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2019

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Santa Barbara

Globalizing Local Resistance from Palestine to Ferguson:
Transnational Alliances and Activist Scholarship

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Master of Arts
in Global Studies

by

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June 2019

The thesis of Abire Hussein Sabbagh is approved.

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June 2019

Globalizing Local Resistance from Palestine to Ferguson:
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Abire Hussein Sabbagh

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

ABSTRACT

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Abire Hussein Sabbagh

This project raises the following questions: How are solidarity networks/transnational alliances activated, and what do they inspire? Are there similarities in modes of domination and subordination that catalyze resistance against state sanctioned violence? What does the specific moment of solidarity between Ferguson (Black communities in the US) and Gaza (Palestinians) in 2014 reveal about the potential of solidarity networks in the 21st century? The aim of this thesis is to contextualize the Palestinian struggle, and it's similarities with the Black struggle/reality in the US, which requires the analysis of colonial violence, both political and epistemic, with a centrality of racialization and its symbolic images. This project examines the continuities and discontinuities between Palestinian resistance to the current Israeli occupation and the movement against police brutality that took over the streets of Ferguson, Missouri. What the comparative approach offers is the parallel relationship that both communities hold in relation to the state and state-sanctioned violence: the police in the United States, and the Israeli military in Palestine. I have chosen to analyze these two movements because both are working against states that repress political, social, and economic rights, albeit in, at times, different ways. It is through their endeavors that the two movements expose how the USA and Israel, via similar agents and mechanisms, achieve their goals of domination and global hegemony. In addition, I will highlight and deconstruct the initiatives of support and solidarity that occur between the Palestinian and Black

communities, and analyze if such relationships act as an inspiration for other movements struggling for collective liberation and decolonization from oppressive states.

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<u>**Introduction**</u>:

If the olive trees knew the hands that planted them, their oil would become tears.

- Mahmoud Darwish

I begin my work with the above quote not only because it is written by the famous

and brilliant Palestinian poet, Mahmoud Darwish, whose persona and poetry stands to reflect

Palestinian struggle and resistance, but also because, through reference to the olive trees, it

symbolically exemplifies the pain and trauma that Palestine has experienced. The olive tree is

also a representation of prosperity and livelihood because Palestinian soil and land nurtures

olive trees better than any other place in the world, making it a symbol of Palestinian

authenticity, uniqueness, and pride. It allows for the production and distribution of olives and

olive oil, which becomes a commercial commodity and means of making money for survival.

Due to this rich significance, the olive tree has played an involuntary and expedient role in

the occupation of Palestine[1]. The Israeli government has used olive trees as a way to enact

violence upon Palestine, both literally and figuratively. Through the symbolic and actual

destruction and cutting down of olive trees across Palestine, the Israeli state practices ad hoc

violence that furthers it's de facto apartheid rule over Palestinian land and people. The

violence enacted towards olive trees becomes a metaphor for the violence enacted against

Palestinian life and prosperity. In all these ways, destruction of olive trees represents settler

colonial rule in all its capacities: physical, mental, social, and economic domination.

On the other hand, the olive tree also attracts attention because is has emerged as a

symbol of resilience against settler colonialism. Palestinians have taken control of the

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[1] Ross, *Stone Men*, pg 37

symbol, transforming it into a narrative of resistance and resilience. With their constant

appreciation for and protection of the olive tree, whether verbally or artistically, Palestinians

continue to hold agency over their land and their existence as a whole; through its

embodiment, the olive tree is transformed from being a symbol of oppression to a symbol of

resilience.

Similar to the olive tree, other highly charged iconic symbols become central to the

articulation of transnational solidarities. For example, as will be discussed in further detail in

the coming chapters, tear gas and tweets emerge as tools for the formation of movements and

solidarity building that become new symbols of twenty first century activism. My thesis

tracks the history and present day manifestation of alliances between two differently situated

circumstances of settler colonialisms, which I will define as a type of colonialism that seeks

to displace, replace, and/or erase the original inhabitants of a land, where we can see similar

themes and use of symbolisms in movements of resistance and struggle. Specifically, I am

exploring the coalition building and transnational alliances between Palestinians and Black

communities in the United States. The two communities connect through symbols of

resistance, and use them to share tactics on how to resist against similar modes of violence

enacted on them by their respective state: Israel's violence on Palestinians and the United

State's violence on Black people.

To draw from Steven Salaita's[2] understanding of the similarities between the United

States and Israel, it is imperative to understand that there is a deeper, structural connection

between the United States' and Israel's empires and settlements that are articulated through

visions of white supremacy, Zionism, and manifest destiny. Salaita names this a "dialectical

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[2] Salaita, *Speaking of Indigenous Politics*, pg 262-264

interchange" to emphasize that what we are referring to is more than just a similarity between two states, but rather it is the relationality of deliberate systemic and structural dominance and control of one group of people over another; the former being an imagined and socially constructed identity of whiteness, while the latter is a group of people and community that has existed and thrived before the inception of the former (Israelis over Palestinians, "Americans" over Native Americans or Africans). This connection goes beyond geopolitical interests to expand to the ways in which each nation imagines itself in relation to each other; if one remains strong and powerful, then so does the other, and vice versa. Since the modes of domination of each community are deeply relational, then we can also understand the modes of resistance against them to inherently be relational and rely on one another for the liberation of all. We are now looking at a new substantial relationship, one between communities who are subjected to structures of state sanctioned violence that themselves speak to and rely on each other. Like their oppressors, these communities begin to speak to and rely on each other, producing what I would like to call an epistemology of struggle and liberation that is inspired by legacies of acts of deliberate dissonance, and allow for a reclamation of agency and self-reclamation.

In 2014, the struggles faced by communities in Palestine and Black communities in the US converged as a result of the violent spectacles of both Operation Protective Edge and the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. Operation Protective Edge, also known as the 2014 Gaza War, was a military operation launched by Israel on July 8, 2014 due to the kidnapping of 3 Israeli teeangers by Hamas members, resulting in a seven-week attack on Gaza (with retaliation by Hamas on Israel as well) causing the deaths of thousands of people, the overwhelming majority of them Gazan civilians. Months later, on the 9th of August, 2014

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eighteen-year-old Black teenager Michael Brown was shot and killed by a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri. People began to gather at the scene of where Michael's body was left, creating naturally the mobilization of a mass of people that quickly turned into demonstrations against the shooting of the teenager, which finally transformed into larger riots and violent confrontations with police. Michael's death followed those of Eric Garner (two weeks prior), Oscar Grant (one year prior), and Trayvon Martin (two years prior), adding to the mourning of Black people in the United States, and further fueling anger against the system causing this injustice. It is important to focus on these moments of 2014 because unlike previous eras of international solidarity, something unique surfaced- perhaps due to the ability to communicate so quickly in space and time with the use of the internet and social media- revitalizing, redefining, and reshaping the scope of global community networks and transnational solidarity. Through innovative spatialities, contemporary activists, in their praxis, locate commonalities whose foundations are premised on state-structured oppression, racism, and militarism, to imagine and develop new global, decolonial sequences of resistance that are unapologetically rebellious in their nature. Tear gas and tweets emerge as two symbolisms of resistance in this specific case that showcase the diverse tactics that circulate in networks and then become the circuits of solidarity that a wider range of people- including activists and scholars -can engage in, albeit in different ways. This moment implores us to question if there are similarities in modes of domination and subordination that catalyze resistance, and if there are, whether or not they activate solidarity networks; we can take the question a step further by exploring the extent to which such networks exist between Palestinian and Black communities?

As observed by Joseph Massad and presented by Ali Abunimah, "Israeli/American politicians will refer to Israel as 'living in a tough neighborhood' where the Arabs are the 'violent blacks' and the Israelis are the 'nice white folks'". Tef Poe, a Ferguson based hip-hop artist who has been on the front lines of the Black Lives Matter movement in Ferguson and in creating international solidarity for the liberation of Black lives, makes a similar observation and connection in the more recent context of the Ferguson protests, where he states that "A Palestinian kid throws a rock at a tank, and instead of speaking out against the people who sent the tank to the village, we classify the villagers as the villains. A young black man or woman in Ferguson throws a water bottle at an armored vehicle, and suddenly they are in the wrong -- as if a line of soldiers with M16s isn't occupying a suburban neighborhood." His reflection bridges state-sanctioned violence with biopolitics by encouraging us to think widely about the structures and systems in place, and not blame the smaller scale individual acts of violence, when exploring acts and scales of violence - and who is allowed to use it against whom. The automatic depiction of Black or Palestinian people as violent and unsafe, and white Americans or Israelis as innocent and in need of protection translates beyond American borders to be used as a justification of Israeli colonial rule.

In fact, this falsely constructed need for protection and security between both oppressors can be seen in an even more literal sense through the number of federal, state, and local US law enforcement brought into Israeli for training[3]. Angela Davis reminds us that "...the Israeli police have been involved in the training of US police. So there is this connection between the US military and the Israeli military. And therefore it means that

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[3] Abunimah, Battle for Justice in Palestine, pg 15

when we try to organize campaigns in solidarity with Palestine, when we try to challenge the Israeli state, it's not simply about focusing our struggles elsewhere, in another place. It also has to do with what happens in US communities."[4] All aspects of which each state was founded on and sustained through are relational, and both produce violence: the violence I chose to focus on here is that of state-sanctioned violence, defined as physical and psychological abuse carried through by entities that represent and uphold the state, such as the police and military.

When speaking about colonial and state violence, it is imperative to expand the conversation to question the role of institutional education in sustaining this violence. More importantly, and given my positionality studying this violence in the academy, I find myself questioning what corrective and decolonial education, scholarship, and activism can contribute to global resistance. I have found that decolonized epistemology and methodology, work to undo the harmful effects of colonially imposed ways of thought, theorization, and research practices that have only elevated the academy and harmed those being studied by it. We can thus think of autonomous education that relies on a decolonial pedagogy as an epistemology of struggle and resistance that becomes a tool for collective liberation.

For collective liberation to be achieved in a way that ensures the elevation of the voices most marginalized, a transnational feminist lens of solidarity must be imbedded in the process towards collective liberation. Radical feminism of color allows for the validation of theory, epistemology, and identity of those not historically validated by Western, hegemonic entities. When added to a conversation surrounding transnational activism, feminism of

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[4] Davis, *Freedom is a Constant Struggle*, pg 15

color, feminism of color is expanded to not only a fight for women, but liberation from colonialism, capitalism, policing, militarism, and racism. The depth and intersections of these struggles allow for them to operate on a global and transnational level, to create a transnational feminsit solidarity framework. Transnationalism can thus be studied as networks that amplify social and epistemic spaces of critical production and knowledge that emerges from the struggles of those from below.This in turn changes the scope of globalization as we have come to define it. These decolonial and feminst solidarity networks bring forth a conversation of alter-globalization and globalization from below. Through insurgent cosmopolitanism and interconnectedness, new global imaginaries of resistance are created as a reaction to and critique of the mainstream neoliberal, capitalist, highly-militarized, and racialized hegemonic globalization.

It is time to imagine and create an alter-society, through alternate forms of globalization, for our communities to thrive (in). To create this alter-society, we must globalize local resistance movements, and recognize resistance as a continuum by drawing from both past and present resistance movements and alliances, such as past Afro-Arab solidarity networks. I argue that an understanding of the power that education, feminim of color, and transnational feminist solidarity can have in this decolonization process is necessary. This thesis explores the need for and potential of alternate spaces of living, learning, and connectedness that do not cater to white, elite, cisgendered, capitalist, patriarchal norms. Instead, through the implementation of decolonial pedagogy and activist-scholarship, we can create platforms that elevate the knowledge practices and ways of life of those at the margins. We can, and must, liberate our minds and hearts to trust and believe in the creation of a world where our historically oppressed communities can collectively thrive.

The first chapter provides a historical background of Palestinian and Black struggle. I first lay out the key historical moments of Palestinian struggle against Israeli occupation and colonization, and key historical moments of Black struggle against Western colonization, slavery, and post-slavery violence in separate contexts, and then focus on the moment of solidarity in 2014 to bridge the two histories together. In chapter 2, I explain the formation of transnational alliances and solidarity networks. More specifically, I focus on the similarities in spaces of protest and demonstrations between communities fighting state-sanctioned violence and the sharing of resistance tactics through social media platforms. Chapter 3 bridges the theoretical interventions surrounding resistance and solidarity networks with actual practice. I outline my personal experience teaching about Palestine in a community center, and bring forth a conversation about the role of activist scholarship and decolonial education.

Historical Frameworks:

Geographical Lens of Solidarity:

The importance of geopolitics in the contextualization of transnational resistance by communities must not be overlooked. I define geopolitics for this conversation as the degree to which activists, communities, scholars- or anyone resisting against state-sanctioned violence- allow, or not allow, borders, which are upheld by constructed notions of statehood, to affect and define the scope and reach of their resistance. Drawing from the work of Alex Lubin and Ali Abunimah, I break this down into and explore three main themes: global political regimes, political imaginaries of struggles, and global manifestations of race.

First, to explain what is meant by a global political regime, I start off with the below quote by former president Barack Obama, which is highlighted in Abunimah's chapter on the shared values and struggles of Israel and the United States:"... (the) bond between Israel and the United States is rooted in more than our shared national interests- it's rooted in the shared values and shared stories of our people."[5] The shared values and stories that Obama is referring to are those of colonialism, imperialism, white supremacy and nationalism. These values and stories have been seen throughout history in various forms, and are what lay the foundations for the global political regime of hegemony that were the foundations of the creation of the United States, that thus enabled and supported the creation of the state of Israel. Zionism emerged as, and is still, a mode of this global political project of white/western social, political, and economic dominance. Zionism can thus be understood as a systemic practice, making the Palestinian plight not a misunderstanding or conflict, but instead a struggle against colonialism.

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[5] Abunimah, *The Battle for Justice in Palestine,* pg 1

Knowing that domination as stems from a global political regime that itself is connected creates an understanding amongst the people being dominated of their shared oppression. We can call this political imaginaries of struggles that unite communities across borders to broaden their capacity and ability to create change. Change is understood to be possible and achievable if people themselves are willing to create the change[6], and is premised on sustaining a strong vision for, or understanding of, a hopeful and just future that is free from oppression and domination of anyone. To put it more simply, shared or similar past histories of domination and violence translates into shared or similar visions and hopes of the ability to imagine their own future. This can be termed intercommunalism, which Alex Lubin defines as "a political imaginary that recognized the shared conditions of racial capitalism and possibilities for anti-imperialism among local communities across the world"[7]. Historically, it has shown up in the time period of 1967 and 1968, where the political unfoldings in both the Arab world and the United States allowed for or created conditions for new possibilities of Afro-Arab imaginaries[8]. The unfoldings I am referring to here are those of the resistance against oppression during the Arab-Israel Six Day War, and the "race riots" that took place throughout the United States. Although distant from each other physically, both entities were brought together through an imaginary of revolution and freedom from oppression. More presently, transnational solidarity amongst the Afro-Arab imaginary is based on and from a political consciousness that recognizes shared social conditions[9]. These shared social conditions they are fighting against are mainly centered around neoliberalism and heightened state policing and securitization. Such mechanisms of

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[6] Ibid, pg 73
[7] Lubin, *Geographies of Liberation*, pg 113
[8] Ibid, pg 112
[9] Ibid, pg 143

violent colonial modernity create structures of feeling[10] that emphasize that even though both communities or circumstances are not exactly the same, the feelings of pain, and trauma that come from oppression and domination are the same; we can think of these as global imaginaries of resistance.

When looking specifically at Palestinian and Black communities, exploring the biopolitical creations and impacts of identity and race is significant. What I'm calling global manifestations of race refers to making Black citizens and Palestinians into disposable populations. Both groups were made stateless because of their race, and both experienced violence from the/a new state that made them stateless in the first place. The excessive focus on the racialization of people works to lock them behind both visible and invisible bars. The invisible bars that I am referring to here is the "other-ing" and orientalist justification of domination of one group of people over another because of their race. Israel and the United States have both asserted themselves as the dominant race by physical force but also through colonial constructions of the superiority of whiteness. The deeply rooted strength and institutionalization of orientalism, which Edward Said describes as "an ontological and epistemological distinction between the orient and the occident"[11], has further helped the United States and Israel advance and claim this dominance. Both Palestinian and Black communities were made to be and are treated as "the other" to justify their continuous physical and ideological abuse and oppression.

A historical conceptualization lays out the foundations of the shared oppression and struggle both communities face against state-sanctioned violence committed by a white colonial power. These comparative histories of colonialism, other-ing, and state sanctioned

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[10] Ibid, pg 169
[11] Said, *Orientalism*, pg 10

violence expose something productive not only about the colonial world, but also about the desire of the oppressed to revolt against it. Their race and identities become an inherent push against and antithesis of these oppressive regimes, and thus communities in struggle articulate their realities in a shared language of resistance and liberation.

History of Struggle:

<u>Palestine:</u>

Palestine is an inherently contested country and topic of discussion, especially in terms of its relationship to Europe and the USA. Even in the few moments that Palestinian history and struggle is discussed on a mainstream level, it is done so still within the framework of the imagination of the West. By this, I mean that the West to this day still controls the narrative on Palestine, specifically because of it's close relationship to and alliance with Israel. Due to this close alliance to Israel, the intesnity of Palestinian subjucation and oppression is belittled to a "conflict between two groups of people" narrative. Instead, it should be understood as a fight between an oppressor and an oppressed that includes regional, international, and cultural factors.

Palestine is diverse in the people that it is home to, who have lived together in the region despite their various religions, whether Jewish, Muslim, or Christian, and shared the city of Jerusalem, deemed the Holy City under all religions. The country's physical environment is also diverse, and was home to many farmers and agricultural work. (Kimmerling, (g. 3-4). Palestinian culture unique among all Arab cultures can be distinguished by its plurality of religions and dialects, as well as food, dance, and agriculture that is specific to it's land. Olive trees and *dabke* (a traditional Palestinian dance) have become the central symbols of the combining of culture and politics: the constant remembrance of the olive tree, Palestine's staple agricultural plant serves a reminder of the

history of Palestine that is also being targeted and destroyed by the Israeli occupation, and thus is often used as the image of and for Palestinian resistance and resilience. *Dabke* has been used to symbolize community and connection to the Earth, since the dance itself is done with everyone holding hands and requires the stomping of feet, which keeps the community grounded and connected to the land that is at stake.

To understand Palestine's manifestation into the country it is today, one must first begin with Europe's physical, social, and economic colonization of the Middle East. In general, European colonialism re-defined the Middle East's social and political boundaries; more specifically, Palestine was a unique situation because the country was also dealing with a third power- the Jewish and Zionist national agenda- which shaped and affected Palestinian history just as much as European colonialism does[12]. European and Zionist power grew over Palestine when the Ottoman Empire lost control of Palestine between 1831-1840, and eventually in 1917 (under the Balfour Declaration) surrendered to the British forces, allowing the British to occupy Palestine by 1918. Thus, although Palestine holds a unique history of confrontation with colonial forces that can be traced as far back as the 1880s[13], it was the Balfour Declaration of 1917 that officially allowed British colonial forces to create the state of Israel, marking the beginning of Western intervention and supremacy in Palestine.[14] Said drives the importance of contextualizing Zionism in the European, Western, and colonial framework, describing the mission of Israel and the West- which he groups together very purposely- as stemming from it's narrative of rightful entitlement to the physical land, which inherently asserts their superiority over Palestinians through the claim that Palestinians do

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[12] Kimmerling, *Palestinians, the Making of a People*, Introduction
[13] Said, *The Question of Palestine*, Introduction
[14] Ibid, pg 15

not deserve or are not considered worthy of the land.[15] The Balfour Declaration serves as an example of this supremacist mindset because it was made by Europeans about non-European land and people- again implying that Europe had the right or needed to make such decisions for and over Palestinians. Thus, Zionism as a project can be understood as an appropriation of the ethno-centrism and white supremacy over territory that drove European colonization right before it.[16] In July of 1922, the League of Nations issued the Mandate for Palestine, an internationally recognized document that was designed by the British to exclude mention of self-determination for Arabs and instead facilitate this self-determination for those migrating under the Jewish identity, where they, as a minority at the time, were given official recognition of national rights.[17] In 1936, the Arabs did try to revolt against British forces for two years, which is now known at The Great Revolt. However, British forces proved to be too strong to fight against, and by 1938 Palestine has no external support or internal unity that was strong enough to sustain the fight. Many homes were destroyed or blown up, crops, and agricultural land, were damaged, rebels were executed, and curfews were not put in place to further control the bodies and behaviors of Palestinians.[18]

Jewish migration to the region from Europe was happening before German persecution under the Holocaust, although the Holocaust did intensify it during before the 1930's and 40's. From their original migration, they did come with an interest of regeneration of Hebrew as a language and Jewish settlements and labor. Even though Palestine did not have all or the best resources, they brought with them a new aesthetic and

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[15] Ibid, pg 15
[16] Ibid, pg 29
[17] Khalidi, *The Iron Cage*, pg 32
[18] Ibid, pg 106

template for farming technology that at first was not imposed on the economy, but instead was enacted more indirectly[19]. During the 1920s and 1930s, Palestine began experiencing intensified Zionist plans and visions, with heightened ambition to bring in more (Jewish) people, and greater amounts of Jewish land buying, which resulted in Arabs owning less land. The larger presence of Jewish communities now became alarming, if it wasn't before, especially since it's economic influence was also beginning to increase.[20] In addition, the categorization of Palestinians/Arabs as "the orient"- a terms used to categorize the East as backwards, emotional, and over-sexualized- helped push the Zionist narrative that came about with the transferring of power over the Eastern region from the Ottoman empire to the British[21]. As Edward Said asserts, a main role that Orientalism plays is the ability it gives to those from the West to distinguish themselves as superior to "the other" by having the power to name and categorize people in the first place[22]. The British played a role in allowing for the state of Israel to flourish in many ways, the first being the creation of the false image that both Palestine and Israel were equal forces that needed mediation, in an effort to come off as objective and only playing the role of mediators[23]. On November 29, 1947 the United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 181 that split Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish state, under the notion that both would be equal. This, however, was not the case, as Palestinians were not given chances to speak or be part of the international conversations that were to declare its fate[24].

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[19] Kimmerling, *Palestinians,* pg. 22
[20] Ibid, pg 32
[21] Ibid, pg 31
[22] Said, *Orientalism*, pg 2-3
[23] Kimmerling, *Palestinians,* pg 31
[24] Khalidi, *Iron Cage*, pg 126

1948 is a significant year in Palestinian history, arguably the year most famously known or drawn back to when discussing Palestine, for multiple reasons: it marked the official end of the British mandate over Palestine, the proclamation of the state of Israel, and the expulsion of Arabs from conquered territories by Israeli forces, causing the dispersion of many Arabs, many of which to this day have not yet returned[25]. From December 1947 to May 1948 the Nakba, the importance of which in discourses about Palestinian struggle is exemplified merely through the meaning of the word itself "catastrophe", marks the largest expulsion and displacement of Palestinian people from their homes and lands by Israeli forces and the creation of the state of Israel.[26] The Israeli state flourished through its assertion of righteousness over the land of Palestine, the physical accumulation of that land, and the constant, deliberate efforts to erase Palestine history and ties to the land[27], completely changing the course of Palestine and its future. It is important to note that the six months that drove to the official day of the Nakba were months of battle between Palestinians and Zionist forces. However, the Palestinians forces, although united under the same goal and motivation, were more disorganized and dislocated, than those of the Zionist project which was more skilled and organized, despite its minor political problems and instability[28]. By the end of the six months, only three to four thousand of the original seventy thousand Palestinians remained (in Haifa), and Palestinians were beginning to be pushed into specific parts of the region. On May 15, 1948, the state of Israel was thus officially established, reducing Palestinians to the minority in many areas of the country, with 78% of Palestine

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[25] Kimmerling, *Palestinians*
[26] Khalidi, *Iron Cage*, pg 105
[27] Said, *Question of Palestine*, 57
[28] Kimmerling, *Palestinians*, pg 136

becoming Israel.[29] Until this day, Arabs had made up 1.4million of the 2 million population in the region, and owned 90% of the land; after May 15th, more than half of this population was expelled and forced to flee[30].

The Intifada, another well known and cited part of Palestinian history, refers to the 1987 uprising of Palestinians against the Israeli state and aggression. The uprisings erupted when an Israeli truck hit vans that had Palestinians in them, killing four Palestinians. The anger and rage that come from these deaths sparked multiple confrontations and spontaneous uprisings in Palestinian camps, that represented the communal frustration of living under occupation[31]. These uprisings were unique and significant not only because of their sporadic nature, but also because with and through them, they brought about new ways of socialization for the male youth, by joining the uprisings through using rock-throwing tactics, and also a new political form of leadership. This new leadership, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), was a combination of different factors from Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Palestinian Communist Party[32]. They spread messages to various groups and camps, who were often too spread apart to communicate with each other, by making leaflets and broadcasting information that was essential to keeping and planning the uprisings. During the time period of the Intifada, the Israeli state was also taking away or shutting off access to resources, forcing Palestinians to be self reliant and create their own spaces for survival, whether by making their own schools, or living off the land themselves to detach from and

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[29] Khalidi, *Iron Cage*, pg 3
[30] Khalidi, *Iron Cage*, pg 1
[31] Kimmerling, *Palestinians*, pg 261
[32] Ibid, pg 263

harm the Israeli economy. However, despite all their efforts, the occupation proved too strong; with both the setting up of Israeli soldiers and military posts right outside of Palestinian camps along with the decreased attention and care given to Palestine by other Arab countries. For example, the Arab summit held in 1987 was focused mainly on relations between Iran and Iraq, instead of the Palestinian plight and the spontaneity and motivation to maintain the uprisings was lost[33].

We can turn to recent uprisings in Palestine as of March 30, 2018, named the Great March of Return for a more recent example of Palestinian resistance. The Palestine Action Network describes through a post on their Facebook page that "On March 30, Israeli occupation forces murdered at least 13 Palestinians and injured more than 1,200 using live ammunition, rubber-coated steel bullets, and huge quantities of tear gas. The massive protests in cities across Gaza -- the world's largest open-air prison -- were held on Land Day and were the start of a six-week long mobilization leading up to al-Nakba Day, May 15, which commemorates the expulsion of more than 750,000 Palestinians from their homeland in 1948 to make way for the state of Israel. The protest is called the Great March of Return, and demands that the expelled Palestinian be allowed to return to their land".[34]

Black Reality/Experience & BLM:

Trayvon Martin was a Black, athletically inclined high school student, living in Florida, with a passion for aviation, and aspirations to become a pilot at the age of 17. On the night of February 26, 2012, however, those dreams were cut short as Trayvon went to a

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[33] Ibid, pg 264
[34] Palestine Action Network

local 7-11 store to purchase skittles candy and iced tea. Wearing a hood and holding his snacks, he was deemed dangerous by community patroller, George Zimmerman. Zimmerman called the police to tell them of his suspicions of Trayvon, and continued to follow the unarmed teenager, eventually leading to a confrontation between the two that led to Zimmerman fatally shooting Trayvon less than a hundred yards away from his father's townhouse. Outrage about the situation came not only from the fact that a young, innocent Black life was taken, but that Zimmerman was found not guilty for the murder, and walked away free.

This outrage fueled the creation of #BlackLivesMatter (BLM) movement by three radical Black organizers: Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi. Alicia Garza describes the movements as "...an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. It is an affirmation of Black folks' humanity, our contributions to this society, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression." BLM is more than just a movement or project, it is a symbol of valid anger and "Black-centered political will", that now has over forty chapters over the country. The growth of BLM can be attributed to the focus on issues critically important to Black people, and created spaces for the celebration and humanity of Black lives[35].

In addition, the movement's mission was to go beyond addressing and critiquing police brutality and systems of oppression enforced by the state, but to also create a more inclusive and holistic movement that disrupts the heterosexual and cis-gendered male dominance of mainstream activist spaces that have not always centered nor catered their work for Black lives. Instead, BLM is led by and elevated by Black, queer, women, who's

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[35] Garza, *Herstory of #BLM*

main goal is to challenge the hetero-patriarchy and anti-Black racism that penetrates society, and arguably is killing the potential to build power for needed social change. Thus, BLM proves to hold a platform that transcends mainstream politics, but pushes for more radical and critical organizing as well[36].

Another significant moment for the movement was August 9, 2014, where eighteen-year-old Black teenager Michael Brown was shot and killed by a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri. People began to gather at the scene where Michael's body was left, leading to a mobilization that quickly turned into demonstrations against the shooting of the teenager, which finally transformed into larger riots and violent confrontations with police[37]. Michael's death followed those of Eric Garner (two weeks prior), Oscar Grant (one year prior), and Trayvon Martin all fellow, unarmed Black men whose lives were also taken by police officers, thus further fueling anger against the system causing this injustice. What makes this moment of anger unique is that it was felt across and beyond the United States, thus elevating the case of Ferguson onto the global scale[38]. Social media proved to be integral for the globalizing of the local movement in Ferguson, and of BLM as a whole. This was achieved in two main ways. First, social media created spaces that allowed for connections to be made with local communities in the United States- social media and the use of hashtags allowed for a quick spread of messaging and organizing that was outside of the normal political organizing spectrum, giving more agency and autonomy to the groups- as well as globally with other state-sanctioned violence- for example, Palestinians were able to communicate their empathy with Black people in Ferguson by sharing their experiences of

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[36] blacklivesmatter.com
[37] Bonilla and Rosa, *#ferguson*, pg 4-5
[38] Ibid, pg 10

being targeted, while unarmed, by an oppressive police regime. Second, platforms like Twitter allowed communities that shared this oppression to provide advice on how to deal with and stay safe from the similar tactics and tools that police systems use against protesters, such as tear gas[39].

The construction of Blackness and the Black identity throughout America's history has acted as a criterion for defining people's relationship with other citizens, the state, and civil society[40]. This has affected and shaped the formation and structure of Black resistance movements in America. Manning Marable defines three basic models of leadership for Black liberation:

1) "accommodation", which brought about no direct challenge to capitalism or institutionalized racism, but embraced a "do it yourself" mentality to survive which often meant embracing capitalism themselves and collaborating with conservative white people.

2) "reform from above", which refers to a complete integration of Black people into US society and government, whether by becoming and/or electing officials in the Democratic party and/or working towards civil rights and equal opportunity.

3) "activist-oriented leadership", which rejects existing power structures and systems and encompasses a more radical organizing, such as through Black militancy, embracing Black power, and third world solidarity, that included the problems of the working class with poverty, unemployment, and political protest.

To understand the importance and potential of BLM's work, however, we must first understand the historical struggle and reality of the Black experience and resistance in the Western world. Similar to the "other-ing" and Orientalism that allowed for white supremacy

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[39] Ibid
[40] Marable, *Black Liberation in Conservative America,* pg 21

over the Arab world, Black populations faced, and continue to deal with, the effects of othering that can be traced back to European imperialism and the Atlantic Slave Trade. The colonial and capitalist exploitation of African countries by European powers left the region underdeveloped and unable to sustain itself after being forcibly deprived of it's resources[41]. Economic and political unrest were aggrivated by colonial interferences in Africa, and eventually led to the justification of the Atlantic Slave Trade. Slavery in the United States dehumanized Black people in a way that equated them to cattle: useful to Americans because of the labor they could provide, but not human or important enough to be treated as equal human beings[42]. This is reinforced by the use of the n-word; to keep dehumanizing Black people, the existence or importance of their actual names is also taken away. To call any and all Black people the n-word homogenizes them, taking away the individuality or uniqueness that makes someone human, furthering the dehumanizing of Black people. The impacts and logic behind this dehumanization can be seen after slavery was abolished, at least on paper.

Between 1958-1960, 34% of victims of police brutality in the US targeted Black people. From 1964-1962, police violence ignited rebellions in 300 cities, with almost half a million people involved. Cities turned into war zones and caused much damage to people and their homes. The state's solution to these rebellions was to enforce more excessive and professionalized policing, but this time through a more liberal language of "serving the ghetto"[43]. With 307 Black people killed by a police officer in 2015[44], 233-266 killed in

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[41] Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, pg 246
[42] Morrison, *The Origins of Others*, pg 5
[43] Kelly, *Policing the Planet,* pg 24
[44] The Guardian

2016[45], and 223 killed in 2017[46], and 61 killed in 2018 so far, the importance and work of BLM is far from over.

BLM's foundation and growth falls under the "activist-oriented leadership" that Marable defines, but includes a more modern approach to it, the use of social media and involvement of the youth being the two that I will focus on more deeply. As Alicia Garza, co-founder of the BLM movement shared in an interview, one of the goals of BLM was to move "the hashtag from social media to the streets." It worked to disrupt and create other activist spaces, such as overly heteropatriarchal ones or communities that still engage in anti-Black racism within social justice movements, that do not cater to Black lives, or give them the specific focus they need and deserve because of the historical and systematic targeting of them[47]. BLM identifies the state as the entity that enacts violence against Black bodies, and thus inherently finds the need to be anti-state, making them unique from other pro-Black organizing that have yet went as far as to critique the state[48]. Thus, when the uprisings in Ferguson erupted and the police responded as violently and militarily as they did, BLM found a need to emphasize and undo the state pattern of the destruction of Black lives, the foundations of which now function under a re-fashioned neoliberal, racist, and capitalist state apparatus.

Ferguson, Gaza, and Solidarity Through Social Media:

In 2014, the struggles faced by communities in Palestine and Black communities in the US converged as a result of the violent spectacles of both Protective Edge and the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson. Operation Protective Edge, also known as the 2014 Gaza

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[45] The Washington Post, and the Guardian
[46] The Washington Post
[47] Garza, A Herstory of #BLM
[48] Camp and Heatherton, *Policing the Planet*, pg 36

War, was a military operation launched by Israel on July 8, 2014 due to the kidnapping of 3

Israeli teeangers by Hamas members, resulting in a seven-week attack on Gaza (with

retaliation by Hamas on Israel as well) causing the deaths of thousands of people, the

overwhelming majority of them Gazan civilians. Months later, on the 9th of August, 2014

eighteen-year-old Black teenager Michael Brown was shot and killed by a police officer in

Ferguson, Missouri. People began to gather at the scene of where Michael's body was left,

creating naturally the mobilization of a mass of people that quickly turned into

demonstrations against the shooting of the teenager, which finally transformed into larger

riots and violent confrontations with police. Michael's death followed those of Eric Garner

(two weeks prior), Oscar Grant (one year prior), and Trayvon Martin (two years prior),

adding to the mourning of Black people in the United States, and further fueling anger

against the system causing this injustice. What makes this anger unique is that it was felt

across and beyond the United States, thus elevating the case of Ferguson onto the global

stage[49]. Social media proved to be integral for the globalizing of the local movement in

Ferguson. This was achieved in two main ways. First, social media created spaces that

allowed for connections to be made to other state sanctioned violence: for example,

Palestinians were able to communicate their empathy with Black people in Ferguson by

sharing their experiences of being targeted, while unarmed, by an oppressive police regime.

Second, platforms like Twitter allowed communities that shared this oppression to provide

advice on how to deal with and stay safe from the similar tactics and tools that police systems

use against protesters, such as tear gas[50]. The main significance of this moment in 2014 lies

in the parallel relationship that both communities hold in relation to the state and state-

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[49] Bonilla, Rosa, #ferguson, pg 10
[50] Ibid

sanctioned violence: the police in the United States, and the Israeli military in Palestine. Since the ways in which both the Israeli military and the US military react to demonstrations or treat protesters are similar, both Palestinian and Black activists are working against states that repress political, social, and economic rights, albeit in, at times, different ways. It is through their endeavors that the two movements expose how the USA and Israel, via similar agents and mechanisms, achieve their goals. Both are fighting states that are colonial and imperial powers. Israel is an extension of the US in the Middle East, which is why they have similar structures of oppression, and comparable modes of state sanctioned violence. We can understand both to have foundations of oppression, racism, and classism. This knowledge of similar foundational structures explains why both communities use the same methods or sequences of resistance. Both the Palestinian community and Black community are historically targeted and marginalized, under justifiable terms by the states they live under. In seeing similarities between the categorizing of Palestinian and Black bodies, as the "scary black/brown person" or always "angry, emotional, ugly"- who are romanticized and fetishized, yet still could be killed or dehumanized at any moment. There are similarities between the orientalist imaging of Palestinians/ Arabs and the bio-political repression (racism) used against the Black community in USA. The themes that join and bridge the historical and present day realities of both communities are thus complex, multi layered and multifaceted, but still interconnected and interweave to create the reality occuring now.

Michael Fischbaum's *Black Power and Palestine* serves as a historical account of the long process of creation of solidarity and transnational networks between those involved in the struggle for Black liberation in the US and liberation of Palestine from Israeli occupation. There are two main themes that tie both struggles together that Fischbaum focuses on: the

first is the shared imperial and colonial history and status of the US and Israel, and the

second is the creation of the "militant" or "revolutionary" Black/Brown figure as well as the

terming and use of "people of color". It is necessary to acknowledge the history of Black

critique of Israeli power[51]. Critiques emerged for varying reasons, whether financial, social,

or political. Financially, there were challenges to the ways in which funds from the United

States were raised for Israel, usually taken from or never given to Black communities in the

first place. Socially and politically, it brought about many conversations about race, identity,

and political action in the 1960s-70s. How the Black communities understood Arab conflicts

and politics was seen as a reflection of how they understood and their own country and

identity as being Black in the United States[52]. Both identities were seen as part of the global

revolutionary struggle against imperialism and global systems of oppression affecting people

of color. The identity "people of color" is also significant, which became a Palestinian

identity based on being "militant warriors, colonized people of color getting off their knees

and fighting back against alien oppression"[53]. To support Palestine meant to have an

understanding of one's own identity and political programs on a global scale because

Palestine is a country of color fighting occupation, who's oppressor is also "white". They

also drew from Fanon's Wretched of the Earth in understanding the need for people of color

to destroy and get rid of the effects of mental colonialism[54]. The Arab Israeli war of 1967

was a key event that brought conflicts and politics of the Middle East to a global scale, at a

time when global revolutionary nationalism growing. Revolutions were being waged by

people of color around the world, and many were interconnected because they understood

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[51] Fischbaum, *Black Power and Palestine*, pg 2-4
[52] Ibid, pg 29
[53] Ibid, pg 29
[54] Ibid, pg 26

themselves as fighting similar systems of whiteness. In talking specifically about Palestine and historic Black activism, the Black Panther Party had at first focused on domestic issues but through the guidance and influence of Malcolm X expanded to internationalism, and framed it as a greater "understanding of connection between black freedom struggle at home and anti-colonialist revolution abroad"[55]. This internationalism and relation to whiteness and colonization was unique, and created varying goals for different people in the Black community. The traditional civil rights activist saw themselves as truly and purely American, even if they were treated as second class citizens, and their motivation to fight for their rights was because they saw themselves as rightfully part of the country. On the other hand, the new Black identity was becoming a more militant one, where they say Black people as a colony in itself in America that needed to liberated. This become the new revolutionary's goal; to understand society and politics in terms of greater systems of colonization and oppression. Zionism became one of the systems that was understood as a settler colonial project and part of the western imperial project, and thus as an ideology to fight against. Palestinians also understood themselves as working with and alongside the Black and African community for liberation. Thinking beyond geography and borders became important here, where even if people were geographically separated, communities came together because of their shared politics and oppression. Politics and revolutionary struggle became just as important, if not more important, than geography and identity[56]. With this ideology came a new understanding of how people were then categorized. Since it was no longer by identity, the new ways of defining oneself and relating to others became through an

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[55] Ibid, pg 112
[56] Ibid, pg 115

understanding of "racism, colonialism, and repression vs revolution, rebellion, and freedom"[57].

Greg Burris' *Birth of a (Zionist) Nation* reminds us of the ideological bind between Israel and the US -which he identifies as white-settler colonialism-, and uses the moments of solidarity between activists in Palestine and in Ferguson in 2014 to explore how Palestinian liberation and the Black Radicalism "speak to each other in at the level of theory, philosophy, and epistemology"[58]. The first step to take in understanding this is to first strip away power from the colonial powers by naming them as the force behind resistance movements. In Palestine's case, Burris suggests not to give credit to the state of Israel, and specifically the Nakba in 1948, as the creator of Palestinian resistance, but to remember that revolutionary power and culture is instead embedded instead within the country's long history instead. In a similar light, Burris would not link the start of Black resistance and radicalism to the slave trade and slavery in America, but instead as a natural trait found within Black people. We can then understand the brutality of Israeli occupation as a reaction to the strength and spirit of Palestinian liberation, and the brutality of American police forces as a reaction to the strength and spirit of Black radicalism in the United States. To think in this way gives more agency to Black Radicalism and Palestinian liberation, and speaks more power to fugitivity of both movements. Fugitivity here is referring not (only) to physical escape, but more strongly to the "escape from dominant ways of thinking, being, and imaging"[59]. With this in mind, we can return to the uniqueness of the Black-Palestinian networks: the people involved in them are creating something new that is not just a response to occupation, but is actually a

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[57] Ibid, pg 115
[58] Burris, *Birth of a (Zionist) Nation*, pg 124
[59] Ibid, pg 130

reflection of the long tradition and ways of resistance that were present pre-occupation, which have always defied norms and brought about radical ways of thinking. Within Black-Palestinian networks, showing solidarity in protests or times of police and military aggression could now look different than it did in the past, but still encompass the same revolutionary and fugitive effects. For example, when a Palestinian holds a sign saying s/he is in support of the Black Lives Matter movement because s/he understands what it is like to be targeted simply because of his ethnicity, or when people in Gaza send tweets to people in Ferguson advising them on how to deal with being sprayed with tear gas based on their past experience, this can be understood as an act of present day global dissonance against identity based politics that restrict activism to, often nationalist, borders and boundaries.

Angela Davis' work on the solidarity networks that emerged between Ferguson and Gaza highlights the understood shared systems of oppression both communities live under that thus inspire the use and sharing of tactics and coalition work. In *Freedom is A Constant Struggle,* Davis reminds us that the events that unfolded in Ferguson, and between Ferguson and Palestine, serve a reminder to globalize our thinking about issues on racism and militarism. I identify two ways in which Davis asserts this, first in her understanding of the similarities of both the Israeli military and US police and military, and in her analysis of intersectionality. People in Ferguson and Gaza were able to support one another in 2014 because both communities recognized that they were being targeted by military entities that themselves share similar tactics and training; the Israeli military is actually involved in the training of US police, and US police forces are equipped with military scale training, arms, and technology. In Ferguson, the police response to demonstrations looked very much like the Israeli military aggression of Operation Protective Edge in Gaza. Thus, when organized

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against the Israeli state and occupation of Palestine, one thus inherently is organizing against military and police brutality and aggression in the US. I like to take the conversation here into that of intersectionality, which should not be thought of as only about the intersection of personal experiences within one person, but instead as the similarities of struggles that cross and defy borders, and create within themselves transnational alliances and networks. Here, it is the structural connections of oppression and imposed violence that bridge Palestinian and Black communities together despite the borders that confine each of them to a certain physical land. Davis reminds us that (our) "histories never unfold in isolation"[60], alluding to the intersection of the histories, and similarities of oppression and subordination, of Palestinian and Black people under colonial and military powers. The connecting ties of the Black radical tradition and Palestinian liberation can thus be thought of as an approach and methodology of resistance not confined to borders and boundaries, but instead as strategies of struggle against oppression that travel with and through the ways in which the communities communicate together, in this case through social media.

The importance of these intersections speak both to the structural implications of both oppression and liberation. In our era of neoliberalism, we are often pushed into an extremely individualistic mindset that not only detaches us from other communities and issues, but also from understanding the oppression faced as structural and systemic. For example, when a police officer kills an unarmed Black man, people are quick to blame the officer himself, and focus on putting him in jail as the main solution for the problem. Although doing so is important and could provide closure, focusing on the individual serves almost as a distraction from the main problem in this scenario: policing and state-sanctioned violence. To ensure

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[60] Davis, *Freedom is a Constant Struggle*, pg 135

that no more Black men are killed by the police, we need to address the systems in place that have allowed and continue to allow them to do so. Perhaps thinking of approaching these issues on a systemic level becomes too daunting and overwhelming for communities on their own, which is why individualism again must be disrupted when thinking about overcoming oppression. The systems at play are too large for communities to fight on their own, and thus communities need to build relationships and alliances with one another for all liberation. The internet allows for access to many spaces around the world, and opens up communication between people and movements who do not need to be on the same physical land to create solidarity networks. We can thus understand solidarity networks to in themselves be a form of alter-globalization, or alternative form of living, predicated not on American, neoliberal, capitalism which mainstream globalization is based on but instead on space sharing and revolutionary joint struggle against all oppression. Historically, various collectivites, spaces, and ideologies have transgressed and disrupted mainstream globalizing networks and narratives that reinforce borders. Global transgressions, which we can define as deliberate disobedience to the foundations of globalization thinking that rely on borders and institutions, manifest in both theory and practice. The practice here that I am focusing on is the creation of these solidarity networks.

Within the span of December 2018 to March 2019, Black-Palestinian solidarity continues to prove itself a timely and contentious issue. Marc Lamont Hill, a prominent scholar and media presence whose work focuses on Black-Palestinian solidarity, was fired from the newschannel CNN after stating support for Palestinian human rights during a speech he gave at the United Nations. A couple weeks later, due to pressures from the Israeli lobby, the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute rescinded Angela Davis' receipt of the Fred

Shuttlesworth Human Rights Award because of her longtime vocal solidarity with Palestine. Weeks after that, newly elected congresswoman Ilhan Omar, a Somali-Muslim woman, was forced to apologize and falsely accused of anti-semitism after rightfully exposing the financial and social power of the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee over the United States government. This is all in addition to the never ending number of university students and faculty that are continuously surveilled and have profiles created for them on websites such as "Canary Mission", which claims to be exposing racists who are part of the university, but really serves as an intimidation tactic to anyone who pushes for Palestinian human rights and liberation. Israel's power reigns high and continues to control American society, whether in its media, government, activist organizations, or universities. However, to me this tightened grip only speaks to the strength of the Black-Palestinian movement, and proves that it is working, taking us one step closer to the freedom and liberation of all that are oppressed.

Transnational Activism:

Since Black- Palestinian activism and solidarity in 2014 emerged in the form of protests and demonstrations, it is necessary to deconstruct what happens when people gather, organize, demonstrate in a specific space. Judith Butler's Bodies in Alliance lays out a framework to contextualize how we can think of solidarity as ways that bodies act together. Bodies can look different or hold varying identities, but what matters is knowing how to embrace the difference and use it to achieve one common goal. This common goal has been liberation. Horizontality is practiced here, where people understand that one cannot achieve the goal of liberation if they act alone. For example, to be able to fight against police and military power requires the help of other bodies and communities. When people don't have the same types of tanks and weapons, all that they have access to is to put their own physical bodies on the line. The more bodies that are there, the stronger they are; all can come together and put their bodies on the line for themselves and each other, this is how collectives and communities are created. The ways in which people protest, and the way the spaces become to manifest itself is thus directly related to the people occupying it: the bodies themselves make up the space, thus one cannot separate the two. Accessibility into protest spaces is also extremely relevant in this conversation. Who is allowed in these spaces, and who makes them up are usually the people historically more marginalized and excluded from multiple spaces in society, whether it be government/politics, institutions, or workplaces. The decision of who is allowed in and how mobilize based off the structures and systems in place that hurt both, and both are fighting against. This is where and how to understand the effects of globalization on local activism: one cannot win alone, and if two groups are fighting similar things, then they recognize that their struggles are interdependent. If struggles are

interdependent then that would mean that the liberation is interdependent, thus actions depend on each other and affect each other. Butler reminds us that transposability is important, where the general scene of different protest environments is able to transcend localities, allowing for global and local links to be made. Chants, songs, and words are created in these localities, where many people follow and say the same thing at the same time, symbolizing unity and the equalization of all people. These can be transferred to an international context because the fundamental importance is not about language or identity, but instead about feelings and experiences.

Transnational Activism & Hybrid Spaces of Protest/Resistance

Globalization, transnationalism, internationalization are terms that have come to dominate current political conversations due to the rise of heightened interconnectivity across nations and peoples. The terms are especially relevant in conversations about Palestine and the Black experience in the United States, specifically in relation to the Black Lives Matter movement. People in Palestine and the BLM movement showcased a unique, revitalized transnational alliance that marked a new era of solidarity and coalition building. In the context of both Palestine and BLM, I want to focus on transnationalism and its relation to activism -both its history and definitions, as well as ways to be critical and wary of it- while weaving in how globalization and internationalism connect to the greater conversation as well.

In *The New Transnational Activism*, Sidney Tarrow gives a historical and definitional understanding of how transnational activism emerged, and continues to emerge today. He reminds us that historically, transnational activism was more than just a reaction to or cause

of globalization[61], which I define as the increased connections of countries and nations that is reliant on technology, mainstream Western media, capitalism, and neoliberalism. There is an important focus on and significance of identity in transnational activism, and in the ways that local and/or national identity travels through borders along with activist networks. People moving into transnational activism take parts of their identity with them to the new spaces they become a part of, and also bring something back from these new spaces into their original spaces. With a new wave of transnational activism comes a new relationship between transnationalism and globalization[62]. Perhaps more mainstream and institutional transnationalism is still highly connected to globalization, operating heavily within the borders of nation-states and institutional organizing structures. However, for many communities and activists, their work does not need to be and is not tied to globalization because they are creating and finding globalizing networks and networks of solidarity that are not premised on border thinking or still confined within the nation-state. Instead, these networks take into account identities that may emerge and operate outside of rigid categorizations. This is where internationalism can be brought into the conversation: "if globalization consists of increased flows of trade, finance, and people across borders, internationalism provides an opportunity structure within which transnational activism can emerge"[63]. What is usually referred to or defined as global is actually more accurately a process of internationalization[64]. Thus, internationalization can be understood as a mix of horizontal relations across states, governments, and nonstate actors as well as vertical links among the subnational, national, and international levels. Together, they create an enhanced

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[61] Tarrow, *New Transnational Activism*, pg 2
[62] Ibid, pg 4
[63] Ibid, pg 4
[64] Della Porta and Tarrow, *Transnational Protest and Global Activism*, pg 122

formal and informal structure for transnational activism to work within. Tarrow delves into

this deeper with Donatella Della Porta in their discussion of the changes in the ways

networks operate, and more specifically how social movements react to power shifts. More

recent emerging networks tend to be tied less to a specific political party, and not confined to

one space or a rigid institution. The processes and mechanisms that allow activists to share

and operate transnationally are also often overlooked. While globalization can be understood

to be a structure, transnationalism can be understood as a process[65], where local information

or ideologies are not liquidated and made to assimilate into, but instead transposed to add to

and enhance the national context. Both Tarrow and Della Porta explain transnationalization

as having three processes, diffusion being the most important and relevant for the work of

Palestinian and BLM activists. Diffusion can be observed through the adoption, or adaption,

of frameworks and ideas amongst various collectivities. People in one place can can adapt or

adopt tools, ideologies, and tactics from another place or group[66], and use that to strengthen

or better their own movement and culture. Technology, the internet, and media have allowed

diffusion to operate with greater ease, making the sharing of ideas and cultures more possible

and accessible. Information is shared on greater and different scales because of access of

social media through the internet. The internet can be thought of as "a vehicle of diffusion"[67],

which is at the core of most new movements and is the main form of communication

amongst people in these movements. This communication is necessary when organizing from

distant places, and allows activists to meet or get to know one another even if they can't

physically be in the same place. Social media also allows for freedom in representation and

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[65] Ibid, pg 123
[66] Ibid, pg 3
[67] Ibid, pg 136

the production of certain ideologies. People now can "be the media"[68], instead of relying on

the media, and use that to create new political, social, and cultural relationships. Not only

does it help create and sustain global and international connections, but it also gives more

agency in determining how movements are running and how the people within the

movements are being represented. People can be as apolitical and unapologetic as they want,

and represent themselves the way they want to be shown. This is especially important given

that mainstream media does not always portray activists or movements correctly. Control and

agency over representation builds trust between activists and communities who, even if they

may not know each other or share the same identity, can support and understand one another

based on shared lived experiences. The sharing of such lived experiences and realities can be

called relational diffusion[69], which transfers information that is reliant on similarities of

struggles and builds trust through these understandings of systems of oppression.

Transnationalism can thus be expanded here, to focus on actions and movements instead of

only on people and identities, and thought of in terms of transnational collective action and

social movements beyond borders in general. Collective action can be coordinated campaigns

of people from different identities against international actors, states, or institutions. Social

movements against oppressive structures now also operate beyond borders, and become new,

emerging types of transnational coalitions that can be thought of as "global social justice

movements"[70]. Such networks are linked due to the similar issues they are fighting against,

not necessarily because they share the same identity. More and more of these networks

function using horizontal structures, where no one person or leader has power, but instead the

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[68] Ibid, pg 220

[69] Tarrow, *New Transnational Activism*, pg 2

[70] Della Porta and Tarrow, *Transnational Protest and Global Activism*, pg 203

group or collective all shares equal responsibility and weight (the BLM movement is an

example). Hierarchies within the movements themselves are dismantled, to symbolically

fight against the social and political hierarchies that historically and presently have oppressed

communities. When talking about these new, emerging social movements, it is always

important and interesting to ask what is new, what works, and what might be challenging to

the movements themselves[71]. With new, transnational activism naturally comes a new type of

activist as well. The new activists that crosses such spaces and borders, are defined by Della

Porta and Tarrow in three main ways which they call the "new activist stratum"[72]: the rooted

cosmopolitans, or people who are active in local work and context but who's work forces

them or requires them to engage in transnational or global issues; activists with multiple

belongings and overlapping memberships which link them to various groups and

collectivities; and finally activists with very flexible identities, who embody inclusiveness, a

positive emphasis on diversity, and a limited focus on identity. New activism and activists

also brings about new opportunities of interaction between different types of transnational

alliances. The question that this brings up is how coalitions might be affected if these

interactions end up being competitive instead of cooperative, and if one group feels like they

are unequally treated over another.

Before going further into the potential of new alliance, I would here like to also

challenge the way in which the term transnationalism and transnational activism has been

defined as the movement of people, organizations, or culture from a homeland to a foreign

place, and claimed by predominantly European and Western nations and identities. In this

definition and claim remains an overly nationalist framework that operates too heavily within

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[71] Ibid, pg 228
[72] Ibid, pg 237

border thinking, and confines movement itself within borders and boundaries. This simplifies not only the harmful effects of socially constructed national borders but also limits and takes away from the communities and collectives that have transgressed such borders in their own, unique praxis.

We can turn here to a conversation on subaltern, insurgent cosmopolitanism that is important to present in bridging transnationalism and globalization. A larger discussion globalization and cosmopolitanism must be explored. It is important to note that globalization as a commonly used term in the current neoliberal political era is new, but the idea of global interconnectedness is not a new phenomenon. Global interactions and community building were present around, and amongst, the world before Western, colonial hegemony- a creation of the prescriptive effect of globalization that Boaventura de Sousa Santos has termed the "neoliberal consensus"[73]. It is this prescriptive component that differentiates neoliberal, hegemonic globalization from previous ways of globalizing. With the aid of modernity and liberalism, this new globalization acts as one that arrogantly enforces policies and ideologies, whether social, economic, or political, on the rest of the world. Under the façade of globalization and increased global connections comes with Western narrative of the erasure of the gap between the global North and South. This claim is not only inaccurate, but also dangerous because it trivializes the negative effects of Western/global North hegemony on the global South. Cosmopolitanism has aided in pushing this misconception of the disappearance of the North/South gap through its universalizing rhetoric and discourse. Although well-intentioned, mainstream cosmopolitanism, in its efforts to unite and celebrate all people, is still missing the critical lens necessary for it to truly

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[73] Boaventura Santos, Globalizations, (2006), 394

benefit all people. Here I would like to bring in Stephen Dillon's contribution to this

conversation through his deconstruction of what he terms the neoliberal carceral state[74].

Comprised of institutions and governments that hold power over people, Dillon reminds us

that the state itself understands the importance of culture to activism and community

building, and thus actively tries to devalue or diminish it through universalism. We now can

see more similarities of the institution and the state here. Just as the institution understands

the power that decolonial/indigenous knowledge has, and is even threatened by it when

brought in because it deliberately goes against the foundations of power that lift the

institution up, so does the state with decolonial/indigenous and non-Western practices and

lifestyles. Fear of the potential of cross-cultural dialogue and practices drives the state to

push for those from diverse backgrounds to assimilate and become a part of the melting pot,

where all differences, histories, and legacies are erased, erasing with them the trauma and

effects the Western world has had on communities instead of taking responsibility for it.

     There is, however, some potential in cosmopolitanism; it has the ability to be

beneficial if truly insurgent. This insurgent cosmopolitanism is explained by Santos as

networks of solidarity that are brought together through transnationally organized resistance

by those who have fallen as victims of social exclusion. What I find most important about

this distinction is the assertion that insurgent cosmopolitanism is not about universality per

se, but instead finds equal significance in both difference and equality. Dillon intervenes

again here by encouraging us not to abandon differences, but instead use differences

strategically for coalition building. He advocates not for homogeneity, but instead for

relational differences[75]. There is an understanding of and emphasis on what differentiates

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[74] Stephen Dillon, *Fugitive Life*, (Duke, Durham, 2018), introduction
[75] Dillon, *Fugitive Life*, introduction

communities and cultures- not as something that is to be feared or must be homogenized in a melting pot in order to work, but instead uses what is specific to local communities and struggles to inspire an emergence of a global, revolutionary consciousness that calls for global liberation through local and trans-local linkages. Dillon speaks more specifically in the context of fugitivity and those who violently escape the state through direct action and disruption of it. Fugitivity can be contextualized as an epistemological and affective force that pushes both the decolonization of knowledge production and sharing, and of everyday life and practice. Not everyone is a fugitive by pure definition, and actually here I would argue that the defining of someone of something as a fugitive must be kept exclusive to not diminish and dilute its history and meaning, there is still much to learn from and influences of the fear the neoliberal state has of fugitive and anarchist practices. For example, the scholar activists may not be fugitives per se, since they are still working within the institutions itself, but they do transgress the boundaries of what is expected or allowed in academia, and in that way causes enough of a rupture to influence some change. To rethink and reclaim transnational activism requires a focus on the insurgent, subaltern activists, those not connected to an organization, political party, or institution (whether a progressive activist one or not) but instead embody their own politics. Nationhood, identity, or the borders they are a part of is not what is important in this context; instead what is important is the structures and systems of life they are subjected to, and the physical spaces they take up through their resistance to violence in all its forms. Physical does not only refer to borders/states/countries anymore: the transnationalism highlighted here is the physical body, the sharing of ideologies and tactics, and the spaces of resistance that activists occupy, both literally and figuratively.

The path to a liberatory future is not attainable, successfully that is, without a feminist framework and foundation. What is needed here is the addition of transnational feminist solidarity to the conversation of transnationalist activism. Using Collins' and bell hook's influences on feminist epistemology, thought, and knowledge, the feminism I speak of is a decolonial feminism of color that is led by the women who have been most oppressed; by the thoughts, values, and contributions of women of color. For woman of color to effectively reimagine and reclaim feminism, it is imperative to first acknowledge that Western feminist discourse was never created for the benefit of non-White women, and will never help liberate women of color. The struggle of colonized women of color against male dominance and patriarchy is one that Western or White feminism will not be able to identify with and understand, one that I call a double, interconnected subjugation: the first being colonial chauvinism and the second a preexisting patriarchy that was exacerbated by the former. There is a constant internal struggle of finding and creating local feminism while balancing the effects of European colonial power and their postcolonial legacies. White feminism assumes privilege and Eurocentric universality[76]. The homogeneity of women assumes that women were already constructed into one group, which is not only ahistorical, but also colonizes and appropriates the pluralities of the differences of women of color[77]. Women cannot be placed in the same universal category because to do so would be to erase and belittle the history and struggles that women of color face. The imposition of Western feminism must be thought of as a continuation of colonialism and a deliberate attempt to rob women of color of their historical and political agency. Feminism for women of color is not simply the struggle for liberation from patriarchy, it also includes an extensive list of

[76] Chandra Mohanty, Feminism Without Borders, (Point Par Point, Quebec, 2007), 19
[77] Ibid, 39

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concerns on issues such as state-building, anticolonial nationalism, social order, class systems, religious discourse, and racism. As such, feminism of color is not only a fight for women's rights, it is a fight for decolonizing various sectors of our current Eurocentric, racist, classist, heteronormative, patriarchal, ablest, and capitalist society With this realization comes the essential next step where women of color decolonize the understandings and priorities of their liberation movements. I am conscience that the term women of color itself also attempts to homogenize and group together vastly diverse groups of women, and by no means do I wish to hypocritically enact what I am arguing against. Instead, opposite from White/Western feminism, I believe the term woman of color embraces and respects the diversity of cultures, struggles, experiences, and needs of non-White women, and uses this diversity to build local and global solidarity that creates powerful liberating movements for all.

Sharing of Resistance Tactics

Activist networks remind us that are knowledge systems in activism that have been made invisible by mainstream politics and/or media, which the insurgents then embody and show through other platforms for expression and self-identification that subaltern, insurgent activists have complete agency over (such as: media outlets: songs and chants, social media such as facebook, twitter, instagram). Social media has allowed for and helped the ways in which the global and local connect. With social media as a tool, activists can communicate in live time , and talk to each other without not having to go through or wait for outside media outlets to do so. Thus, they have full autonomy in the space, and the movement, and how they themselves and their movement is portrayed. This is extremely important given the history of framing protests or demonstrations as overly violent and/or as riots. This backlash

against demonstrations and protests can be understood as a result of considering certain issues and needs as personal issues that are supposed to remain private. When communities speak out about these issues, such as racism, state-sanctioned violence, and oppression- those in power fear it because they fear the potential of overthrowing current systems that communities may have if they win. Making this public means exposing the violence of the state, and perhaps inspiring a revolution against the system as a whole, turning upside down the structures that currently favor and cater to those in power.

The aggressive use of tear gas by both Israeli forces and the US government in 2014 became the main reason behind the initial communication of people in Palestine to those being attacked in Ferguson. Since the Palestinian people have had much experience and encounters with tear gas being sprayed at them, they were able to share advice and tactics with Ferguson, and BLM activists in general, on how to handle and deal with it. Almost ironically, tear gas inspired coalition building and networks of solidarity resisting against violence by the state[78]; it was being used as a policing tool to oppress and hurt activists and civilians, which then was turned into a form of communication beyond borders, and the premise of a transnational alliances between the two communities[79].

Anna Feigenbaum outlines the history of the use of, and marketing behind the use of tear gas. The use of tear gas dates back to World War I, and has been used to force people out of safe cover or to disperse a crowd of protesters. In relation to state-sanctioned violence, the use of tear gas in police-public relations has questioned the notions of safety and security[80]. If the police and military are now so closely linked, and their expertise and equipment have

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[78] Feigenbaum, *Tear Gas*, pg 167
[79] Ibid, pg 157
[80] Ibid, pg 11

become as easily shareable, then how can the public still feel safe, or have any agency in speaking out against injustices when they occur? The militarization of police is not[81], and should not be, necessarily surprising, given the colonial legacy of both countries[82]. It should, however, be constantly challenged and critiqued in larger conversations of abolishing systems of control and power. The way in which tear gas has continued to be marketed, as an efficient and more humane tool in war fighting or crowd control, is also significant. Much of the justification of its use has come under the guise of it being a better alternative to killing or bombing people[83], and as a humane and scientific way of modern day crowd control[84]. Although marketed as not harmful, this thinking actually proves to be potentially more harmful because it allows for injuries that have more long term effects, that could potentially restrict other daily functions, such as causing blindness, physical injuries, and trauma. Social media, that is operated by communities and collectives themselves, has helped to bring large scale attention to the harmful effects of tear gas, exposing it on a larger platform. The importance of agency through social media is again showcased here, further signifying the need for autonomous spaces of representation and being.

The power of the use of social media platforms, such as twitter, is highlighted by Zeyneb Tufekci's *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest* in her analysis of the impact of internet platforms on social movements. She uses the term "digitally networks movements" and/or "networked movements" to refer to the unique elements and changes in public spheres that the use of social media platforms brings about,

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[81] Ibid, pg 70
[82] Ibid, pg 12
[83] Ibid, pg 2
[84] Ibid, pg 50

encompassing local, global, transnational, online, and offline spheres of a movement[85]. Social media allows for ordinary people to be part of and have agency in the movement- one no longer needs to be a politician or have a certain social and economic standing to be allowed to participate, it now becomes contingent on the accessibility of the internet. The networked protests and movements of the twenty first century have a digital and technological link that give new tools to gather large numbers of people with a common goal, that can cheaply and easily connect on a global scale. Although the tools are new, the roots and needs of social movements and protests however continue to be fueled by the same needs for liberation that have inspired movements in the past. Thus, the incorporation of social media does not need to be thought of as creating new reasons or ways of protesting, the internet instead allows for the fusion of the old and new, and the local and global to create larger connections of resistance. The internet acts more than just as a gatekeeper to the greater public, but also could be thought of as the creation and sharing of information, thoughts, and actions that are done by and for the public under their own autonomy.

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[85] Tufecki, *Twitter and Tear Gas*, pg 6

Liberation Through Education:

The youth have proven themselves as playing an integral part in the ways in which the state has enacted violence, and against whom, and in the ways people have resisted against it. By being targets of violence and oppression themselves, or by being innovative in their use of social media and coalition building that created networks of resistance and solidarity on a larger scale, the youth have played, whether intentionally or not, roles in these movements and moments that cannot be overlooked. Since younger generations play such a role in global movements and alliances, the ways in which the youth are educated must be taken into account. This leads us to question that way in which institutional education only sustains and furthers violent, colonial knowledge. It pushes us to identify the role and duty that educators, especially those who identify as scholar-activists, must have to undo this violence and encourage fighting for collective liberation. This chapter emphasizes that for education to be an effective tool for liberation, Western education must be decolonized, and more alternate spaces of knowledge production are needed.

Freire teaches us that education is a liberatory practice[86], and that "problem-posing education is revolutionary futurity"; Assata Shakur reminds us that theory and practice cannot exist separately and that "the two must go together". Education can thus be understood as one tactic and path to take in the process of achieving liberation in the future. The educator and/or scholar-activist becomes part of the movement, in their own realm, through posing questions and critiques of the current problems plaguing society, and exposing who or what is behind them. The educator cannot forget that they are part of the academy that has directly contributed to the occupation of knowledge because they are part

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[86] Freire, *Pedagogy*, 135

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of the entity that creates the knowledge, and people, who go out into the world to further oppress through their theories, research, or elitism. This is the driving motivation towards taking up what can be thought of as an epistemic decolonization, or a decolonized methodology of being a scholar all together. This decolonization begins in the classroom and works its way out to larger spaces of society.

Palestinian American Community Center:

The occupied Lenopy territory, now known as Clifton, New Jersey, is home to a Palestinian American Community Center (PACC), a space that, through its short three year tenure, uniquely and unapologetically caters to the Palestinian community, from its elders to its youth, and from its immigrants to its diaspora. PACC is a community funded, multi-use center that not only hosts a variety of educational and social programs- such as Arabic language learning classes of all levels, SAT preparation classes for high school students, dabka (traditional Palestinian dance) classes, and annual youth summer programs for children from 5-11 and 12-16 years old- but also is a space that the community can rent out for parties, engagement celebrations, and even funeral visitation receptions. Thus, in all its capacities, through emphasizing the importance of culture and tradition and opening its doors as a safe space for those who hold this identity, PACC serves to empower, uplift, and highlight Palestinian and Arab heritage as a whole. The summer of 2018 gave me the opportunity to work for and with PACC, as the teacher for the program called Holding Onto Palestinian Existence (HOPE) that was a part of the two eight week summer youth programs, the first catered to children from ages 5-11 and the second for teenagers from 12-16 years old. HOPE aims to teach Palestinian history, culture, influential figures, and social justice

with the goal of educating the youth about their heritage and land, as well as encouraging them to be more engaged with the politics of the world around them.

My classroom was often loud, sometimes rowdy and chaotic, but always filled with young and raw frustration about the struggle and lives of Palestinian people. Lesson plans involved many film and media resources, games, and coloring and drawing activities to keep the students engaged and interested in the subject we were learning. The students and I covered key historical moments in Palestinian history, including the Nakba, Naksa, both Intifadas, and the Great March of Return, which gave them knowledge of their familial origins that they would not have received otherwise through mainstream Western education. We also discussed influential figures, such as Leila Khaled, Linda Sarsour, Malcolm X, and Muhammad Ali, all potential role models who demonstrate criticality and liberatory thinking that Western media does not represent. There was always a large focus on culture in the classroom as well, where we would listen to the latest Palestinian songs, deconstruct the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish, admire art through the character of Handala, discuss our favorite foods, and occasionally form a dabka line to which everyone in the center was always invited to partake in. This was essential in validating their cultural practices and encouraging them to embrace their identity instead of being ashamed by it, the latter being easier to do than the former given Western hegemony and the social pressures it creates on youth to "fit in". Of course, instilling a wider sense of social justice was key to our classroom, to expand our knowledge beyond Palestine to learn about other communities who have also struggled against oppression, such as the Native American and Black communities, and discuss ways in which we can create solidarity networks.

Many times, I found myself learning much more from them than expected, whether because of the questions they would ask me that I had not thought through before, or through the (family) stories and narratives they would share in class. Coming from Lebanese descent, I recognize that I have to constantly be conscious about the fact that I am not Palestinian when in these spaces, and would thus give room for students or staff who are Palestinian to share their knowledge and experience. I would also give students the task of asking their parents or guardians about certain topics or events we were covering in class to normalize bringing into the classroom oral history and knowledge from below, something often lacking in academic spaces and studies.

As rewarding and impactful as my time in the classroom was, I did encounter several challenges while teaching that are important to point out. The most prominent was how to create original, engaging and exciting lesson plans on Palestine that cater to young(er) age groups. Palestinian history is often heavy, and requires time to break down and understand. Teaching it in a way that can resonate with kids within a fifty minute to one hour time frame was a new, and helpful, challenge for me. It was helpful in that it allowed me to practice being true to my de-colonial scholarship since I had to speak, write, and teach in ways and language that are accessible to varying communities and age groups outside of the academy. In addition to keeping the classroom fun and engaging, another challenge, perhaps more unique to the teaching of Palestine specifically, was navigating the intricacy of discussing topics of violence, which is difficult to avoid when talking about Palestine. For example, this issue emerged during the lesson on freedom fighter Leila Khaled. Many children, especially the girls, were inspired by the fact that she carried and used weapons to support the Palestinian struggle, and told their parents about what they had learned when they went

home. One student's mother was upset that images or talk of weapons were being circulated in the classroom, and thus I had to step back and be more careful about how we talk about these topics, especially with the youth. Beyond how and what to teach, there were also some difficulties in getting the students to want to learn and be in a classroom setting. Being that these programs take place during the summer, children were more interested in having fun, and thus learning was not appealing to them. I found that the best way to deal with this and engage them was to continue to instill in them the importance of learning about Palestine being that it is a land and identity that strong powers such as Israel and the United States are literally trying to erase, or that most of the rest of the word has forgotten about. When those conversations took place, in a tone that added responsibility on them as part of the diaspora to uphold and retain this knowledge, students re-focused and were more willing to continue to learn, even if it did not seem as fun.

The classroom sparked many conversations and contained numerous amounts of powerful moments, two of which I will focus on in more detail. The first was when students would ask, more than once throughout the summer, regarding the oppression and occupation of Palestine/ians: "Why is this being allowed to happen? Why isn't anyone doing anything to stop it? What do we do?" These are the types of questions that fuel consciousness, awareness, and the drive needed to create change. Instilling this form of questioning at children at a young age is extremely important and is the first step towards the liberation of not only Palestine, but all oppressed people. The second was when students would share some of the bullying, racism, and/or Islamophobia they have personally experienced. The students and I partook in an identity based exercise one day, where I placed various identities around the wall (age, gender, body size, religion, race, economic status) and I asked various

questions (such as: which identity are you most aware of?; which identity do you think people notice about you first?) to which the students had to walk to the identity that was most prevalent to that question. This activity brought about much discussion when I would ask students why they chose the specific identity they did. Things that were shared included: being bullied about body size in school, and constantly told that they needed to lose weight to be beautiful; being made fun of for having darker skin and Arab/Muslim names by peers in school; and constantly being de-legitimized or not taken seriously because of their age.

All the above tough experiences and pressures could be theorized as results of Western standards of beauty, being, and validation of knowledge, theories which will be returned to after first using all the can be learned from the classrooms created by PACC about decolonizing Western education and the bridging of scholarship and activism in the process, the focus of which will be the rest of this chapter. Although here the specificity is no longer directly on Palestine, the conversation of autonomous knowledge production is necessary to even begin imagining a free Palestine; before the work for freedom comes the work needed within our communities to strengthen ourselves and each other, to have the ability and power to fight for the liberation of all.

The Classroom and Activist-Scholarship:

Freire's *Pedagogy Of The Oppressed* is rampant with revolutionary ideas and trajectories which advise key principles that can guide the struggle for liberation. Through the unpacking of the yearning of the oppressed for freedom[87], we can complicate this struggle for freedom as a struggle towards recovering the humanity that was stolen from the oppressed through various processes of domination, whether it be (settler) colonialism,

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[87] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, (NY, Continuum, 2005), 44.

capitalism, or chauvinism. Given that this domination is as strong and impactful as it is, the question of how to find or create a model of humanity that does not simply replicate that of the oppressor comes up, especially when this model is all that has been validated previously[88]. One of the first, and seemingly most obvious steps, is recognizing that this struggle must come from below and be led by those at the margins, or as Steven Osuna cites as "the noise" when placing Cedric Robinson's lessons of the Black Radical Tradition in the context of scholarship and activism[89]. This bridging of scholarship and activism, or radical scholarship[90], and the liberatory potential it holds, is needed especially in times of neoliberal expansion that affects not only economic realms of life, but also the political, cultural and social. Neoliberalism in academia[91] has looked like the delegitimization, if not complete erasure, of any forms of knowledge and knowledge production that did not come from an elite class of (white male) intellectuals. The process of privatizing knowledge pushed those that did not fit the above category to the margins. They were made to feel inferior or less than, and thus were discouraged to revolt against the oppression they faced. Here, a focus on Patricia Hill Collin's teachings in *Black Feminist Thought* is crucial. Collin's new lens of radical feminism, Afrocentric Feminism, highlights the history and reasons of the suppression of Black feminist thought, and emphasizes the need for self-definition and resilience. I use the words 'radical' and 'new' intentionally and cautiously: it is only radical in the sense that this feminism does not adhere to white-normative and limited ideas of sex(ism) and gender, but instead recognizes the importance of the intersections of race, class, gender, and other social identities of those at the margin; and it is new not because these

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[88] Ibid, 45
[89] Gaye Johnson and Alex Lubin, *Futures of Black Radicalism*, (Verso, London, 2017), 23
[90] Ibid, 22
[91] Ibid, 27

ways of life and thinking did not exist before, but instead because it merges everyday

practice with scholarship and theory to imagine and inspire truly liberatory methodology and

epistemology. This Afrocentric scholar-activism not only allows, but calls for, the production

and construction of knowledge by communities at the margins, or the noise, for themselves[92].

By recognizing and validating their knowledge, their beings as a whole are validated and

their imaginations for what life could look like beyond the model of oppression is

expanded[93]. The importance of the validation of knowledge leads to the second step that must

be advocated for: education that is made by and found from those at the very bottom.

For this education to be effective, a horizontal dynamic between teacher and student

must first be established. Horizontality is based on mutual and equal amounts of trust and

respect between the two, and is possible if founded on humility, faith, and hope[94]. Dialogue

must be the central form of communication between the teacher and the student, replacing

the more mainstream narrative approach where the teacher lectures about reality as if it were

static, and the student is expected to listen and memorize. A dialogical approach instead

disrupts this mechanical cycle, and allows for the teaching of concrete situations that people

(or students) encounter on a daily basis. This transforms the dynamic of teaching for or about

the student, to the teaching with and alongside the student, and allows for the merging of

theory and practice that is central to scholar-activism.

Munir Fasheh, a mathematician of Palestinian descent, embodies a decolonial

mentality about education through his identity, educational background, and decolonial

awakening. His comparison of military tanks to think tanks equates mainstream educational

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[92] Patricia Hill Collins, Black Feminist Thought, (Routledge, NY, 2000), 25-30
[93] Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 201-202
[94] Freire, *Pedagogy*, 91

systems to forms of occupation themselves[95]. For Palestinians, and other communities who face the violence of settler colonialism such as Native and Indigenous communities in the Americas, this means living under a dual occupation for decades: physical and military control of land and territory, and control of the maintenance and production of knowledge and traditions. The institutionalization of education and knowledge has made the latter have arguably more negative and significant impacts than the former. Institutions create foundations that have the potential to last longer than the physical presence of the colonizer, and allow a deeper and more internal effect on the society it infiltrates. Through institutionalization, education is thus turned into a form of control and power, losing sight of its main mission of teaching and learning.

Neoliberalism has allowed such institutions to continue existing, post-colonization, through its modernization efforts. Modernization reinforces the notion that certain forms of knowledge are more superior to others, and relies on this false and constructed superiority to justify its expansion and domination. Understanding that institutionalized knowledge is false and constructed does provide hope and motivation, however. There is hope that since it is relatively newly constructed, it can be undone. To do so, one must empower native/indigenous knowledge. This is both important and possible because, due to the fact that native/indigenous knowledge is embedded in long histories of communal thought, relations, and being, it cannot be as easily replaced as something that is (newly) constructed, such as institutional knowledge. This outlook on knowledge can be used as motivation to transform education as it is practiced in institutions today. The question here becomes: how does that translate into the classroom (as an educator) and beyond (as a scholar-activist)?

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[95] Munir Fasheh, *Over 68 Years with Mathematics*, Arab Education Forum

In the classroom as a teacher:

Most classrooms have become places of practicing obedience and authority; one person, the teacher, is trusted to embody all power and authority while a group, the students, are expected and taught to follow the teacher in obedience. This system intentionally perpetuates and models the structures of power that modernity and governments have created to continue their oppression of certain communities. Educators have the ability to change the dynamic of classrooms, both those within schools/institutions and those outside that may be created in community centers or organizing spaces. The classroom should be made into an exciting space[96], where teachers enjoy teaching and students enjoy learning. This concept, as simple as it may seem, is itself disruptive because it challenges the notion that to be truly intellectual, the classroom and educator must be serious at all times. I argue that this notion stems from Western codes of etiquette that lead to highly individualistic practices, rather than communal learning and sharing that is needed for communities of color to thrive. To enjoy teaching and value students experience and voices itself becomes an act of resistance[97] in face of the apathetic point of view of most educators. As shared with me by fellow educator and colleague there are ways of equally valuing the presence of all in the classroom by adopting a more equitable distribution of power where the educator sometimes merely assumes the main role of a facilitator and/or discussant. The purpose of this practice is to decolonize pedagogy, by dismantling structures of hierarchy while learning from one another in speaking and listening. Just as the movement towards a revolution cannot have power disparities and hierarchies that separate people, neither can education, and vice versa. This horizontal structure succeeds in a collaborative and supportive environment brought about

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[96] bell hooks, Teaching To Transgress, (Routledge, NY, 1994), 7
[97] Ibid, 11

through the dynamic engagement and keen interaction of all. An equitable distribution of

power means elevating the voices of those that have otherwise been overshadowed by more

privileged voices.

Revisioning and revising what is taught in classrooms is also an important task that a

radical educator must take on. A transformation of what is taught, and how it is done so, is

needed to undo the erasure and delegitimization that current school curriculum and syllabi

enforce often under the facade of cultural diversity[98] and the melting pot narrative. Diversity

has become a word easily used by institutions and the academy to fit into the liberal model of

inclusivity, yet the institution as a whole still fails to embody and allow diverse practices and

ways of life. To the academy, diversity means adding one or two ethnic studies classes,

maybe even a whole department, but keeping them on the sidelines, as separate from the

main visions and aspirations of the institution, simply to fulfil requirements and be more

palpable to society. Instead of highlighting the complexities of identities, teaching about the

vast amount of histories and knowledge communities have contributed to the world, and

exposing the harmful legacies of colonialism and imperialism, the academy chooses to

dismiss all of that as part of the past through pushing for the melting pot narrative of

universality and equality of all. Recognizing that this is harmful in that it dismisses the years

of struggle, resistance, and resilience of communities at the margins, the educator can

decolonize their lesson plans by including what is often left out. This inclusivity, specifically

for the students in the classroom who hold identities that have been violated by imperialism

and institutionalization, validates the past, explains the present, and inspires the future. What

we teach in classrooms must cover and encompass the lived realities, traditions, and values of

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[98] Ibid, 30

people around the world. It needs to be more than just understanding of struggle; it needs to come from the experiences and everyday situations faced by those who have struggled themselves. Concrete and contemporary human activity, which is a natural merging of theory and practice[99], must be at the center of the classroom, to not only make it more real and relatable for all, but to probe the criticality of students which allows for a non-mechanic, non-static cycle of simple memorization.

Activist-Scholarship:

Activist-scholarship, or scholar-activism, can be defined as the infiltration of activist (political) ideology and methodology into the academy. Given that the foundations of modern age institutions and the academy did not, and still do not cater to or include knowledge from below, bringing in activist frameworks is thus an act of infiltration. Charles Hale explains how it validates the notion that one does not need to choose between their ethics or morals and wanting to be a scholar, allowing for the imagination of education that is transformative and transgresses walls of access, resources, and knowledge production that the institution holds up. It is the recognition that not only can research and political engagement[100] be mutually enriching, but that the merging of these two realms[101], the scholar and the activist, is an advance towards the goal of liberation. Liberation here can refer in general to freedom from all oppressive systems. More specifically, however, the scholar-activist understands the academy itself to be an institution that is oppressive in nature, both historically and contemporarily. Thus, the scholar-activist recognizes the responsibility to use their positionality in the institution to intervene in it's systems of control. Interventions are

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[99] Freire, *Pedagogy*, 125
[100] Charles Hale, Engaging Contradictions, (University of CA Press, Berkeley, 2008), 2
[101] Ibid, 91

possible if and when the scholar-activist undertakes what George Lipsitz terms a "mastering the ship" approach[102], with the ship being the institution. To master the institution does not mean agreeing with or being part of it, but instead refers to the strategic understanding of one's own oppressor that allows the oppressed to know how to fight against it. There is an inherent understanding of a duality that comes with being a scholar-activist where the researcher/scholar must use their privilege and positionality to aid in the process of equally distributing the power that is consolidated by the academy. Redistribution of power allows for both the legitimization and production of knowledge to be expanded, specifically to those who this privilege has historically been taken away from.

For this empowering reason, the bridging of scholarship and activism can be seen as a threat to the academy because it validates and brings in knowledge from those who have been oppressed or marginalized by the institution itself. It deliberately disrupts the exclusivity of who, physically and ideologically, literally and figuratively, is allowed into the academy. New knowledge is not necessarily created, instead a new, imaginatory intellectual community that is compromised by people within and beyond the academy[103]. All knowledge and experiences are allowed in this community and will be drawn from equitably for the advancement of marginalized peoples and thoughts. It is crucial to highlight here the accountability that the scholar-activist must keep in constant practice when working in such communal spaces. Scholarship and activism to be practiced with, alongside, and for communities outside of academia, not about them. This applies more directly when the scholar is conducting research in a community; one must not fall into the normative savior complex mindset that often defines scholarly work done within by those in the institution.

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[102] Ibid, 94

[103] Ibid, 16

Such circumstances can look like a white scholar whose research is on a non-Western community of color, or male scholar researching a topic that directly affects women. A feminist outlook on theory and research methods can be utilized here through the understanding of scholars such as bell hook's and Collin's conceptualization of feminist theory. The feminist practices they advocate for, that we need currently, is one that does not separate women's struggles from issues of racism, capitalism, and heteronormativity; instead is brings all together to inspire engagement in critical reflection and empower[104] those placed at the bottom. This looks like the need for both changed consciousness and a transformation of political and economic systems for social change[105]. Here, the concept of intersectionality goes beyond thinking only about ways in which identities (such as race, class, sex, gender, etc) can intersect, but how internal and external understandings of oppression, and the transformation of all diverse sectors of society, come together and are needed to create new spaces of empowerment and enrichment. There is an inherent trust that working on the liberation of one's internal community gives power not just to the collective, but to women specifically as well[106]. The education the community will receive must be anti-patriarchal, anti-racist, ant-classist, and thus will lead to the natural dismantling of what bell hooks calls "the white-supremacist, capitalist, patriarchy" within the community that can be translated to larger contexts. Through education comes empowerment, and so feminist thought that is taught and embodied by women and communities of color empowers us by suggesting that there is always a choice to make, and our communities always have the power to act.

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[104] hooks, *Teaching*, 70
[105] Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 221
[106] Ibid, 229

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Collective action[107] is emphasized and prioritized, and is what generates lasting, systemic change.

We are now slowly and naturally progressing into the potential scholar-activism has to affect people and communities on a global scale, which are important to acknowledge and deconstruct. In times of heightened positive globalization rhetoric that is used to mask its harmful effects of neoliberal, capitalist, and white supremacist traits, scholar-activism can be thought of as an outlet to disrupt and expand notions of place and community by bridging multiple local movements together to create global networks of resistance[108]. We can visualize such networks as new, global civil societies[109] who collectively struggle against forms of neoliberal and corporate globalization, albeit perhaps in different ways. Here, the scholar-activist must find their role within these transnational movements, if they are needed in them by the community in the first place. The main goal of a scholar-activist becomes to undo the current forms of knowledge production with a commitment to social justice and fighting against inequalities of power on a larger scale. They work in solidarity with local and global activists, scholars, and community members[110]. To name the work of scholar-activist as solidarity is important because it disrupts the hierarchy that often superiozes institutional scholars. Beyond that, since globalization has had harmful effects on people at local levels that do not make it to scholarly texts, it becomes the scholar-activist's role to expose these impacts on a larger scale. Solidarity here becomes the engagement in transformational, educational spaces and connections that can all be traced back to decolonial pedagogy, which starts in and then expands beyond both the global and local classroom.

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[107] Ibid, 237
[108] Hale, *Engaging Contradictions*, 138
[109] Ibid, 142
[110] Ibid, 147

Directing Potential:

To answer the initial question posed in the beginning of this chapter requires the envisioning of the potential that the future can and will hold. Liberatory education should ideally lead to a liberatory future, one that embraces and uplifts the historically oppressed and neglected, and allows for a way of living and being that is free from power hierarchies, neoliberalism, capitalism, racism, sexism, and so on. Arturo Escobar, in his new book *Designs for the Pluriverse*, alludes to and calls for this future by terming it "autonomia". The future must allow for autonomy of expression, identity, and critical thought and intervention[111]. Organizations and communal work exist in a horizontal manner that includes and values all while embracing any differences instead of erasing them. Different communities and spaces work together and in dialogue with one another to make all of their lives better. There is an emphasis on the sharing of skills and knowledge they one community may have with another for the collective benefit of all. Sharing is done consensually and purely; traditions and knowledge are not stolen from, altered, or enforced on anyone else, which is how institutions and those in power have mainly received and transmitted knowledge. The academy, as previously discussed, has also mishandled cultural differences and relations; instead of embracing differences, the academy has feared them the potential the sharing of differences may have against its power, and thus instead pushed for assimilation to one way of being and thinking.

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[111] Arturo Escobar, Designs for the Pluriverse, (Duke, Durham, 2018), 181

Conclusion:

I was born a Black woman

and now

I am become a Palestinian

Against the relentless laughter of evil

There is less and less living room

And where are my loved ones?

It is time to make our way home

-June Jordan

June Jordan's concluding lines of *Moving Towards Home* serve as the most approporaite coda for this project because June Jordan herself is an example of what transnational feminist solidarity is and should be[112]. As an feminist of color, artist, and poet, and through her many visits to Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon- including in 1982 after the massacre that took place in the Sabra neighborhood of Lebanon which was adjacent to the Shatila Palestinian refugee camp and in 1996 after Israel's attempt to invade Southern Lebanon- she shares the pain and struggles of those suffering from Israeli rule locally, and American imperialism globally. From her visits and personal learning, she challenges American complicity in the violence on Palestinian lives by first recognizing the role she plays in it as an American tax payer. Much like the present-day activists using social media as an autonomous way of sharing their realities, Jordan's platform as a poet allowed her to shed light on the reality of the suffering of others. The usage of terms such as "living room" and "our way home" exemplify her call for collective solidarity; she speaks of suffering collectively to emphasize why resistance must also be a collective act. Although she is Black,

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[112] Therese Saliba, "June Jordan's Songs of Palestine and Lebanon"

she identifies with the Palestinian struggle not only empathetically, but because she realizes that she herself, and the people in her community, have been subjected to similar violence and attack. Thus, only by working in solidarity can true liberation for Palestinians, Black communities, and all oppressed by systems of power be achieved.

The main implication of this work is to start a conversation centered around the following

question: how can this moment of solidarity between Ferguson and Gaza give rise to further and

greater solidarity networks? Here, I want to take this conversation one step further to suggest the

ways in which these networks can make larger implications to society. First, we need solutions

that go further than social media exchanges – where we see the sharing of tactics and coalition

building that answer questions of how to abolish policing, power, prisons. Second, these tactics

and networks must also flood into the gates of academia, and uses its status and privilege to elevate its potential and power. I am speaking to a specific audience, one that is actively working to bridge the gap between theory and practice, academia and on the ground activism: the activist-scholar. The relationship of activist work to academia can come hand in hand: to truly make a change we must document, read, and learn about the history of struggles to understand how and why they manifest today, and what they could add to our

current understanding (or lack of) of networks of solidarity amongst similarly oppressed groups.

The solidarity networks and transnational alliances that have been deconstructed and presented in this thesis are part of what I'm identifying as global imaginaries of resistance. Transnational feminist solidarity should thus be thought of as the necessary foundation for these imaginaries. Manfred Steger's analysis of an argument drawn from Benedict Anderson's account of imagined communities contextualizes social imaginaries not as ideologies or theories, but instead as "implicit 'backgrounds' that makes possible communal practices and a widely shared sense of their legitimacy"[113]. As collectives that transgress social or national borders and boundaries, global imaginaries may not be real in a physical or institutional way, but figuratively feel very real to many. Although they may seem intangible or not powerful, the strength and impact of global imaginaries of resistance specifically must not be dismissed. The alliances between Palestinian and Black communities in the past and present day continue to be proof of how powerful they are and can be. Much of their strength can be attributed to the fact that they deliberately stray away from identifying with or as any specific nation or institution, because they recognize that to do so could confine and control the work they are allowed to do. This also explains the importance of the use of social media and other platforms that people themselves have more agency over, and cannot be controlled by entities in power. The rise of technological modernity has helped and allowed for resistance groups to exist and expand with more agency; which brings us to a question on the role modernity can play in the separation of the state from civil society: In an effort to expose the violence of the state on their own communities, are communities in resistance

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[113] Manfred Steger, *Rise of Global Imaginaries*, pg 6

encouraging a much needed divide of the people and civil society from the very entities

oppressing them? Is this what future networks of solidarity and transnational alliances need

to keep doing to not only be stronger, but also to keep distancing away from the violence of

the state as well? As an example, the solidarity showcased between the Palestinian and Black

communities- that is premised not on nationalism or identity borders, but instead on a deeply

rooted understanding of systems of oppression that intersect to marginalize multiple groups

at the same time- suggest that this divide is not only needed, but is more effective. It allows

for communities to imagine freedom as a place that is not confined or restricted by borders,

but instead is shaped by all the people and movements that struggle against and defy those

upholding these borders. Transnational, global imaginaries of resistance inspire and validate

the need for, and power of, the creation of more liberating, autonomous spaces of bonding,

living, learning, and existing.

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