDS discourse I studied, there were a handful of times that the BNC or Omar Barghouti raised Nazi analogies in the context of Israeli human rights violations (Barghouti, *Boycott* 13). In each of these few instances, however, the BNC and Barghouti make such comparisons only to pre-Holocaust Nazi discrimination against Jews, and they also only do so by quoting Jews or Israelis, never suggesting such comparisons themselves in the absence of a quote from a prominent Jewish individual. This careful use of quotes from Jewish critics, however, may not resonate with some Jewish (and non-Jewish) audiences who may instead respond to any mention of Nazis in the context of Palestine/Israel with powerful affective uptakes that may reinforce the *doxa* that BDS is antisemitic (Abraham, “Reluctant Rhetoricians” 37-38; Bawarshi 13).

The counterframing by BDS opponents and supporters of Israel that the BDS movement is antisemitic poses a significant rhetorical obstacle to the acceptance of pro-BDS framing by some audiences. According to Benford and Snow, successful “counterframing” by opponents “can affect a movement's framings, on the one hand, by putting movement activists on the defensive, at least temporarily, and, on the other hand, by frequently forcing it to develop and elaborate prognoses more clearly than otherwise might have been the case” (617). Thus, because BDS critics and Israel advocates have been successful at counterframing that perpetuates the *doxa* of the BDS movement as antisemitic, pro-BDS rhetors and the BDS movement as a whole are forced to respond to antisemitism charges and adjust their discourse to a degree that goes beyond what is required of most other human rights and racial justice movements. Such a

requirement may not only undermine the *ethos* of pro-BDS rhetors but also distracts from pro-BDS framing of the situation in Palestine/Israel, which seems to be the intention of some pro-Israel “hasbara” organizations that seek to steer public discourse toward support for Israel and away from discussions of Palestinian rights, groups which include The Israel Project, StandWithUs, Campus Watch, Canary Mission, the Adelson-funded Maccabee Task Force, StopAntiSemitism.org, and others. (“Watch the Film”; *Occupation of the American Mind*; Cortellessa; *The New Anti-Semites*).

Mainstream Democrats and liberals in the US, along with their counterparts in Europe, also seem unlikely to fully embrace pro-BDS framing in the near future, though there are some signs that this could be changing. For example, 2016 US presidential candidate Hillary Clinton expressed disdain for the BDS movement and vowed to fight against BDS at every opportunity during the presidential election (Wofford). Despite some tepid criticism of Israel and hopes that he would do more to hold Israel accountable early in his presidency, Barack Obama also demonstrated his support for Israel above the Palestinians on many occasions, speaking before AIPAC and negotiating the largest military aid package for Israel in US history (Kahl; Spetalnick). Other prominent Democratic politicians have also criticized BDS, expressed support for Israel, and even co-sponsored anti-BDS legislation like S.720, the US Senate’s Israel anti-Boycott Act, including Ben Cardin, Chuck Schumer, and former Senator Claire McCaskill, despite the ACLU’s position that the bill violates the First Amendment (Cardin; Hauss). Even left-leaning liberals like Bernie Sanders, even though he has been increasingly critical of Israeli policies and the Netanyahu government in recent years, have criticized BDS and the UN for unfairly singling out Israel (Brown). Some Israel critics have argued that mainstream Democratic support for Israel, especially in recent years, is often tied to the influence of AIPAC and a

handful of top Democratic donors with strong pro-Israel views, including Haim Saban, who contribute large sums to many Democratic politicians, including \$15 million to Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign (Bruck; "Haim Saban"; Emmons). Considering that the US political campaign system is tied to the ability to fundraise and attract donations, small numbers of large donors can have outsized influence over politicians' positions, which in turn may promote support for Israel among mainstream Democrats—support that is reinforced when well-known politicians like Obama and Clinton repeat pro-Israel framing.

As Republican support for Israel has increased during the Trump era, however, Democratic attitudes toward Israel are worsening, perhaps partly in response to Trump and partly thanks to the success of pro-BDS framing. Recent polls indicate increasing support among Democrats for Palestinians and decreasing support for Israel (Nathan-Kazis, "Report"; "Republicans and Democrats"; Tibon; Telhami, "Americans Are"). For example, an October 2019 University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll by Shibly Telhami at the Brookings Institution's Center for Middle East Policy found that American audiences' attitudes toward BDS were heavily dependent on party affiliation, with the vast majority of Democratic respondents reporting being neutral or supportive of BDS with only 15% of Democrats opposing it, with the reverse findings for Republicans (76% opposed and only 20% supportive or neutral) (Telhami, "American Attitudes"). This same poll also found that 77% of Democratic respondents who had previously heard of BDS agreed with the following statement: "BDS is a legitimate, peaceful way of opposing Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. Inspired by the South African anti-apartheid movement, BDS urges action to pressure Israel to comply with international law. Opposing Israeli policy does not equal anti-Semitism" (Telhami, "American Attitudes"). This poll further found that state and federal efforts to implement anti-BDS legislation are not

representative of American public opinion. Wide majorities among all respondents, including 62% of Republicans and 80% of Democrats (and 72% overall) were opposed to anti-BDS legislation and instead agreed with this statement: “We should OPPOSE laws that penalize people who boycott Israel because these laws infringe on the Constitutional right to free speech and peaceful protest” (Telhami, “American Attitudes”). While it is impossible to attribute the precise causes of these shifts in public opinion, as liberals and Democrats express more sympathy with Palestinians and less with Israel, and as support for BDS—or at least the right to boycott Israel—increases despite pro-Israel framing against BDS, then it becomes more likely that liberal audiences will increasingly become more receptive to pro-BDS framing as well.

The Role of Transference, Belatedness, and Affect

While pro-BDS rhetorical moves and framing strategies often resonate with Jews and non-Jews who highly value social and racial justice and who see Jewish history as evidence for why oppression of anyone should never be tolerated, many liberal Zionists may be put off by the *doxa* of BDS as antisemitic and therefore suspicious of any calls for Palestinian rights, and especially those that do not definitively embrace the necessity of Jewish self-determination in the form of a two-state solution. Abraham argues that even when rhetors advocating for Palestinian rights take care to avoid and denounce antisemitic discourse, sometimes criticism of Israel can lead some audiences to assume nefarious and antisemitic intent, even when there is none (Abraham, “Reluctant Rhetoricians” 45). Abraham further argues that this conflation of criticism of Israel with antisemitism at least partly results from the effects of transference, belatedness, and affect, which Abraham argues are “applicable to understanding the hidden energies and psychological forces at work in our argumentative dynamics about the Israel-Palestine conflict” (Abraham, “Reluctant Rhetoricians” 37-38). Related to Abraham’s argument, Bawarshi argues

that affective responses to discussions of Palestine/Israel can lead to what he calls “uptake memory”: “Uptakes have memories in the sense that they are learned recognitions and inclinations that, over time and through ideological reproduction, become habitual. Our uptake memory is what we bring to a rhetorical encounter, and it is what helps us select from, define, and make sense of that encounter” (13). Related to Bawarshi’s concept of the rhetorical obstacle posed by “uptake” memories, Abraham further explains how transference, belatedness and affect can influence how many people, including Jews and some non-Jews as well, to reflexively reach back to distant history when discussing present realities: “When one speaks of Jewish History, the Jewish People, or Jewish suffering, there is a tendency to lump a good bit of history together,” which “enables a conflation of memory, whereby supposed threats to Jewish memory in the present seemingly enable one to reach for events from the past, as part of an effort to suture together. . . a rather fragmented history” (Abraham, “Reluctant Rhetoricians” 35). Frank echoes Abraham and Bawarshi when he describes how discussions of Palestine/Israel often get sidetracked “by traumas expressed in transhistoric terms. . . The difference between the past and present is collapsed, and no critical space is allowed between the historic trauma and the present” (Frank 133-134). Thus, pro-BDS discourse critical of Israeli policy may end up triggering uptake memory even when pro-BDS rhetors take care to denounce antisemitism and avoid demonizing Israel through their language choices.

Abraham explains how this rhetorical and psychological process can lead to flawed perceptions of antisemitism: “If one suggests that Israel has engaged in immoral or illegal conduct in its dealings with the Palestinians, due to this affective dimension whereby to criticize Israel is to somehow criticize the Jewish people, one is likely to be constructed as issuing an indictment of Jews, even if one goes to great lengths to insist that this is not what one is doing”

(Abraham, “Reluctant Rhetoricians” 45). Abraham thus explains not only how the *doxa* of BDS as antisemitic functions as a rhetorical obstacle for BDS activists to overcome, but he also provides some insight into how this *doxa* came to be in the first place: because many supporters of Israel (including but not only Jews) reflexively assume that any harsh criticism of Israel may be motivated by antisemitism, and so therefore the BDS movement, which focuses its criticism on Israel, must also be motivated by antisemitism.

The effects of transference, affect, and belatedness described by Abraham may also demonstrate one possible reason why so many Israel supporters and liberal Zionists argue that the “right of return” for Palestinian refugees would necessarily mean the “destruction” of Israel and the end of Jewish self-determination (Reut Institute, “Building a Political” 13-14; Rosenfeld; StandWithUs). Abraham explains how many BDS critics perceive calls for the “right of return” as attacks on Israel’s existence that are therefore antisemitic:

Since the claims these Palestinian refugees make upon Israel involve providing redress for dispossession and ultimately a return to Israel, which would disturb Israel’s demography as a Jewish state, these claims are often characterized as threatening Israel’s existence. In other words, any political action or statement that makes a gesture toward disturbing Israel’s Jewish character seems to become configured—by definition—as anti-Semitic. (Abraham, “Reluctant Rhetoricians” 41)

Another reason that discussions of refugee rights and the right of return generate so much controversy and affective uptakes among audiences sympathetic to Israel is that many people assume that the right of return would mean millions of Palestinian refugees all returning to Israel at once. Surveys of Palestinian refugees, however, suggest that when given a choice of returning to Israel, a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, or a third country, less than half a

million choose Israel, which suggests that if the “right of return” were implemented, it would still leave Israel with a larger Jewish majority than the Jewish state had at the time of the 1947 UN partition plan before 700,000 Palestinians were expelled³¹ (Harms and Ferry 94-102; Morris 184, 222-259; Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, “Results”).

In addition to fears of the right of return, another related belief that serves as an obstacle to the potential resonance of pro-BDS discourse is the view that anti-Zionism is inherently antisemitic for unfairly singling out the Jewish people as the only people not deserving of the right of self-determination (Reut Institute; StandWithUs; *The New Anti-Semites*). While most Israel supporters see Zionism as the abstract right of the Jewish people to self-determination (with no mention of Palestinians), most Palestinians and BDS activists see Zionism as a settler-colonial movement that ethnically cleansed the indigenous Palestinians to create a state that continues to privilege Jews and oppress Palestinians. Because these two opposing views of Zionism are so different, with Israel’s supporters viewing Zionism as an abstract idea while many Palestinians and BDS activists view Zionism in terms of its material consequences, it can lead to many misunderstandings in discussions of Palestine/Israel—misunderstandings that can also trigger affective reactions and “uptake memories” that import the history of antisemitism and Jewish victimhood into the discussion of a nationalist political ideology (Zionism) and its concurrent policies (Abraham, “Conclusion,” “Recognizing,” “Reluctant”; Bawarshi).

Ways BDS Discourse Could Become More Resonant With a Wider Audience

The BDS movement’s framing and rhetorical strategies seem to resonate with the values and beliefs of many social justice-focused audiences, and the BDS movement has made notable achievements in recent years, including several high profile endorsements of BDS from

³¹ The 1947 UN Partition Plan allotted the Jewish state approximately 55% of the land of Mandate Palestine, which would have included a population that was 45% Palestinian Arab (Morris 184, 252).

university student governments, cancellations by musical performers, and the loss of corporate partnerships, etc. (Barghouti, *Boycott* 19-31; “Impact”). However, pro-BDS framing also continues to face rhetorical obstacles and counterframing from supporters of Israel who regularly accuse the BDS movement of being antisemitic for targeting Israel and for promoting the “right of return.” The persistence of the *doxa* of BDS as antisemitic can undermine the resonance of BDS framing for mainstream audiences who are not already committed to intersectional social and racial justice movements, including those in the mass media. Therefore, pro-BDS rhetorical framing strategies—both official and vernacular—may become more resonant with these audiences if they can more effectively address the issue of antisemitism and avoid triggering uptake memories based on affect, belatedness, and transference (Abraham, “Reluctant Rhetoricians”; Bawarshi). Expecting pro-BDS activists to devote a large portion of their time and effort to directly addressing and rebutting the charge of antisemitism, while there is no guarantee that doing so would prevent future charges (as can be seen in the antisemitism debate around Corbyn’s Labour party in the UK and the repeated accusations against Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib in the US), would be unrealistic. Pro-BDS activist-rhetors could, however, consider adjusting their discourse and responses to engage more productively with potential supporters and wider audiences who are still sensitive to antisemitism.

For example, contemporary antisemitism scholar David Hirsh admits that most of the antisemitic or borderline antisemitic statements that come from leftist supporters of Palestinian rights and BDS are probably inadvertent and born more of ignorance of the nature of antisemitic discourse rather than any conscious underlying Jew-hatred (Hirsh, “Anti-Zionism” 15, 70-71). Thus, one step that pro-BDS activists could take is to be sure they are informed and educated enough about antisemitic discourse to recognize it when they encounter it, so they can more

quickly and effectively push back against it. Many pro-BDS rhetors already do this on a regular basis, as I have observed in my research, but there may be instances in which some rank-and-file BDS activists or supporters miss opportunities to respond and thus may appear to tolerate antisemitic discourse. Hirsh also argues that the common tendency for most claims of antisemitism against pro-Palestinian or pro-BDS activists to be automatically attributed to deliberate bad-faith attempts to smear activists and silence all criticism of Israel, a phenomenon he refers to as the “Livingstone Formulation” (named after former London mayor Ken Livingstone), also serves to block potentially important discussions about Palestine/Israel and the lingering effects of antisemitism (Hirsh, “Anti-Zionism” 54-62, 141-142).

On the other hand, *some* claims of antisemitism against the BDS movement and other Palestinian solidarity activists are most likely made in order to circumvent legitimate discussions and criticisms of Israeli policy, especially when originating from organizations whose primary purpose is public relations on behalf of Israel (also known as “hasbara”) (Aked, *The Undeniable*; Bazian; *The Occupation of the American Mind*; “Watch the Film”). It is also likely, however, that many other claims of antisemitism arise from real fears based on uptakes triggered through transference, belatedness, and affect rooted in conflating the historical persecution of Jews with contemporary political realities. Thus, some antisemitism charges, especially those coming from Jewish individuals, may be misplaced or inaccurate but yet come from a place of genuine fear rather than a bad faith attempt to stifle criticism of Israel.

It is also true that some charges of antisemitism against BDS supporters are legitimate, which is also evidenced by the fact that BDS activists themselves have repeatedly denounced expressions of antisemitism or antisemitic individuals who profess support for Palestinian rights or BDS, including in one case I witnessed during my IAW research (discussed in Chapter 5) and

in many other cases in which BDS leaders and pro-BDS organizations have publicly denounced antisemitism or instances of antisemitic discourse, including statements made by supporters of BDS or Palestinian rights (@AliAbunimah; Abunimah, “A Final Word,” “Palestinian Writers”; Abunimah and Ibish; Barghouti, *Boycott* 33; Dann; Dysch; “Granting No Quarter”; Horowitz; “Letter”; Pessah; Salaita, “Condemnation”; Serhan; Palestinian BDS National Committee, “Palestinian BDS”; Wolf).

Therefore, it may be more effective and avoid triggering further affective uptakes if pro-BDS activist-rhetors were to respond to charges of antisemitism with more empathetic acknowledgments of Jewish fears of antisemitism along with careful counterframing, rather than resorting automatically to defensive assertions of bad-faith intent. This strategy is also similar to recommendations from pro-Israel advocates and public relations specialists, including Frank Luntz’s *The Israel Project’s 2009 Global Language Dictionary*, suggesting that empathetic expressions of sorrow for Palestinian deaths followed by counterframing is the most effective way for Israel advocates to respond to charges of Israeli human rights violations and war crimes rather than angry defensive reactions (Luntz 4; *The Occupation of the American Mind*). For example, even if there were no antisemitic intent behind a pro-BDS activist-rhetor’s statement, that does not necessarily prevent some audience members from experiencing real feelings of fear based on uptake memory connected to historical traumas. By first recognizing and acknowledging the impact of historical trauma, pro-BDS rhetors may be able to coax some audiences to be more open-minded to subsequent rhetorical framing strategies, which may also help with counterframing against the *doxa* that BDS is antisemitic.

Several other scholars of antisemitism and Palestine/Israel discourse have made similar arguments that acknowledging Jewish trauma in the context of Palestine/Israel could go a long

way toward promoting the acceptance of the Palestinian narrative of suffering and thus also encouraging support for Palestinian rights (Klug, “The Question”; Omer, “It’s Nothing”; Yi and Phillips). This strategy also echoes Krista Ratcliffe’s calls for “rhetorical listening,” which she defines as “a stance of openness that a person may choose to assume in relation to any person, text, or culture,” including in the context of cross-cultural conversations (1). For example, Atalia Omer argues that when Palestinian solidarity activists use a human rights framework that ignores Jewish history, it “enables a de-contextualised attitude that erases the pertinence of recognising and negotiating the boundaries and memories of (all) identities involved in conflict zones” (Omer, “It’s Nothing” 513-514). Similarly, antisemitism scholar Brian Klug also suggests that changes in the tone, word choice, and symbol use in discussions of Palestine/Israel can help avoid accusations of antisemitism against Palestinian solidarity activists (Klug, “The Question,” “What Do We Mean” 12-13). Klug suggests that not only is it important to acknowledge Jewish history and antisemitism as relevant to the birth of Zionism, but that criticisms of Israel are more effective and less likely to trigger fears of antisemitism when speakers “avoid words and images that conjure up the negative stereotype of ‘the Jew’ and project it onto Israel or onto Jews in general”; he also suggests that is more productive for both sides to avoid including Nazi and Holocaust analogies in discussions of Palestine/Israel (Klug, “The Question”).

And just as both Abraham and Bawarshi cite Ratcliffe’s concept of “rhetorical listening,” so too could a form of “rhetorical listening” be useful for BDS activist-rhetors. Listening to the other side in order to understand another perspective does not imply that Palestinians or BDS activists should change their demands for justice or give up any of their rights. Rather, if pro-BDS activists use rhetorical listening and expressions of empathy in discussions with BDS critics, then they may find that these critics and other audiences observing such exchanges may

be more likely to accept pro-BDS frames as well—or it could at least help to undermine some of the fierce resistance to BDS. If BDS activist-rhetors applied more rhetorical listening toward good-faith BDS skeptics, they could better avoid triggering affective uptake memories in some audiences by acknowledging Jewish trauma, correcting misunderstandings about BDS, and addressing the discrepant definitions of Zionism used by BDS activists and Israel advocates. For example, Israel’s supporters usually define Zionism innocuously as a movement for Jewish self-determination, while the definition held by most Palestinians and BDS activists is that Zionism is a discriminatory settler-colonial project. Thus, each side selects only the parts of Zionist ideology and history that support one side’s perspective while ignoring other possible meanings and experiences. Instead, it may be more productive—for both BDS activists and Israel’s supporters—to acknowledge Zreik’s point that Zionism and Israel can be viewed as *both* a liberation movement for self-determination for Jews fleeing persecution *and* a discriminatory settler-colonial movement at the same time (Zreik 358-359). In some contexts, it could also be helpful to explain the long history of Jewish anti- and non-Zionism dating back to the beginning of the Zionist movement, including among Jewish Bundist socialists in Europe and elsewhere (Butler, *Parting*; Rabkin; “Protest”; Omer, *Days of Awe* 5; Rose).

BDS activists need not accept the Zionist narrative and framing wholesale in order to acknowledge the role of antisemitism in the history of Zionism. For example, in several pro-BDS texts I studied, both official and vernacular BDS movement activist-rhetors acknowledge the history of Jewish persecution in Europe and the horrors of the Holocaust (Abunimah, “Palestinian Writers”; Barghouti, *Boycott* 68, 82, 89; Palestinian BDS National Committee, “Remembering”). However, the official BDS movement website’s “What is BDS?” section on “Israeli Settler Colonialism and Apartheid,” does not mention antisemitic persecution in Europe

as an impetus for the Zionist movement in Europe (“Israeli Settler”). Overlooking this primary motivator for Zionism could be counterproductive to the resonance of pro-BDS discourse for wider audiences. Pro-BDS activists can still argue, as many Palestinians and anti-Zionist Jews and others have done for many years, that Palestinians do not deserve to suffer and be denied human rights and self-determination because of European antisemitic persecution in which they played no role (Barghouti, *Boycott* 68; Harms and Ferry 83; Said, “Zionism” 17-18, 23-29; Makdisi 287). If BDS activist-rhetors were to more consistently acknowledge Jewish history, it could also serve as counterframing for charges of antisemitism against the BDS movement and encourage wider audiences, including more Israeli and American Jews and non-Jews, to acknowledge the Palestinian narrative and framing and be persuaded to support BDS and Palestinian solidarity.

Many pro-BDS activist-rhetors already often use these strategies, but it’s possible that a stronger focus on some of these issues could improve the resonance of BDS movement framing for wider audiences, especially considering the unique rhetorical challenges pro-BDS rhetors face. For example, Omar Barghouti himself has argued repeatedly that BDS activists should be careful with their language use and avoid antisemitic discourse in support of Palestinian rights (Barghouti, *Boycott* 33, “Two Degrees” 144; “Granting No Quarter”). Barghouti’s discussion of antisemitism in JVP’s book, *On Antisemitism*, explains his view on how to address antisemitism in relation to the BDS movement for Palestinian rights:

Sometimes associating Israel with stereotypical attributes that are associated with Jews is antisemitic. Sometimes it may not be. Regardless, and given the hurt that verging on antisemitic language causes to Jewish communities, we who advocate for Palestinian rights must be quite vigilant about using such language and must try our best to adhere to

the most accurate, non-emotive description of the facts as possible. (Barghouti, “Two Degrees” 144)

Barghouti later goes on to argue, as he does on many other occasions as well, that, “Antisemitism has no place in the worldwide Palestine solidarity movement, including BDS. This is a principled position and there can be no compromise over it” (“Two Degrees” 151). As mentioned earlier, the first step in ensuring that antisemitism doesn’t appear in pro-BDS discourse is for BDS activists to educate each other on what constitutes antisemitic discourse so they can recognize it when they see it, as suggested by both Hirsh and Klug. Education is also important because many Americans, especially non-Jews, are often unaware of the nature and content of antisemitic discourse (Hirsh).

Once an activist is able to recognize when harsh criticism of Israel crosses the line into antisemitism, it can become tricky, however, for BDS movement leaders and more rank-and-file activists to determine when an antisemitic or borderline antisemitic statement is worth addressing. It would be impossible to respond to every antisemitic statements from all fringe supporters of Palestinian rights, especially when extremist views on many issues are easy to find online (which is also the case among Israel’s supporters). Such an unrealistic expectation for BDS leaders to respond to all instances of antisemitic speech would also not as readily be applied to the leaders of other social or political movements. Demanding that BDS leaders or Palestinians repeatedly denounce antisemitism also echoes the Islamophobic demand for Muslims to denounce terrorism. Thus, BDS leaders and activists must continue to constantly and carefully navigate this sticky rhetorical ecology to avoid antisemitic discourse while focusing their rhetorical framing strategies and efforts on arguing for Palestinian rights and against continuing Israeli oppression.

Another way that BDS movement activists could potentially make their rhetorical framing strategies more resonant with a wider liberal audience is by adding more personal testimonies from Palestinians to elicit empathy and raise awareness about the discrimination and hardships Palestinians face. Using personal narrative and testimony, including some emotional appeal, is common practice in many other human rights campaigns (Brysk; Keck and Sikkink). While I found a few examples of emotional personal testimonies in both official and vernacular pro-BDS discourse, such examples were rare, and instead, much pro-BDS discourse seemed to follow Barghouti's reasoning that one way to avoid triggering fears of antisemitism in Jewish audiences is to use mostly *logos* and less *pathos* to present the "most accurate, non-emotive description of the facts as possible (Barghouti, "Two Degrees" 144). It would be possible, however, to present real stories of Palestinian struggles and suffering without concurrently demonizing Israelis in an antisemitic way. And if Jewish fears of antisemitism were acknowledged more openly as well, such personal stories may help wider audiences connect and empathize with Palestinians in a way dry "non-emotive" facts about international law may not.

Because the "right of return" is the most controversial aspect of the BDS call and the part that leads many BDS critics and supporters of Israel to believe that BDS is antisemitic and seeks to "destroy" Israel, it may also be helpful for pro-BDS activists to include more detailed explanations about the basis for this right, historical precedent, and various possible practical plans for carrying it out. My analysis demonstrated the prevalence of the *right of return* frame in much pro-BDS discourse, including in the 2005 BDS Call itself, and this "right" was framed as being based in international law and originating in response to Israel's *ethnic cleansing* of Palestinians during the Nakba. The official and vernacular pro-BDS texts I analyzed, however, did not include significant discussion of how Palestinians or the BDS movement envision return

in a practical sense. This lack of explanation allows critics of BDS to claim—without a clear and consistent response from the BDS movement—that the right of return seeks to overwhelm and “destroy” Israel through the return of seven million Palestinian refugees to Israel all at once.

In a few recent public speaking engagements, Barghouti has addressed the right of return more clearly, explaining to an audience at the non-Zionist Tzedek Chicago synagogue that international law gives all refugees everywhere the same right to return and reparations as Palestinians also have (“BDS and Liberation”). During this talk³², he explains that the BDS movement does not outline the parameters of a just return because it is “beyond our mandate,” and he further explains that the UN developed parameters for return in former Yugoslavia that would not cause harm to people, emphasizing that any enactment of the Palestinian right of return should try to avoid harm to anyone, thus inferring that the right of return should not cause undue harm to those Israeli Jews currently living in Israel (“BDS and Liberation”). Though Barghouti addresses some aspects of how the BDS movement envisions the right of return, more in-depth explanations may help skeptical audiences better understand the Palestinian perspective. One example of research on the right of return that could be useful for pro-BDS activists but which I did not encounter during my analysis of pro-BDS texts is the work of Palestinian scholar, Salman Abu Sitta. In his careful research of Israeli maps, Abu Sitta identifies patterns of population density and concludes that many sites of emptied or destroyed Palestinian villages inside of Israel remain unoccupied and the majority of land unused, thus suggesting there is

³² In April of 2019, Omar Barghouti was scheduled to go on a speaking tour of several universities and organizations in the United States and also attend his daughter’s wedding, but the US government denied his entry as he was about to board a plane at Ben Gurion airport. Even though he held a valid visa, US officials informed him that his visa had been revoked for a vague immigration matter. Barghouti had previously traveled to the US on multiple occasions, so it is unclear why his visa was revoked this time, and a US State Department spokesperson denied that revoking his visa was based on his political views, but no further explanation was offered. Barghouti participated in the speaking tour anyway via videoconferencing, but he missed his daughter’s wedding (“Denied Entry”; Kilani; Specia).

significant space within Israel to accommodate returning Palestinian refugees if there were political will to do so. Ibish and Abunimah also published research on the basis in international law for the right of return and various plans for return used in other conflicts that could be applied to the case of Palestine/Israel and which could also serve as a useful resource for pro-BDS activists.

Examining pro-BDS framing regarding the *right of return* is also useful because the BDS movement emphasis on this right, despite the controversy it generates among supporters of Israel, reveals Palestinians' own priorities. This is important because if future peace negotiations and reconciliation are ever to succeed, Palestinians' actual priorities and grievances must be addressed realistically and in a way that is perceived as just and fair by most stakeholders. For example, in 2000, the Second Intifada broke out not long after failed peace negotiations between Ehud Barak and Yassar Arafat, and it has been widely reported that the right of return was a major sticking point between the two and a right which Arafat was not willing to relinquish to Israel's satisfaction because a majority of Palestinians believe that the refugees have a right to return as stipulated in UN Resolution 194 (Ibish and Abunimah; Malley; Thrall, *The Only Language* 64-66, 182). Israel and its supporters may not be happy with the Palestinians' focus on the right of return because they fear that it will erode the Jewish demographic majority in Israel, but any peace agreement will need to account for the attitudes of the majority of the Palestinian people rather than just a handful of unelected leaders. The 2018 and 2019 Great Marches of Return in Gaza also reveal the Palestinians' strong belief in their right to return. Even if many Palestinians would be willing to make some compromises on the right of return and how it is implemented, Israelis and their US supporters must realize that Palestinians expect more than a small token regarding the right of return. The fact that a large percentage of the Palestinian

people still live in exile, many remaining in refugee camps in Gaza and elsewhere—and the fact that they have never received compensation or even an admission of culpability from Israel—is a significant factor that contributes to ongoing conflict and the lack of a comprehensive peace accord. Thus, another way this rhetorical frame analysis of pro-BDS discourse is useful is by revealing that pro-BDS framing that aligns with Palestinians' values, beliefs, worldview, and priorities regarding their rights, which have often been previously overlooked and denied. This denial of Palestinian rights continues to be a major underlying cause of ongoing oppression and conflict, and future peace negotiators must take the right of return seriously or a just and sustainable peace will likely remain elusive.

What Next for BDS?

Despite the fact that rhetorical obstacles to pro-BDS discourse still sometimes function to undermine the wider acceptance of pro-BDS framing strategies, especially the *doxa* that BDS is antisemitic and persistent Islamophobic and anti-Palestinian attitudes, both anecdotal and empirical evidence found in my research suggests that the BDS movement and pro-BDS framing are gaining wider support even as pro-Israel advocates and the Israeli government are spending increasing amounts of time, money, and effort at combatting BDS. It even seems that the more pro-Israel advocates fight against BDS, the more their efforts only backfire and bring more attention to BDS movement framing. The BDS movement and use of BDS tactics continue to grow on college campuses and among transnational networks of social and racial justice activists in the US and around the world despite anti-BDS blacklists like the websites of Canary Mission and the AMCHA Initiative, pressure on college administrators to not hire or promote academic advocates for BDS and Palestinian rights, and both successful and unsuccessful attempts to crack down on BDS activism and push for anti-BDS legislation in the US. Because of the popularity of

intersectionality and joint struggle on the left, the growth of other social and racial justice movements may also continue to spur the growth of the BDS movement.

Just as several other recent social movements have sprung up suddenly and succeeded in changing the discourse and sometimes gaining subsequent tangible victories or policy changes, including Black Lives Matter, #MeToo, and others, the BDS movement could also experience an unpredictable burst of growth and success in the near future. The Gaza Great Return Marches in 2018 seemed to signal a change in media coverage and discourse around Palestine/Israel as thousands of unarmed Palestinian protestors were shot by Israeli snipers as they protested for their right to return and an end to the inhumane siege of Gaza. During these events, Palestinian grassroots activists also succeeded in raising awareness about the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, which led dozens of liberal Democratic members of Congress to call on the Trump administration and Israel to address this issue (Abunimah, “70 Members”). During the Great Return March in 2018, Senator Bernie Sanders also released a video featuring Palestinians in Gaza describing the everyday hardships they face, which can be seen as one of the most pro-Palestinian messages ever publicly espoused by a sitting US senator, which also garnered hundreds of thousands of views on Twitter (Beinart, “Bernie Sanders”; @SenatorSanders; Senator Bernie Sanders). Sanders’ first campaign video of the 2020 US presidential primary also featured one of his surrogates, antiracist activist Shaun King, praising Sanders for denouncing the “apartheid-like” conditions faced by Palestinians (“Bernie Sanders Posts”). Even though Sanders does not support BDS and has defended Israel’s actions at times, these examples of Israel criticism and calls to acknowledge Palestinian rights—combined with recent public opinion polls in the US—demonstrate decreasing support for Israel and growing support for Palestinians, especially among Democrats, liberals, and younger Americans (Telhami,

“Americans Are,” “American Attitudes”; Nathan-Kazis, “Report”; “Republicans and Democrats”; Tibon). The close alliance between the Trump administration and the right-wing Netanyahu government in Israel may only exacerbate this divide and further erode the historical “bipartisan consensus” that has previously dominated US foreign policy toward Israel.

And finally, the growth and ultimate future success of the BDS movement and its framing strategies may end up happening less as a result of pro-BDS rhetorical moves and more from the increasingly anti-democratic and repressive actions of Israel and its advocates. Many recent policies and laws in both Israel and the US, some seeking to counter the influence of BDS, seem to have backfired and done more to cause a backlash against Israel. For example, the recent so-called Israeli “Nation-State Bill” passed by the Knesset in July of 2018 has led many supporters of Israel, including both liberal and centrist Zionists, to decry the erosion of Israeli democracy and the shift toward official apartheid (Green, Emma “Israel’s Nation-State Law”). Even staunch Israel supporter and advocate Alan Dershowitz bemoaned this new bill and argued that it would only make it harder to defend Israel’s actions and policies and hurt relations with US Jews (“Exclusive”). In another surprising development, well-known liberal Zionist Israel advocate and dual Israeli-US citizen, Natalie Portman, adopted a BDS tactic, despite her criticisms of the BDS movement, and refused to come to Israel to accept the Genesis Prize in protest over the Netanyahu government’s repression of Palestinian demonstrators during the 2018 Gaza Great Return March (“Genesis Prize”). The apartheid analogy and frame also started appearing more prominently in the public sphere after the January 2020 release of the Trump administration’s *Peace to Prosperity* plan that proposes the annexation and division of significant parts of the West Bank, which has led to several prominent Israelis, Israeli human rights organizations, and other critics condemning the plan and comparing it to South African

apartheid and *bantustans* (“B’Tselem”; Levy; Sokatch; Thrall, “Trump’s Middle East”; “Trump’s Peace Sham”; *Peace to Prosperity*).

While some minor adjustments to pro-BDS rhetorical framing strategies could perhaps help overcome rhetorical obstacles that limit the resonance of pro-BDS framing for certain audiences, such as affective uptake memories triggered by fears of antisemitism, pro-BDS framing strategies may gain more widespread resonance even without changing anything. If intersectional social and racial justice movements continue to gain adherents, if younger Americans’ and Jews’ support for Israel and Zionism erodes further, and if Israel persists in pursuing increasingly anti-democratic policies (including the possible official annexation of the West Bank suggested by Trump’s 2020 *Peace to Prosperity* plan), then prior evidence suggests that support for the BDS movement could grow as more people are turned off by Israel’s increasingly anti-democratic behavior and harsh repression of Palestinians.

Applications for this Research

Hopefully, this research has shown not only how rhetorical frame analysis can be a productive methodology for studying pro-BDS discourse in particular but also how it can be used for examining the rhetorical moves and framing strategies of other social movements and their rhetorical artifacts. Combining rhetorical analysis with elements of sociological frame analysis can offer deeper insights into social movement rhetors’ worldviews and ideologies, revealing how they frame problems and solutions, promote identification and division, respond to rhetorical challenges and constraints, and how their framing strategies may or may not be resonant for different audiences and within shifting rhetorical ecologies. Rhetorical frame analysis can also be especially useful in the context of controversial issues and debates like

Palestine/Israel in which strong emotions combine with affective reactions and uptake memories to create unique rhetorical obstacles and challenges for social movement rhetors to overcome.

While rhetorical frame analysis is useful for studying pro-BDS discourse, it would also be productive for analyzing a variety of texts and discourses. For example, rhetorical frame analysis could also examine pro-Israel framing strategies and mass media frames about Palestine/Israel and BDS. Gamson, Wolfsfeld, and other scholars have studied mass media framing of the Palestine/Israel issue, and these studies have revealed not only common media frames but also have shown, in the case of Gamson et al., how media framing of Palestine/Israel has changed over time and to what degree average Americans have adopted these frames for understanding the situation at a given time. While many scholars that use frame analysis focus on textual analysis, some, including Gamson et al., use focus groups to gather data about the frames used by average people. Focus group studies or carefully crafted surveys of Americans' attitudes and preferred frames regarding the BDS movement and Palestine/Israel at different times could offer unique insights into how public opinion and pro-BDS frame resonance may be changing over time.

Rhetorical frame analysis could also be useful for analyzing the discourse of other past or present social movements. For example, the rhetorical frame analysis heuristic I developed here could also be productively applied to the discourses of Black Lives Matter, #MeToo, immigrants' rights movements, and other social movements, especially those that generate controversy, intense debates, and frequent misunderstandings and discursive backlash. Analyzing how social movements respond to some of this backlash through counterframing would be another application. For example, the frequent charges of antisemitism against BDS and the BDS movement's attempts to counter these may have some parallels to the way the women's rights

movement and feminism generally have often been construed as “anti-men” or how racial justice movements, including Black Lives Matter have been seen as inherently “anti-white” or “anti-police.” And while it is useful to combine analysis of both official and vernacular social movement discourse to get a more holistic picture of a social movement’s discourse, scholars could study these separately as well. Other techniques for analysis could also be added to this coding heuristic to highlight various aspects of the discourse, depending on the purpose of the analysis, including critical discourse analysis, or other elements of linguistic discourse analysis or rhetorical criticism.

In addition to some useful applications for my research, as with all limited studies, there are also a few shortcomings, including the limits of my corpora and the rhetors I chose to study and the lack of an in-depth comparison with mass media or pro-Israel framing. Even though this study analyzed the rhetorical moves and framing strategies of large corpora of both official and vernacular pro-BDS texts, any such study is inherently limited by the text selection. For example, because I chose to only collect texts from pro-BDS student groups at Washington D.C.-area universities during IAW events in 2017, I am unable to make broad generalizations about the rhetorical framing strategies of other pro-BDS students groups in other countries or regions of the US, which may be significantly different from those I studied. While I examined over 200 statements by the BNC and several of Barghouti’s texts, there remain many pro-BDS texts left out of my analysis, which is a limitation of any rhetorical study. Were a rhetorical scholar to compare framing strategies from early in the development of a social movement to that of later years, it would be a valuable way to determine and evaluate how social movement framing strategies change over time in response to shifting rhetorical ecologies. If larger corpora of BDS-

related texts were sponsored or housed by an institutional archive, then it could offer researchers a more accessible point of access for future research of BDS-related discourse.

Ultimately, pro-BDS activist rhetors—both movement leaders and more rank-and-file activists—do not have control over Israel’s actions or international and US support for Israel. The best that pro-BDS activists rhetors can hope for is to raise awareness of the Palestinian plight to hopefully shift the discourse toward acknowledging Palestinian suffering and the need to hold Israel accountable, especially among people in a position to enact changes in policy toward Israel. Pro-BDS rhetorical framing strategies already seem to be moving the needle toward support for Palestinians on many college campuses and among many social and racial justice advocates, but Palestinian and pro-BDS activist-rhetors also continue to face a strong backlash from Israel and its supporters, especially in the US. If the current trends of increasing support for Palestinians and criticism of Israel continue, as revealed by recent opinion polls, then younger and more liberal Americans who emphasize intersectionality could help push pro-BDS framing and support for Palestinian rights more into the mainstream discourse. This trend could, in turn, eventually lead to a tipping point that could have more practical effects in the realm of US and international policy toward Israel, and significant changes in policy could finally lead to a “South Africa moment” regarding Palestine/Israel. Whether and when this shift occurs will depend not only on the success or failure of pro-Israel efforts to counter BDS movement messaging and the effectiveness and resonance of the rhetorical framing strategies of pro-BDS activist-rhetors, but the future resonance and potential effects of pro-BDS discourse will also hinge on how events play out on the ground.

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APPENDIX

CORPORA FOR ANALYSIS

I have listed all of the sources I analyzed as part of my corpora of official and vernacular pro-BDS texts below. Mirroring the order I discuss my analysis of data in chapters 4 and 5, I list citations for BNC statements first, followed by Omar Barghouti's texts, and then citations for vernacular student texts analyzed at the end.

OFFICIAL BDS TEXTS:

Statements from the Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC):

The following official statements from the BNC posted to the BDS Movement website from 2008-2017 are listed chronologically with more recent statements from 2017 first and the oldest statements last (with 2005 BDS Call as the very last statement listed), which corresponds with the order the states are listed in the website's archive of BNC statements (found by searching for "BNC Statements" in the "News" search feature). All statements were originally accessed in the spring and summer of 2017.

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PhD, *Old Dominion University* (2020). Major: English. Emphases: Rhetoric, Writing, and Discourse Studies & Pedagogy

M.A., *Virginia Tech*, (2007). Major: English.

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“Social Media Rhetoric of the Transnational Palestinian-Led Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement.” *Social Media + Society*, vol. 2, no. 1, Jan. 2016, doi:10.1177/2056305116634367.

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