

**THE IMPACT OF TRANSNATIONAL-INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY ON  
ISRAELI SETTLEMENT POLICY IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN  
TERRITORIES: AN ANALYSIS OF SHEIKH JARRAH NEIGHBORHOOD  
AND THE BOOMERANG-SPIRAL MODEL**

By

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## **ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION**

### **The Impact of Transnational-International Advocacy on Israeli settlement Policy in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: An Analysis of Sheikh Jarrah Neighbourhood and the Boomerang-Spiral Model**

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This dissertation investigates the efficacy of international advocacy in driving domestic policy changes. Drawing on the works of Risse et al. and Keck and Sikkink, the study employs the boomerang-spiral model of transnational-international advocacy, which posits a five-stage framework that enables advocacy networks to achieve the desired policy change. The case study for this dissertation is the Israeli settlement policy in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, which challenges the boomerang-spiral model. The expected policy change was not realized, despite fulfilling the conditions for transitioning through the model's phases. Therefore, the research identifies the factors that hinder the progress through the model's phases to achieve the desired outcome. The study employs a single case study method following the theory-testing approach utilizing multiple data sources and mixed analysis methods, including

quantitative and qualitative techniques. The study's findings reveal that while the advocacy network achieved success by halting specific settlements, a permanent solution was not guaranteed. The Israeli lobby, which supports the settlement policy, and the American foreign policy approach, which balances promoting international norms with regional interests, contributed to this outcome. These findings contribute to our understanding of the constraints of international advocacy in promoting domestic policy change, particularly in cases where powerful interest groups are involved

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## **Chapter 1. Introduction**

### **1.1.Introduction**

The iconic photo of 23 years-old American activist Rachel Corrie standing in front of an Israeli bulldozer that crushed her to death in the Gaza Strip in 2003 became a symbol of international solidarity with the Palestinian people. Corrie was a member of the International Solidarity Movement; a Palestinian-led movement committed to resisting the oppression and dispossession of the Palestinian population through non-violent means. Corrie's tragic death during protesting the demolition of a Palestinian home was shortly followed by the establishment of the Rachel Corrie Foundation for Peace & Justice (RCF) in her hometown Olympia in Washington. RCF became one among hundreds of international organizations that collaborate with Palestinians to advocate for their rights.

The Palestinian people have sought global support for their cause since the beginning of their struggle. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) led the charge in internationalizing the issue aiming to free Palestine, secure self-determination, and return refugees through armed resistance. The PLO played a key role in rallying Palestinians worldwide and garnering support for their cause (Khazen, 1987, p. 39). Upon the establishment of the PLO, Palestine was connected to the larger global anti-colonial movement of the 20th century, which focused on achieving national independence and postcolonial nationalism in the developing world. People from a wide range of countries, including Japan, Spain, Italy, Germany, Argentina, Colombia, Nicaragua, Iran, South Africa, Turkey, and various Arab nations, volunteered to support the Palestinian struggle (Chamberlin, 2012, p.

27). However, the Palestinian social movement's capacity to generate international mobilization weakened by the early 1990s.

The intensity, nature, and purpose of Palestinian international mobilization changed in line with the change in the international environment and the beginning of the peace process between Israel and the PLO (2014، كيالبي). By late 1970s, the colonial era came to an end which declined the global anti-colonial rhetoric and the Palestinian social movement lost its international context. In addition, by early 1990s, the collapse of the Soviet-Union and the Eastern bloc which was a major supporter for the PLO negatively influenced the international support (Massad, 2015). On another level, in 1993–1995, the American mediated peace process resulted in the Oslo Accords between the PLO and Israel through which the mutual recognition led to the two-state solution. Upon signing Oslo Accords, the Palestinian Authority was founded in the aim of state building. The change of the PLO's objectives changed the discourse from the anti-colonial struggle to sovereignty. Therefore, the international support with the PLO was brought down due to the widespread belief in the peaceful settlement of the struggle. Not only the international mobilization was abandoned but also domestic mobilization was eliminated. The grassroots movements were transformed into official NGOs dedicated to support the state-building process under the international liberal values that dominated the international system since early 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Da'na, 2014, p. 130).

The peace process failed as the Palestinian aspirations for statehood were never manifested. Israel pursued its colonial project in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) by gradually fastening its grab on the OPT violating the Palestinians' basic human rights and ruining their hope to achieve self-determination. Therefore, the

second Palestinian national uprising erupted in 2000–2004. The events generated a new wave of international support as a result of the Palestinian international mobilization efforts at different levels. In addition, the national uprising produced a new presidency of the Palestinian authority that totally abandoned the military approach for the sake of bilateral negotiations with Israel. The negotiations reached a deadlock leading the Palestinian authority to adopt the internationalization strategy to join the international mobilization efforts of the Palestinian activists and civil society organizations. The new wave of international advocacy abandoned the Palestine liberation rhetoric and adopted the human rights and international law discourse under the international liberal system and the democratic liberal values.

Israel has committed various egregious violations of international law and human rights principles since it occupied the Palestinian territories in 1967 (HRW, 2021). One of the most notable violations is the Israeli government's adoption of a settlement policy, which involves placing Israeli civilians in towns and villages that it builds in the OPT. This policy results in the confiscation of Palestinian lands and the depletion of their natural resources. As a result, Palestinians are forced to leave their homes and land to new Israeli residents, who are protected by Israeli law and military.

The settlement policy is placed at the core of the Palestinian advocacy efforts as it is one of the main reasons for the violations of the Palestinian rights and the major obstacle for Palestinians self-determination. The advocacy efforts seek to influence the Israeli decision-makers through garnering international support and applying pressure on Israel to uphold international law. The advocacy network expanded to include a notable number of actors across the globe to advance the Palestinians' claims at the international level. The advocacy's efforts fluctuated in generating international

support; while some settlement plans received limited international attention, other high-profile cases advanced the issue on the international agenda.

## **1.2.Problem Background**

On May 2021, the world witnessed a widescale solidarity with the Palestinian people manifested in protests in 150 cities worldwide. The protests started in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in East Jerusalem against the Israeli court ruling in favor of a settler organization that claims ownership to the land in Sheikh Jarrah. The court ruled to forcefully evict the Palestinian residents from their homes in the aim of expanding the Israeli settlement in accordance with the settler organization plans. While the protests expanded across the OPT and in the Arab neighborhoods in Israel, the Israeli police and military oppressed the protestors brutally. An international advocacy campaign was launched and successfully grabbed the attention of the international community at all levels. The majority of governments and international institutions agreed that the Israeli practices are unlawful and urged Israel to halt the eviction of the Palestinian residents.

On March 2022, the Israeli court ruled to halt the evictions of the Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah and that the land ownership dispute between the Palestinian residents and the settler organization will be decided at further notice. The Israeli court will make its final decision after considering the Palestinian residents' documents of ownership. The attorney for the Palestinian residents claims that the Israeli court has never taken the ownership documents submitted by the Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem into consideration. In comparison with other cases, the Sheikh Jarrah case made a significant progress. Sheikh Jarrah is not the only instance in which international advocacy led to halting the Israeli plan of a settlement construction or

stopping a forceful eviction plan.

Over the years 2020–2022, four settlement plans were stopped or delayed; the Sheikh Jarrah settlement, Atarout settlement plan, the Lower Aqueduct plan and most recently the E1 settlement plan. In those cases where the settlement plans were halted, no proof can be found that the plans are completely abandoned. In the case of Sheikh Jarrah for instance, the Israeli court ruled that the forcible eviction of the Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah was ceased. However, it did not offer a long-term solution to the dispute or permit the families who had already been forcibly evicted from their homes to return.

### **1.3. Problem Statement & Research Question**

The problem that this research addresses is the fluctuation in the Israeli behavior in regard to the settlement policy. While the Israeli settlements construction in the OPT is rising steadily since 1967, there is a temporary shift in the Israeli behavior like halting some settlement plans. The question that this study seeks to answer is: what explains the Israeli decisions in halting specific settlement plans while pursuing the settlement policy?

### **1.4. Research Hypotheses**

The research argues that the Palestinian as well as the Israeli anti-settlement movement succeeded in generating a transnational force that created international pressure on Israel that led to halting the settlement plan of Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. However, it failed to generate a long-lasting solution for the issue following the same approach. While the Palestinian international advocacy is able to influence the Israeli decisions at the short-term, it fails to generate a long-lasting solution due to its inability to generate a sustainable international pressure on Israel. The ability of the Palestinian



international advocacy to generate international pressure on Israel is influenced by the United States (US) position towards the issue as it has the highest leverage on the Israeli government and a big impact on the international institutions. Thus, the ability of the Palestinian international advocacy to produce sustainable international pressure is embedded due to two factors; the influence of the Israeli coalitions in the US and the foreign policy approach of the US. To attest this argument, two hypotheses are proven:

H1: The Palestinian international advocacy led to halting the forced eviction of the Palestinians in Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood through generating international pressure on Israel.

H2: The Palestinian international advocacy failed to generate sustainable international pressure on Israel to make a final solution due to the US position that is determined by the impact of the Jewish coalitions in the US and the American foreign policy approach.

### **1.5. Empirical Literature Review**

Scholarly attention wasn't particularly focused on the Palestinian advocacy activities but on the blockage of the opportunity for advocacy. The majority of the literature is concerned about the continuous Western support for Israel that hinders the Palestinians' ability to advance their claims internationally. To begin with, the famous Palestinian scholar Edward Said discussed the Western support for Israel and the Palestinians' misrepresentation in the western sphere. In his book "The Question of Palestine". Said discussed the dismissal of the Palestinian narrative by Americans, Europeans, and Israelis and concluded that Palestinians are portrayed negatively and passively (Said, 1992). Said indicated in his article "Permission to Narrate" that the

Palestinian narrative is denied in the international sphere; in addition, it is always a reaction and defensive to the Israeli narrative which distracts Palestinians from telling their own story (Said, 1984). While Said's work goes back to the late 1970s and 1980s, the argument is still relevant.

Said's argument has been proven through studies on the Western media coverage on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and reflected through the favorable Western public opinion for Israel. According to Noura Erakat, an American human rights activist, misrepresentations of the Palestinian people's history, geography, and identity pervade the major political literature on the Palestinian question (Erakat, 2014). Studies on the mainstream media, particularly the Western media coverage for the major escalations of violence show the bias in favor of the Israeli narrative confirming this argument (Caballero, 2010; Alkalliny, 2017; Conig, 2011; Gaber, Seymour, & Thomas, 2009; Ross, 2003; 2021، خمائسة). It is also proven by the Western public opinion according to Gallup opinion polls, which show that the Western public opinion is more sympathetic with Israel than with the Palestinians (Saad, 2021).

The Western public opinion can be explained by the adoption of the Israeli narrative by the politicians and the mainstream media. Some scholars emphasize the role of the Zionist movement in generating the Western support for Israel in the US and the United Kingdom (UK). Waltz and Mearsheimer discussed the role of the Israel lobby in influencing the US foreign policy in favor of Israel. While Al-Tamimi emphasized the impact of the Zionist lobby in the UK and its role in shaping the discourse regarding Palestine, he mentions a gradual shift towards supporting Palestine in the UK (التميمي، 2016). Alex de Waal (2015) argued in their book "Advocacy in Conflicts" that the Palestinian advocacy in the west is delegitimized due to two reasons; Israel is

considered part of the West which generated support for the state's position. In addition, Israel is victimized in the dominant discourse; thus, hindering the chances for Palestinians to advance their claims as the victim (de Waal, 2015). The US unequivocal support for Israel is manifested in the military and financial aid that Israel receives. The US has provided Israel \$150 billion dollars in bilateral assistance and missile defense funding. On 2022, almost all of the US bilateral aid to Israel is in the form of military assistance; however, from 1971 to 2007, Israel also received significant economic assistance (Sharp, 2022). Besides, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) failed to pass almost all resolutions against Israel as the US vetoed 43 resolution drafts by the UNSC members.

Another argument has been emphasized about the Palestinians advocacy's obstacles that is the variations of the Palestinians collective claims due to the fragmentation of the Palestinian society that resulted from the Israeli practices. In addition, the conflict between the Palestinian actors is a major obstacle. Following this logic, each transnational movement is studied as an isolated advocate or comparison between two or more movements is examined. The International Solidarity Movement (ISM) as well as the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement (BDS) received the biggest attention in the scholarly work since they were the first to be launched during the second national uprising, the biggest and most consistent.

ISM is a movement headed by Palestinians that aims to end the systematic oppression of the Palestinian people through the use of non-violent direct-action techniques. ISM was founded in August 2001 to assist and strengthen the Palestinian popular resistance by calling on international activists to stand beside Palestinians in situations where Palestinians are subject to persistent harassment or attacks from

soldiers and settlers. Unlike ISM that adopts direct-action techniques, BDS movement—that was founded on 2005—is inspired by the South African anti-apartheid campaign calls for action to put pressure on Israel to abide by international law. It is a thriving international movement made up of grassroots groups, academic associations, churches, and unions from all over the world opposing international support for Israeli apartheid and settler-colonialism. Both movements were debated widely in the media and among the Israeli and pro-Israeli circles.

Scholars adopted different ISM approaches to study these transnational movements; some used the organizational structure approach to conclude that the movements' organization structure influences the ability to advance the claims (Seitz, 2003; Beerli, 2013; Morrison, 2015). Other scholars focused on the relational approach and the communication styles of each movement to discuss the ability to expand the network and finally advance the collective claims (Maistrelli, 2018; Koss, 2020; Ayyash, 2015; Dadoo, 2018; Collins J., 2010). Other studies attributed the underrepresentation of the Palestinian narrative to the weak advocacy efforts by the Palestinian actors. They argue that the lack of English media resources is the reason for the Western publics' unawareness about the Israeli Palestinian conflict resulting in weak support for Palestinians (2021، عدوي).

### **1.6. Empirical Literature Limitations**

The major shortcoming of the literature is the absence of investigating the Palestinian international advocacy's impact in making a change on the ground. The majority of studies Emphasizes the constraints that Palestinians face to advance their claims internationally; thus, the Palestinian advocacy's impact is obscured. However, the events on the ground show that in few cases, the advocacy efforts generated results.

The literature emphasizes the argument that the Palestinian advocates are not allowed to advance their claims internationally because of the Western states' support for Israel. The argument is undoubtedly proven by the general trends of the Western states' positions, Western media and public attitudes particularly in the US towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which favors Israel. However, this argument reduces the diverse aspects of the Palestinians' struggle and the changes of the Palestinian collective claims over four decades into a single issue.

The transition from the PLO's rhetoric of liberating Palestine to the Palestinian Authority's demand for sovereignty over the 1967 borders influenced the international community's positions towards the Palestinians' collective claims as the two-state solution is welcomed in the international community. The European states, for instance, declare their support for "Israel's right to exist and defend itself"; however, they oppose the settlement policy adopted by the Israeli government because the policy impedes manifesting the two-state solution. Hence, the opportunity for Palestinians to advance their collective claims internationally depends on the issue they advocate for.

On another level, the other group of studies reflect the fragmentation of the Palestinian actors approaches and claims. By studying each movement's approach, organization structure and frames, the literature does not provide an overall analysis of the Palestinian and international actors as one body advocating for one cause. Indeed, there are variations between the advocacy movements and there are strong oppositions among the Palestinian actors; however, there are issues that all Palestinian actors agree on prioritizing like the Israeli settlement policy. While it's placed in the heart of the advocacy efforts, it did not receive the attention of the scholars. The ISM efforts in recruiting international activists to directly join the Palestinian protestors

mainly in villages that are under threat of confiscation are in fact protesting the settlement policy. The BDS rhetoric focuses on the Israeli apartheid regime which results from the implementation of the settlement policy among other practices.

By focusing on analyzing the grassroots movements, other actors advocating against the Israeli settlement policy are overlooked like the Palestinian authority as well as the Palestinian, Israeli and international human rights NGOs. The Palestinian authority adopted the internationalization strategy since 2011 to join the advocacy network and focused its advocacy against the settlement policy. The human rights NGOs have been actively advocating against the Israeli violations in the international institutions particularly those resulting from the settlement policy. Therefore, this research combines all actors advocating against a specific policy under one network framework and investigates the network's approach that generated a temporary shift in the Israeli decisions regarding particular settlement plans. It also examines the reasons that impede the advocacy network to create a sustainable change in the Israeli behavior.

### **1.7. Research Contribution, Objectives and Significance**

The research fills the literature gaps discussed above by investigating the advocacy network including all actors advocating against a specific policy to conclude the impact of their work. By focusing on the Israeli settlement policy, all advocates efforts are examined at different levels. The self-proclaimed activists, the grassroots movements, the Palestinian, Israeli and international human rights organization and the Palestinian authority and its supportive governments are considered actors within the network. The domestic-transnational-international coalition making is studied through tracing the advocacy activities of the domestic actors and their impact on the international level. Then, trace the international actors influence on the Israeli decision

making to explain two phenomena; the Israeli decisions to halt specific settlement plans, and the consistent expansion of the settlements. Thus, the research objectives are summarized as follows:

- Understanding the Palestinian domestic-transnational-international network building mechanism and the extent of its influence on the Israeli decision makers.
- Concluding under what circumstances the advocacy network fails to fulfill its ultimate goal even though a considerable progress is achieved.

The research investigates the Palestinians ability to influence the Israeli behavior in the OPT through following an alternative approach to the direct military confrontations and the bilateral negotiations. The Palestinian international advocacy has been a topic of debate over the last four decades since the issue was internationalized after the UK announced the end of the British mandate and turned the Palestine problem over to the United Nations (UN) in 1947. Due to the international community's involvement in the issue, proving the legitimacy of the Palestinian collective claims is crucial. The Palestinians' struggle against Israel is described in the international sphere as a war of ideas since the struggle is not a conventional one over territory, but an identity struggle. The human rights scholar Richard Falk stated that "the Israeli- Palestinian conflict is a legitimacy war with both sides trying to demonstrate the legitimacy and morality of their position" (Hallward, 2013, p. 21).

Moreover, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict extends over seven decades witnessing several major transformations in the international system as well as regional geopolitical changes, thus, influencing the Palestinians ability to advance their claims internationally. This research sheds light on the success of the Palestinian international

mobilization that led to halting specific settlement plans, meanwhile addressing the reasons for the impact of advocacy on specific plans and not the policy as a whole.

### **1.8. Theoretical Model and Methodology**

The research applies the Transnational Advocacy Networks (TANs) framework developed by Keck and Sikkink (1998) in their book “Activists Beyond Borders”. The authors argue that when a government violates an international norm, and the domestic communication channels between the opposing groups and the domestic government are blocked, the domestic actors bypass their government and reach out to the Western liberal states and the international institutions. Those international actors pressure the violating government to comply with the international norms. This process works through a boomerang pattern which was incorporated with the spiral model that was developed by Risse et, al. (1999) in their book “The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change”. The spiral model works through a dynamic causal mechanism which show the specific phases that the TANs go through to achieve their ultimate goal. Therefore, the study uses the boomerang-spiral model to analyze the Palestinian TAN advocating against the Israeli settlement policy and trace their activities through the model’s phases.

The boomerang-spiral model explains the causal relation between the Advocacy efforts and the compliance of the target state with the international norms through phases defined by the target state’s reaction to the TANs progress through the model’s phases. Applying the model to the case at hand concluded that halting the Israeli settlement plans corresponds with the Palestinian TAN’s ability to generate international pressure on Israel. Thus, the Israeli decision to halt some settlement plans is explained. However, achieving a permanent solution to the problematic settlement



policy is embedded due to the US' foreign policy approach and the impact

of the Jewish coalitions in the US which support the settlement policy and the actors behind it. Based on the analysis of this case, a modification for the model is suggested that incorporate two variables that impact the transition of the TANs on the model's phases. The counter advocacy as well as the foreign policy priorities of the targeted Western states with leverage over the violating state are influential factors in the success of TANs in achieving their ultimate goal that is the violating state compliance with international norms.

The research follows the theory-testing process tracing approach using a single case study method. Therefore, each phase of the model will be traced using various data sources and analytical methods. The data triangulation method is used to analyze the causal mechanisms between the independent and dependent variables. The main analytical methods used are social network analysis and text analysis.

### **1.9. Scope and Limitations of the Research**

The Palestinian international advocacy's approaches vary between the Palestinian and international actors as well as the issues they advocate for. The research covers the Israeli settlement policy as a case study with the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood as the unit of analysis. Thus, the research is limited to one problem and does not cover the multiple aspects of the Palestinians' struggle or advocacy issues. Besides, the unit of analysis used in the research is located in East Jerusalem; thus, the research focuses on the events in this specific area. The timeframe of the research is limited to the second wave of international advocacy which emerged after the failure of the peace process and the end of the second national uprising i.e., since 2005 until 2023. This wave of international advocacy works within the international law and human rights

principles in the aim of pressuring Israel to comply with the international law. Therefore, this period is marked with the absence of the use of violence as a major means of struggle; yet, it's not completely abandoned by the Palestinian activists and military groups. The violent resistance approach does not fall within the scope of this research.

The limitations of the study are primarily associated with the collection of data. The research relied on Twitter as the primary source of data for examining the construction of the Sheikh Jarrah transnational advocacy network. Although activists used various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok, the study solely focused on Twitter. Therefore, further investigation into the networks and content of other platforms may be necessary. Additionally, some aspects of the analysis required users' self-descriptions, including their classification and online/offline actions. Nevertheless, this information is not accessible to all users, and even when available, it may not be entirely accurate.

Data collection is hindered by social media censorship, which is a significant limitation. Many pro-Palestinian content has been censored on social media platforms, resulting in numerous complaints and the blocking of major accounts by Facebook and Instagram (Paul, 2021). The Arab Center for the Advancement of social media (7amleh) reported 500 Palestinian digital rights violations between May 6 and May 19, 2021, including taken-down content, closed accounts, hidden hashtags, restricted access, and reduced content accessibility. Among these incidents, 250 occurred on Instagram (50%), 179 on Facebook (35%), 55 on Twitter (11%), and four on TikTok (1%) (7amleh, 2021, p. 2). Sada Social, a Palestinian digital rights organization, found 1,200 violations of Palestinians' digital rights on social media in 2021, with 770 in

May alone (Kharroub, 2021). This study used backup accounts as some original accounts were disabled, and the text crucial for analysis was deleted. Additionally, some active nodes in the network were suspended, preventing the collection of further information.

The study requires measuring international public opinion; thus, another challenge emerge as measuring public opinion has its limitations. Since the data source for constructing the transnational advocacy network is Twitter, the most appropriate method to measure public opinion is sentiment analysis which has a set of limitations as it relies on the language used in the text tweets; thus, it relies on the algorithms' contextual understanding. Sentiment analysis algorithms can struggle with understanding the context of a given text, and may miss sarcasm, irony, or other forms of nuanced language. Many words and phrases have multiple meanings, and the sentiment of a given text can be ambiguous therefore influences the results accuracy.

#### **1.10. Chapters Description**

The dissertation includes six chapters. While the first chapter provides an overview for the research project, the second chapter discusses the theoretical literature review and the theoretical model, the conceptual framework, and the methodology in details. The third chapter introduces the case that the research analyzes that is the settlement policy and the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood as the unit of analysis. The third chapter describes the settlement policy and explains how it manifests an international norm violation and discusses the failure of the other pathways to generate a solution like bilateral negotiations and the peace process leading to the transnational advocacy approach.

Chapter four discusses the Israeli settler groups' domestic and transnational

influence on the Israeli and the US governments' decisions. It discusses their ties with the Israel lobby in the US which advocates for Israeli narrative in the US generating a large-scale American support which shaped the US stance towards the events of East Jerusalem. Chapter five explains how the Palestinian advocacy generated international pressure on Israel to halt the settlement plan in Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood by examining the emergence of the Sheikh Jarrah network and its expansion worldwide and how the international community responded to the advocacy efforts. It discusses the international community's position in general and the US position in particular, thus, identifying the obstacles that the Sheikh Jarrah advocacy network faced to achieve its ultimate goal. Chapter six concludes the research findings and the thesis arguments.

## **Chapter 2. Theoretical Literature Review, Conceptual Framework, and Methodology**

### **2.1. Introduction**

The research seeks to explain the Israeli government's fluctuating decisions in implementing the settlement policy adopted since 1967. It argues that the Palestinian actors mobilized an advocacy network which worked at the transnational and the international levels and generated international pressure on the Israeli government that led to halting specific settlement plans. However, the advocacy network failed to generate a long-lasting solution for the settlement policy as it failed to generate sustainable international pressure on Israel due to the US position. The US position is influenced by the Israeli/Jewish coalitions, and the foreign policy priorities of the government. The argument includes three main influencers; the anti-settlement movement, the settler groups, and the US position that explains the ability of both actors to make a change. Hence, theories that explain the actors' advocacy on the domestic-transnational-international levels are reviewed to conceptualize the relation between the Palestinian anti-settlement network and the Israeli government decision making.

To that end, this chapter starts by presenting the theoretical literature review based on which the theoretical framework of the research was identified. While boomerang-spiral theoretical model is applied, a modification is suggested that incorporate two intervening variables which are the Israeli counter advocacy and the US foreign policy priorities to help explain the case at hand. Thus, the conceptual framework is developed based on the boomerang-spiral model and specifications of the case. The last section of the chapter discusses the methodology adopted to implement the

research which is the theory testing process tracing approach using a single case study method. The data description and the analytical methods used are discussed giving a comprehensive understanding for the research project's implementation.

## 2.2. Theoretical Literature Review

The literature on the groups' ability to influence a government's policies went through various waves since the 1950s. In the 1950s and 1960s, two approaches to study citizens' participation were developed within two separate disciplines. Social movements scholars in sociology and interest groups scholars in political science have examined the participation and representation in the decision-making processes (Meyer, 1993, p. 254). Both disciplines investigate how individuals who perceive a threat to their interests collaborate in groups to influence the governments decisions to advance their interests. While both groups have the same motivation for collaboration and pursuit of influencing their government policies, they follow different approaches to achieve that goal. Therefore, both approaches will be discussed starting from social movement theories, and the social movements crossroad between interest groups and transnational nonstate actors is reviewed to define their mobilization paths. Once the distinction between social movements and interest groups is made, the theoretical literature on each group's transnational-international path of influence is reviewed.

Figure 1. below shows the literature review map.

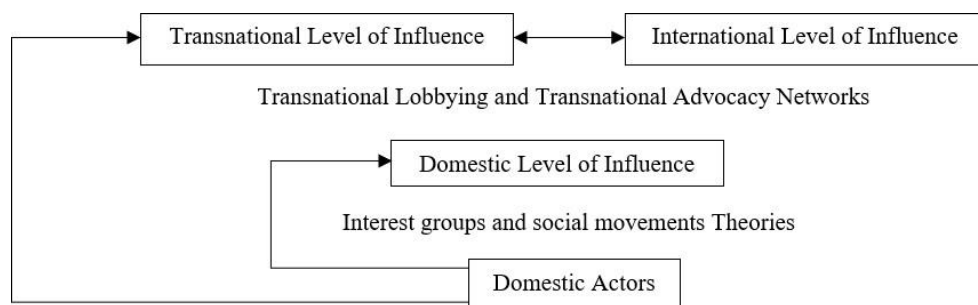


Figure 1. Literature review map

### **2.2.1. Social Movements**

Social movements are informal networks of people, groups and organizations based on common political, ideological and/or cultural identities. These networks increase public support for their collective claims in order to influence the political system through protests (Diani, 1992). Social protests were perceived as a form of expression that is irrational and distinct from the conventional interest groups participation, early scholars in the 1950s linked demonstrations to social breakdown. However, in response to the 1960s' political upheavals, scholars started to view social protest as a political decision made by individuals who were unlikely to succeed through more traditional political means (Oliver, Cadena-Roa, & Strawn, 2003, p. 213).

In the mid of 1960s, the "resource mobilization" perspective was developed, which reframed protests from one of irrational behavior to one involving instrumental actions. The resource mobilization perspective focuses on the mechanisms of mobilization and opportunities to seek redress stressing the rationality of protest politics and the role of organized groups in structuring social movements (McCarthy & Zald, 1977, p. 1212). The resource mobilization perspective scholars placed the protests politics of social movements within the framework of the logic of collective action alongside interest groups following a rational model (Davis, McAdam, Scott, & Zald, 2005, p. 6). However, this perspective does not take into account the impact of the political context on advancing collective claims.

Later, by recognizing that changes in political context influence the availability of resources and incentives for social movement organizations, scholars integrated the role of political context and state action in shaping social protest movements (Mayer

& Imig, 1993). McAdam (1982) developed the political process model through studying the black civil rights movement. While defining a social movement as a political process and not a psychological one, he focuses on the concept of the political opportunity structure (Mitchell, 1983, p. 724). The political opportunity structure focuses on the political context and the institutional structures that shape the opportunities for dissent and channel its expression.

The term “political opportunity structure” was first coined by Eisinger (1973), who observed that cities with a mix of what he called “open” and “closed” institutions— i.e., institutions that are open to citizen claims and participation— have a higher likelihood of experiencing protests. He concluded that activists’ mobilization strategies were directly influenced by the existence of institutional mechanisms of redress (Meyer & Minkoff, 2004, p. 1459). The concept was further elaborated by Tarrow (1983, 1989) who emphasized the continuity between extra-institutional and institutional political action, and the state’s role in channeling dissent. States can repress protest, or channel it into less volatile or disruptive venues. Therefore, movements meet different fates depending on the political institutions they challenge (Kriesi, 1991, p. 3). Tilly and Tarrow (2007) concluded that contentious politics is highly affected by a state’s political regime. The variations in collective action among countries depend on the regime type of the countries. The properties of the regime determine the social movement’s fate.

Two scenarios are derived from the status of the political opportunity structure that determine the fate of the social movements. If the regime properties meet the criteria of the open domestic opportunity structures, the collective claims will be advanced in the political system and the social movement will be able to influence the decision



making. In this case, the social movement develops into an interest group. However, if the domestic political opportunity structure is closed, the chances for domestic activism are diminished. Hence, activists go beyond national boundaries to seek help from international actors to bring pressure on their government. To achieve that, national social movements start building connections with actors across national borders to generate transnational social movements. The two scenarios are discussed in the following sections; first, social movements transforming into interest group; second, the national social movements go transnational.

### **2.2.2. Social Movements and Interest Groups: Common Grounds but Different Routes**

Both of interest groups and social movements follow the logic of collective demand making by a group of people whose shared interests are threatened by lawmakers. However, these concepts are perceived differently. While social movements concept is perceived as a positive phenomenon that expresses aggrieved people's demands for justice, the interest groups concept is heavy with negative connotations. "First shoot all the lobbyists?" is Holyoke's introduction title in his book "Interests Groups and Lobbying". Holyoke (2014) quoted the writer Jan Witold Baran's publication in Washington Post imagining what would Shakespear say about the lobbyists' impact on the US government. Lobbyists have a seedy reputation as well as interest groups. They are perceived as laws manipulators in favor of a small wealthy self-interested group at the expense of the public good.

There is an increasing contention that interest groups do not always act in their members' self-interest. Rather, in certain instances, they serve the public interest, specifically in the case of "public interest groups" (Candler, 1999, p. 242).

Additionally, academics argue that social movements have evolved beyond the idealized notion of impassioned individuals marching through the streets in protest. Rather, they are now structured organizations with recognized leaders whose credibility with the public and ability to garner the attention of decision-makers are the primary indicators of success. As a result, the line separating interest groups from social movements has become increasingly indistinct.

Holyoke discussed the difference between the interest groups and social movements. He indicated that the main difference between the two concepts is that interest groups are privileged by the prevailing system while social movements are still trying to align their interests with the system (Holyoke, 2014, p. 70). Therefore, interest groups are able to work vertically through targeted coalitions within the system and insider lobbying with lawmakers. However, social movements are trying to gain public legitimacy through horizontal networking to expand the public support to create channels within the regime. If this purpose is achieved, the social movements' tactics develop to become like those of the interest groups. Hence, social movements are undeveloped forms of interest groups. To become an interest group, a social movement should align its grievance with social values and policymakers' interests.

### **2.2.3. Interest Groups**

An interest group comprises individuals who share a common interest or a set of related interests. These groups are typically non-governmental organizations that aim to influence legislators to pass laws that enable them to pursue their interests (Holyoke, 2014, p. 10). Members' personal interests can vary widely, reflecting their economic needs, professions, ethnicity, sexual orientation, views on justice and fairness, beliefs, and values.

Scholarly attention was particularly focused on understanding what brings people together in the individualized nations to form those groups. Truman (1951) built his theory of politics and government around the assumption that society is fundamentally composed of groups and that each group is composed of people who share interests. Grounded in Bentley, David Hume and James Madison arguments, he argued that politics is a conflict between many groups or pluralities rather than simple majorities of people. Truman's analysis focuses on the political disturbance or conditions that lead to the creation of the groups, he assumes that any disturbance would create group representation, and conversely, that any group was the result of a political disturbance. Dahl developed the pluralist paradigm arguing that groups develop to represent shared interests, then bargain with political leaders and parties for influence on the policy process. Acknowledging the unequal distribution of resources among groups, Dahl stated that no developed group was without resources.

The economist Olson (1956) in his work "The Logic of Collective Action" relied on the rational choice model to explain the emergence of interest groups. He concluded that people are likely to free ride on group activity believing that while their contribution to the group's activity might have limited impact, it has high costs. However, selective material incentives in return for participation make people join the groups (Lowery, 2015). Clark and Wilson (1961) argued that material incentives do not explain political activism. It is driven by passion to change policy and society. They introduced the purposive incentive where members are attracted by the intangible reward of feeling that their participation in those groups makes a positive difference in societies. They also introduced the solidarity incentive by which people join groups to socialize and meet others who feel strongly about the same issue.

Lobbying, according to Holyoke (2014), is the act used by interest groups to influence and shape public policy. It is a method of communication in which a lobbyist sends a message to decision-makers through a channel, in a specific setting, and with a particular outcome. Lobbyists are professionals who represent citizens' interests before government officials and serve as a channel for information between interest groups and policy makers. Strategic lobbying includes different stages, strategies, and target audiences. After choosing a cause, adopting a stance, and framing it, lobbyists decide on the strategies that include coalition building, insider lobbying, and outsider lobbying. Building coalitions is one of the methods used in lobbying; the impact of lobbying varies depending on whether a message is delivered by a single advocate or a coalition of organizations. An interest group can increase the weight of its demands for policy by forming coalitions with other like-minded groups. Alliances give organizations a way to connect with a larger pool of decision-makers. Working together, interest groups are able to cover a greater range of lobbying targets and coordinate who contacts whom.

Lobbying tactics are chosen based on the degree of shared interests between the interest group and the legislator. When there is a high level of cohesion between the members of the group and the legislator's interests align with theirs, insider lobbying is the preferred strategy. This involves working discreetly with a supportive legislator, often in private meetings, to secure their backing. On the other hand, if an issue is important to the interest group but decision-makers are not yet convinced of its merits, the lobbyist will resort to outsider lobbying. This involves using various tools such as press advocacy, social media, and mass email campaigns to generate public support, and organizing demonstrations outside the legislator's office to increase pressure on

them.

#### **2.2.4. Transnational Lobbying**

Interest groups influence goes beyond their country's national borders to influence foreign governments and international institutions. Interest groups practice lobbying to influence the position of foreign governments in the aim of enhancing their positions in their own countries and at the same time, cut the road in front of the rival groups. Thus, they make coalitions across national borders forming a transnational force. Those transnational forces become able to intervene in policy processes across national boundaries.

Chung-In Moon (1988) developed a typology for transnational lobbying through which he explained the methods that interest groups use to influence foreign governments. Some methods are direct like coopting powerful collaborators or by purchasing knowledge and expertise. Alternatively, they can indirectly influence the policy making of the target foreign governments by coalition formation or grassroots mobilization through mutual interest or ideological and ethnic ties. Hence, he concluded four methods of transnational lobbying: 1) access to power; 2) technocratic; 3) coalition building; 4) grassroots mobilization, the four types are explained in Table 1. below (Moon, 1988, p. 69)

<i>Type</i>	<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Targets</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Tactics</i>
Direct lobbying	1. Power approach	Power brokers, influence peddlers, PR firms, high-powered law firms and consultants (direct hiring by foreign actors via material incentives)	Top decision makers of executive and legislative branches	Access to political power and vital information, revolving-door connections	Personal contact and persuasion, intermediation, public relations
	2. Technocratic approach	Lawyers, technical consultants (direct hiring by foreign actors via material incentives)	Middle-level decision makers of executive and legislative branch, media, interest groups	Legal and technical expertise, revolving-door contacts	Early warning of policy trends, administrative intervention and persuasion, litigation, legal loopholes, advising indirect lobbying
Indirect lobbying	3. Coalition-building approach	Functional private and public interest groups, public agencies mobilized by mutual interests	Top and middle-level decision makers, media, interest groups	Alliance formation via purchasing power, corporate constituents, and mutual interests	Issue linkage, PACs, personal or organized lobbying, grass-roots mobilization, policy intervention and persuasion
	4. Grass-roots mobilization approach	Ethnic or ideology-based public interest groups and/or individuals	Legislative branch, media	Constituency influence and pressure via ethnic ties and ideological solidarity	Letter writing, voting record, personal contacts, campaign contributions, PACs, proxy lobbying, protest

Table 1. Moon's four methods of transnational lobbying

### 2.2.5. Social Movements Go Transnational

While social movements that succeed in creating communication channels with their governments follow the interest groups tactics to influence the decision making, others that fail in this mission are left out of the political process. Thus, they attempt to create an international path of influence through transnational interactions between domestic social movements and foreign actors. Social movements scholars are becoming aware that social movements operate at both the domestic and international levels; therefore, they have been focusing on transnational activism that links the domestic with the global. They examined transnational activism focusing on three areas; the actors engaged in the trans-nationalization activities, the international opportunity structure that is equivalent to the domestic political opportunity structure, and lastly some scholars focus on the dynamic mechanisms and processes through which transnationalization takes place.

To study transnational movements, scholars expanded social movements actors to encompass various transnational players. Some scholars focus on the

Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) and specifically the international ones (INGOs) as the main actors in the trans-nationalization process referring to them as transnational social movements organizations (Smith, Chatfield, & Pagnucco, 1997). Others focus on the activists' networks that include advocates for a specific cause based on common values among the network actors at different levels; individuals, movements, local organizations, international organizations and states (Keck & Sikkink, 1998). Others focus on transnational labor unions activism bridging the gap between the old labor union domestic activism across classes and the new transnational social movements across national borders against the neoliberal globalized capitalism (Waterman, 1998).

Other scholars focus on the international opportunity structure identified in the domestic politics discussing a "multilayered" opportunity structure including a "supranational" layer or a "multilevel polity" or highlight how international pressures influence domestic opportunity structures (Sikkink, 2005). Tarrow and McAdam use the term "scale shift" to refer to the shift of the social movements' activities from the domestic level to the international level through transnational mechanisms adopted by social movements. They explain how social movements mobilize transnationally against international actors (Tarrow & McAdam, 2005). McCarthy and Johnson discuss the sequencing of transnational and national mobilization and the overlapping of the bottom-up vs. up-bottom approaches to understand the sequence of the national-transnational activism (Johnson & McCarthy, 2005).

According to Sikkink (2005), the majority of the literature on transnational social movements perceive international opportunity structures either as targets or constraints not as opportunities or arenas for social movement activity (Sikkink, 2005,

p. 151). The international opportunity structures are constraints when collective claims are introducing a new norm to the international sphere or when the advocacy effort aims at challenging an international norm. In this scenario, social movements seek to open the domestic and international opportunity structures. For example, transnational activism against the neoliberal economic approach try to challenge the international institutions and advocate against their policies. Starting from the Battle of Seattle in 1999 against the free trade of the WTO; the “Put People First” worldwide protests in 2008 against the G20’s planned financial policies to solve the economic crisis; to the Spanish anti-austerity movement in 2011 known as 15-M movement; these transnational advocacy movements are targeting the international institutions. In those cases, the international opportunity structure is not conducive to advance the collective claims which explains treating international institutions as targets.

In most of the literature, transnational social movements against international actors and international institutions are traced at the domestic-transnational level. However, in case the collective claims correspond with well-established international rules, the international opportunity structures are opportunities or arenas for mobilization activities. In this scenario, transnational social movement work within the international institutions i.e., the international level, against the target state, like the case of human rights principles. Therefore, social movement activism is traced at the domestic-transnational-international levels. From this stand point, transnationalism in international relations theory is reviewed to understand the interaction between the domestic politics and the international system in order to trace the domestic-transnational-international interaction.



### **2.2.6. Transnationalism in International Relations Theories**

In discussing the domestic politics and international relations, Peter Gourevitch (2002) classified IR theories into three categories based on the analysis approach they follow. He concluded that while some theories follow a system level analysis, others adopt a unitary level analysis. He also discussed the interactional theories between the unit (state) and the structure (international system). The system level theorizing holds domestic events constant and explores changes in the international sphere. This is the case with realism which holds the rational states constant in order to examine variance within the international system. Waltz's defensive realism (1979) and Mearsheimer's offensive realism (2001) adopt a system analysis that focuses on two key elements of the structure; the anarchic nature of the international system and the distribution of power within the system. The distribution of power is the variable that influences the states' behavior. This is also the case with any other system approach analysis like neoliberal institutionalism and system constructivism.

While neoliberal institutionalism discusses the role of the domestic actors and transnationalism, the actual emphasis is placed on the international level. Haass (1997) for example, emphasized the effect of parties and interest groups on the European integration process by introducing the concept of "spillover". However, the main focus of his study is the evolution of the international institutions rather than the actual interaction of the domestic and international levels. Nye (1990) and Keohane (1984) as well discuss the interdependence and transnationalism; however, the concept of international regime was the main focus of the discussion. Wendt's system constructivism (1999) argues that domestic politics is influenced by international relations as national interests are built on shared ideas rather than material factors, thus

emphasizing the international system's influence on the domestic politics. While neoliberal institutionalism and system/structure constructivism challenge the realist structural argument, neither examined domestic politics.

Contrary to the structural analysis that emphasizes the international environment's impact on shaping states' choices, the unitary level analysis holds the system constant and examine the aspects of domestic politics by examining the domestic factors that shape states choices. The internal aspects include interest groups, institutions and ideas. The interest groups' impact on a state's choices have been widely studied in the field of political economy where internal actors' preferences shape the state's choice in economic policy; for instance, the choice between free trade or protectionism. The constructivist unitary approach focuses on a state's identity as the decisive factor for its policy choices. Identity is shaped by the ideas of the policy makers and the strategic culture within which they operate.

The third analysis approach seeks to explore the interaction of both levels (system and unit) of countries with each other and of transnational forces. This approach seeks to explain the interaction of all elements. According to this approach, institutions, interests and ideas within countries are constantly influencing the same factors of other countries. According to Gourevitch, this area of research is the least well developed in the international relations field (Gourevitch, 2002, p. 310). Within this area of research, the transnational relations and international civil society challenge the state/system (unitary/structure) theories by decentralizing the state as the only unit of international relations. Transnational international relations theorists emphasize the role of the types of transnational groups, the role of norms and new forms of civil society while highlighting the role of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

NGOs act across national borders to push for various goals like environment, human rights, equality for women, working conditions for children and many others. English School theorists place non-governmental organizations (NGOs) within the context of transnational powers, which form a form of civil society on a global scale. According to their examination of the international system, international society, and world society, these theorists suggest that nation states are not the only players in the international system. Although they recognize the significance of non-state actors, they have not pursued any further research on this specific issue (Suganami, 2010, p. 22).

Robert Putnam's article "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games" holds the record for being the most referenced work in the field of domestic politics and international relations. Putnam's contribution is the two-level game approach, which merges domestic-oriented and international-oriented theories with theories of the negotiations. In this approach, Putnam explains that policymaking involves domestic preferences, coalitions, and institutions at the domestic level, while negotiators bargain at the international level to reach a tentative agreement (Putnam, 1988). Putnam's article provides an interactive model that would apply to the transnational social movements. della Porta and Caiani (2009) adopted the model to discuss the role for civil society actors within different approaches to European integration and multi-level policy making. Transnational social movements scholar criticized the model for being state-centric. Sikkink (2005) argues that the two-level game model provides a suitable metaphor for the levels that transnational social movements work within; however, the concentration on the chief negotiator or a government leader as the main mediator between the domestic and the international

levels misses a major point. Transnational social movements do not work through negotiators or governments leaders, they usually bypass the government to engage in direct lobbying (Sikkink, 2005, p. 154).

The holistic constructivist approach of Finnemore and Sikkink links the domestic with the international levels in analyzing the role of norms in creating political change. They proposed a two-level norm game to explain the norm life cycle. Many international norms began as domestic norms and became international like Women's suffrage. On another level, for international norms to influence the domestic politics, domestic political structures should be conducive to compliance with the international norms. Finnemore and Sikkink criticized the macro-level theorizing (system/structural analysis) stating that while they provide good explanation for stability and order, they fail to explain the shifts that lead to system transformations. System constructivism defines international structure as an international distribution of ideas, shared ideas, expectations, and beliefs about appropriate behavior that give the world structure order and stability. However, this approach does not explain political change which is the case with system level theories like realism. Norm shift for ideational theorists is like the shift in the distribution of power for realists, both explain the transformations in the system but do not explain what creates those shifts. To discuss how shifts occur and normative change happen, Finnemore and Sikkink introduced the concept of “norm entrepreneurs” who advocate for a particular norm at the domestic as well as the international levels. They traced the norm life cycle through three stages explained in Table 2 below (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 898); norm emergence which depends on the norm entrepreneurs, norm cascade and norm internalization.

	<i>Stage 1</i> <i>Norm emergence</i>	<i>Stage 2</i> <i>Norm cascade</i>	<i>Stage 3</i> <i>Internalization</i>
<i>Actors</i>	Norm entrepreneurs with organizational platforms	States, international organizations, networks	Law, professions, bureaucracy
<i>Motives</i>	Altruism, empathy, ideational, commitment	Legitimacy, reputation, esteem	Conformity
<i>Dominant mechanisms</i>	Persuasion	Socialization, institutionalization, demonstration	Habit, institutionalization

Table 2. Stages of norms

### 2.2.7. The Boomerang Pattern

Inspired by the norm life cycle constructivist model, in their book “Activists Beyond Borders”, Keck and Sikkink (1998) developed a “boomerang pattern” that explains how social movements pressure their government to change a domestic policy through generating international support. The model in Figure 2 (Keck and Sikkink, 1998, p. 13) below shows that a national social movement in country A when unable to pressure their government to advance their collective claims, link up with NGOs in country B creating a transnational force. The transnational social movement gain support from the government of country B as well as the international institutions who pressure country A to change its policy.

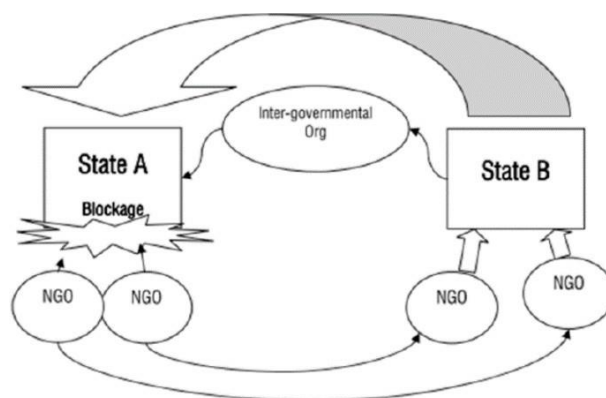


Figure 2. The boomerang pattern

### **2.2.7.1. Transnational Advocacy Network (TANs)**

Keck and Sikkink coined the term Transnational Advocacy Networks (TANs) as agents of change that work through the boomerang pattern. They defined TANs as “forms of organization characterized by voluntary, reciprocal, and horizontal patterns of communication and exchange” (Keck & Sikkink, 1998, p. 8). They are called transnational because they work across two or more states. They called them advocacy networks because the advocates stand for others’ causes or defend a cause or proposition. Advocacy is the main feature of those networks as they are organized to promote causes, principled ideas, and norms, and they frequently involve individuals arguing for policy changes that are difficult to link to a rationalist view of their interests. They identified the major actors of the TAN as follows: international and domestic nongovernmental research and advocacy organizations; local social movements; foundations; the media; churches, trade unions, consumer organizations, and intellectuals; parts of regional and international intergovernmental organizations; parts of the executive and/or parliamentary branches of governments.

### **2.2.7.2. Mobilization Tactics**

Keck and Sikkink developed a typology of tactics that networks use in their efforts that include persuasion, socialization, and pressure. The first and foremost tactic is what Keck and Sikkink call information politics. It is the capacity to produce politically useful information swiftly and credibly and to transfer it where it has the highest impact. TANs give information that would not otherwise be available, from sources that could not otherwise be heard, and they must make this information comprehensible and helpful to activists and publics who may be geographically and/or socially distant. By acting as alternative information providers, nonstate actors can

exert influence. Information is the key to the success of TANs; some social movements fail due to a lack of information (Risse, Ropp, & Sikkink, 1999, p. 22).

Keck and Sikkink introduced three other types of mobilization symbolic, leverage, and accountability politics. Symbolic politics is the capacity to use symbols, acts, or stories to help an audience that is frequently far away understand a situation. Leverage politics is the capacity to enlist strong individuals to influence a situation when lesser network participants are unlikely to have any significant impact. The last type of politics is accountability politics that aims to hold powerful actors accountable for their prior policies or ideas.

Information should be effectively framed since the success of TANs depends on the persuasion process. Frames must demonstrate that the situation is not natural nor accidental, identify the party or parties responsible, and offer solutions. These goals necessitate strong, persuasive statements that appeal to universal values. Networks work to identify issues, inform the media, and inform decision-makers. The information supplied by networks needs to be dramatic and immediate in order to be believable.

Along with Keck and Sikkink's specification for the type of information that should be dramatic and credible, social movement scholars have developed the framing theory that places big emphasis on the information frames' impact on mobilization. The concept of framing suggests that the meanings connected to events, actions, places, and individuals are frequently contested and negotiable, leaving them up for discussion and many interpretations. From this stand point, mobilizing claims are seen as the outcome of interactively based interpretations rather than as naturally occurring sentiments or as automatically developing from identifiable material conditions. The

act of framing conceptualizes this signifying effort, which is something that social movement leaders, participants, as well as the media, all often engage in (Snow, 2013, p. 393). As a result, the way TANs convey information inside frameworks for collective action makes it easier to mobilize people to support and grow the network.

The framing perspective illustrates how the information is presented to win over supporters, but the communication pathways still require more clarification. While the Keck and Sikkink model contends that international NGOs serve as the primary channels for communication, Tarrow (2005) provided a more thorough explanation for these channels as part of the process of scale shift. Tarrow asserts that information diffusion process is an essential part of the scale shift process. Relational diffusion, which is the dissemination of knowledge through established lines of engagement through trust networks like the case of international NGOs, is one of the three avenues for diffusion. Nonrelational diffusion happens when users have few or no social connections, as is the case with traditional and digital media. Mediated diffusion describes a series of movements made up of people who are located within a geographic cluster and which connects other clusters via a few weak links. Tarrow agrees that the relational dissemination, as proposed by Keck and Sikkink, was traditionally the primary channel of communication. Information regarding collective action does, however, move along the other two paths in the age of widespread immigration and low-cost, easy transportation and communication (Tarrow, 2005).

In the field of communications, a new logic was found for explaining large-scale mobilization that corresponds to the current technological and communications developments on one hand, and the transformation of the modern societies on the other hand. The logic of connective action was developed by Bennet & Segerberg (2012)



who argue that the modern societies and communication tools enforced a new mobilization style. The increasingly individualized societies resulted in a lack of unions and few public sectors resulting in a separation of individuals from civil society limiting the chances for collective action and paving the way for connective action. In the connective action, individuals who are not affiliated to any political party, organization, movement or union are mobilized without any organization. The mobilization process takes place in the virtual sphere where social media platforms work as organization structures.

In collective action, digital media reduce communication costs but do not replace conventional organizations, but in connective action, communication networks constitute organization. Thus, in the connective action framework, the movement structure is a decentralized horizontal one due to the lack of a central vertical organization. The digital communication platforms function in the same way an organization is functioning. Bennet and Segerberg (2012) argue that the personalization of politics results in inclusive personal action frames that travel easier online than the collective action frame. The personal action frames are developed based on the individuals' own terms where they do not need to follow instructions from an organizing movement.

Using the mobilization logic, Bennet and Segerberg (2012) distinguished three different network types. The first category is organizationally enabled networks, which follows the logic of collective action by relying on brokering organizations to promote collaboration and reduce gaps. The Keck and Sikkink's model utilizes this type of network. Connective action networks are self-organizing systems without a centralized organizational actor and use digital media as organizational agents. Personal action

frames are used as the transmission units via reputable social networks in place of collective action frames. Between these two extreme network types lies the third, or hybrid, network type. In order for loose public networks to evolve around personal action frames, formal organizational actors stop projecting their objectives, political brands, and collective identities. In the digital media age, the traditional organizationally brokered networks used by Keck and Sikkink are increasingly changing their mobilization strategies into a hybrid type to be successful (Bennet & Segerberg, 2012, p. 755).

#### **2.2.7.3. Stages of Influence**

The TANs' impact begins by creating issues and setting the international agenda by generating media attention, discussions, hearings, and gatherings on issues that had not previously been the subject of public debate. When TANs encourage governments and international organizations to support international declarations, they have an impact on discursive stances. Networks also seek to alter institutional practices that could later affect policy. The networks' primary goal is to alter international opportunity structures in their advantage in order to advance their claims and garner support on a global scale. The target state ultimately complies with international norms due to pressure from the international community (Keck & Sikkink, 1998).

#### **2.2.7.4. Boomerang Pattern Shortcomings**

The boomerang pattern has been the cornerstone in the domestic/international interaction and transnational social movement studies. Keck and Sikkink stated that this model serves as an alternative to Putnam's two-level game model that provides an explanation for the transnational non-state actors (Sikkink, 2005, p. 154). While the model has been widely adopted to analyze transnational social movements in cases

across the globe, it was not free of criticism. The major criticism for the model is that the Western states are the determinant of the success of the work of the TANS. If the Western states are not willing to pick up the TANS call, the model collapses. The second criticism is the imbalance of power between states; the target state's vulnerability is the other determinant of the success of the TANS' work; in case the target state is powerful, TANS would not be able to make a change. The boomerang model depends on the socialization and persuasion tactics that relies on argumentative discourse which was criticized by the rational theories. In addition, it does not provide an insight into the chain of influence that starts from the international community on the target state. In other words, the effectiveness of the TANS, which is the key variable for the political change is not clear. The causation between the TANS activities and the progress of the target state towards compliance with international norms is hard to be proven. In addition, the emergence of the issue on the international agenda is not necessarily due to the TANS work but might be due to other factors.

The boomerang model was incorporated into the spiral model, which was developed by Risse et al. (1999) as a more dynamic conception of the consequences of domestic-transnational-international links on domestic political change. The spiral model overcomes the criticism by the rational theorists by incorporating a rational explanation for the target state to comply with the international norms through three types of social action: instrumental adaptation, argumentative discourse, and institutionalization. In addition, it specifies the causal mechanisms by which TANS work reach out to the international level and how the international actors influence the domestic opportunity structures which led to compliance with international norms.

### **2.2.8. The Spiral Model**

Risse et al. (1999) introduced the five-stage spiral model in their book “The Power of Human Rights”, which outlines the stages and methods by which international norms, particularly human rights are socialized into domestic contexts. The first stage is the repression and activation of network. This stage goes along with the boomerang pattern where the domestic oppressed groups seek transnational allies to create a transnational force. Rise et al. (1999) emphasize the importance of acquiring information at this stage as it is the condition for the transition into the next stage. The second stage is denial which is the initial response to allegations of a violation by the violating state. At the denial stage, TANs pursue leveraging various actors, including decision-makers in liberal nations, the general public, and major human rights organizations.

The lobbying process might take the shape of a discursive argument that appeals to Western nations’ moral sensibilities. Democratic countries are urged to denounce the activities of the norm violating regimes by reasserting their identity and liberal principles. They can run the risk of being publicly shamed if they do not take a stand. The discursive criticism leads to the next phase that is tactical concessions. The violating state respond with hollow language and tactical concessions to the standards. In this phase, the violating governments seek instrumental or material objectives, and they adapt their behavior to international norms without necessarily believing in the norms’ legitimacy. Those behaviors are largely consistent with rational choice theories about humans as expected utility maximizers.

Actors employ a number of strategies to persuade audiences, including emotional appeals, symbolism, and the extension of logical arguments. Persuasion and

socialization frequently use techniques such as shaming and denunciations, which are aimed at isolating or embarrassing the target state rather than changing minds with logic. Pressures, arm twisting, and punishments are all examples. The moral strength of norms becomes binding with time, and target governments become immersed in their own rhetoric. International norms become prescriptive, absorbed, and start to influence behavior. The spiral model is used to operationalize the norm socialization theoretical framework and identify the dominant mode of social interaction in each phase (adaptation, argumentation, institutionalization). Figure 3 below shows the five phases of the spiral model according to Risse et al. (1999).

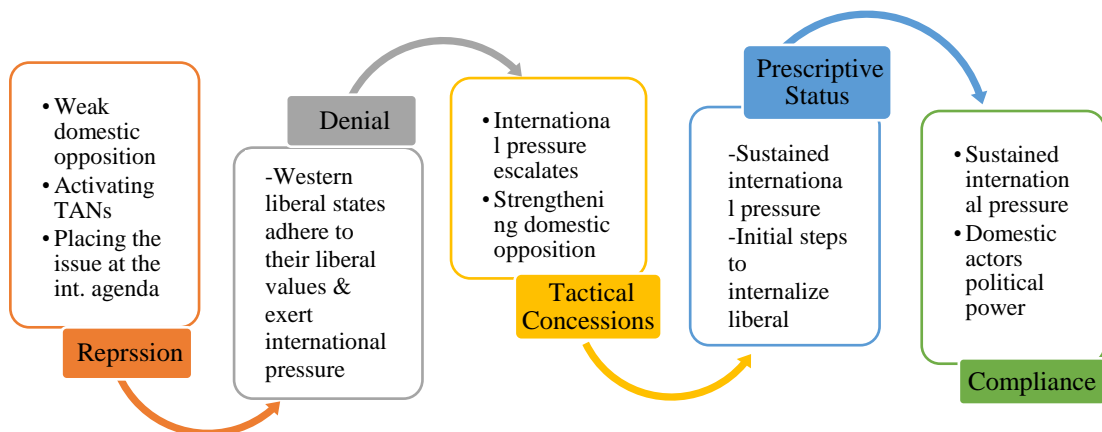


Figure 3. The spiral model five phases

### 2.2.8.1. The Spiral Model Shortcomings

Several shortcomings are found in the spiral model. First, it is criticized for being overdeterministic and idealistic assuming that once the target state makes progress towards compliance with international norms, there is no turning back. It also treats human rights practices of a state as homogenous block not allowing for disaggregation of different practices. It also does not consider the target state's security threats that shape its repressive policies (Shor, 2008).

Second, the spiral model was also criticized for its lack of integration for the role of the domestic actors in the main processes; the domestic-international process and the international-domestic process. The spiral model traces the internalization of the international norm focusing on the transnational actors' role in raising the issue at the international agenda. Then, focuses on the role of the international actors in influencing the target state through five phases defined by the target state reaction to the international actors' influence. Hence, the role of the domestic actors in creating the transnational force is obscured (Shahbari, 2019). Likewise, the domestic factors that lead to the internalization of the human rights norms are absent from the model. It is important to comprehend who, within the state, is feeling the pressure and acting to demand a policy response from their government when TANs generate worldwide pressure. Kahler (2000) researched the effects of international pressure, whether it came from civil society, NGOs, or open state diplomacy, and created a model known as "compliance constituencies" that clarifies the domestic compliance issue and the political process around it (Gourevitch, 2002, p.320).

Third, the spiral model emphasizes the role of international actors in internalizing the international norms and changing the identity of the target state through the international pressure. However, the model ignores the geostrategic importance of the target state in terms of its vulnerability to the international pressure. Countries with importance to the western powers are immune to the international pressure. The cases of Israel, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and others demonstrate that the spiral model is not applicable in cases where norm violating states enjoy geostrategic vitality for the western powers (Shahbari, 2019). Therefore, contrary to the spiral model's authors claim that the model is "generalizable across cases irrespective of cultural, political,

or economic differences among countries” (Risse, Ropp, & Sikkink, 1999, p. 6), it was criticized for lacking the ability to provide comprehensive explanation for all oppressing regimes.

### **2.3. Conceptual Framework & Theoretical Contribution**

Three studies investigated the Israeli government compliance with human rights principle applying the spiral model. The first investigation was implemented by Laursen (2000) to examine the Israeli supreme court’s judgment in 1999 on the use of “moderate physical pressure” in interrogating Palestinian detainees. The paper concluded that the court decision to reduce torture against detainees is a tactical concession; however, eradicating the use of force against detainees depends on the Israeli public attitude. In other words, the lack of domestic pressure is the reason for the lack of incorporating human rights principles in Israel.

Shor (2008) concluded that the main strength of the model lies not in explaining the general change in the behavior in a given country, but rather in accounting for the process of change in specific, at times isolated violations. This claim is demonstrated in the Israeli case through three practices of human rights violations in the OPT: the erection of the “barrier”, torture, and human shields. Shor focused on the Israeli democratic nature and that it is considered a Western industrial state unlike the cases analyzed by Risse et al. (1999) which despite their cultural, economic and geographic variations share the same features of authoritarian regimes. Shor argued that Israel is struggling with the same issue that the majority of democratic countries are facing which is terrorism. Democratic countries are trying to face terrorism at the same time minimalizing human rights violations which according to Shor explains the absence of incorporating human rights in Israel fully but minimalizing some violations.

Shahbari (2019) studied internationalization as a tool for Palestinian Arab minority in Israel to advance their circumstances. The study aimed at investigating if the minority was able to achieve its objective of redress for their grievances. The study applied the boomerang-spiral model to the internationalization process and concluded that the reasons for the lack of integration for the Arab minorities are the Israeli state's Jewish identity and the Israeli government's security concerns.

The three studies conclude that the lack of Israeli compliance with international norms is explained through domestic factors; the absence of domestic pressure represented by the Israeli public opinion, Israel's security threat represented by terrorism, and the Jewish identity of the state. While all studies emphasize the geostrategic importance of Israel for the US which allows the state to bypass international pressure, this particular factor was neither studied thoroughly nor considered a major constraint for the TANs to progress along the spiral model's phases and achieve their objectives.

This research applies the boomerang-spiral model to the Israeli/Palestinian case to trace the impact of the Palestinian led TANs on the Israeli government's decisions in regard to the Israeli settlement policy in the OPT. This dissertation argues that the Palestinian led TAN generated international pressure on Israel that led to halting specific settlement plans. However, the TAN failed to generate sustainable international pressure to reach a long-lasting solution or alter the policy as a whole. The reason for the TAN's inability to generate sustainable pressure is the position of the US which is determined by the Israeli advocacy and lobbying activities in the US as well as the American foreign policy priorities.

To investigate this argument the study adopts the boomerang-spiral model to



examine the Israeli government behavior in regard to the settlement policy and the role of the anti-settlement actors in influencing the Israeli government decisions. The model is insightful to investigate the transnational advocacy network's work internationally to bring international pressure on a violating state to comply with international law, including the human rights principles. While the settlement policy per se is not a violation for human rights, it is a violation for international law and it has implications that demonstrate flagrant violations for the human rights principles.

Keck and Sikkink's boomerang pattern and Risse et al.'s spiral model are situated within the scholarly discourse that theorizes the transformation of international norms into universally recognized international laws, a process facilitated by three distinct mechanisms: "norm entrepreneurship," "norm cascades," and "norm bandwagons" (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 893). The boomerang-spiral model elucidates how firmly established international norms, having attained the status of universal international laws, are internalized within states whose governing bodies initially contest the validity and universality of international laws, including principles of human rights and international treaties and conventions.

By employing the boomerang-spiral model in the context of Israeli settlement policy, this research contributes to the existing body of literature on the diffusion process of international norms by identifying the factors that impede the internalization of international law in states possessing geostrategic significance to Western liberal states, which hold considerable influence over the non-compliant states. Consequently, this study offers an explanation for the lack of implementation of ostensibly universal international laws in specific cases, thereby raising questions regarding the true "universality" of international laws.

In light of the inherent limitations of the spiral model in elucidating the disparities observed in states' adherence to international norms and legal frameworks, Risse et al. embarked on a comprehensive re-evaluation of the spiral model in 2013 within the context of their seminal publication entitled "The Persistent Power of Human Rights: From Commitment to Compliance." In this revised body of work, particular emphasis was placed on examining the behaviours of dominant global powers, such as the US and China, entities that have demonstrated relative immunity to external international pressures. By addressing the issue of non-compliance by major powers with international norms, such as the prohibition of torture in the US during the administration of George W. Bush, the authors substantiated the continued validity of the spiral model, accentuating the influential role played by the target government regime. Specifically in the case of the US, the authors contend that compliance with the prohibition of torture materialized subsequent to Bush's departure from office.

Furthermore, Pallas and Bloodgood (2022) have similarly undertaken a reassessment of the boomerang pattern, aiming to account for the consequential transformation of the international order arising from shifts in power dynamics. Their publication, titled "Beyond the Boomerang: From Transnational Advocacy Networks to Transcalar Advocacy in International Politics," posits that the evolving global system has had a profound impact on the modus operandi of TANs. Whereas previous advocacy endeavors predominantly targeted Western audiences, where Western states held the central agency in influencing non-compliant states, this influence pattern was delineated as south-north-south. However, the contemporary paradigm is characterized by a south-south influence mechanism, devoid of intervention from Western states.

Both revised works critically address significant deficiencies inherent in the boomerang pattern and the spiral model, primarily pertaining to the TANs' incapacity to accomplish their objectives in situations involving impervious states, such as great powers, which are immune to international pressure. Moreover, these revised works highlight the absence of Western states' influence within the contemporary international system, which has witnessed the emergence of well-established institutions within Southern states capable of effectively responding to advocacy efforts. However, it is important to note that both revisions overlook instances where states possessing geostrategic significance, despite violating international norms and laws, maintain a level of vulnerability to international pressure, yet manage to evade accountability through the acquisition of support from Western leverage states, which despite the change in the international distribution of power, they still maintain the highest leverage over violating states.

By applying the boomerang-spiral model to Israel, the dissertation addresses a case of a violating state, which despite its vulnerability to international pressure, enjoys impunity to international pressure due to the US support. The dissertation utilizes the Israeli settlement policy to overcome the shortcomings of the model discussed earlier. The model was criticized for the deterministic nature of the model's phases treating human rights principles as whole unaggregated package, as well as the absence of taking into consideration the violating state's security concerns. The research does not discuss the incorporation of the Israeli government to the human rights principle as a whole. Thus, allowing to trace a particular policy which gives a precise understanding for the Palestinian led TAN's work and impact. In addition, studying the settlement policy holds the variable of the Israeli security concern constant as this particular

policy is declared to be adopted for ideological reasons as no security justification would apply to it.

To overcome the pitfall about the spiral model's obscuring the role of the domestic actors in creating a transnational force, the research combines the boomerang pattern with the spiral model. The boomerang pattern provides a detailed explanation for the domestic actors' activities that create a transnational force while the spiral model traces the activities of the TAN after the issue is placed at the international agenda until the target state's compliance with international norms. The resulting boomerang-spiral model traces the events starting from the norm violation by the Israeli government to the stages of its reaction to the TANs efforts. On the other hand, the model's gap in regard to the absence of the role of domestic factors in internalizing the international norms have been filled by the studies on the case of Israel particularly by Shor (2008) who unpacked the Israeli democratic regime's role in regard to internalizing the international norms emphasizing the role of the Israeli supreme court as the main actor that feels the international pressure and takes actions towards compliance.

The model was criticized for its inability to explain the cases where the violating states enjoy a geostrategic vitality for the western liberal states; thus, enjoying impunity against international pressure (Pace, 2001). Based on this argument, the geostrategic importance of the state of Israel to the US explains Israel's impunity to international pressure; thus, Israel's ability to bypass compliance to international law. This argument implies that advocacy does not matter. By undermining the impact of international advocacy claiming that the states' compliance to international law can be attributed to other factors (Schwarz, 2007). This study suggests that while this

criticism is valid, it cannot discard the role played by the advocacy networks in generating behavioral change in the violating state, nor does it offer a comprehensive explanation for the behavior of geostrategically important states for the Western liberal democracies. The case of apartheid South Africa challenges this argument; while the Advocacy network against the South African regime was expanding, the international community responded by sanctions and boycotts for the apartheid South African regime which was an ally to the US. The US was the last to join the international community's pressure on South Africa due to its geostrategic importance. However, the US had no choice but to join the international community, which eventually led to the change in the South African state's identity (Risse, Ropp, & Sikking, 1999, p. 94).

The research argues that advocacy matters and it is able to change the states' behavior to comply with international law. However, the model's inability to explain the cases of geostrategically vital states to the Western liberal democracies is attributed to its dismissal for two prominent factors. First, the material-based counter advocacy implemented by the interest groups of the violating states that build transnational coalitions able to face and undermine the norm-based advocacy claims within the Western liberal states i.e., at the transnational level and consequently at the international level. Second, the foreign policy approach of the influential Western liberal states that have priorities that vary between promoting international norms and pursuing their own security agendas.

The model's overlooked shortcoming is treating the Western liberal states' adherence to the liberal international values as given. The model as well as its criticism consider the violating state's reaction as the dependent variable and the TANs activities as the independent variable while holding the variable of liberal western

states' reaction to the violation constant (either the liberal states adhere to their liberal values or totally discard them). Figure 4 below shows the set of variables according to the boomerang-spiral model.

TANs Independent variable	Violating state's behavior Dependent variable	Western states' positions Constant
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Figure 4. The boomerang-spiral model's variables

However, this study suggests that the Western liberal state's reaction to international law violation is not constant, rather it is an intervening variable that varies based on the leverage Western states' foreign policies priorities. Thus, the TANs seek collaboration with the foreign governments and the international institutions not only to pressure the violating state, but also the government of the state with the highest leverage over the violating state. Figure 5 below shows the suggested set of variables of this study.

TANs Independent variable	Western states' positions Intervening variable	Violating state's behavior Dependent variable
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Figure 5. The study's variables

The foreign policy approach of the US—which is the state with the highest leverage over Israel, and one of the biggest influential actors internationally—is key determinant for the impact of the Palestinian-transnational advocacy. The American foreign policy approach is defined as a balance between the liberal ideology that is concerned with promoting international norms and a realist approach that prioritizes the security and national interests of the US (Forsythe, 2012). This approach explains the fluctuation in the American pressure on Israel that is translated in the Israeli fluctuated behavior in regard to the settlement policy. The American security objective prevails over the international norms promoting objective which explains the inability

of the Palestinian-transnational advocacy to generate a long-lasting solution. The US is a liberal democracy that cannot simply ignore the international and domestic public opinion and the international criticism. Hence, the Israeli/Jews interest groups with material-based counter advocacy is the gatekeeper that impedes the flow of the norm-based advocacy collective claims. Thus, the US is free to prioritize its security concerns as long as the domestic and international criticism does not escalate thanks to the Israeli/Jews coalitions gatekeeping. However, in situations where the norm-based advocacy is able to bypass the material-based counter advocacy's filters, the US joins the international criticism of Israel leading to temporary changes.

To prove the above discussed argument, the Palestinian as well as the Israeli advocacy are examined to understand their influence on the US, international community as a whole and finally the Israeli government's decisions as shown in Figure 6 below. The Palestinian norm-based advocacy explains halting the settlement plans in East Jerusalem particularly the Sheikh Jarrah settlement. To analyze the Palestinian-transnational TANs, the boomerang-spiral model is applied. However, the Israeli/Jews coalition material-based advocacy in the US explains the US position that influences the international community's position and the Israeli government behavior which explains the absence of a sustainable international pressure on Israel. To understand the Israeli/Jews coalitions impact, the interest groups theories and transnational lobbying tactics are applied.

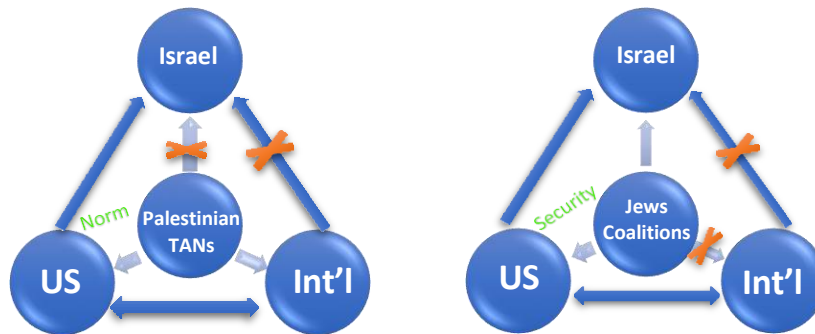


Figure 6. Palestinian and Israeli actors domestic-transnational-international interactions

By analyzing the case of the Israeli settlement policy, the impact of the advocacy efforts in cases of states with geostrategic importance for Western liberal democracies are unpacked. By understanding what explains halting particular settlement plans in East Jerusalem, the research identifies the conditions for the advocacy efforts success in those particular cases. At the same time, the research investigates the reasons for the advocacy efforts inability to generate a long-lasting solution following the same approach. Hence, the constraints for the international norms-based advocacy efforts are identified. Thus, the applicability of the boomerang- spiral model to geostrategic vital states is examined and the conditions for its success or failure can be generalized.

## 2.4. Methodology

The methodology description provides an in-depth discussion of the research design, data description, and analytical tools employed in the study. It aims to provide a clear understanding of the methods and techniques utilized to collect and analyze data, as well as the overall approach to conducting research.

### 2.4.1. Research Design

The research follows the theory testing process tracing approach through a single case study method. The theory to be tested is the boomerang- spiral model applying the case of the Israeli settlement policy in the OPT with the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood



as its unit of analysis. The model provides phases through which the domestic oppressed group activate a transnational advocacy network and generate international pressure that influences the behavior of a violating state until it complies with international law. The model was built on a causal mechanism process in which phases transform under determinant causal conditions. The availability of specific conditions leads to the move from one phase to another. Based on the model, the following set of conditions were generated, shown in Table 3 below.

Initial causal conditions	Intermediate causal conditions	Expected Outcomes
-International norm violation;  -Blockage of the communication channels between the domestic actors and the target regime.	-Transnational mobilization of the domestic actors creates Transnational Advocacy Networks (TANs) that place the issue on the international agenda if the international opportunity structures are open;  -The International community pressures the target state; -The target state reacts by 4 phases: denial, tactical concessions, prescriptive status, and internalization.	-The target state complies with the international norm and change its violating policies.

Table 3. The set of conditions generated from the boomerang-spiral model

The research traces the model's phases starting from identifying the international law violation represented by the settlement policy. Thus, the Palestinian aggrieved group as well as the Israeli anti-settlement movement mobilized a transnational force that was able to raise the issue at international agenda. The international criticism of Israel was first faced with denial by the Israeli government but then led to halting the high-profile settlement plans which according to the model is considered a tactical concession. However, the TANs mobilization was unable to generate sustainable

international pressure. Therefore, no long-lasting solution for the settlement policy was achieved. Based on the research hypotheses and the model's phases, the following set of variables were identified:

Independent variable (IV) = Palestinian TANs  $\longrightarrow$  Dependent variable (DV)  
 = The Israeli government decisions regarding settlement policy

Between those variables the causal mechanism is traced generating a detailed sub-set of variables:

1. IV = Sheikh Jarrah TAN  $\longrightarrow$  DV = Halting the forceful eviction  
 $\uparrow$

The intervening variables are: a) Mobilization Tactics: network's type, size, frames, and communication channels.

b) international opportunity structures: public opinion, mainstream media positions, international donors' support, and discursive positions of foreign governments and international institutions.

2. IV = Sheikh Jarrah TAN  $\longrightarrow$  DV = Reversing the settlement expansion  
 $\uparrow$

The intervening variable of international opportunity structure at this stage includes:

a) Israeli settler groups counter advocacy and b) American foreign policy priorities.

Table 4 below shows the variables as well as the data used and the analytical methods followed.

Independent Variable	Intervening Variables		Dependent Variable
Sheikh Jarrah TAN	1. Mobilization Tactics: network's type, size, and frames		Halting Evictions
	Data	Analytical Method	

	Twitter network	Social network analysis & topic modelling	
	2. International opportunity structures: public opinion, mainstream media positions, foreign governments positions		
	Data	Analytical Method	
	Twitter network, Media coverage & online publications	Sentiment analysis, term frequency analysis & thematic analysis	
Sheikh Jarrah TAN	Israeli settler groups counter advocacy and US foreign policy approach		Reversing settlement plan
	Data	Analytical Method	
	News media & opinion articles	Qualitative content analysis	

Table 4. Research variables, data and analytical method

#### 2.4.2. Data Description and Analytical Methods

The research adopts the data triangulation method to attest the hypotheses using various data sources. The first hypothesis includes two areas of investigation; the mobilization tactics and the international opportunity structures. To analyze the mobilization tactics, the advocacy network was first identified based on the actors' presence in the virtual sphere which gives an insight to the network's size, type, and frames. The data was extracted from Twitter as well as the involved actors' publications on their official websites and press releases.

From Twitter, the data was collected using #savesheikhjarrah, #Sheikhjarrah and #savesheikhjarrahneighborhood from 9 February 2021 to 19 December 2021. These particular hashtags were used to focus on the case in question as those hashtags were the most used during the events of Sheikh Jarrah. The activists deployed all available social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok and others. For the

purpose of this research, Twitter was used to extract text content since it was widely used by the English-speaking activists and less censored. Only the English tweets were sampled as the purpose of the research is to analyze the international activists' network where English is the most common internationally spoken language.

The period of analysis was 9 February 2021 to 19 December 2021 (inclusive). The timeframe was selected due to the increased tension and the escalation of violence that reached its peak in spring 2021. Twitter data was extracted using the Tweet Binder tool (a total of 110,861 tweets consisting of 16,365 original tweets and 94,469 retweets). Ethical concerns arise from the study of user data in social media research, mainly in terms of privacy and accuracy of information among others. Only publicly shared information by Twitter users was used in this research. Furthermore, the research does not aim to provide factual information about the events through social media data; instead, it analyzes data presented by users to assess how the actors framed the issue in question.

The second area of investigation is the international opportunity structures which is measured by the public opinion, mainstream media positions, international donors' support, and discursive positions of governments and international institutions (Sikkink, 2005). To analyze each component of the international opportunity structures, different datasets were used. The public opinion was analyzed using the twitter network sentiments; thus, text tweets comprise the data. To conclude the mainstream media positions, international news media outlets coverage for the issue is used. Four main international media outlets' coverage of the events were analyzed; CNN, BBC, MSNBC and Fox News. Those media outlets were chosen since they are the most popular in the Western world, particularly in the US, according to a report

published in 2023 by Statista titled “Leading cable news networks in the US in February 2023, by number of primetime viewers”, (Watson, 2023). Furthermore, those media outlets represent different ideologies. The text news coverage of the events in Israel and the OPT throughout May 2021 was analyzed as this period marks the highest escalation of events.

For the international donors support analysis, publications of the actors’ websites were collected. Finally, to analyze the discursive positions of the foreign governments, released press statements on the states’ ministries of foreign affairs official websites were collected. In addition, meetings coverage of the UNSC between 27 May 2021 and 8 August 2022 were also collected. Twenty states made statements within the specified period on the UNSC meetings and fifty-five official statements were found on the government’s websites, seventy-five statements were analyzed in total.

The second hypothesis includes two intervening variables that require investigation. The counter advocacy of the Israeli settler groups and their transnational counterparts in the US on one hand and the US foreign policy approach on the other hand. To investigate the transnational settler groups’ counter advocacy, data from the actors’ official websites was collected as well as news media and opinion articles are used. The discussion of the US foreign policy approach relied on the published scholarly books and articles.

#### **2.4.2.1. Social Network Analysis and Topic Modeling**

A review of the methods used to analyze Twitter networks reveals a range of approaches varying from traditional methods to big data analysis tools. Social network analysis was implemented in this study as it focuses on the relational aspect of the network to map the key actors and identify the information flow patterns by utilizing

Twitter users as the unit of analysis. However, the Text Tweets defined the interactions among the users within the network. Due to the large volume of data, machine learning was used to carry out topic modeling for the Text Tweets as a quantitative method of recognizing the issue framing of Twitter users.

To examine the organizational characteristics of the campaign and to map the key actors, the network structure was represented to demonstrate the information flow patterns. Using Gephi software (open source and free access for viewing network graphs), a retweeting network was constructed to track the information flow on Twitter from the source user who originates the tweet (user A) to the connecting user who retweets it (user B), as depicted in Figure 7. The retweeting network is directed and weighted, with direction information flow and weight indicating how many times the retweeting occurred between two users.

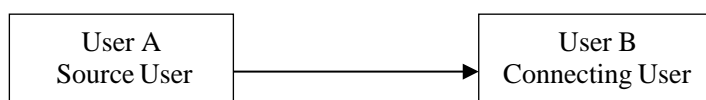


Figure 7. User B retweets User A

To map the key actors in the network, the nodes' centrality measures were utilized. According to the literature on social network analysis, the most influential users are those who are well-connected to others. Users with a large number of relationships measured by in-degree and out-degree scores are referred to as social hubs in terms of connectedness. The content created by source users has a significant influence over a user community. Additionally, connecting users—those who contribute to information dispersion not by providing content, but by disseminating content created by others—are immensely influential. There are two categories of connecting users: diffusers, who convey information between distinct groups of people or communities; and embedded actors, who form strong ties with others in a certain community (Kim et al., 2018).

Based on the network analysis, the key actors from the dataset were mapped and defined as narrators (source users), diffusers, and embedded actors (connecting users) according to their out-degree centrality scores, in-degree centrality scores, and eigenvector centrality scores, respectively. Given the retweeting network structure, the out-degree score demonstrates the actor's contribution to creating the narrative, while the in-degree score represents the diffusion power of the actor. The eigenvector centrality score refers to the nodes' influence on the network through connections, i.e., a user connected to the users with the highest degree scores, or a user who is connected to most of the users in a sub-community within the network (Maharani, Adiwijaya, & Gozali, 2014). Additionally, the key actors were systematized according to the self-description of their accounts on Twitter. They were systematized into four categories: non-governmental organizations, local media, independent activists, and Indigenous movements.

Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) topic modelling was employed using Python on the Text Tweets to detect the themes in the data. This process allowed for the identification of the frames used by Twitter users across the network and within each sub-community, demonstrating the high level of inclusivity of the network that has facilitated its growth. LDA is a popular text mining technique that combines unsupervised and supervised statistical machine learning methods to uncover latent themes in vast collections of documents by forming clusters of words, which are referred to as topics. Each document is viewed as a composition of latent topics, with each word in the document assigned to a topic (Carnot et al., 2020). Every topic is a mixture of words, and the topics delineate the themes discussed by Twitter users throughout the campaign. To implement Topic Modelling, the following steps were

undertaken: data cleaning, data preprocessing, modelling, visualization, and results.

To examine the online information flow, community detection was implemented to detect the information flow pattern among sub-communities. Using Gephi’s modularity function, the sub-communities of the network were mapped. Based on the retweeting frequency among the nodes, the largest five sub-communities were sampled. The Text Tweets between these sub-communities were then analyzed using topic modelling to identify the main themes covered by the sub-communities. Furthermore, the most important contributors in each sub-community were classified based on their self-description on their Twitter accounts. Based on the topics discussed by each sub-community and the sub-community’s classification, the information sharing pattern was detected. The workflow depicted in Figure 8 includes three primary stages: capturing, analysis and visualization.

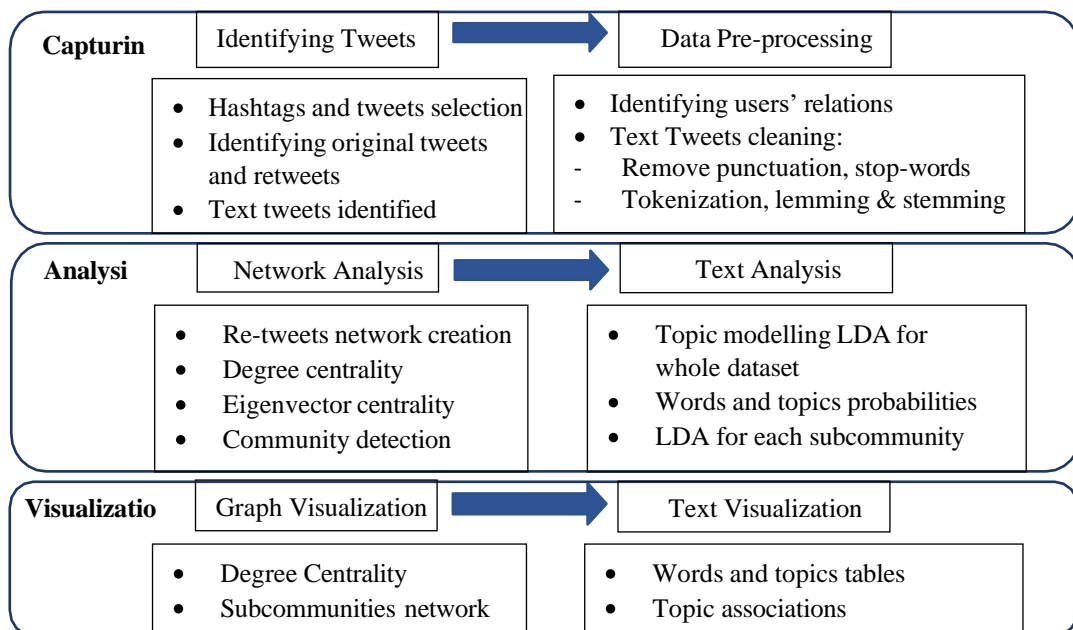


Figure 8. Social network analysis and topic modeling workflow chart.

#### 2.4.2.2. Sentiment Analysis

To measure the international public opinion, sentiment analysis was implemented



through tweet binder on all text tweets collected under the specified hashtags. Sentiment analysis is a technique used to determine the overall emotional tone of a piece of text. When applied to social media data such as tweets, it can provide valuable insights into the attitudes and opinions of individuals and communities on a

particular topic. Tweet Binder is a social media analytics tool that provides insights into Twitter activity. As part of its functionality, Tweet Binder implements sentiment analysis to classify tweets as positive, negative, or neutral based on the sentiment expressed in the text.

The sentiment analysis methodology implemented by Tweet Binder involves several steps. First, the collected data is pre-processed to clean and normalize the text data, remove stop words, and convert the text into a format that can be analyzed using NLP techniques. Features are then extracted from the pre-processed text data, which include the frequency of certain words, the presence of certain emoticons, or the length of the tweet. The sentiment analysis algorithms used by Tweet Binder then classify the text as positive, negative, or neutral based on the features extracted. The sentiment analysis algorithms utilize machine learning techniques for classification, which improves the accuracy of the analysis. The results of the sentiment analysis performed by Tweet Binder provide insights into the polarity and strength of the sentiment expressed in the text. The polarity of the sentiment can be positive, negative, or neutral, indicating a favorable or unfavorable opinion or emotion.

The results were generated based on the number of participants, number of tweets and number of impacts. The number of participants is the number of users who expressed negative, positive or neutral sentiments towards the events. The number of tweets is also categorized into positive tweets, which include positive language about

the events, negative tweets that include negative language about the events and neutral tweets that do not include words that indicate sentiments. Finally, the number of impacts is the number of users with high impact within the network i.e., high number of followers, who expressed positive feelings about the events, negative feelings about the events or neutral. The results were interpreted as follows: the negative sentiment used by participants expressed their dissatisfaction with the events, the positive sentiment indicates their satisfaction with the events, while neutral language indicate that the user stated facts without expressing sentiment towards the events. Thus, a negative sentiment indicates support for the TAN's advocacy efforts and a positive sentiment indicates opposition and undermining of the TAN's advocacy effort.

#### **2.4.2.3. Term Frequency Analysis**

Term frequency analysis is a quantitative method used in text mining and natural language processing to identify and analyze the frequency of words or terms in a given corpus of text. In the present study, term frequency analysis was conducted on news titles and contents from four major news media outlets, namely Fox News, CNN, BBC, and MSNBC, during the month of May 2021. The objective of this analysis was to identify the frames used to cover the events by identifying words and phrases with the highest frequency in the news media. The identified frames are compared across the different outlets and compared with the issue framing used by the advocacy activists in order to identify the position of the international media towards the Sheikh Jarrah issue. Thus, allows to identify the international opportunity structures.

The coverage of the escalation in Israel and the OPT throughout May 2021 by each media outlet was collected. Python programming language was utilized for conducting the term frequency analysis. Firstly, the data was pre-processed by removing stop

words, punctuation, and numbers, and converting all the text to lowercase for consistency. Then, term frequency was calculated by counting the frequency of each term within the corpus. The results of the analysis were presented in a table showing each term's frequency within the corpus based on which the most frequent terms across the different media outlets were identified. The findings of the term frequency analysis provided insights into the topics and themes that were most frequently covered by each news outlet, and the differences in the language and tone used in their reporting.

#### **2.4.2.4. Thematic Analysis**

A semantic deductive approach to thematic analysis was employed manually to examine 75 statements made by various governments regarding the Sheikh Jarrah issue. This approach involved identifying and analyzing the language used in each statement. The semantic deductive approach involves a process of deduction, where pre-existing categories are used to analyze the data. In this case, the category used was based on the theme of "blame". The objective was to determine whether the governments' positions were supportive of the Sheikh Jarrah residents or not. The analysis aimed to investigate the naming and shaming mechanism that the advocacy network hoped to activate by examining the governments naming of the responsible party for the events in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood and the escalation of violence in general as well as identifying the language and the tone of the governments towards the responsible party. The use of a semantic deductive approach to thematic analysis provided a structured and systematic way to analyze the data and draw meaningful conclusions. It allowed to examine the language used in the statements to determine the governments' positions regarding the Sheikh Jarrah residents' problem.

## **2.5. Conclusion**

The chapter discussed the theories that explain people's participation in a government's decision-making process through un-institutionalized channels. It reviewed the social movements theories as well as interest groups highlighting the similarities and differences. The social movements levels of mobilization were discussed; a domestically successful social movement develops to become an interest group and adopts the lobbying tactics. However, the social movement that is faced with a blocked domestic political opportunity seeks transnational allies that bring international pressure on its government. Thus, theories on transnationalism were reviewed identifying the boomerang-spiral model as this research's backbone.

The conceptual framework was developed based on the boomerang-spiral model phases at the domestic-transnational-international stages of influence following five phases identified by the target government's reaction to the transnational-international pressure. The research suggests that TANs do not operate alone at the transnational-international levels, the counter advocacy of rival actors plays a significant role in determining the success of the TANs work. In addition, the position of the Western liberal states—which according to the model support the TANs efforts—is determined not only by their liberal values but to their foreign policy approach. In this case, the Western liberal state that is targeted by the TAN is the US due to its leverage over the violating state that is Israel. The US foreign policy approach fluctuates between promoting the liberal values and securing their regional interests where in several cases, the security priority prevails over the commitment to promoting liberal norms. Thus, the research suggests that these two variables; the counter advocacy and the Western states' foreign policy priorities are the determinant for the TANs success. The

research methodology was described discussing the research design as well as the data and analytical tools used. The research is designed based on the process tracing through single case study approach. The case to be studied is the Israeli settlement policy in the OPT analyzing the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. The case and the unit of analysis are thoroughly described in the following chapter.

## **Chapter 3. Israeli Settlement Policy and Sheikh Jarrah Neighborhood**

### **3.1. Introduction**

The Israeli settlement policy in the OPT has been a long-standing issue of concern and has been a major reason for tensions in the region as it not only violates international humanitarian law and human rights principles, but also undermines the prospects of a peaceful resolution of the question of Palestine. The chapter discusses the settlement policy exploring how it demonstrates violations of the liberal international law through the lens of international humanitarian law and human rights principles. It focuses, in particular, on the case of the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in East Jerusalem, where Israeli settlements have been established by forcibly evicting Palestinian residents from their homes.

To achieve this objective, the chapter first provides a historical overview of the Israeli settlement policy in the OPT, including its evolution, motives, and impacts on the prospects of a Palestinian state breaching the internationally mediated bilateral agreement between Israel and the PLO. The chapter then examines the legality of the policy from the perspective of international law and human rights principles, highlighting the various violations that it entails. Finally, the chapter discusses the Sheikh Jarrah case, which is the primary unit of analysis of this research to illustrate how the settlement policy has played out on the ground and how it has affected the lives and rights of Palestinian residents. The Sheikh Jarrah settlement resulted in the activation of an advocacy campaign by Palestinians and pro-Palestinian groups in the aim of changing the Israeli court's decision to forcefully evict the Palestinian residents of the neighborhood.

### **3.2. Israeli Settlement Policy: Definition and Development**

While settlements usually describe the towns established in the areas that Israel has been controlling since 1967 (the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem and Golan Heights). However, the settlement activity started in the nineteenth century to materialize the Zionist vision of establishing a state in Palestine (Barell & Ohana, 2014, p. 2). Early Zionism emerged in the 1860s and 1870s as a political movement in Eastern Europe with a vision for a new socialist era where all minorities would have equal rights and autonomy (Lumer, 1973, p.12). Later, secular Jewish nationalism proposed the colonization of Palestine as essential to modern Jewish evolution. In the early 1880s, small groups actually made the journey and established the earliest Zionist settlements in Palestine (Taylor, 1972).

Israel is recognized as a settler regime as the state was built on the concept of settlements as a way of capturing lands, expansion and enforcing a reality by planting its civilians in Palestinian lands resulting in dispossessing and transferring the Palestinian population from their land. The proposed Jewish state had no declared territorial goal as Zionism has always taken a pragmatic approach to the geographical issue. While Zionists officially agreed to the UN partition plan of mandate Palestine in 1947, they sought to expand beyond these delimitations by force or cunning (Will, 1982, p. 39).

From its inception, the issue of settlements has been a core concern for the political Zionist movement and has been widely debated within Zionism. This issue has been a key factor in shaping various political factions within the Zionist movement and subsequently in the Israeli state. Additionally, settlements have played a significant role in the Zionist displacement and dispossession of the Palestinian people.

In 1948, the establishment of the state of Israel led to the displacement of over 750,000 Palestinians who were forced to become refugees in neighboring countries. Similarly, the Arab-Israeli war in 1967 resulted in a second wave of Palestinian refugees (Goldstein, 2020).

In the initial two decades of its existence, Israel's policies both domestically and internationally were based on the principles of its founder David Ben-Gurion. These policies relied heavily on military deterrence rather than diplomatic efforts towards the Palestinians. Nonetheless, the 1967 war ushered in a new era in Israeli politics. The unexpected and significant triumph in the war, resulting in the capture of a vast Arab territories, created a division in Israel's national and security issues. Post-war, two groups emerged; the doves and the hawks. The doves believed that the newly captured territories could be bartered for peace, while the hawks believed that Israel had a historical and religious right to keep the territories. However, there was unanimity in the policy regarding East Jerusalem, with an agreement that it should be annexed.

The labor left-wing party, which held power over Israeli politics since the establishment of the state in 1948 until 1977, was in favor of a "territorial compromise" with the Palestinians. The left wing was aligned with the doves' camp, advocating for peace with the Palestinians. Their peace plan entailed reverting to the 1967 borders while taking Jewish settlements into account and ensuring Israel's security, while maintaining Jerusalem as Israel's "Eternal Capital" (Lustick, 2019, p. 143). The party supported a two-state solution and was prepared to evacuate remote settlements. The



Labor party placed greater emphasis on Israel's internal character than its future borders and the territories it must govern. They feared that expanding Israel's boundaries would lead to more Palestinians being incorporated, diluting the state's Jewish identity. Although the demographic problem was initially deemed tolerable in Jerusalem, Israeli policies aimed to displace the Palestinian population from the city (Lustick, 2019, p. 142).

After their victory in the 1967 war, the Labor party indicated a willingness to engage in negotiations with the Palestinians. However, the party did not have a clear position on the Palestinian territories and instead embraced the Allon Plan, which proposed that Israel relinquish control of the main Palestinian population centers in the West Bank to Jordan, while maintaining control of land along the Jordan River under Israeli military supervision. Once the decision was made to maintain control of the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Israeli authorities began to systematically establish civilian and military settlements on Palestinian land as a means of consolidating their hold on the area.

The Allon Plan provided the initial framework for this settlement campaign. During the first decade of the occupation, the Israeli government adhered to the Allon Plan, which involved the construction of settlements in areas that were considered to be of "strategic importance" and where the Palestinian population was minimal. The Labor party established the first settlements between 1968 and 1977 with the explicit goal of securing a Jewish majority in strategic regions of the West Bank (Erakat, 2017, p. 21).

The elections of 1977 brought the right-wing Likud party into power replacing the labor party, which still holds power in 2023. The roots of the Likud party can be traced back to the struggle of revisionist Zionism which was primarily a political movement

that insisted on a forthright statement that the aim of the movement was a Jewish state from the Jordan river to the Mediterranean Sea. The Likud has remained committed to its concept of a larger Israel on all of historic Palestine. A Jewish-ruled Great Israel was never a secret or a questionable objective. The Likud party took a proactive stance in promoting and endorsing the settlement of the entire OPT, leading to a significant surge in the Jewish population in the region. Initially estimated at around 10,000 individuals in 1977, the population experienced rapid growth due to the party’s encouragement and support (Halkin, 2007). As shown in Figure 9 below, the number of settlers in the OPT is estimated around 450,000 individuals by 2018 (FMDP, 2019).

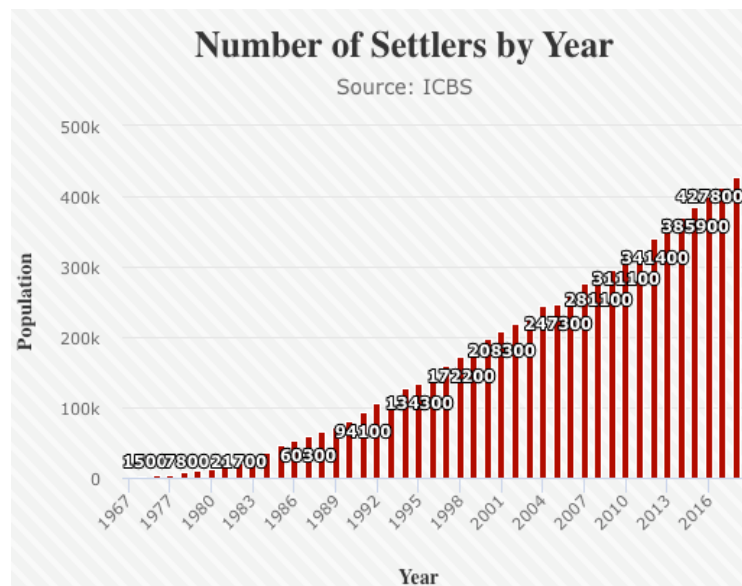


Figure 9. Number of settlers in the OPT by year

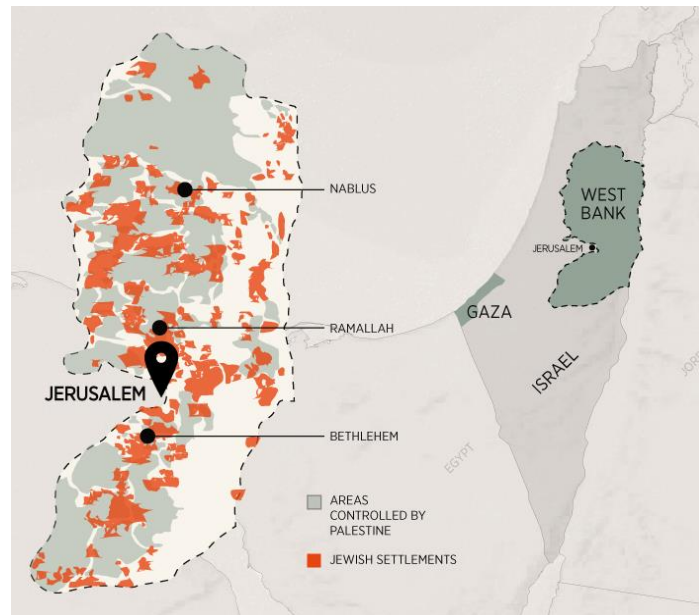
### 3.3. Israeli Settlement Policy Hinders Peace Talks

The UNSC resolution (242), which was adopted shortly after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, serves as a pivotal framework for negotiating a two-state solution to the Palestine issue. The proposed solution involves the establishment of two states for two distinct people: one for Jewish Israelis and another for Palestinian people. The Oslo Accord of 1993, which resulted in the formation of the Palestinian Authority, also adopted this

approach. In this agreement, the PLO recognized the state of Israel and agreed to comply with UN Resolutions 242 and 338, which stipulate the attainment of lasting peace with Israel by Israel's withdrawal to its pre-1967 borders. Furthermore, PLO renounced the use of force in pursuit of establishing a Palestinian state on the 1967 borders.

The Oslo Accords entails establishing the Palestinian state on the OPT (22 percent of historical Palestine) known as the West Bank and Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem the capital. However, the agreement resulted in dividing the west bank into areas A, B and C. Area A (18% of the West Bank) and B (22% of the West Bank) which are home to most of the Palestinian population in the West Bank, were handed over to the Palestinian Authority. They are distributed in 165 disconnected locations in the West Bank. The remaining 61% of the West Bank were designated Area C where Israel retains full control over security and civil affairs, including planning, building, laying infrastructure and development (USIP, 1993).

In accordance with the agreement, the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem are intended to fall under the sovereignty of the Palestinian state. Despite this, the expansion of Israeli settlements and the dominant Israeli presence in area C has created a significant obstacle for the Palestinian people in their quest for a feasible national territory, given the absence of any physical continuity between Palestinian cities and towns as shown in map 1 below (B'tselem, n.d.). Moreover, the population of Israeli settlers residing in the West Bank and East Jerusalem has been consistently rising, causing further complications and politically sensitive issues in terms of cleanly separating Israeli and Palestinian communities (Mokski, 2022).



Map 1. Jewish settlements in the OPT

The Oslo accord pledged to halt Israeli settler colonial expansion in the OPT. Nonetheless, it failed, and this failure ultimately led to the second Palestinian national uprising in 2000. Over the period spanning from the ratification of the Oslo I Accord to September 2000, the overall number of settlement housing units in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip surged by 54 percent. Moreover, during this seven-year timeframe, the number of settlers also rose significantly from 100,500 to 191,600, representing a growth rate of nearly 90 percent (Halkin, 2007).

The second uprising and the escalation of violence brought the international attention back to the heated situation in the Palestinian Territories. In 2002, the Quartet (The US, the European Union, Russia, and the UN) drafted the Road Map which was considered the most serious international effort to intervene in the conflict, with the aim of ending the violence, and resuming peace negotiations.

The Palestinians and the Israelis accepted the plan; however, Ariel Sharon, the Israeli prime minister at a time said that the road map would not stop settlements

construction. Since the road map shares the same flaws with the Oslo Accords, failure was anticipated. The conflict issues —the four million Palestinian refugees, the final borders, the status of Jerusalem, the Israeli settlements in the OPT— were not addressed. The Quartet has failed to put demands on the parties, settlement activity continued, violence has persisted, and the Road Map has slowly lost its credibility (GPF, 2003). When Barack Obama was elected as American President in 2008, stopping the settlements construction was on his agenda. In November 2009, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of the Likud party agreed to Obama’s demand and announced a freezing of the construction for the duration of ten months. However, there were various exceptions to the freeze making its impact limited, moreover, Netanyahu refused to extend the freeze after the ten months (Aronson, 2016).

Benjamin Netanyahu —who was running office from 2009 until present (2023)— showed no intention to continue the peace process. Netanyahu is one of the leaders of the Hawks camp, which rejects any territorial compromise and he is a big advocate for the settlement policy. On several occasions he instated on the continual construction of settlements. The Israeli government provides financial and tax incentives for Jews to move to the West Bank settlements. In addition, Loans are more concessionary and infrastructure is provided free of charge (Mokski, 2022). By 2022, between 600,000 and 750,000 Israeli settlers live in at least 250 settlements in the West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem. The annual growth rate for the Israeli settlement population (excluding East Jerusalem) is more than two and a half times higher than that of the overall population in Israel: 4% and 1.6% respectively (Degarmo, 2016).

The Israeli settlement policy demonstrates a violation for international norms as it

not only breaches the bilateral treaties between the PLO and the Israeli government, it breaches international humanitarian law and the human rights principles as well as the UN resolutions. The following sections explain the settlement policy's violations from the perspective of international law and human rights principles.

### **3.4. Settlement Policy and International Law**

Since 1967, the international community recognizes the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip, and the Syrian Golan Heights, as occupied territories according to international law. Israel has signed the Geneva Convention, as well as the Hague Regulations. The High Contracting Parties of the Geneva Convention have confirmed several times the applicability of the convention to the occupied territories and the status of Israel as the occupying power (Stockmarr, 2012). However, Israel's policy of settling civilians in occupied territories and displacing the native population violates the most fundamental principles of international humanitarian law. The settlement policy breaches provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention that address the protection and treatment of civilians during times of war and conflict, particularly Articles 49, 53, 54, and 147. Those articles prohibit the forcible transfer of individuals from the occupied territories. They also prohibit the destruction of properties unless it is necessary for military operations (Geneva Convention, 1949).

According to the Hague Regulations of 1907, any property belonging to the populace of an occupied area is subject to the laws of usufruct. Essentially, this implies that the occupying state can only use this property to a limited extent. The basis for this limitation stems from the understanding that occupation is not permanent, which is the fundamental principle underlying the law of occupation. As per the International Committee of the Red Cross, the occupier is obligated to ensure the safety, security,

and welfare of the inhabitants of the occupied region, and to guarantee that they can lead their lives as normally as possible, according to their own customs, culture, and laws (Amnesty International, 2022).

According to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Israel's policy of settlements is considered a violation of Article 8(2)(b)(viii), which prohibits an occupying power from transferring its civilian population into the territory it occupies or deporting the population of the occupied territory (Knoops, 2018). Additionally, the UNSC passed Resolution 446 in 1979, condemning Israel's establishment of settlements in Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967 as illegal and obstructing the achievement of peace in the Middle East (Stockmarr, 2012).

### **3.5. Implications of the Settlement Policy on Palestinians' Human Rights**

Israel, as the occupying power, must abide by its obligations under international human rights treaties with regard to the OPT, in addition to its responsibilities under international humanitarian law and customary international law. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the human rights treaty bodies in charge of monitoring the fulfillment of the obligations arising from such treaties in the area of international human rights have both confirmed Israel's responsibility (UN, 2022; Frigo, 2022).

According to the ICJ, citizens living in the OPT must be covered by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, as well as other treaties to which Israel is signatory. However, as has been extensively documented by the UN, Amnesty International, and other NGOs for many years, Israel's settlement policy is one of the driving forces behind the severe human rights violations brought on by the occupation

(Amnesty International, 2022).

Racial discrimination and apartheid are just two examples of the numerous basic human rights abuses caused by the settlements policy in the OPT. Palestinian citizens have been unlawfully killed and injured by Israeli soldiers, police, and security personnel, frequently during demonstrations opposing the annexation of more land and the expansion of settlements. Palestinians are tried by military courts, which do not adhere to international law for impartiality and fair trials. For Palestinians, there are very few legal options available to them when their fundamental rights are violated. Israel's High Court of Justice declines to comment on the legality of settlements because it considers it to be a political issue outside of its purview (Human Rights Council, 2013).

Israel uses military orders to repress peaceful demonstrations and make free speech illegal in the West Bank, violating both the right to free expression and the right to peaceful assembly. Israel violates the right to adequate housing when it builds settlement houses on Palestinian territory, seizes Palestinian-owned homes to give to settlers, or forcibly evicts or demolishes Palestinian homes. Palestinians' access to healthcare, clean water, and education is hampered by travel restrictions, access denials, and other issues. Settlement growth obstructs Palestinian farmers' ability to earn a living wage and undermines their livelihoods (Amnesty International, 2022).

While Palestinians continuously reject the settlement policy and protest the settlements construction which is accompanied by homes destruction and forced evictions, the most recent case of Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem escalated the violence to a very high level. The settlements expansion in the heart of the Arab neighborhood of East Jerusalem and the forceful evictions of the Palestinian residents



resulted in 11 days of bloodshed in May 2021 with death toll of more than 200 Palestinians and 12 Israelis. The outbreak of protests and the escalation of rage in solidarity with Sheikh Jarrah residents came after a historical accumulation of oppression that the Palestinian residents went through to maintain their homes in the neighborhood. The Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah have been struggling in the Israeli supreme court against the settler organization that claims ownership to the lands of the neighborhood since 1972.

The Sheikh Jarrah settlement exhibits distinctive circumstances when compared to other settlements in the OPT. The OPT encompasses various types of settlements, primarily consisting of the Israeli government's authorized settlements and the illegal outposts, as delineated by Israeli governmental standards. The authorized settlements sanctioned by the government exhibit a range of sizes and functionalities that are contingent upon the underlying motives for their establishment. For instance, urban settlements constitute areas characterized by significant infrastructure, services, and amenities, accommodating tens of thousands of residents. These settlements, such as Ma'ale Adumim, Ariel, and Modi'in Illit, possess a more enduring and permanent nature.

Furthermore, regional council settlements are established within regional councils, which serve as administrative bodies responsible for governing multiple smaller settlements within a specific region. Typically, regional council settlements consist of a cluster of smaller residential communities. Illustrative examples of regional council settlements include Gush Etzion and Mateh Binyamin (2018، خمائسي). Additionally, certain Israeli settlements focus on agricultural or industrial pursuits, leveraging natural resources such as water and land for agricultural purposes or establishing industrial

zones for manufacturing and production (يوسف، 2020).

Moreover, there exist settlements established by Israeli settlers motivated by ideological and religious factors where settlers concentrate on historical locations connected to religious sites. Those settlements were initially deemed illegal by Israeli authorities; however, subsequent legalization measures have been enacted, especially after the Likud party came into power. Notable examples include Hebron, Beit El, and Kiryat Arba (Pemberton, 2022). Lastly, outpost settlements, smaller and unauthorized in nature, are established without official approval from the Israeli government. Typically situated on hilltops or strategically advantageous locations in the West Bank, these outposts often encounter legal challenges and possess a heightened risk of demolition. Nevertheless, many of these outposts have been retroactively legitimized by the Israeli government (Magid, 2023).

The Sheikh Jarrah settlement does not fall within the aforementioned categories, as it encompasses the involvement of the Israeli judicial system, wherein Israeli settlers have initiated a legal case in the Israeli court claiming ownership rights to the lands in the neighborhood prior to the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. Consequently, this characterization renders the case distinct, stimulating various claims, and complicating the attainment of a resolution. The Israeli political system is commonly acknowledged for its democratic nature, entailing the separation of the judicial system from governmental decisions. Consequently, Israel views the case as a legal dispute, albeit the Palestinians and international non-governmental organizations perceive it as a political matter, owing to the Israeli occupation and annexation of East Jerusalem. While Israel regards East Jerusalem as an integral part of its sovereign state, exercising complete authority, international law designates East Jerusalem as part of the occupied territory,

thereby negating Israel's legal jurisdiction and precluding the application of domestic law in this context. Furthermore, the case highlights the presence of double standards within the Israeli legal system, wherein Jewish individuals are afforded the right to assert claims of land ownership predating the establishment of the state of Israel. Conversely, Palestinians are legally prohibited from pursuing ownership of their own lands prior to the state's formation. Consequently, this case serves as an example of the discriminatory nature of the Israeli judicial system.

### **3.6. Israeli Settlements in East Jerusalem: Sheikh Jarrah Neighborhood Case**

Jerusalem holds a significant and unique position in the ongoing conflict. Starting from 1947, Jerusalem has been a focal point of the conflict, and both sides have sought to gain control over it. The UN partition plan for Palestine in 1947 aimed to keep Jerusalem united by placing it under an international regime, governed by the UN. However, this plan failed, and the 1948 war resulted in the division of the city into eastern and western parts. The Israel-Jordan Armistice Agreement of 1949 officially recognized this division, with Jordan controlling the eastern sector, and the newly formed state of Israel controlling the western sector.

The 1967 conflict put an end to the line that marked the ceasefire between the eastern and western regions, but it also sparked a renewed argument over the two competing claims. Israel insists that Jerusalem belongs entirely to them and should be under their control indefinitely. However, the international community does not accept Israel's claim to the city and deems any changes made through warfare as unlawful and null. Conversely, the Palestinians have demanded that East Jerusalem be recognized as the capital of their own independent state, which would be formed in the areas seized since 1967.

Before 1967, no Israelis lived in East Jerusalem and 69,000 Palestinians inhabited the city. However, by 2020, there were 227,000 Israelis living there (Terrestrial Jerusalem, 2021). One-third of the privately owned land in East Jerusalem was expropriated by Israel, primarily from Palestinians, for the purpose of constructing these settlements. On these grounds, Israel has constructed more than 56,000 homes for Israeli citizens (Terrestrial Jerusalem, 2021). In order to fortify and establish the new and expanded boundaries of Jerusalem and retain a Jewish majority, the neighborhoods were constructed along the municipal boundaries between Palestinian neighborhood (Ir Amim, 2009).

The settlers' communities in East Jerusalem fall under the category of settlements under international law, which has never approved the annexation of the area. Israeli discourse and law, however, consider them as regular neighborhoods (NRC, 2017). The Israeli government adopt a strategy to avoid international criticism that includes relying on right-wing private organization in the pursuit of settlements and forceful eviction of the Palestinian residents.

The Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah area have been under the threat of evictions from their homes since 1972 for the sake of expanding the Israeli settlements in the heart of the Arab neighborhood. The sequence of events explained below was monitored and documented by several Palestinian and Israeli human rights NGOs namely Ir Amim, Terrestrial Jerusalem, the Civic Coalition for Defending Palestinians' Rights in Jerusalem among others.

The issue started in 1956 when the Jordanian Ministry of Construction and Development and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) agreed to provide 28 Palestinian families, who lost their homes in the 1948

events and became refugees, a residential compound in the neighborhood. The Palestinian residents had to hand up their refugee status and its benefits, like free education and free health care from UNRWA. In return, they live in the houses from 1956 to 1959 and then get ownership of the properties. The families of Sheikh Jarrah sought that the Jordanian Land Department register the homes in their names after the three-year deadline had passed. However, the registration was not carried out because of paperwork problems and the inability to identify the original landowners (Hughes, Derejko, & Mahajna, 2009).

Following the 1967 war and the implementation of Israeli law, jurisdiction, and administration in East Jerusalem, the properties that had been managed by Jordanian government, were transferred to the Ministry of Justice of Israel. While the ownership issue was not yet settled, two settler committees; the Sephardic Community Council and the Kenesset Israel Committee then initiated legal proceedings in 1972 demanding registering the lands to their names. They claim Jews' ownership to the neighborhood based on an Ottoman document. The Ottoman agreement, which entailed the allocation of land for agricultural purposes to a Jewish resident of Jerusalem, is characterized as a lease contract rather than a transfer of ownership. According to the settler committees, the land upon which Palestinian residences are situated is regarded as a sacred site for the Jewish community. They further asserted the presence of a cave within the area, wherein a rabbi has been interred since 1885. Subsequent to the 1948 conflict, the Jewish families who had been cultivating the aforementioned land were compelled to flee. Given the ambiguity surrounding land ownership and the historical tenancy of Jewish families, Jordan deemed it necessary to classify the land as enemy property, thereby necessitating further examination. These proceedings concluded in

September 1972 and ownership of the properties was preliminarily registered in the name of the settler committees in the Land Registry.

From the perspective of the Jordanian authorities, new information emerged with supporting evidence put forth by Hanna Elias Bandak, a resident of Bethlehem. Bandak claimed ownership of a substantial portion of the land upon which the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood currently stands, dating back to 1934. The evidence presented included Bandak's formal request for registration of the land under his name, as well as a document attesting to the sale of the property to another individual from the al-Saadi family in the al-Saadiya neighborhood of Jerusalem. These pieces of evidence were presented in Israeli courts (Yousef & Thabet, 2021).

In 1982 the two settler committees brought suit against 23 families that resided in the neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah and demanded their eviction from 17 apartments within the compound. The Palestinian families' attorney at the time, Tosya Cohen negotiated an agreement—which according to the Palestinian families was carried out without their consent—that was granted the status of court ruling. The terms of Cohen are that the families become “protected tenants”; therefore, they will not be evicted. However, protected tenants are obligated to pay rent and not to make changes to the properties (ASF, 2011).

In 1993, the two settlers' committees began filing suits for payment of rental fees and eviction of the Palestinian tenants from the place. They claim that the Palestinian residents have not paid rent, that some of them are making changes and additions to structures without a permit, and that they have not maintained the property in an appropriate manner. In 2001 the Jerusalem Magistrates Court accepted the committees' demand, and an appeal challenging the ruling was denied (Reiter & Lehrs,

2010).

The two settler committees sold the properties within the compound to an organization of settlers named “Homot Shalem”, then to “Nahalat Shimon International” organization, which declared its objective of constructing settlements in the neighborhood. In August 2008 this organization submitted a plan to the Regional Committee for Planning and Construction of a Jewish neighborhood with 200 housing unit and for the destruction of homes in which Palestinians reside, as well as for the eviction of 500 Palestinian residents. Between 2008 and 2009, Palestinian residents started receiving eviction notices.

The displacement of Palestinians in the neighborhood and the first step of implementing a Jewish settlement there started in 1998. A group of settlers led by Knesset member Benyamen Elon entered the compound and started conducting Torah lessons. The ministry of housing provided an annual funding for the security of the settlers through a private security company. In 1999, Al-Kurd family was sued for undertaking renovations and expanding the existing property which according to the court violated the agreement of 1982. Thus, the court ruled for the displacement of the family members from the renovated portion and that part of the house would be sealed. Jewish settlers moved to the sealed renovated part and settled in the compound. In 2009, another court ruling displaced another two families that include 53 members. Their homes were given to Jewish settlers who also settled in the compound (Yousef & Thabet, 2021).

The displacement of Palestinians and the settling of Jewish families in East Jerusalem neighborhood increased over the years and is still increasing. By 2020, four main compounds consisting of twelve Palestinian families that include 500 members

in Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood are targeted by settler organizations (Yousef & Thabet, 2021). On October 2020, the Israeli court ruled to forcibly evacuate twelve Palestinian families, along with the transfer of ownership of their homes to Israeli settlers. According to the Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem, Aryeh Yitzhak King, the plan for the next phase is to place Jewish families in two more compounds, one of 300 housing units and the other of 200 housing units. So, by the next decade, between 400 to 500 Jewish families will be placed in the two sub-neighborhoods of Sheikh Jarrah (Shaham, 2017).

The Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah started protesting the court ruling since 2008 by setting up tents in front of their homes from which they were displaced. However, the municipality of Jerusalem destroyed and confiscated their tents 17 times. The protesting movement increased gradually resulted in the creation of the “Solidarity Sheikh Jarrah” movement, which was led by the Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah and their Israeli left supporters. However, their activities were limited to East Jerusalem with little international support. In contrast, the court ruling of October 2020 triggered a wide-scale outrage against the Israeli settlement policy throughout the Palestinian communities within Israel, East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza Strip leading to the highest escalation of violence since 2014. The escalation of violence in 2021 resulted in the death of more than 200 Palestinians and 12 Israelis generating wide international attention.

### **3.7. Conclusion**

The chapter introduced the Israeli settlement policy and explained how it demonstrates a violation for international law. The policy breaches the international humanitarian law and the human rights principles leading to deteriorated living



conditions for Palestinians in the OPT. The settlements construction problem was not solved through bilateral peace talks as every international initiative for peace failed to put an end to the Israeli settlements' expansion in the OPT. The settlements construction was carried on since 1967 ignoring all international laws and attempts to end it. Some international intervention attempts theoretically succeeded to freeze the construction like that of Obama in 2009. Nonetheless, the implementation on the ground showed that the Israeli government has never intended to make a serious step towards ending the policy regardless of its consequences that in some cases reach a high-level escalation of violence.

The recent escalation of violence in 2021 in Israel and the OPT is a direct result from the settlers' activities in their attempt to expand the Israeli settlements in the heart of the Palestinian neighborhood leading to the forceful eviction of the Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah. While protests initially erupted in East Jerusalem in response to the Israeli court ruling on October 2020, they spilled over the Palestinian communities in Israel, which were brutally suppressed by the Israeli forces. Protests expanded in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and an exchange of fire between Hamas military group and Israel started and lasted for 11 days. The escalation of violence demanded an international intervention to mediate ceasefire and put an end to the forceful evictions of the Palestinian residents. The following chapter discusses the settler groups' role in endorsing the settlement policy and their role behind the forceful eviction of the Palestinian residents from their homes. Moreover, it discusses their transnational connections within the US and their influence on the Biden administration's position towards the 2021 events.

## **Chapter 4. Israeli Settlers' Domestic and Transnational Force and the US**

### **Foreign Policy**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

The Israeli settlement policy has long been a source of tension in the region and a major obstacle to achieving a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As discussed in chapter 3, despite its recognition as illegal under international law, successive Israeli governments have pursued settlement construction in the OPT since the 1967 war. This policy has had severe implications for the human rights of Palestinians and has been a clear breach of international norms. A specific case of this policy is the ongoing eviction threats faced by residents of the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in East Jerusalem. Palestinian families in the area have been under the threat of eviction from their homes since the 1970s, as part of a broader effort by the Israeli government to expand settlement construction in the OPT. While the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood is not an isolated case, the Palestinians' response to the eviction order and the subsequent protests have led to a high-scale storm of violence.

This chapter examines the role of Israeli settler groups in the pursuit of the settlement policy, specifically in the case of the forceful eviction of Sheikh Jarrah residents. It also explores the transnational ties between settler groups and Jewish coalitions within the Israel lobby, which have increasingly supported settlement activities in the OPT. The impact of the Israel lobby on US foreign policy decisions is discussed, with a focus on the successful lobbying tactics adopted by these coalitions to ensure unwavering American support for Israel. The chapter argues that the Israeli narrative about the events of 2021 was adopted and advanced by the Israel lobby, shaping the US stance towards the events. Despite the violation of international law and

the tragic events in the region, the Israeli government, serving the interests of settler groups, has denied any wrongdoing, absolving itself of responsibility.

#### **4.2. Settlement Policy Advocates: The Force behind Sheikh Jarrah Residents Evictions**

The identification of Israeli political actors who endorse settlement policy is based on their ideology and stance regarding the OPT. The preeminent political force in this regard is the right-wing Likud party, which has been holding a dominant position in Israeli politics since 1977. Moreover, minor right-wing parties and factions, as well as religious organizations that endorse an expanded Israel on the basis of biblical interpretation, are notable in advancing this agenda. Nonetheless, formal political parties do not solely support the policy, as interest groups are recognized as a critical driving force behind it.

The 1973 war loss was a turning point that led to the emergence of interest groups and movements in Israel, with significant political changes marked by an increase in protest movements and demonstrations (Avruch, 1979, p. 47). The settlement policy in Israel was largely influenced by the settler movement, which was led by Gush Emunim. This group consisted of ultra-nationalist and Orthodox Jewish right-wing activists who were dedicated to settling Jews in the occupied territories (Sprinzak, 2011 p. 3). They were a powerful interest group in Israel, with strong connections to political parties, but they also maintained their independence. Gush Emunim firmly rejected any territorial withdrawal from the occupied territories and advocated for the establishment of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Drezon-Teple, 1990).

The success of Gush Emunim can be attributed to the political opportunity that arose

after the 1973 war and their resource mobilization strategy. They utilized a protest-based extra-institutionalist strategy, at the same time underwent institutionalization and government co-optation by working within the government to achieve their political goals. The National Religious party (NRP) was the primary political party associated with the Gush Emunim ideology. The NRP supported the settler movement during the 1970s and helped pave the way for Israel's first right-wing Likud government. The group's backing of right-wing and religious political parties contributed to Likud's victory in the 1977 elections (Munson, 2009).

A local governance system was established by the group to advance the interests of settlements. These local government institutions have the responsibility of creating plans for social welfare and educational services in their respective areas, which in turn creates opportunities for public sector employment (Newman, 2005, p. 205). At the intersection of non-parliamentary protest movements and the formal political institutions of the state, two ad hoc organizations, namely the Yesha Council and the Yesha Rabbis, were created. The Yesha Council serves as the umbrella organization for all local government agencies and municipalities in the West Bank, working to promote the interests of settlers within the government, political parties, and government ministries.

Gush Emunim dissolved as a group in 1984, but its leadership was transferred to the Yesha Council, which continued to lead the settler movement. Through its efforts to dominate public sectors, particularly education, Gush Emunim was able to promote its ideology within Israeli society (MacGillivray, 2016). This legacy was continued by the Likud party's dominance of Israeli politics, which led to the growth of the settler population and their increasing influence. By 2020s, there are various settler interest

groups operating in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, each with its own agenda and tactics. Some groups, like Regavim, seek to challenge Palestinian land ownership through legal means and advocate for the demolition of unauthorized Palestinian buildings. Other groups, such as Ateret Cohanim, focus on Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem. Elad is another organization that focuses on the Jewish settlement in the Palestinian neighborhood of Silwan in East Jerusalem. Other groups, including Women in Green, Im Tirtzu, and The Jewish Agency, advocate for increased investment in settlement infrastructure and enhanced security measures to protect settlers.

The settler groups' leverage over the Israeli politics have been influential on policies related to East Jerusalem. Through their lobbying activities supported by their right-wing champions within the parliament, the settler groups influence the government's decisions to achieve their goals. The annexation of East Jerusalem was uncontested among all political parties as there was consensus between the left and right wings on Jerusalem to be the eternal capital of Israel; however, the Israeli government keeps the process at a low profile to avoid international criticism. Thus, the settler groups have been the executive arm of the government to implement the plan through laws and policies designed to serve this goal.

The Master Plan for the Old City of Jerusalem, for instance, serves as compelling evidence of settler groups' influence over Israeli policies in East Jerusalem, prioritizing settler interests at the expense of Palestinians. The plan —adopted by the Israeli government in 1959 and updated periodically— regulates land use in Jerusalem and designates certain areas of the Old City as either Jewish or Palestinian. This discriminatory designation results in the demolition of Palestinian homes citing

building and zoning violations and the unequal allocation of resources and funding to Palestinian neighborhoods. The plan prioritizes the renovation of Jewish historical sites and the construction of Jewish housing and infrastructure while neglecting Palestinian neighborhoods. Since the plan aims to preserve the Old City's cultural heritage and promote economic development and tourism, the issuing of building permits is a lengthy and intricate process.

In 2013, a revised plan was proposed to simplify the procedure of obtaining building permits in the Old City of Jerusalem. However, right-wing representatives in the city council opposed the plan due to their affiliations with settler organizations, such as Ateret Cohanim. Investigations conducted by Ir Amim organization on February 2013 revealed that Ateret Cohanim played a crucial role in modifying the plan in a way that complicate the process for Palestinians. Ateret Cohanim has the ability to manipulate the plan, utilize their political connections and financial resources to submit detailed applications for building permits, circumventing the master plan's requirements. This gave them an unfair advantage over Palestinian residents, who struggled to obtain building permits. During a hearing of the Jerusalem Local Planning and Building Committee, representatives from Ateret Cohanim coordinated with right-wing officials, who presented a document outlining their demands. Ateret Cohanim participated in the meeting even though the forum should only include the planning committee. This mirrored their involvement in a previous master plan for the southern part of the Old City, where representatives of the Elad settler group participated in internal discussions regarding the development of the area. The Jerusalem Development Authority eventually maintained a policy that made it nearly impossible for Palestinian residents and private individuals to obtain a building permit (Tatarsky,

2013).

The activities of settler groups and their influence on Israeli politics are the primary catalyst for the eviction of Palestinian residents from their homes in East Jerusalem. This is clearly exemplified by the situation in Sheikh Jarrah. Numerous settler groups have been implicated in the forceful displacement of Palestinian residents in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. One such organization is the Israel Land Fund (ILF), led by Jerusalem Deputy Mayor Arie King, which has launched three building initiatives in Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood under the guise of urban renewal. If implemented, the housing-unit proposals would necessitate the demolition of current residential structures and the eviction of six Palestinian families from the Um Haroun section of Sheikh Jarrah (Buxbaum, 2022).

Subsequent to the sale of properties within the Sheikh Jarrah compound made by the Sephardic Community Council and the Knesset Israel Committee —the registrants of the land in 1972— for a sum of three million dollars to Homot Shalem settlers’ organization, a large settlement plan was also declared. The land’s ownership was later transferred to another organization called “Nahalat Shimon International”, which seeks to advance construction and settlement plans in Sheikh Jarrah. In August 2008, this organization submitted a proposal to the Regional Committee for Planning and Construction for the establishment of a Jewish neighborhood with 200 housing units and the demolition of homes in which Palestinians live, as well as the eviction of 500 Palestinian inhabitants.

#### **4.3. Settlers’ Transnational Support: Settlers’ Ties with the Israel Lobby in the US**

Settler groups have been successful in establishing channels of communication within

the Israeli government to secure their support and advance the settlement policy leading to the forceful eviction of Palestinians from their homes like the case of Sheikh Jarrah. Nevertheless, their efforts to achieve their goals are not limited to local activities. They have also forged transnational connections, specifically in the US. Settler groups are linked with American private donors via American non-profit organizations, which provide the necessary financial resources to transfer ownership of lands in Jerusalem to Jewish settlers. Donors from the US enjoy tax deductions for their contributions to US-based non-profits that ultimately direct funds to Israeli settler groups. As such, private US funding has been a significant factor in enabling settler groups to carry out evictions (Lowry, 2021).

The Israel Land Fund, established by the Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem, aims to turn the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood into a Jewish settlement with no Palestinian presence. This settler group has links to American private donors and has been acquiring land in Palestinian neighborhoods across East Jerusalem since 2007, with the intention of selling it to Jewish settlers. The Central Fund of Israel, a US-based non-profit organization, provides the majority of the Israel Land Fund's budget (Khatib, 2022).

The fund is part of a network of US-based groups that transfer funds to settlers in Jerusalem. The tax-exempt non-profit status of these groups acts as a subsidy to their donors, facilitating the transfer of millions of dollars to settler organizations. An investigation by *Haaretz* in 2015 found that from 2009 to 2013, US charities funneled over \$220 million to Israeli settler organizations. This use of tax-exempt status to support settler groups is viewed by Palestinian rights advocates as a means to perpetuate violence and create apartheid in the OPT, in opposition to US law. The



involvement of US non-profit organizations in the Israeli settler movement has prompted calls for an investigation into organizations supporting the displacement of Palestinians (Kane, 2021).

The transnational connections of the settler groups are not limited to receiving financial aid from private donors in the US. Historically, settler groups have also been supported by pro-Israel advocacy groups in the US, collectively known as the Israel lobby. The Israel lobby is composed of Jewish individuals and organizations who strive to influence American foreign policy in favor of Israel. This coalition is not led by a central authority, but rather consists of various groups and individuals who work in different ways to shape US policy. Nonetheless, there is a core group of influential organizations and individuals within the Israel lobby who are dedicated to promoting US support for Israel's government and policies through material assistance and citizen support.

This lobby as defined by Mearsheimer and Walt (2007) encompasses prominent groups, including the American Jewish Congress, American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), Zionist Organization of America (ZOA), the Israel Policy Forum (IPF), the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), Americans for a Safe Israel, Mercaz-USA, American Friends of Likud, Hadassah, and numerous others. Additionally, there are think tanks such as the Middle East Forum (MEF), the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), and The Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), as well as individuals in academic and research organizations. Among these organizations, AIPAC is the most influential and well-known, having been identified as the most powerful interest group in

Washington by several studies.

The connection between settler groups and the Israel lobby in the US is complex and multifaceted. On the one hand, the Israel lobby is not a monolithic entity, and there are significant disagreements within the lobby over particular policy issues, such as the settlement policy. However, there has been a notable shift towards a more right-leaning ideology within the Israel lobby as a whole, according Mearsheimer and Walt (2007). The leading groups in the Israel lobby, such as AIPAC and the Conference of Presidents, have grown increasingly conservative. This shift has been fueled by the hawkish views of their Israeli counterparts and hard-liners who have held key positions within these organizations since the 1967 war. As a result, the conservative ideology of these lobby groups has supported the settlement policy that enable settlers to expand further into occupied territories.

This shift of ideology has been reinforced by the emergence of the neoconservative movement and the Likud party's successful cultivation of hardline support within pro-Israel organizations. For example, the Conference of Presidents has been led by Malcolm Hoenlein for the past 50 years, a staunch supporter of Israel's settler movement, who, among other Jewish organization leaders, pressured Obama in 2009 to stop pressuring Israel to freeze settlements (Smith B., 2009). Similarly, AIPAC's board of directors is selected based on their financial contributions, with the most generous donors tending to be the most passionate defenders of Israel. Consequently, the top leadership of AIPAC tends to hold much more hawkish views on Middle Eastern issues than most Jewish Americans (Ahmadi, 2014).

It is worth noting that not all Jewish organizations in the US support the settlement

policy. Smaller organizations, such as Ameinu, Americans for Peace Now, Brit Tzedek v'Shalom (Jewish Alliance for Justice and Peace), Israel Policy Forum, Jewish Voice for Peace, Meretz-USA, and Tikkun Community, strongly support a two- state solution and think Israel must make significant concessions to make it happen, like reversing the settlement policy. However, despite the disagreements within the Israel lobby, the shift towards a more right-leaning ideology has had a significant impact on US policy towards Israel and the OPT. The Israel lobby, under the leadership of AIPAC, claims to be bipartisan, especially regarding the settlement policy. AIPAC tweeted in 2019 that it does not take a position on settlements, believing that the issue should be resolved by direct negotiations between the parties, not something determined by international bodies. However, their actions have been supportive of settler groups, influencing every American president (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007, p. 122).

According to Mearsheimer and Wal's argument (2007), the Israel lobby's influence in the US is practiced at different levels based on its ability to influence and silence potential critics of Israel; the congress and executive branches of the government as well as the public opinion are all influenced by the lobby. One reason for the Lobby's success is the presence of Christian Zionists and Jewish members of Congress who prioritize Israel's interests over anything. The Executive branch is influenced by the Lobby due to the significant political power held by Jewish voters in presidential elections. Despite being a small minority, they provide substantial financial support to candidates from both major political parties (McGreal, 2022).

The Israel lobby seeks to influence public opinion about Israel and the Middle East by exerting its influence on the media, academia, and think tanks, which are

instrumental in shaping public opinion. The pro-Israel perspective is dominant in mainstream media, and most American commentators are pro-Israel, which results in a lack of open debate on issues concerning Israel (Caballero, 2010). Editorial bias favoring Israel is also present in major newspapers, magazines, and prominent media outlets (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007, p. 172).

Several studies have approved the strength of the Israel lobby and its ability to influence the American decision-makers in favor of Israel (Bahnassy, 2016; McCormick, 2012; Ahmadi, 2014; Tahir, 2021). However, the question persists as to what underlies this lobby's ability to exert such a profound impact on the American government. In other words, what is the rationale that the Israel lobby uses in its advocacy that results in the US support for Israel despite Israel's breach for international law?

#### **4.4. Israel Lobby's Advocacy Rationale and the US Foreign Policy**

AIPAC; the strongest and most effective Jewish group within the Israel lobby in the US, has stated its mission on their website that their aim is to encourage and persuade the US's government to implement specific policies that create a mutually beneficial relationship with Israel. They engage with and educate decision-makers about the bonds that unite the two countries and emphasize how it is in America's best interest to strengthen those bonds and help ensure the safety, strength, and security of the Jewish state. This statement indicates how the Israel lobby advocate for Israel in the US by portraying Israel as a strategic asset that serves the US in the region. This belief is widespread among American decision-makers, both republicans and democrats. Policymakers from both parties agree that Israel has advanced US's interests in the

Middle East, creating a broad bipartisan consensus that is the driving force behind America's long-standing support for the Jewish state.

The relationship between the US and Israel has been a subject of scholarly debate for many years. While some scholars support the Israel lobby's claim and argue that Israel is a strategic asset that serves American interests in the Middle East, others contend that this perception is a misconception perpetuated by the Israel lobby. Mearsheimer and Walt (2007) argue that supporting Israel has been costly and counterproductive for American interests. They argue that extremist groups like bin Laden find it easier to recruit supporters due to the US' unwavering support for Israel. Furthermore, Arab populations are against American backing of Israel, and citizens in these nations are distressed by the suffering of Palestinians and the US's role in the conflict. Mearsheimer and Walt also contend that the US's relationship with Israel makes it harder to deal with rogue states in the Middle East, and Israel's possession of nuclear weapons has led some of its neighbors to seek them as well. The US invasion of Iraq in 2003, for instance, was significantly endorsed by the Israel lobby, according to Mearsheimer and Walt, and had backfired on the US. The Israel lobby believed that removing Saddam Hussein would weaken Iraq and benefit Israel's security. However, the invasion ultimately led to a destabilization of the region and an increase in anti-American sentiment.

On the other hand, some scholars believe that Mearsheimer and Walt overestimate the role of the Jewish coalitions in influencing American foreign policy decisions. They argue that while the lobby's role in influencing American foreign policy decisions supporting Israel is significantly important, it is not the sole player. In fact,

the decisions are derived from America's strategic posture. Indeed, the Israel lobby has influenced the US to take decisions in favor of Israel even before the establishment of the Jewish state like the immediate recognition of the state in 1948 and providing economic aid. However, the special relations between the two states started after the 1967 Israeli military victory. The US defined its relationship with Israel as special and started providing it with significant military and economic support only after acknowledging that the community of strategic interests between the two countries enhanced its own global and regional interests. This development enabled the US to play a crucial role in the region, culminating in mediating the reduction and resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Therefore, the timing of the recognition of the special relationship was directly linked to Israel's military victory and its impact on the Middle Eastern region (Barsimantov, 1998; Eisenstadt & Pollock, 2012; Lewis S. W., 1999).

The relationship between the US and Israel from 1948 to 1967 was cold. Despite the lobbying efforts of the Israel lobby, the US limited the military and economic aid to Israel out of fear of the Soviet influence in the region through its relation with Egypt (Barsimantov, 1998). During the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, the Israel lobby succeeded in warming up US relations to Israel, but aid and open diplomatic support remained limited before the 1967 War. Nixon's administration marked a new phase of US-Israel relations, with a focus on limiting the Soviet influence and developing ties with Israel and conservative Arab states. Nixon increased economic and military ties with Israel to counter the Soviet arms sales and established the fundamental policy of providing Israel with a technological military edge. Under Nixon, aid to Israel increased significantly, reaching \$2.6 billion after the 1973 War and

remaining at high levels ever since to maintain regional military balance (Barsimantov, 1998).

Following the end of the cold war and the change in the strategic context, the Clinton administration's policy towards the Middle East during the 1990s was shaped by the US interests in the region, including concerns about the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, Iranian support for terrorist groups, and the potential proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The administration sought to promote a Pax Americana policy in the region, with the Arab-Israeli peace process being a key component of this strategy. The result was a close convergence of political and strategic interests, making the US relationship with Israel one of the closest the US has with any of its allies anywhere in the world (Rousan, 2013). Over time, the strategic importance of Israel was enhanced as it was a force against radical groups in the region. Israel shares intelligence on terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and Middle Eastern politics with the US, and both countries work together to develop advanced military technology. The cooperation expanded to include technology and development. Israeli innovations in information technology, water conservation, and high-tech agriculture have helped the US maintain economic competitiveness and address global challenges (Eisenstadt & Pollock, 2012).

The scholarly debate over the impact of the Israel lobby over the American foreign policy choices does not negate the Israel lobby's role in influencing the decisions neither ignore the American administrations' strategic calculations. The actual debate is over the extent of the lobby's influence. Mearsheimer and Waltz argue that the lobby's influence is very strong to the extent of American prioritization of Israel's

interests over the US. However, the counterargument claims that the strategic calculations are the main factor determining the most critical American foreign policy choices while the lobby's influence is limited. The US-Israel special relations based on strategic calculations raises questions about the US consideration for liberal values and human rights in its foreign policy, as the American supportive position for Israel does not consider the Palestinians' human rights, as well as the Israeli several violations for the international humanitarian law.

The US has a record of supporting authoritarian regimes that violate international liberal values and international law, particularly human rights principles, which has exposed the US government to domestic and international criticism because of the contradiction between its rhetoric and practice (Afoaku, 2000). Before the 1970s, ethical considerations were not a significant factor in the US foreign policy. Henry Kissinger's realpolitik doctrine did not take into account human rights. However, in 1974, a subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee conducted hearings and issued a report titled "Human Rights in the World Community: A Call for US Leadership," which urged the Department of State to prioritize human rights in foreign policy. Since then, the US's foreign policy has displayed a repeated back-and-forth emphasis on human rights, which has faced challenges from security concerns and national interests.

The Carter administration introduced a distinct approach to foreign policy by adopting the human rights policy proposed by Congress. Carter believed that a human rights-based policy would allow the US to regain its moral standing as supporting repressive regimes could have serious repercussions. The Secretary of State under



Carter's administration announced cuts to security assistance to Ethiopia, Argentina, and Uruguay, but not to strategic allies like South Korea, Indonesia, and Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo) guilty of similar infractions. The Secretary of State explained that "we must balance a political concern for human rights against economic and security goals" (Heaps, 1984, p. 21). However, the Reagan administration placed a greater emphasis on strategic interests over human rights concerns.

The Reagan administration provided support for the Pinochet regime in Chile and the Marcos regime in the Philippines, citing their anti-communist stance as a common ground for cooperation. However, the administration eventually facilitated the removal of both leaders from power and supported democratic transitions in Chile and the Philippines. Regarding South Africa, the prioritization of economic and business interests over addressing the racial policies of the white minority government was prevalent during the Reagan era. Congress and the public expressed strong objections to the administration's detachment from human rights, particularly when violence erupted in South Africa in 1983. In response, Congress passed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act in 1986, which implemented trade and financial sanctions against South Africa and lent support to the anti-apartheid opposition (Cohen R., 2008).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US under the administration of George H. W. Bush aimed to propagate democracy and modify regimes in accordance with a new international system. Nevertheless, Bush's foreign policy was characterized by apathy towards human rights violations, as he did not react to such offenses in locations like Tiananmen Square, Iraq, former Yugoslavia, and Haiti (Knott, 2020). Clinton strongly criticized Bush's perceived disregard for human rights. To facilitate the

transition to democracy, the Clinton administration provided economic assistance to South Korea, Argentina, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. However, despite these endeavors, the Clinton administration did not fully meet its human rights prioritization promises. For example, despite media reports of human rights abuses in Sindh and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, the Clinton administration provided Pakistan with \$360 million in aid (Jha, 1995).

The relevance of liberal values and human rights has been emphasized by US foreign policy in recent years. The Obama administration made an effort to lead from behind by forming alliances and concentrating on the credibility of international institutions. Nevertheless, he was criticized for doing little about Syria. Biden has promised to make human rights a key component of his foreign policy, in contrast to the Trump administration's frequent disrespect for human rights issues. However, Biden was criticized for falling short of his promise. For instance, he has supported authoritarian leaders in the Middle East. Additionally, while the Biden administration criticized the military coup in Myanmar, they did not target a major source of revenue for the junta (Lewis & Pamuk, 2021). In fact, history shows that, despite claims by administrations that human rights are central to their foreign policy like Carter, Clinton and Biden, national interests and security concerns have always been prioritized. This is evident in the US's longstanding support for Israel, despite its human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law.

The US approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has focused on bilateral negotiations, ignoring calls from the international community to pressure Israel to adhere to human rights principles. Indeed, the strategic calculations of all US

administrations have been the most influential factor in defining the relation with Israel demonstrating the viability of the Israel lobby's advocacy rationale of emphasizing the mutual interests between the US and Israel. Biden, for instance, stated bluntly in several occasions that "if there were not an Israel, we'd have to invent one to protect our interests in the region" (Oval Office, 2022). However, while these strategic calculations and security concerns can account for US government's support of Israel, they do not fully explain why Congress and the American public, who place a strong emphasis on liberal values, including human rights, are also supportive of Israel.

The Israel lobby has established a moral ground for the historical support of Israel by the US. The lobby portrays Israel as a fellow democracy, surrounded by hostile dictatorships, and deserving of US support based on shared values and principles. In his meeting with President Herzog of the state of Israel on 26 October 2022, President Biden stated "I'll say this 5,000 times in my career, the ironclad commitment the US has to Israel is based on our principles, our ideas, our values. They're the same values" (Widakuswara, 2022). This belief is reinforced by the idea that Israel has sought peace at every turn and has shown great restraint even when provoked. In contrast, Palestinians are portrayed as acting with deep wickedness and indiscriminate violence. These myths have been perpetuated for decades by the Israel lobby, which has dominated the public discourse in the US and banned the flow of information from Palestinian and pro-Palestinian advocacy groups that expose Israeli violations of international humanitarian law and human rights.

Throughout history, the Israel lobby has employed various methods to stifle any dissent towards Israel in the US, such as using intimidation and character assassination

against those who criticize Israel, or even attempting to harm or ruin their professional lives (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007, p. 185). Nonetheless, the allegations of anti-Semitism have been the most effective tool in discrediting any valid objections towards Israeli policies. In fact, labelling any international individual or organization that shows supportive position for Palestinians “antisemites” is a strategy adopted historically by Israel and the Israel lobby in the US that blocks any attempts for stating pro-Palestinian positions. Former Democratic President Obama, in his memoir “A Promised Land” explains that those who expressed criticism of Israel risked being labelled as “anti-Israel” or “anti-Semitic”. Despite providing significant aid to Israel during his presidency, including a \$38 billion package, he experienced a “whisper campaign” that portrayed him as hostile to Israel because he was critical of the settlement policy and the Israeli practices in the OPT (Obama, 2020, p. 626). According to Mearsheimer and Waltz, “anyone who criticizes Israeli actions or says that pro-Israel groups have significant influence over US Middle East Policy stands a good chance of getting labeled an antisemite” (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007, p. 188).

The Israel lobby’s historical dominance over the public discourse has weakened any attempts by the pro-Palestinian groups to generate support from the US Congress and the American public (Biletzki, 2015). As a result, sympathy for Israel over the Palestinians has consistently increased since 1967; support for Israel remains favored by more than 4 to 1 in the American public opinion polls until 2023 opinion polls. However, while the American public opinion was increasingly supporting Israel, a new phenomenon was observed starting from 2013. An increase in the sympathy towards Palestinians was noticed in the opinion polls. They show that while the support for Israel among the republicans is steady, there has been a change in the democrats’ opinions

who are divided in their sympathy between Israelis and Palestinians, where sympathy with Palestinians among democrats is increasing.

In fact, the antisemitism rhetoric is becoming less effective in intimidating critics of Israel as criticizing Israel is no longer a taboo in the US. This change can be attributed to several factors. The pro-Palestinian advocacy of the grassroots movements has been a prominent factor. The grassroots activism in the US results from the increased engagement with social media and alternative news sources, and the rise of intersectional activism that connects the struggles of different marginalized communities. The demographic change in the US (Mansoor, 2021) and the generation factor has also influenced the American public opinion to sympathize with Palestinians; older Democrats from the silent and baby boomer generations have stronger sympathy for Israelis than Palestinians, whereas millennials and Generation Z are evenly split in their support (Saad, 2023). Given the change in the public opinion among democrats, democrat congress representatives have become vocal in criticizing Israel, which was demonstrated in the 2021 events where some democrats publicly criticized the Israeli practices in East Jerusalem and the Israeli court ruling to forcefully evict Palestinians from their homes. However, given that the majority of the congress members are supportive for Israel and the Biden administration position towards Israel, the democrats voices were limited in effect. The following section discusses the Israeli narrative of the Spring 2021 events and its influence on the US position.

#### **4.5. The Israeli Narrative about the 2021 Events and the US Stance**

The Palestinians' Protests started in 2021 in opposition to the Israeli court decision on October 2020 to evacuate 12 families from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood

in East Jerusalem. After the decision was made public, Palestinians have demonstrated in the Sheikh Jarrah area, as well as in Israel and the OPT. The demonstrations were brutally dispersed by Israeli police and troops, further escalating the situation. As protests and clashes between Israeli settlers and police on one side and Palestinians on the other grew, Israel began airstrikes on the confined Gaza Strip, killing 256 Palestinians including 66 children and 40 women in retaliation for Hamas' response to the events in Jerusalem; Hamas launched rockets toward Sderot, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Jerusalem and other communities killing ten Israelis.

In portraying the events that took place in Spring 2021, the majority of the Jewish coalitions, particularly the most prominent ones, adopt the Israeli narrative. The declared Israeli narrative is that the properties in Sheikh Jarrah where the Palestinians reside were owned by Jewish families before the establishment of Israel in 1948, and that the evictions are a legitimate legal matter rather than an issue of Palestinian rights. According to this narrative, the Israeli courts have already ruled in favor of the Jewish organizations claims to the properties, and the evictions are the enforcement of legal decisions. The Israeli narrative ignores the fact that the Israeli court's eviction ruling has no legal basis since the Israeli court lacks legal jurisdiction over East Jerusalem, which is part of the OPT since 1967 and is subject to international humanitarian law.

The majority of the Jewish coalitions within the Israel lobby argue that the Sheikh Jarrah issue is a complicated legal matter that is being handled by the Israeli court, which corresponds with the Israeli description of the events and the Palestinian protests represent Arab's antisemitism against Jews living in Jerusalem. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL), for instance, released a statement stating that "this is a deeply

complicated matter with legal, social, and security considerations for all residents of Jerusalem” (ADL, 2021). While the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) went further to declare in a statement released on 10 May 2021: “The ZOA strongly condemns the antisemitic Arab violence against innocent Jews in Jerusalem, promoted and incited by Mahmoud Abbas (the Holocaust-denying, terrorist dictator of the Palestinian Authority terrorist regime), Abbas’ Fatah Movement, and Hamas” (ZOA, 2021).

The Israeli government and Israel lobby’s main tactic to evade international criticism for the Sheikh Jarrah residents’ forceful evictions order is presenting the escalation of violence under the theme of security. Therefore, they tried to obscure the events in Sheikh Jarrah instead directing the international audiences’ attention to the 11 days exchange of violence between Israel and Hamas in an attempt to present the 2021 escalation as a security threat for Israel, thus, provoking the security concern of the US. They have particularly shed light on the role of Hamas military group presenting it responsible for the events in the OPT as Hamas started the rocket attacks. AIPAC, for instance, ran paid social media ads denying that the evictions of Palestinians at Sheikh Jarrah have anything to do with the missiles from Gaza. AIPAC had been intentionally erasing any Israeli responsibility for the situation. For example, a sponsored tweet by AIPAC stated that “Hamas has fired over 300 rockets at Israeli civilians. This isn’t about evictions, annexation, or two states. It’s not about Palestinians or a better future. It’s about Hamas wanting to terrorize Israelis, destroy Israel, and gain power for itself and its Iranian backers”. By referring to Hamas rockets as the major issue, AIPAC attempted to decontextualize Hamas rockets, obscuring the

fact that they were a response to the events in Jerusalem presenting them as a security threat to Israel's existence, a topic that has been historically at the core of the Israel lobby's advocacy rationale.

In fact, on May 3, Hamas has called for international intervention to stop the violence in East Jerusalem, one week before launching the rockets on Israel. Hamas spokesperson Sami abu Zhuri tweeted, "The occupation's attempts to violate #AlAqsaMosque, field executions, mass displacement (#SheikhJarrah neighborhood) are enough to blow up the region. The international community must intervene to stop Israeli #terrorism. The #Palestinian people will face these crimes by all means". However, the events of East Jerusalem were discarded by the Israeli narrative. By focusing on Hamas rockets and by involving Iran's backing, the framing of the issue detaches it from the human rights framework and presents it as a security threat.

The Israeli narrative resonated widely in the US specially among the republicans who are historical strong supporters for Israel. Fox News, for instance, one of the most watched news outlets in the US which has been historically known for and described by politicians and academics as biased in favor of the republicans and their views adopted the Israeli narrative. The analysis of the media coverage of the May 2021 escalation shows that the coverage of the events during that period heavily emphasized the violent clashes between Hamas and Israel, while overlooking the Sheikh Jarrah issue. The reporting mostly concentrated on the security aspect of the events, without acknowledging the forced evictions that were taking place in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. When the coverage did mention Sheikh Jarrah, it portrayed the Palestinian residents as simply seeking to own property in Jerusalem, without



acknowledging the violent and unjust nature of the evictions.

The analysis results also found that “antisemitism” is the term with the highest frequency in the Fox News coverage of the events related to Israel and Palestine throughout May 2021. In addition to the republican Fox News, the international media outlets BBC and CNN gave special attention to the Israel-Gaza violence while shedding some light on the events in the East Jerusalem; however, the Sheikh Jarrah issue did not make it to their news headlines. The most repeated words in the news headlines in May 2021 were “Gaza”, “conflict”, “violence”, “Hammas”, “clashes”, “strikes”, “ceasefire” which reflects the attention paid to the exchange of fire between Hamas and Israel.

The pro-Palestine lobby, on the other hand, presents the Sheikh Jarrah issue within the human rights framework relying on the liberal norms-based advocacy rationale. However, the Palestine lobby lacks the Israel lobby’s level of financial and political resources. Its main organizations include the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), American Muslims for Palestine (AMP), and the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR). These groups historically face significant challenges in lobbying policymakers and influencing public opinion due to limited resources and the prevailing pro-Israel bias in the US media and political establishment.

The Palestine lobby’s advocacy while limited in influence was backed up by J Street pro-Israel lobby group which was the only group within the Israel lobby to oppose the Israeli narrative. In a statement released on May 6, 2021, J Street expressed deep concern over the Israeli Supreme Court’s decision to hear the cases of several Palestinian families facing eviction in Sheikh Jarrah. J Street stated that the Sheikh Jarrah and

Silwan evictions are “provocative and unjust attempts to ‘Judaize’ primarily Palestinian neighborhoods” (JStreet, 2021). J Street went on to call on the US government to intervene and pressure the Israeli government to halt the evictions, which it described illegal under international law and “have dangerous ramifications for Jerusalem and the wider region”.

Several Democrat congress representatives, some of whom work in collaboration with J Street, were drawn to the events in East Jerusalem and expressed their opposition to the forceful eviction of Palestinians in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. Democrats including Marie Newman, Cori Bush, Chuy Garcia, Mark Pocan, Rashida Tlaib, Andre Carson, Betty McCollum, Debbie Dingell, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and Ilhan Omar took to social media to show their support for Palestinians and condemn the Israeli court’s eviction orders. Tlaib, who is of Palestinian origin, started a petition calling on President Biden to intervene and put an end to the Israeli government’s illegal eviction, demolition of homes, and land theft against the Palestinians in Jerusalem. Ocasio-Cortez, one of the most prominent members of Congress, posted the petition on her social media page, and it garnered over 12,000 signatures (Harb, 2021). Pocan and Newman wrote to Secretary of State Antony Blinken on behalf of Congress, requesting that the State Department apply diplomatic pressure to stop the uprooting and destruction of Palestinian homes. Bush, a Black Lives Matter activist who defeated an establishment Democrat in 2020, called on Blinken to condemn the violence.

While those voices demanded the Biden administration to pressure the Israeli government to stop the eviction of the Sheikh Jarrah residents, the administration appeared hesitant to intervene. On 7 May 2021, three days before the fire exchange

between Hamas and Israel started, the US released a press statement entitled “Violence in Jerusalem” expressing its concern over the events in East Jerusalem and about the eviction of the Palestinians from Sheikh Jarrah; however, maintaining a neutral language stating: “We urge the authorities to approach the residents of Sheikh Jarrah with compassion and respect, and consider the totality of these complex historical cases and how they impact real lives today” (Price, 2021). The US statement did not reflect any position; neither called Israel to halt the eviction ruling nor named Israel responsible for the events, rather it called both sides the Israeli and the Palestinian leaders to deescalate tensions and referred to the issue as historical and complicated. However, in response to the exchange of fire between Hamas and Israel that started on 10 May 2021, the US state department spokesperson, Ned Price declared at a press conference on 11 May that the US “condemns in the strongest terms the Palestinian rocket attacks on Israel”. He went on to say that “while we urge de-escalation on all sides, we also recognize Israel’s legitimate right to defend itself and to defend its people and its territory”. However, when asked by journalists if Palestinians have the same right to defend themselves, the question was evaded more than ten times by Mr. Price (Al Jazeera, 2021).

Democrat representative Ilhan Omar criticized Biden for not referring to the Sheikh Jarrah issue during a phone call with Israeli prime minister Netanyahu on 12 May 2021, two days after the exchange of fire between Israel and Hamas. During the call, Biden showed concern over Israel’s security and “condemned the rocket attacks by Hamas and other terrorist groups, including against Jerusalem and Tel Aviv,” Biden also “conveyed his unwavering support for Israel’s security and Israel’s legitimate right to defend itself and its people, while protecting civilians” (Hernandez, 2021).

Representative Omar wrote in a tweet “No mention of Sheikh Jarrah. No mention of the Al-Aqsa raid”. In order to understand Biden’s passive behavior towards the Sheikh Jarrah eviction ruling and his enthusiasm to condemn any attack on Israel, his historical position towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a whole as well as his foreign policy approach needs to be reviewed.

Biden is a historical supporter of Israel. Throughout his career he declared in multiple occasions that he himself is a Zionist stating that “I am a Zionist. You don’t have to be a Jew to be a Zionist” (Biden, 2022). Ever since his first visit to Israel in 1973, which he has often cited that trip as a turning point in his understanding of the importance of the US-Israel relationship, Biden has remained unwaveringly dedicated to the security of Israel. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Biden continued to champion Israel’s cause in the Senate. He was a leading advocate for US aid to Israel, during a conference in 1986, Biden referred to the amount of aid dedicated for supporting Israel “the best \$3 billion investment we make” (Safak, 2021). In 1992, he introduced the Comprehensive Anti- Terrorism Act, which included provisions to enhance US-Israel cooperation in the fight against terrorism (CQ Almanac, 1996). Biden has also been a vocal advocate for Israel’s right to defend itself against terrorism and any other threats. In a speech to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) in 2013, he said, “our job is to make sure there’s always a place to go, that there’s always an Israel, that there’s always a secure Israel and there’s an Israel that can care for itself” (Biden, 2013).

Through coordination with the Israel lobby, he ensured unwavering support for Israel’s security as vice president under Obama administration despite the tension between Obama and Netanyahu and between Obama and the Israel lobby. He was a

key advocate in securing support for the Israeli defense technology like Iron Dome, David's Sling, and Arrow 3 anti-rocket and missile defense systems. Biden played a significant role in the development of the extraordinary \$38 billion, ten-year agreement for defense assistance to Israel, which was signed in 2016 and is the biggest military aid deal in American history. He has taken charge in the fight against censoring Israel, both internationally and within the US, particularly by opposing the boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement (Biden Harris Democrats, 2020).

Throughout his presidential campaign in 2020, Biden reiterated his commitment to Israel's security and his support for a two-state solution to the Israeli- Palestinian conflict. In a speech to the Jewish community in an event hosted by Jewish Democratic Council of America (JDCA) in September 2020, he said, "I will never waver in my support for the Jewish state of Israel. It's not negotiable. My commitment to Israel is rooted in my conviction that Israel is essential to the security of the United States" (JDCA, 2020). Since taking office as President, Biden has continued to demonstrate his strong support for Israel. He re-joined the international institutions—which Trump withdrew from due to their positions against Israel like the Human Rights Council—stating that the US will defend Israel from within. Furthermore, The US aid to Israel under Biden administration was increased from the Obama and Trumps days as Israel received 3.8 billion dollars annually, and following the escalation of violence in May 2021, Israel received additional one billion dollars to restore the "Iron Dome" missile defense system (Harb, 2022). Given Biden's extremely supportive position for Israel and his strong ties with the prominent Jewish coalitions, adopting a stronger position against the Israeli violations in regard to Sheikh Jarrah was unlikely, which was demonstrated in Biden administration's passive position towards the Sheikh Jarrah

evictions.

On the other hand, there were other indicators —contrary to the former US government under Trump administration— which gave hope for Palestinians and pro-Palestinians that Biden administration would respond to advocacy efforts to stop the Sheikh Jarrah evictions court ruling. While Biden maintained Trumps legacy of maintaining the US embassy in Jerusalem and shuttering the consulate for Palestinian affairs in Jerusalem, he took a different approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Biden restored the historical American position towards the Israeli settlement policy as illegal under the international law, reversing the position of the US under Trump administration which declared that the policy is not a violation to the international law. In a statement, Biden declared his commitment to the two-state solution, which he believes is the only viable solution for the conflict. Hence, supporting the international community’s position towards the construction of Israeli settlements in the OPT as a unilateral measure that hinders peace by severely limiting the feasibility of the two-state solution.

Biden’s rhetoric in his elections campaign about pursuing a foreign policy that would center on human rights was another source of hope for Palestinians to pursue advocacy efforts. In hopes for pressuring Biden to uphold his promise of centering human rights in his foreign policy in regard to the case of Israel and Palestine, Palestinians and their supporters resorted to grassroots mobilization through activating a transnational advocacy network in the aim of saving the Sheikh Jarrah Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem. The network aimed at mobilizing supporters for Palestinians at several levels and raise the Sheikh Jarrah forceful evictions issue at the international agenda, which in turn would lead to changing the passive attitude of the

US government to force Israel to change its decision.

#### **4.6. Conclusion**

The chapter discussed the Israeli settler groups influence on the Israeli politics demonstrating their impact on the Israeli government to endorse the settlers' interests. It also discussed their active role behind the events of Spring 2021 marked with a high escalation of violence resulting from the settlers' effort to evict the Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in East Jerusalem in the aim of expanding the Israeli settlement. Furthermore, the settler groups' transnational connections with the Jewish coalitions in the US were discussed, particularly with the most prominent Jewish groups. The right ideology of those Jewish groups that started dominating the Israel lobby since 1967 facilitated strengthening the relations with the settler groups. Therefore, the settler groups influence is not limited to the Israeli government, rather they are able to influence the foreign policy decisions given the Jewish coalitions big influence on the US foreign policy.

The Israel lobby's ability to influence the US governments' foreign policy decisions indicated that the rationale used by the lobby based on the mutual national interests between Israel and the US as well as securing the American interests in the region is influential as it corresponds with the American foreign policy priority of security. The role of human rights in the US foreign policy throughout the American administrations since Nixon's administration until Biden's administration was discussed. The discussion concluded that while the US started including ethical consideration represented by human rights in its foreign policy since 1970s starting with Carter administration, the security concern has been prioritized in the incidents where the

American national interests are at stake.

In the case of Israel, while almost every American administration disapproved the Israeli settlement policy and supported the two-state solution, none of the American administrations pursued substantial measures against Israel to stop the settlements expansion as the congress and the public approve unwavering support for Israel. The support by the congress and the public for Israel despite the human rights violations and its breach for international law comes from the widespread belief that Israel is a moral case that requires the support of the US. This belief was created and perpetuated by the Israel lobby. Thus, the Israel lobby succeeded in adopting a doubled advocacy rationale. While the mutual national security concerns rationale was effective at the government level due to the security foreign policy priority, the morality rationale succeeded at generating the support of the congress and the public.

The discussion on the Spring 2021 events showed that the Jewish coalitions framing of the events as a security threat for the existence of the state of Israel was effective in generating the US immediate support. Not only did the Biden administration provided aid to enhance the Israeli defense system immediately after the events, its first response to the events also confirmed its support for Israel's right to defend itself against any perceived threat. The US's indifferent position towards the Sheikh Jarrah forceful evictions and the persistent of the Israeli government in denying the illegality of the forceful eviction order led the Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah to activate a transnational advocacy network relying mainly on grassroots mobilization. The advocacy network aimed at changing the US position towards the events which is able to pressure Israel to uphold the international law and stop the evictions of the Sheikh



Jarrah residents. The 2021 transnational campaign was built on previous advocacy efforts by the Palestinians and their Israeli left supporters, however, at a larger scale aiming to generating support from the international publics as well as foreign governments to impact the US government which would eventually pressure the Israeli government to stop its violations of the Palestinians rights.

## **Chapter 5. Palestinian Transnational-International Advocacy: A Glimpse of Hope?**

### **5.1. Introduction**

The Israeli supreme court has been passing eviction notices to the Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah since 2002. While the forceful evictions were carried out quietly or accompanied by popular protests within East Jerusalem, the October 2020 court ruling triggered a storm of violence in the region resulting in the death of over 200 Palestinians and 12 Israelis. The Israeli government and the prominent coalitions within the Israel lobby in the US framed the escalation of violence within the state's security concerns cultivating the US government's support. However, the prolonged violation of the Palestinian Sheikh Jarrah residents' rights—who have been gradually forcefully evicted from their homes since 2002—was ignored as the Israeli narrative denies the occurrence of any violation. In Response, the Palestinian resident of Sheikh Jarrah activated a transnational advocacy network that worked internationally to influence the US government to act in support of the Palestinian residents pressuring the Israeli government to reverse the Israeli court eviction ruling. This chapter argues that the transnational advocacy network led to halting the eviction order saving the Palestinian residents from displacement; however, it failed to generate a permanent solution for the Sheikh Jarrah Palestinian residents issue as they remain under the threat of forceful eviction.

This chapter delves into how the advocacy efforts that started within Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood grew into a transnational network that was able to rescue the Palestinian families from the forceful eviction. It examines the formation and growth of this network, its organizational structure, and how it framed the issue, in order to

determine how a domestic problem became a subject of international debate. The international public opinion, the media coverage and foreign governments declared positions towards the issue were analyzed to conclude the impact of the advocacy efforts.

The chapter culminates in the success of the advocacy network, having gained the backing of foreign publics, international institutions and the international community as a whole, ultimately saving the families from eviction. The Sheikh Jarrah case demonstrates the applicability of the boomerang-spiral model, albeit it draws attention to variables that impede the transition along the model's phases. While advocacy network saved the Sheikh Jarrah families temporarily, the eviction threat persists and the longstanding Israeli settlement policy in East Jerusalem and the West Bank continues. The US with its leverage over Israel, has a huge influence on the Israeli behavior, which explains the ebb and flow of the settlement plans advancement. The US pushes for halting some settlement plans, at the same time, permits Israel to evade international pressure and thus continues the settlements construction, which explains the persistent threat of forcefully evicting the Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah and other neighborhoods. The chapter starts by discussing the early attempts of the Palestinians and pro-Palestinians —mainly the left Israeli activists— to counter the eviction ruling are also explored. The formation of a transnational advocacy network and its impact is then examined tracing the events until the eviction ruling is halted. Finally, the chapter discusses the challenges to achieve a permanent solution for the Palestinian residents.

## **5.2. From East Jerusalem to the UN: Mobilization Rescues Sheikh Jarrah Families**

Unable to recall precisely when he first visited Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, Israeli Solidarity activist Daniel Dukarevitch-Argo stated that the neighborhood has been silently transformed into an Israeli settlement. In 2003, he and a group of activists whose number did not exceed 14 were spending nights at the Palestinian families' houses where according to Dukarevitch-Argo, "the police and the settlers take advantage of a moment of lack of alertness, break into the house, arrest some, beat others, and within hours the house is another settlement" (Dukarevitch-Argo, 2012). He added that outside the tiny circle of activists, no one in the Israeli public knew what was going on as the media reported nothing of the events. Since the beginning of the issue in the 1970s, the Palestinian residents have been fighting alone in the Israeli court halls against the settler organization to prove their legitimate right to the lands.

### **5.2.1. The Sheikh Jarrah Quandary Rises to the Fore**

In November 2008, Al-Kurd family lost half of their home and in August 2009, two Palestinian families Ghawi and Hanoun were forcefully evicted from their homes which were immediately then inhabited by Jews based on a court rule. Following these events, the Palestinian residents accompanied by a handful of Israeli activists gathered in the neighborhood in protest for the forceful eviction of the Palestinian residents. The Palestinian and Israeli activists' joint protests became a ritual where they gather every Friday afternoon in the neighborhood with drum circles and anti-occupation slogans. While the protests started with fourteen Israeli activists and the Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah, the number of participants grew throughout two years to include thousands of activists among them first-time Israeli activists. Late 2009, "Solidarity

Sheikh Jarrah” protest movement was formed (972magazine).

The grassroot movement that appeared in 2009 worked in collaboration with a local Palestinian committee in Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood to coordinate the weekly demonstrations. The movement was called “Solidarity Sheikh Jarrah” emphasizing its particular connection to the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood (Gale, 2014). As the number of Sheikh Jarrah protestors grew, the Israeli police started to use force against demonstrators, refuse to issue permits for the non-violent demonstrations, arrest, drag and beat activists on a weekly basis. The protests attracted heads of well-known civil society organizations. In 2010, the Sheikh Jarrah issue made headlines in Israel when the director of B'Tselem human rights organization, Hagai El-Ad, was arrested along with 14 other Israelis. The protests showed a reemergence of an Israeli left and the movement symbolized Israeli civil disobedience and rejection to occupation, which promised a change in the Israeli politics landscape which was dominated by the right-wing ideology.

Israeli politics and public discourse have been dominated by the right-wing Likud party since 1977, stifling any potential for pro-Palestinian movement. After the 1973 war that sparked a wave of grassroots political activism, the early Israeli peace movement and the settlement movement both arose concurrently. In 1978, Peace Now, the largest and most effective peace advocacy group at the time, was established. It argues that the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is the only practical way to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Peace Now worked against the settlement policy in order to achieve the two-state solution.

The movement was criticized for the lack of authenticity in terms of Zionism and for its lack of patriotism or allegiance to the state of Israel. The secularism of the

movement was also criticized by the religious parties and groups. In addition, the security approach of the movements was not accepted neither among the political parties, nor the Israeli public. All of the major political parties view the security issue through the prism of power politics. The relationship with the Palestinians is seen as a zero-sum game in which the acceptance of Palestinian national rights results in the loss of Israeli national rights. Therefore, Israeli politics glorify using military force as the sole way to handle the security concern (Hermann, 2002). In contrast, the peace movement's strategy for achieving security does not adhere to power politics; instead, it promoted a win-win scenario that views military solutions as more expensive and ineffective than political ones. Peace Now activists believe that the only way to attain security is through territorial concessions. Even though the left and center parties share the same viewpoints on some issues, they separated themselves from the peace movement's actions over a variety of time periods in order not to lose their support base (Cohen S., 2019).

The peace movement failed to build sustainable communication channels within the parliament even though it had connections with the Labor and Meretz left parties. In addition, the assassination of the Labor Prime minister Rabin in 1995 by an extremist right-wing Israeli brought an end to the labor power in the parliament. The peace process that both sides; the Palestinians and the left-wing Israelis hoped for, failed. The failure of the peace agreement led to further escalations and ultimately led to the second Palestinian national uprising in 2000. As a result, the Israeli public attitudes shifted away from the peace discourse completely and aligned with the right-wing government means. Thus, the Israeli peace movement failed to secure a peaceful environment and therefore shut down which diminished peaceful activism within the

Israeli society.

The breakout of the second uprising and the Israeli military's violent treatment of Palestinian protestors produced a new wave of Israeli activists. However, it came in a new form, activists established several human rights organizations that were registered as NGO. Several NGOs were registered by early 2000, for example: the military veterans witnessing organization "Breaking the Silence", "Yesh Din" whose legal and public advocacy is designed to protect Palestinians human rights under occupation, and many other NGOs. Other organizations that were formed during the 1980s and 1990s joined the new oppositional initiatives like "Yesh Gvul" that was established in 1982, "B'Tselem" the Israeli information center for human rights in the occupied territories, "HaMoked" center for defense of the individual, the feminist "Women in Black" organization, and Peace Now launched the "settlement watch" project that monitors the settlements development among others (Katriel, 2021). Other NGOs were founded particularly to monitor, collect information and advocate at the local and international levels for the Palestinian's rights in East Jerusalem like "Ir Amim" and "Terrestrial Jerusalem".

Those organizations undertake both verbal and physical activities in order to express solidarity and disregard the distinction between Israelis and Palestinians. As an example, Israeli activists orchestrate collaborative olive harvesting with Palestinian cultivators who face harassment and violence from settlers. Additionally, these activists also seek to spread awareness by providing information to expand their network across the globe. Generating counter-information is a major objective for many NGOs and for some, it is the primary task (Katriel, 2021, p. 59). Factual accuracy is necessary for forming critical opinions, which is the main purpose of these initiatives.

Human rights discourse is used to interpret and analyze the data gathered by victims, monitors, and those responsible for the abuse, as seen in the work of organizations such as B'Tselem, MachsomWatch, and Breaking the Silence. These interpretations represent human rights violations, as they are inconsistent with the moral standards underlying human rights (Ganapathy & Bhatia, 2017).

The new NGOs initiative that has many titles; anti-occupation movement, radical left, or independent left is located on the margin of the Israeli politics. The political environment that led to the failure of the first peace movement continued to undermine the new wave of activism. The right-wing party's ideology in collaboration with the settlement movement has penetrated the Israeli politics at all levels; at the parliament level and at the public opinion level that was perceiving peace as an unattainable goal. This led to lack of influence of the new initiatives within the political process (Katriel, 2021, p. 60). Given the hostile environment against peace activism in Israel, the "Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity" movement, led by pro-Palestinian groups, was a groundbreaking development. The protests not only inspired Israeli citizens to take action, but also drew in activists from around the world to witness the police brutality. To stop the protesters from entering the Palestinian neighborhood, the Israeli police set up roadblocks. Arrests were made indiscriminately, with Palestinians, Israelis, and international activists all taken into custody. Israeli activists were given a court order to stay away from Sheikh Jarrah for 30 days, while international activists were immediately deported from the courtroom (Wafa News, 2009).

International human rights organizations like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the United Nations Human Rights Council were drawn to the neighborhood's events. Those



organizations raised the matter, demanded an end to the family evictions, and denounced the mistreatment of the protesters. Protests featured prominent figures showing up like David Grossman, an Israeli novelist, former Parliament Speaker Avram Burg, former US President Jimmy Carter, and Mary Robinson, a former leader of Ireland. The protests attracted the attention of the international media, who covered them. *The New Yorker* and the *Guardian* newspapers both ran articles about the Sheikh Jarrah incident.

In 2011, a film was produced by Just Vision organization entitled “My Neighborhood”. The film featured 11 years old boy Mohammed Al-Kurd who is a resident of Sheikh Jarrah and his family is one among those under the threat of eviction. The film was premièred at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York and won a Peabody Award. According to the activists, Sheikh Jarrah became a symbol for the struggle against settlements due to the protests and the activists’ advocacy efforts. Hagit Ofran, director of the Settlement Watch program of Peace Now, said: “They helped, they made it costly for the government, there were diplomats calling our government, calling our foreign office, asking questions, and it became a headache to the system” (Wildman, 2013). During the years of the consistent protests between 2009 and 2011, not a single family was evicted from the neighborhood. In July 2011, the court ruled that both the Farhan and Harisha families will not be evicted as they did not lose the protected tenants status.

Following the court rule, the Solidarity Sheikh Jarrah movement decided to stop organizing protests at the neighborhood in September 2011. The activists declared that the movement has achieved its goal as the court stopped or delayed the evictions in Sheikh Jarrah. Therefore, they saw no need for the protests to continue in the location

(Zonszein, 2012). At the same time, the events in Sheikh Jarrah were not taking place in a vacuum. The settlements expansion and Palestinians uprooting was continued elsewhere in East Jerusalem as well as the rest of the OPT. In Silwan village of East Jerusalem, settlement and archaeological tourist site “City of David” was created upon the forced evictions of Palestinians and demolition of Palestinian homes (Remy & Power, 2022). In Issawiya and A-Tur Palestinian neighborhoods of East Jerusalem, the Jerusalem municipality started building a national park called “Mount Scopus Slopes” on lands belonging to Palestinian residents of the neighborhoods, and entails the demolition of approximately 50 Palestinian homes and structures. Therefore, to respond to the large-scale forceful evictions and land confiscations, the Solidarity Sheikh Jarrah movement decided to change its approach. However, a limited number of activists insisted on carrying on the Friday protests routine in Sheikh Jarrah due to the symbolism this particular case represents in fighting against the settlement policy (Gale, 2014).

The “Solidarity Sheikh Jarrah” movement was renamed “Solidarity” and its goal was to make the Israeli public aware of the settlement policy in the OPT. It did this by setting up activist groups in universities that held educational programs. This quickly became a national movement that opposed the government’s unjust actions within Israel. However, in the Summer of 2011, the focus of the social-justice protests shifted away from more complicated matters and towards the cost of living. Therefore, the Sheikh Jarrah protests deteriorated but the threat of evictions remained while the Palestinian residents and the settler organization continued their battle in the Israeli court halls (Wildman, 2013).

### **5.2.2. The Sheikh Jarrah Advocacy Network Spreads Worldwide**

After a decade of quietness, the Sheikh Jarrah Issue was thrust back into the spotlight at a larger scale following a court ruling in October 2020 of forcefully evicting four Palestinian families from their homes in the neighborhood. Witnessing the mobilization ability by the early “Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity” movement and utilizing the modern communication tools, in spring 2021, the Palestinian residents launched a new advocacy campaign. The campaign was led by Mohammed and Muna Al-Kurd whose family had lost half of their house for Jews inhabitants in 2008 and their family is to be evicted according to October 2020 court ruling. While the 2009-2011 protests mobilized Palestinian, Israeli and international activists within the borders of East Jerusalem and grabbed the attention of the international NGOs as well as media, the 2021 campaign expanded far beyond. The 2009 grassroot movement was led mainly by the Israeli left activists who were able to mobilize a large-scale Israeli left protests within the border of East Jerusalem promising a transition in the Israeli public opinion and consequently the right dominance on the parliament. However, the Israeli left shrank again to the margin of the Israeli politics where left activists remains a detested minority whose activities are suffocated by the settlement movement and the government’s laws.

The right-wing groups demonized the anti-occupation activists considering them anti-Israel and traitors. The demonization campaigns and steps to curb their activities have considerably undermined their public standing. These included the passing of laws that delegatize particular oppositional groups’ activities, including the so-called NGO law, which targets the financial aid given by European governments to civil society groups in Israel; an anti BDS (Boycott, divestment and sanctions) law that

outlaws calls to boycott goods produced in West Bank Jewish settlements, and a law designed to block organizations like Breaking the Silence and the Bereaved Parents' Circle from bringing their messages to school children and youth (Katriel, 2021, p. 62). Thus, the activists found themselves alienated from the Israeli community with limited resources which left them exposed to burnt out. However, they continued their work as the main source of credible information about the Israeli violations in the OPT (Katriel, 2021, p. 63).

Unlike the 2009 advocacy campaign that worked domestically under the leadership of a grassroot movement and civil society organizations, the 2021 campaign took the mobilization efforts to the international level which helped in advancing the advocate's goal. The Sheikh Jarrah 2021 campaign generated international wide-scale support at different levels. The campaign resulted in the Sheikh Jarrah issue and the settlement policy being raised at the international agenda leading to not only halting the evictions of the four families, but also to the Israeli court's reconsideration of the settler organization's ownership to the lands. The advocacy campaign mobilized the foreign publics across the globe who showed unprecedented support to the Palestinian families, hijacked the international mainstream media, grabbed the attention of the international institutions, led foreign governments to release statements to announce their stance on the issue and finally pressure the Israeli government to act.

The 2021 advocacy campaign included the conventional mobilization methods through national and transnational human rights NGOs and grassroot movements. However, the network was mainly expanded through the use of the modern communication technology particularly the social media platforms by launching an online advocacy campaign. The online campaign was launched by Palestinian activists

on March 2021 and by May 2021, solidarity demonstrations were held throughout Israel, the OPT and 150 cities across the globe. The analysis of the Twitter campaign shows that the network's features make up a recipe for mobilization success. The network included 47,313 contributors from 87 countries which is a huge number of participants covering a wide geographical area across the planet which is an indicator for the network's mobilization abilities. While the network included 47,313 participants, it included 94,523 retweeting ties which means that information related to the Sheikh Jarrah issue were shared 94,523 times on Twitter only.

The twitter network analysis shows that Sheikh Jarrah network was built by independent activists who created the Palestinian narrative of the events and shared the information to the foreign audiences. The network included two types of participants who have distinctive roles that did not overlap. The narrators who created the storyline and the brokers who connected the network together through sharing the information published by the narrators with the audience. While the network included civil society organizations, human rights NGOs and grassroots movements, their contribution was limited. By sampling the highest 600 influencers in the network, it was found that 97% of the narrators are independent activists while organizations and movements made 3% of the network. The brokers who connect the network and expand it were made up of purely independent activists as none of the organizations or movements were found among the highest 600 influencers in terms of brokerage. The limited role played by organizations explains the ability of the network to expand as the network's structure was built on open participation allowing for any interested individual to join in.

Not only did the network was built on open participation, it was also built by

activists located across the globe. Unlike the conventional social movement organization where the work is concentrated in one location and aims at attracting activists globally through specific mobilization tactics adopted by the organization, the base of this network is fragmented across national borders. The most influential activists in the network are distributed across 30 countries as shown in Figure 10 below. It is worth noting that while the key influential activists are located in Palestine as expected, the following locations of the most influential activists are the UK and the US. While the Israeli activists led the early domestic mobilization of 2009 and pushed the Sheikh Jarrah issue to the fore, in the 2021 campaign their participation was limited as international activists showed higher participation in the network.

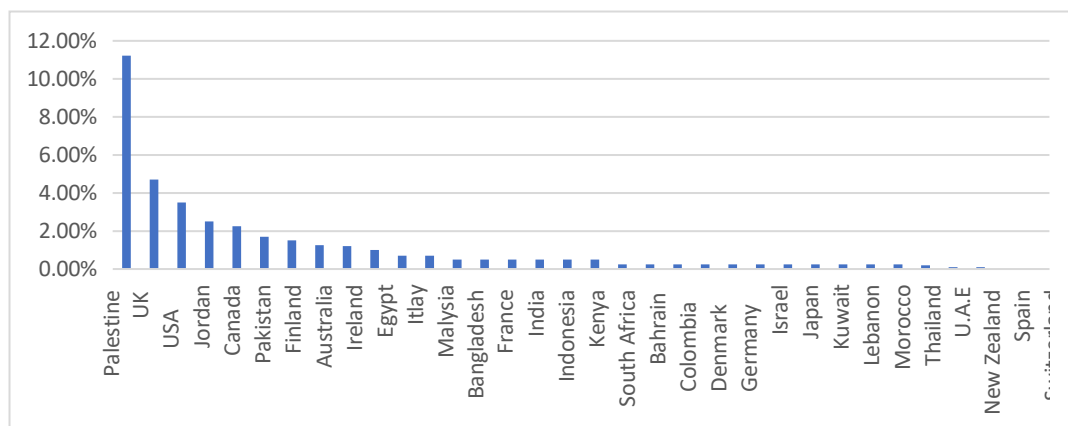


Figure 10: Percentage of top influencers per location.

While the network has a fragmented structure base, it was able to sustain a steady information flow through clusters which is reflected in the network's density score. The network's density was extremely sparse at 0.000034. The low density of the network means that it is not evenly connected but instead clustered. In other words, the network is not a unified body that communicate at the same level, rather it consists of sub-communities i.e., the network is a combination of a group of small networks. The networks modularity score of 0.645 shows high density within a sub community but

only a few pointing outwards to other sub-communities. Thus, the activists communicated through internal strong ties within specific sub-communities while the sub-communities are connected together in weak ties. The findings show that the Sheikh Jarrah network includes 832 sub-communities. While the number of the sub-communities is large, it explains how the information traveled across a vast geographical space of 87 countries.

The network's sub-communities were built based on common backgrounds and interests of the actors rather than their geographical locations. For example, the first largest sub-community consists of online webpages founded by independent activists. Those activists are dedicated to supporting and raising awareness about the Palestinian struggle for their land in the virtual space targeting the international public. The second largest sub-community includes specialized local media agencies and organizations like Quds News Network, Wafa News Agency, and Days of Palestine, as well as individual contributors who are not affiliated with any organization. University students made up the third largest sub-community. Sub-community four consists of well-established grassroots and solidarity movements, human rights NGOs, as well as activists affiliated with those movements and organizations. Sub-community five includes intellectuals, researchers, and academics. The large number of sub-communities (832) within the network and information flow pattern within like-minded actors across national borders show the horizontal nature of the network's structure, which explains its wide reach internationally.

Generating information and mobilizing advocates transnationally are the main pillars for creating an advocacy network. Albeit, framing the information is more critical for a successful network. According to the social movement theorists, frames

should be dramatic, credible and appealing to the target audience that the advocates aspire to mobilize. Thus, the frames should correspond with the liberal values for the western activists, governments and international institutions to be convinced to pick up the call. The Sheikh Jarrah issue framing was identified at two levels; the general framing by all activists, and the issue framing by each sub-community. The Sheikh Jarrah network’s frames indeed corresponded with the liberal values by approaching the issue from several aspects of the international law. In addition, they focused on dramatic events and relied on credible sources of information; the legal analysis of the international human rights NGOs, the live coverage of the events and testimonies from the Palestinian residents and protestors on site. Table 5 below depicts the topics that were covered by the activists throughout the network and the keywords that indicated the topics.

Topic	Keywords
Violence (1)	Attack, threaten, eviction, arrest, force, Nazi
Terrorism (2)	Terrorist, terrorism, crime, kill
International Law (3)	Ethnic cleansing, apartheid, displacement
Taken under control (4)	Imposing siege, surround corner, monster
Calling for int. support (5)	Neighborhood, Palestinian, save, Israeli, Gaza, family, settler
Violence against journalists (6)	Journalist, apartheid, photojournalist, force

Table 5: Topics and keywords.

The first theme covered by activists on the online network is documenting the violence of the Israeli police committed against the Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah as well as the protestors. Second, they described the escalation of events by emphasizing the use of words like “terrorism”, “killings”, and “crimes”. Third, they framed the events within particular legal terms to describe the whole situation, such as “ethnic cleansing”, “apartheid”, and “displacement”. Fourth, they reported that the manner by which the neighborhood was taken control of by the occupation forces by



imposing a siege and surround the neighborhood with armed force. Fifth, the activists called for international support by referring to the events in the neighborhood as indicated by the fact that the verb “save” was the token with the highest frequency throughout the dataset. Finally, they documented the use of force against journalists.

While there are specific topics that were raised by activists throughout the network, each sub-community focused on particular themes related to the Sheikh Jarrah struggle. The sampled five biggest sub-communities raised several aspects of the problem. The first largest sub-community of online media webpages of the independent groups discussed the situation of the Al-Kurd family whose house had been stolen by Israeli settlers. They also covered international organizations’ reactions and condemnation of the events. The second largest sub-community that includes specialized local media agencies and organizations and independent contributors covered governments’ reactions to the events and the political standpoints and consequences. They also highlighted other areas that are suffering from the same problems as Sheikh Jarrah. The third sub-community of student activists documented the Police violence and random killings of Palestinians. They particularly focused on the attack on Jana Kiswani, a 16 years old Palestinian who was entering her home in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah when an Israeli police officer shot her in the back. They also documented the brutality against the demonstrators. The fourth subcommunity of NGOs and solidarity movements and networks focused on calling for support from the international community, the issue of the Judaization of Jerusalem, and the violence and destruction carried out in the process. Sub-community five of intellectuals, researchers, and academics who raised awareness about racial segregation against Palestinians in Jerusalem and the attacks conducted against

Muslims praying at Al-Aqsa Mosque as well as the apartheid system of Israel. They also highlighted the solidarity demonstrations by international supporters of Palestine.

The activists involved in the network showed a wide range of topics and themes, as each contributor brought their own personal views to the debate. The Sheikh Jarrah issue was tackled from different angles due to the many perspectives presented, leading to a wider spread of the network. The contributors of the network did not need to be swayed by a well-crafted slogan in order to join, they shared their stories and gave their opinion on the situation. The network's growth was not forced by a social movement organization, but naturally grew due to the spontaneous participation of the individuals. However, there were general unified themes under which the contributors crafted their frames. The underlying theme of the contributors' frames was the Israeli forces' violations of international law and human rights. This enabled the Palestinian narrative to resonate among western liberal audiences like publics and governments. Through exposing Israeli violence against Palestinians, protestors, and journalists, several human rights principles were breached. Furthermore, concepts such as "ethnic cleansing", "racial segregation", and "apartheid" were used to directly reference the Israeli breach of international law reported by human rights NGOs in various reports.

Creating the advocacy network through generating information, framing the information within the international liberal values and expanding the network's reach facilitate channeling the information where it made an impact indicating the success of the network. The Sheikh Jarrah online transnational advocacy network was able to attract the attention of the international community at all levels as shown in Figure 11 below. The network was met with support from foreign publics which was demonstrated in their attitudes in the online network as well as the solidarity protests

which led to the mainstream media coverage of the events in East Jerusalem. The international human rights organizations attention was also drawn to the events conducting investigations and releasing reports providing legal analysis to the situation.

The UN human rights bodies became also involved in the issue and the issue was also discussed at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) meetings. Finally, foreign governments also declared their positions from the events demonstrating the ability of the advocacy network to cultivate international support.



Figure 11. The transnational advocacy network's areas of influence

Assessing global public opinion is difficult, yet the findings of the sentiment analysis conducted on the Twitter network and worldwide solidarity protests demonstrate the widespread support. The majority of the text tweets were found to be neutral in nature, although negative sentiment was observed to be more prevalent than positive sentiment. Neutral language indicate that the texts were framed in an informative way that describes the events without expressing sentiments. The negative language used in the text of the tweets was found to be mainly critical of Israeli

practices, while those expressing satisfaction with the events employed more positive language. The following Table 6 provides an overview of the sentiment analysis results.

	TOTAL TWEETS	POTENTIAL IMPACTS	CONTRIBUTORS	LINKS/ PICS	RETWEETS
NEUTRAL	76,485	172,488,773	38,331	8,061	65,549
POSITIVE	5,750	14,480,431	4,293	571	4,792
NEGATIVE	28,614	69,823,532	17,533	3,132	24,155

Table 6: Twitter network sentiment analysis findings

Table 6 above reveals that neutrality was the dominant mode of interaction on the network., 38,331 of the contributors used neutral language to describe events. Out of the 110,861 total tweets, 76,485 of the tweets featured facts and provided information with 8,061 links and pictures. These neutral tweets were highly retweeted, with 65,549 retweets. Influential contributors of the highest impact on the network, those with the highest number of followers, were also mostly in the neutral category. The tweets that expressed disapproval of Israeli actions in Sheikh Jarrah were much higher than those that expressed approval. 28,614 negative tweets negative tweets were found generated by 17,533 contributors and shared 24,155 times. On the other hand, 4,293 tweets that supported the events were sent out with only 4,792 retweets. The reach of the tweets that criticized the Israeli practices was much greater, at 69,823,532, compared to 14,480,431 for the tweets that confirmed the evictions of the Sheikh Jarrah residents.

The sentiment analysis of the general tweeting trend showed that the international public opinion was in line with the information shared. As shown in Figure 12 below, Neutral, positive and negative tweets were relatively balanced over the studied period. However, a notable shift was seen on June 14, when the neutral tweets decreased and the negative tweets suddenly rose, with positive tweets at their lowest point. This shift can be attributed to the events occurring in the neighborhood; on this day, the Israeli

occupation forces called for Palestinians to demolish their homes in East Jerusalem and conducted operations storming villages and cities in the West Bank, leading to increased support from the foreign public, shown in the increased number of negative tweets. On August 5, there was a large surge in neutral tweets, as well as a greater number of positive tweets than negative tweets, which were at their lowest. The Israeli court proposed a solution for the issue, which would have given the Sheikh Jarrah Palestinian residents the “protected tenant” status while their homes would be owned by a settler organization. The neutral tweets provided information about the solution, while the negative and positive tweets showed the contributors’ views on it.

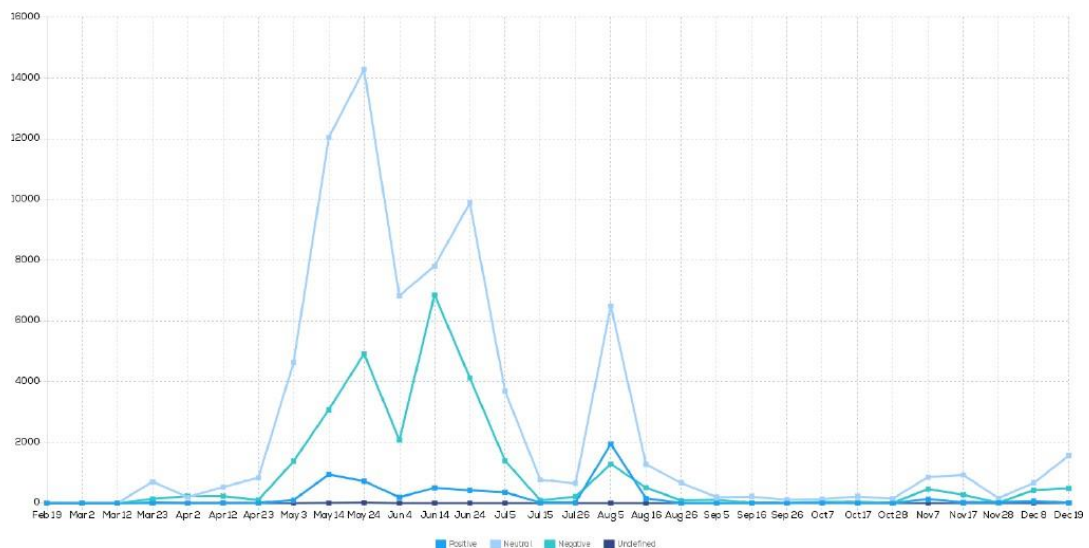


Figure 12. Sentiment analysis of the general tweeting trend

The twitter network analysis shows that the Sheikh Jarrah online advocacy network was able to generate participation from sympathetic individuals, grassroots movements and organizations across the globe. However, the question of the online activism’s impact and ability to make a tangible change on the ground remains unsolved. The role of digital communication technology on political activism has been covered widely in the literature. Some scholars doubt the ability of the online activism to make

an impact and coined the term “clicktivism” to describe online activism, which is considered a technique to make people feel positive emotions cheaply and quickly rather than engaging in a costly type of activism (Chiluwa & Ifukor, 2015, p. 270).

According to the clicktivism hypothesis, engaging in an online campaign does not reflect a participant’s propensity to participate in an off-line activity. Therefore, according to this view point, the online network size does not reflect the actual size of the network which is able to make the desired change. Some features of the Sheikh Jarrah Twitter network might support the theory of clicktivism as the network includes 110,861 total tweets, comprising 16,365 original tweets (14.76 per cent) and 94,496 retweets (85.24 per cent). The low proportion of original tweets and the high proportion of the retweeting activity indicate clicktivism as participants were involved in retweeting rather than building on their content which is an easy and costless relieving behavior.

On the other end of the spectrum, some scholars argue that the virtual realm plays a crucial role in supporting activism, suggesting that the most effective activism comprises both online and offline aspects that work in tandem. The flow of information on digital media plays a significant role in generating awareness for a specific cause and can hijack the mainstream media and set the agenda for media and collective action (Jackson & Welles, 2016, p. 412). The Sheik Jarrah network proved that the online and offline actions complement each other despite the dominance of the retweeting activity on the network. The general tweeting trends correlated with the events taking place in the neighborhood. Besides, the online activity correlates with offline action demonstrated in protests within the online activists’ geographical locations dragging the mainstream media’s attention to the cause.

Figure 13 below shows that the tweeting traffic during the study period had five high points on May 14, May 24, June 14, June 24 and August 5. These dates were marked by multiple tragedies, with the Palestinian Ministry of Health reporting 115 deaths in Gaza, including 27 children and around 600 injuries on May 14. On the same day, a young man was killed near the border in Ramallah, West Bank, and thousands of Jordanians marched to the border with occupied Palestine. On May 24, settlers broke into Al-Aqsa Mosque with the protection of the Israeli occupation forces, and a large detention campaign took place across Jerusalem and the West Bank, resulting in the detainment of 26 Palestinians, including a 10-year-old child.

On June 14, the Israeli occupation forces conducted raids on the West Bank village of Jenin and demolished shops in Nablus. This came at the same time as reports emerged of Zara's CEO sending a hostile message to a Palestinian model, resulting in people from around the globe urging a boycott of the company and its affiliates. Between August 25 and November 2021, the volume of tweets decreased and then spiked again, likely due to Palestinian families' rejection of a proposal offered by an Israeli court which would have given them the "protected tenants" status. This suggests that the tweeting activity was linked to the changes taking place on the ground, with people intensifying their online presence to match the escalation of events.

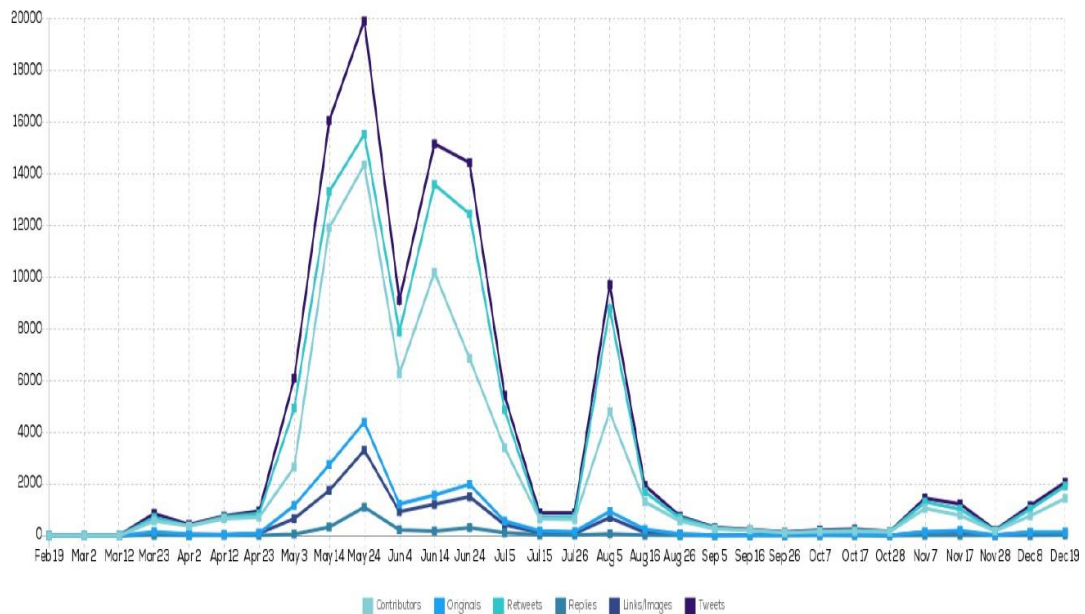
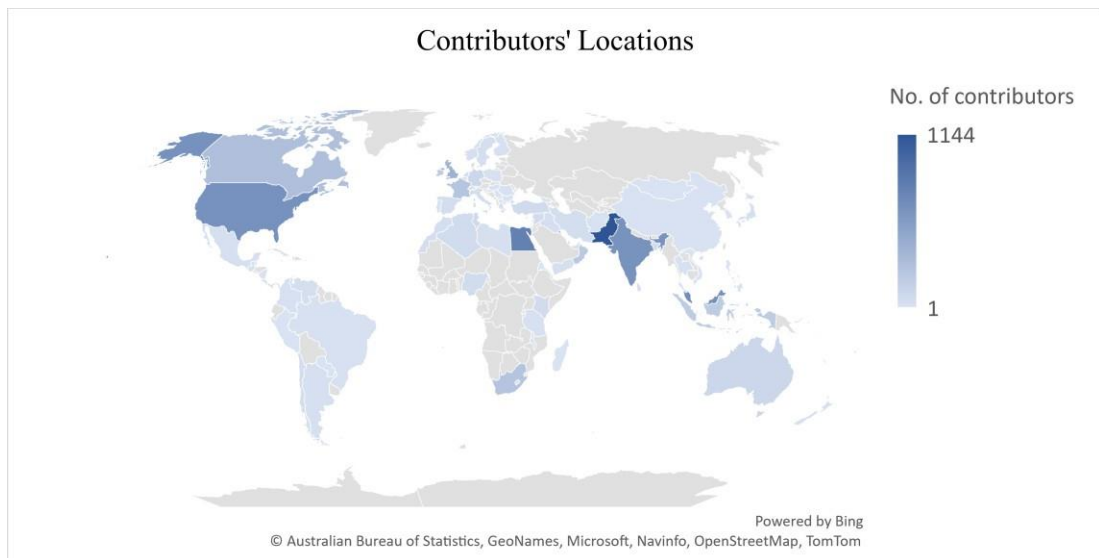


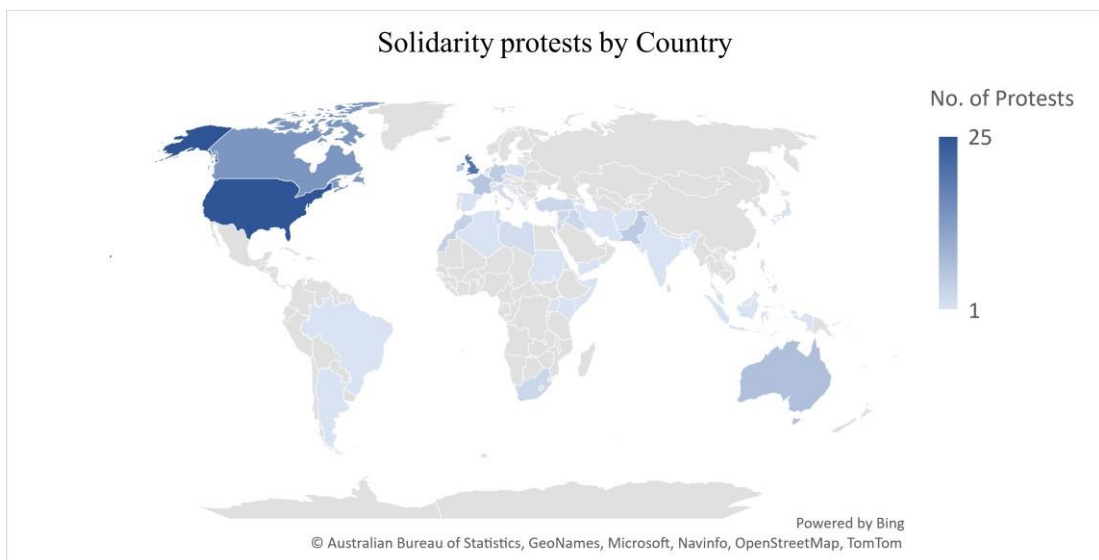
Figure 13. The general tweeting traffic

The online action was accompanied by offline action setting the agenda for collective action. With the facilitation of the supportive transnational grassroots movements in 46 countries across the globe, hundreds of thousands of people participated in solidarity protests that took place in 150 cities. The majority of protests were concentrated in the Western liberal democracies with the highest concentration of protests was navigated in the US (25 protests), in the UK (20) and in Canada (14). It is worth noting that the protests were held in the countries where key contributors in the twitter network are located as shown in Maps 2 and 3 below; the contributors' locations map was generated based on mapping the network's actors conducted on Gephi software and the solidarity protests map based on Al-Jazeera coverage of international solidarity protests.





Map 2. Contributors' locations by country



Map 3. Mapping solidarity protests with the Palestinian people by country

The attention of the global media was drawn to the international solidarity protests, the escalating violence in the OPT protests and the riots in Israel. Similarly, the airstrike on Gaza by Israel and Hamas rockets on Israel were also widely reported. Upon examining the coverage of these events on May 2021 by major international media outlets, it was revealed that the Sheikh Jarrah issue was portrayed in a way that was dependent on the media outlet's perspective. The activists from Sheikh Jarrah

highlighted the bias of the media coverage, mainly from CNN and BBC, and initiated a campaign to correct the news headlines to show an accurate representation of the events and an objective framing.

The headlines on the BBC and CNN highlighted the Israel-Gaza fighting while providing some context for developments in the neighborhood. As a result of the attention paid to the events in Gaza, the phrases “Gaza,” “conflict,” “violence,” “ Hamas,” “clashes,” “strikes,” and “ceasefire” appeared most frequently in news headlines in May 2021. Even while references to the events in East Jerusalem were made in the BBC and CNN news content, the forced eviction from Sheikh Jarrah were only a minor concern and Hamas missiles took center stage. For instance, in the BBC news content, the word “ Hamas” was repeated 258 times while “ Sheikh Jarrah” was referred to 31 times. Likewise in the CNN news content, the word “ Hamas” was repeated 83 times about four times more of “ Sheikh Jarrah”. While the network’s frames were not highlighted by the mainstream media, the Sheikh Jarrah activists as well as the Palestinian authority’s officials were hosted on both news channels where they expressed their perspectives and shared the Palestinian narrative.

The BBC and CNN were moderate in their coverage of the issue to some extent; whereas, the American right Fox news and left MSNBC have extremely opposing stances. Fox news totally discarded the events in East Jerusalem and adopted the Israeli narrative in covering the escalation of violence focusing mainly on the Hamas rockets on Israel. For instance, the word “ Hamas” and “antisemitism” were among the most repeated words in the headlines. The Sheikh Jarrah issue was referred to only four times in the entire month in the news contents and the Palestinian residents were portrayed as “Palestinians who try to own property in Jerusalem”. In contrast, MSNBC’s headlines

incorporated the frames of the Sheikh Jarrah online network including phrases like “ethnic cleansing”, “human rights”, and “attacks”. In the news content, the word “apartheid” was also of the highest used words in the news framing. While the international media framing of the issue varies based on the channels’ ideologies, the Sheikh Jarrah advocacy network had without a doubt brought the issue to the forefront on the international public debate including the mainstream media.

The online network succeeded in generating foreign public support and grabbed the attention of the international media. However, online activism’s main feature is that it is momentum with no guarantees for sustainability. According to Bennet and Segerberg (2012), all the literature on network organization theories has three common principles; all organizations distribute resources like information, short term reaction to external events, and long-term adaptation and change. While the digital media platforms fulfill the first two principles, the third principle of long-term adaptation and change cannot be fulfilled as it requires consistency, which online activism proved to lack. The only actors in the online network who remain committed to the cause are the conventional organizations and the ideological committed individuals. Therefore, for a network to succeed in maintaining its existence and make influence on the decision-making level, organizations and well-established movements should be involved and carry on the mission after the momentum fades.

Indeed, the Sheikh Jarrah online network was led by self-proclaimed activists who fed the network with information, connected the actors and expanded the network’s reach. However, the local, transnational and international organizations and movements played a major role in organizing the offline action through protests. They also sustained the network, and linked the connective action network with the

international institutions and the foreign governments. Those actors who made up the fourth biggest sub-community in the online network bridged the gap between the virtual world and the real world by bringing the issue to the international institutions forcing foreign governments to prioritize the issue on the international agenda.

The international organizations provided credible legal analysis for the case from the perspective of international law providing the base for creating the Palestinian narrative. For instance, the network included powerful international human rights organizations with global reach like Amnesty international and Human Rights Watch. The reports on the Israeli settlement policy in the OPT released by those organizations provided information that was widely circulated within the network. Thus, those organizations were among the actors that were retweeted and hash tagged frequently.

Human Rights Watch released a 213-page report on April 27, 2021 titled “A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution”, which concluded that the Israeli government is aiming to keep Jewish Israelis in control of Palestinians, it uses systematic oppression against Palestinians and carries out inhumane practices. When these three factors come together, it is considered the crime of apartheid. The report ended with a call to all countries, UN members, and the US to release statements condemning the Israeli crimes in the OPT, and urged the International Criminal Court’s Prosecutor to investigate and charge individuals believed to have committed crimes of apartheid or persecution.

Following the escalation of events, Amnesty International conducted an investigation into Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood and released a 280-page report, titled “Israel’s apartheid against Palestinians: Cruel system of domination and crime against humanity” on February 2nd, 2022. The report not only declared the settlement policy

as a war crime, but also described Israel as an apartheid state due to its practices in the OPT. The term “apartheid” had been used by the network activists to describe the events in the neighborhood, particularly by the BDS Movement, which has the highest centrality in the Sheikh Jarrah online network. However, the reports from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch were the first to provide a legal basis for the claim based on their detailed legal analysis.

### **5.2.3. The International Community Answers the Call**

Since the escalation of events in Israel and the OPT, the international community’s attention was drawn to the region. The UN Human Rights bodies were alarmed by the events and expressed their positions. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), called on Israel to immediately halt all forced evictions, including those in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem, as well as to refrain from using force maintaining security in the region. OHCHR spokesperson Rupert Colville said that the evictions are illegal under international law as East Jerusalem is part of the OPT (UN News, 2021). The OPT country team of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) stated that, regardless of the justifications, it is illegal under international humanitarian law to transfer people who are subject to occupation. In addition to other UN organizations, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) has expressed concern over the Sheikh Jarrah families’ impending forced eviction and urged the Israeli government to take all necessary steps to stop it.

“The grave human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem”, was the topic of a special session of the UN Human Rights Council on May 27, 2021., which was requested by Pakistan following the escalation of events

in East Jerusalem and the wide-scale international attention. Speakers from Palestinian and international NGOs as well as Muna Al-Kurd, a resident of Sheikh Jarrah who is facing eviction, and one of the leaders of the Sheikh Jarrah online TAN, participated in the event and provided their narrative about the Sheikh Jarrah evictions issue. The council decided to create a commission of investigation to look into the claims of human rights and international humanitarian law violations in Israel, the OPT, including East Jerusalem. The commission's report, which was released on October 20, 2022, concluded that Israeli practices are illegal under international law and advised the UNGA to ask the ICJ for an advisory opinion on Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories.

The Sheikh Jarrah issue was discussed under agenda item 38, "The Situation in the Middle East," at the 76th session of the UNGA. The UNGA adopted a resolution titled "Jerusalem" on December 1, 2021, which said that all actions taken by Israel to alter the character or status of the holy city were illegal and had to be immediately rectified. The resolution expressed disapproval to the unilateral actions, which are against international law with regard to the Sheikh Jarrah case. It's noteworthy that the 76th session saw the release of five resolutions on the rest of the world and fourteen resolutions on Israel, including the "Jerusalem" resolution. Following the recommendations of the Human Right Council's Commission of Inquiry, on December 20th, 2022, the UNGA adopted Resolution 77/400 requesting an advisory opinion from the ICJ regarding the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land.

On another level, governments across the globe declared their views on the occurrences in the region through press releases on their official sites. Furthermore, other countries' positions on the issue were shared by their representatives at the

UNSC meetings discussing “The Situation in the Middle East including the Question of Palestine”. The positions of the foreign governments varied between condemning Israel for the escalation of events and for forcefully evicting the Sheikh Jarrah residents on one hand and neutrally expressing different levels of concern over the events on the other hand. Thematic semantic analysis of the governments’ statements was conducted following one theme: "blame." The objective of this analysis was to investigate the naming and shaming mechanism that the TAN aspired to activate. Specifically, it aimed to determine foreign governments’ positions regarding the responsible party for the escalation of violence in general, and the events in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in particular.

The findings show three groups of governments’ positions. While two European governments of Hungary and Bulgaria expressed unlimited support for Israel, the majority of the international community expressed their concern about the Sheikh Jarrah issue. Forty governments bluntly condemned the Israeli practices naming Israel as responsible for the escalation of violence as a result of the decision to forcefully evict residents of Sheikh Jarrah and urged it to halt the forced evictions of the residents. However, the language used in the statements is not equally forceful. Some Arab and Islamic countries as well as North Korea which rarely comments on the Middle East issues, and some governments in Latin America expressed strong condemnation for Israel. Their statements include words that corresponds with the Sheikh Jarrah activists’ frames which described the Israeli use of force in suppressing the demonstrations like “attacks”, “violence”, “aggression”, “killings”, “state terrorism”, and “bloodshed”.

The other governments in the same group that held Israel responsible for the events are European countries including the European union and the Nordic countries. They

released joint statements or individual statements referring to the illegality of settlements construction and the forced eviction of Palestinians of Sheikh Jarrah under international law. However, they did not refer to the activists' frames nor described the events. While no bold statements were made against Israel, the European continent has declared in several occasions its rejection to the Israeli settlement policy. Besides, it's been actively supporting the Palestinians' advocacy efforts in the human rights field through generous donations. Based on a report covering the period between 2015 and 2021 published by NGO monitor; an Israeli research institute, the European Union has the highest funding of all donors of 73,985,079.38 USD followed by Nordic countries namely Norway of 56,555,382.08 USD and Sweden of 16,615,829.43 USD. In addition to providing funds separately, Sweden, Netherlands, Denmark, and Switzerland jointly created a funding channel through "The Secretariat of Human Rights and IHL" project. Through the secretariat, partnerships with Palestinian and Israeli human rights NGOs were created where core funding as well as projects funding was channeled. Other European countries provide funding at different rates. Nordic, European countries and the European Union provide funding mostly in a direct way from the governments; however, some donor countries did not provide governmental funding like Germany, the US and the UK. Donations from those countries are mainly provided by private organizations and foundations like the Heinrich Böll Foundation, the ZFD–Weltfriedensdienst, and the Medico International of Germany, the Grassroots International, the Open Society Institute, and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, in the case of the US, and the Amos Trust and the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) in the case of the UK.

While the majority of the international community named Israel responsible for the



events, nineteen governments declared their concern through neutral statements. Those governments did not hold Israel responsible for the events and did not name it directly. The sentences are structured using the passive voice in order to avoid pointing to Israel as responsible. They urged both sides; the Israeli and the Palestinian to de-escalate the situation and to seek peace within the international law framework. Those governments used neutral words to describe the events like “clashes”, “escalation of events”, and “tension”. In addition, they avoided taking positions in favor of any side in a way that equate between the oppressor and the victim. No reference to the Israeli occupation was made, neither to the Israeli settlements policy that violates international law and international humanitarian law. While respect to human rights was mentioned, no clarification on how or by whom the human rights principles should be respected. They emphasized that the status quo of the city of Jerusalem should be maintained. However, none of the statements is clear enough to highlight the actual problem, rather the sentences were formed vaguely to avoid pointing fingers at Israel as the violator of the international law and human rights principles. In reference to Sheikh Jarrah issue, those governments expressed strong concern, but did not clarify their stance on the issue. Those governments include the US, Canada, Japan, Russia, India and China in addition to some other states.

The American government’s official position is no surprise as the US has historical close relations to Israel especially since 1967 war providing the state with billions of dollars in foreign aid and military assistance each year, as well as diplomatic and political support, as discussed in chapter 4. The US vetoed 42 resolutions drafted against the state in the UNSC since 1972 blocking any attempt by the international community to pressure Israel, despite its recognition that the Israeli settlement policy

is unlawful under international law. However, the American attitude towards the policy varies with the change in the American administration. For instance, in 2016 the Obama administration allowed a UNSC resolution to pass, an unprecedented move in US history, to condemn the policy before leaving office. In contrast, the Trump administration not only deemed the settlement policy legal, but also acknowledged Israel's complete annexation of Jerusalem by relocating the US embassy to Jerusalem, thus, legalizing and normalizing the settlement expansion in East Jerusalem flouting the international community's stance. However, since Biden took office, he has declared his disapproval of this policy. While Biden continued the American ritual of blocking the international community's efforts to hold Israel responsible for its actions, the American president responded to the advocacy efforts and the international community's criticism.

Since the US government declared its neutral position towards the Sheikh Jarrah evictions in a statement released on 7 May 2021, the Biden administration had been under domestic and international criticism. The official stance of the American government was criticized by the solidarity groups in the US where petitions were launched through global networks like Avaaz and SumOfUs urging the US government to take action. For example, the American actor Mark Ruffalo tweeted that he was among 100+ artists who signed a petition for the US congress to demand action to support the Palestinian people human rights. Many international celebrities expressed their support for Sheikh Jarrah residents and signed the petitions to name a few, Bella and Gigi Hadid the American model sisters, have been particularly vocal about the events in Palestine. Roger Waters, of the legendary rock band Pink Floyd, as well as American actress Susan Sarandon were among the most outspoken supporters

of Palestinian rights, protesting Israel's forceful evictions in Sheikh Jarrah. Furthermore, Emma Watson, Lena Headey, Viola Davis, Tilda Swinton, Richard Gere, Simon Pegg, and many others. As found in the results of the Twitter network, the activists located in the US were among the most active advocates for the Sheikh Jarrah issue. This has been reflected in the solidarity protests where thousands of Americans participated in the solidarity marches. While solidarity protests were organized in several cities worldwide, 25 cities in the US witnessed people marching in the streets to call for Biden to intervene to stop the Israeli practices and the forced evictions of the Sheikh Jarrah residents.

The grassroots activism was not the only source of pressure on Biden to act towards the Sheikh Jarrah forceful evictions issue. J Street group, which is the only group within the Israeli lobby in the US to condemn the evictions and was a partner for the early “Solidarity Sheikh Jarrah” movement of 2009 (Gale, 2014) published a documentation of the US congress senators’ positions towards the events. The documentation shows that while 64 senators urged Biden to intervene to mediate a ceasefire agreement between Hamas and Israel, 35 senators condemned the Israeli decision to forcefully evict the Sheikh Jarrah residents and urged the US to take action to put an end to such practices by the Israeli government. Furthermore, on 23 September 2021, representative Andy Levin, a democrat from Michigan who is a public critic of Israel, supported by J Street lobby group and other organizations introduced the “Two-State Solution Act” bill in the 117th Congress, 1st Session. The bill seeks to explicitly designate the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza as occupied territories, and to prohibit the use of US military aid to Israel in support of the occupation or potential annexation of these territories, including the demolition of

Palestinian homes (Levin, 2021). Levin referred to the Sheikh Jarrah evictions on his Twitter to argue the importance of endorsing the Two-State Solution Act (Cohen M., 2022).

The green party of California released a statement using a forceful language to condemn the Israeli practices describing them ethnic cleansing and referring to Israel as apartheid state (Green Party CA, 2021). In addition, in August 2021, a new lobby group was established to support Palestinian rights. Americans for Justice in Palestine (AJP) Action's goal is to influence US policy regarding the Palestinian issue by advocating for legislation supporting the Palestinian people's human rights and endorsing candidates who support those rights (AJP, 2021). The launch of AJP Action coincides with the events in Sheikh Jarrah that have gained sympathy from the American public and political elite. Ayah Ziyadeh, the group's advocacy director, acknowledged the momentum, saying that "We came in the midst of this momentum, there's a shift that's happening" (Anderson B., 2021).

The condemnation for the Sheikh Jarrah forceful evictions by the American activists and officials in the US and the criticism of Biden's passive position towards the events, as well as the international criticism, increased after the eviction of the Salhiya family of Sheikh Jarrah took place. The eviction was implemented on January 17, 2022 at 3:00 am when Israeli soldiers attacked the Salhiya family home in Sheikh Jarrah and evicted 15 members of the family. The family's home was then destroyed. Numerous members of the Salhiya family and the neighborhood were detained during the operation "on suspicion of violating a court order and disturbing the peace" (Patel, 2022). Videos of the Salhiya family members witnessing their home being demolished by Israeli soldiers on a winter night went viral on social media as activists were

outraged by the events and the ambassadors in the UNSC highlighted the issue on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January meeting rejecting the Israeli actual implementation of the eviction order.

Under the increased domestic and international criticism, the US had to respond. The US joined the international community in criticizing the Israeli behavior in Sheikh Jarrah, while maintaining a strongly supportive language for Israel during the 19<sup>th</sup> of January 2022 UNSC meeting. Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield, the US representative at the UN made the first reference to the Sheikh Jarrah eviction describing it as “unilateral steps that exacerbate tensions and undercut efforts to advance a negotiated two-state solution”. Although the American reaction to the evictions was mild, it was a significant step towards backing the advocacy initiatives and marked the start of the Biden administration’s vocal censure of Israel’s settlement growth in East Jerusalem.

The Jewish coalitions within the Israeli lobby in the US, which had backed the Israeli narrative upon the eruption of the events in East Jerusalem became concerned after the wide condemnation of the international community, especially after the US publicly disapproved the eviction order. On January 2022, seven prominent Jewish organizations in the US, including the Anti-Defamation League, the Israel Policy Forum, the National Council of Jewish Women and the Union for Reform Judaism, sent a letter to the Prime Minister of Israel calling for action to be taken against settler violence that is harming Israel’s reputation and its relationship with the US (Mohamed, 2022). The letter read:

“As pro-Israel Jewish organizations, we are deeply concerned by these trends and request that you address them. These attacks serve as an affront to Israel’s rule of law, to Israeli democracy, and to Jewish values, while undermining Israel’s image and relations with the United States

government, American people, and American Jewry. They make it more difficult to appreciate Israel's legitimate and ongoing security needs and efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict".

On 1 March 2022, the Israeli supreme court made a ruling allowing the four Palestinian families to continue residing in their homes in Sheikh Jarrah until a final decision on land ownership is made. Ir Amim, a group opposed to settlements in Jerusalem, states that the ruling means the property's final status will be determined by an office within Israel's Ministry of Justice. Sami Irshid, part of the legal team for the Palestinian families, considers the ruling a significant success as it allows the residents to argue and prove their ownership. While the Hebrew press reported that the court put a freeze on evictions, Hosni Abu Hussein, another member of the legal team, revealed that the ruling stated the eviction decision had been rescinded and a new ruling will be made after reviewing the Palestinian residents' documents. The lawyers note that it's the first time an Israeli court has questioned the settlers' documents (Hasaneen, 2022).

The court's ruling was made after the Palestinian families rejected a compromised offer from the Israeli court on August 2021, which proposed that the Palestinian families stay in their residences as protected tenants in return for acknowledging the settler organization's ownership of their properties. Earlier, on 9 May 2021, during the height of the Palestinian advocacy campaign and the global solidarity protests, the high court postponed its judgment on the matter and declared that a new court date would be declared within 30 days. Lawyer Abu Hussein told Al- Jazeera that he was positive that the popular resistance had an impact on the Israeli government to postpone the legal proceedings. While the activists thought of the postponement as an indication of the efficiency of the advocacy attempts, Muhammad al-Kurd —one of the residents threatened with evictions and one of the leaders of the advocacy campaign— regarded

the deferral as a momentum victory and encouraged the protests to keep going. He prompted supporters to not give in and instead “intensify efforts and presence in Sheikh Jarrah” (Husseini, 2021). The most recent court ruling of March 2022 came without explanation for the Israeli court’s siding with the Palestinian families in an unprecedented move.

The reason for the last court ruling was never declared nor discussed by the Israeli side. The settler organization Nahalat Shimon that claims ownership to the land refused to communicate with the press after the court ruling was issued. Albeit, one can relate the Israeli decision to the international criticism, especially after the US joined the international community in rejecting the evictions. While Biden administration has emphasized its commitment to supporting Israel in every occasion, the US has influenced the Israeli decisions in regard to the settlement expansion in East Jerusalem throughout the years of 2021 and 2022. Other than Sheikh Jarrah settlement, four other settlement plans were halted or delayed due to the American influence after the Israeli left Peace Now movement and Ir Amim organization as well as the Palestinian authority campaigned the plans.

On 6 December 2021, Jerusalem municipal officials put a halt to the construction of a significant Jewish settlement at an old airport in East Jerusalem called Atarout settlement. The plan consisted of 9,000 housing units in a heavily populated Palestinian area which was met with resistance by anti-settlement group Peace Now. This decision to suspend the settlement was due to the American distress. Earlier, the Israeli government informed the American government that the plan had been postponed; however, they advanced the plan the following week causing a strong reaction from the US. Secretary of State Antony Blinken had a lengthy conversation

with Prime Minister Naftali Bennett to express the Biden administration's strong objection to the settlement plan in the middle of Palestinian contiguity between Ramallah and East Jerusalem, which resulted in the settlement halt (Magid, 2021).

Biden's visit to Israel in July 2022 caused a further postponement of a settlement plan. The two settlements, Givat HaShaked and the Lower Aqueduct, which would involve the erection of 1938 housing units, which would disrupt the connection between East Jerusalem and Bethlehem. This plan has been on the Israeli agenda since 1995, however, had to be put on hold due to the global reaction it received, including from the US (Lazaroff, 2022). Most recently, the hearing on the E1 settlement was once again adjourned on 8th September 2022, without a date for the reconvening being set. This particular settlement, with 3,412 housing units, is located within the boundaries of the Ma'ale Adumim settlement east of Jerusalem. The Palestinian Authority and Israeli left-wing organizations have stated that the construction of this settlement would hinder access to East Jerusalem from the Palestinian cities of Ramallah and Bethlehem, and would be an impediment to the territorial continuity of a potential Palestinian state. The Prime Minister's Office, the Defense Ministry, and a spokesperson for the defense minister Benny Gantz have declined to explain the reasons for the postponement of the plan. The Biden administration has expressed its vehement opposition to the plans for the E1 area, with US Ambassador to Israel Tom Nides explicitly condemning the plans during a Peace Now webinar in March 2022. Nides noted that the US had applied significant pressure to avert the January hearing in the subcommittee, noting: "E1 was a disaster. I went full bore on E1" (Sharon, 2022).

Biden administration's position towards the settlement policy and his efforts in halting the advancement of settlement plans in East Jerusalem, as well as the public



criticism of the Sheikh Jarrah settlement beside others have influenced the Israeli government. Thus, halting the evictions of the Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah from their homes resulted from the international rejection that influenced Biden to act. However, halting the evictions does not permanently save the Palestinian residents as the court ruling did not finalize the issue in favor of the Palestinians. The advocacy efforts did succeed in saving the Palestinians temporarily but not permanently.

### **5.3. Advocacy has Constraints and the Threat Remains**

In light of the international criticism, four Palestinian families have been able to remain in their homes and were assured to have the right to prove their ownership of the land in court. The verdict on the property rights is yet to be decided; however, if the court rules in favor of settler organizations, the families would be obligated to evict. Furthermore, since 2002, 43 Palestinians have been expelled from Sheikh Jarrah, in 2008, 2017 and January 2022, with their properties being taken over by Israeli settlers. The most recent court ruling does not include the displaced families who have had their homes taken by Israeli settlers, leading the Salhiya family to bring Israel to the International Criminal Court (ICC) (Times of Israel Staff, 2022). The four settlement plans in East Jerusalem comprising Atarout, Givat HaShaked, the Lower Aqueduct and E1, were not cancelled, but instead put on hold. Nonetheless, Givat HaShaked and the Lower Aqueduct plans were accepted one week after the delay, regardless of the international community's opposition.

It is evident that the Israeli settlement expansion in East Jerusalem is not reversible, as the Israeli government strive to make East Jerusalem have a Jewish majority population, just like West Jerusalem, in an effort to unify the city it considers as its eternal capital, which is against the international community's stance on the matter.

As shown in this study, the case of Sheikh Jarrah succeeded in cultivating international support at all levels generating a unique case of a settlement plan that became a matter of public debate and was raised at the international agenda due to the advocacy efforts of the Palestinian and pro-Palestinian advocate. However, despite the efforts it failed to generate the ultimate goal of the advocacy network that is permanently cancelling the forceful eviction order and halting the settlement expansion plan in the neighborhood.

The Israeli government has been subjected to international criticism and private diplomatic pressure from the US for continuing to pursue settlement expansion and forcibly evicting Palestinians. Despite the wide condemnation from the international community regarding the forceful eviction of Sheikh Jarrah residents, the Israeli government remains firm in denying any violation of international laws. On October 19, 2021, the representative of Israel, Gilad Erdan, was invited to deliver a statement in the UNSC meeting on “the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question” agenda. While several state representatives discussed the illegal evictions of Sheikh Jarrah, Erdan refrained from making any reference to the case. Instead, he criticized the international community’s position and disapproval of Israeli practices and highlighted the security threat posed by Iran to Israel.

However, during the meeting of January 19, 2022, after the eviction of the Salhiya family, which was criticized by state representatives, including the US, Mr. Erdan explained Israel’s position. He claimed that the Palestinians are distorting reality to inflame the situation on the ground, while the international community is embracing their libel. According to Erdan, the Salhiya family had illegally built on public land that had been earmarked for a school for children with special needs. Erdan’s remarks

on the forceful eviction of the Salhiya family confirm the explanation of the Jerusalem deputy mayor, who stated that the eviction order was executed due to illegal buildings built on grounds designated for a school for children with special needs. Thus, the dispute surrounding the Salhiya family's home was completely different from the events in May 2021, when Palestinians risked being forced to hand over plots of land to Jewish settlers (The Straits Times, 2022).

The Jewish coalitions within the Israel lobby in the US were alarmed with the success of the Sheikh Jarrah advocacy network in generating public support. Thus, it responded to the Sheikh Jarrah advocacy campaign with support for the Israeli government's persistent denial. The Jewish coalitions argue that there are inaccuracies being spread on social media by Palestinian and pro-Palestinian advocates about the events in Sheikh Jarrah. Various Jewish organizations, including the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), which refrained from releasing any statement upon the eruption of events in Jerusalem, American Jewish Committee (AJC), and Anti-Defamation League (ADL), have released memos on their websites called "Myths and Facts on the Situation in Sheikh Jarrah". The memos refute every argument put forward by Palestinian advocates calling them "myths" and provide corrections from the Israeli perspective under the title "facts".

The coalitions contend that the whole Sheikh Jarrah advocacy campaign is based on a myth that the Palestinian residents' concern is to stay in their homes (AIPAC, 2021). The Court offered to put Palestinian residents in the status of "protected tenants" for three generations if they pay a nominal rent of about \$40 per month. According to the Jewish coalitions, the Palestinian residents' rejection of this compromise suggests that their primary objective is not to stay in their homes but to exacerbate the conflict for

political purposes. They claim that the Palestinian and pro-Palestinian advocacy promote that the Israeli government is responsible for escalating tensions around Sheikh Jarrah while in fact, Palestinian leaders are to blame (AJC, 2021).

The coalitions stated the Israeli government has implemented series of measures aimed at reducing tensions in Jerusalem. One such measure was the postponement and change of route of the annual Jerusalem Day parade, which was originally scheduled for May 10, 2021, due to concerns that it would inflame tensions with Palestinians. Additionally, the Israeli government temporarily restricted Jews from visiting the Temple Mount, which is a site of great religious significance to both Jews and Muslims, in an effort to avoid provocation. Furthermore, the Israeli government asked the Supreme Court to postpone a ruling that would have resulted in the eviction of Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah (AIPAC, 2021). Those measures are presented by the pro-Israel groups as compromises made by the Israeli government to deescalate the violence; however, the Palestinian and pro-Palestinian advocates perceived those measures as attempts to distract the international attention and avoid international scrutiny that was generated by the advocacy efforts.

Pro-Israel American groups accused prominent figures and influencers with high fan bases who showed support for Palestinians during the May 2021 escalations of antisemitism with agendas of supporting the Iran-Hamas alliance to destroy Israel. For example, Rabbi Shmuley Boteach —the head of the World Values Network; a pro-Israel advocacy group in the US committed to advancing a vision of Judaism as a light onto the nations— organized, produced and paid a full-page ad in the *New York Times* Newspaper entitled “Bella, Gigi and Dua, Hamas calls for a second Holocaust. CONDEMN THEM NOW” (Arab News, 2021). The ad came in response to the

American-Palestinian models Gigi and Bella Hadid as well as the British-Albanian popstar Dua Lipa supportive positions for Palestinians through their social media accounts.

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) accused the campaign of promoting “virulent anti-Israel and anti-Semitic rhetoric” and “delegitimizing the Jewish state”. The American Jewish Committee (AJC) also claimed that the Sheikh Jarrah advocacy is “blatantly anti-Semitic” (AJC, 2021). Protests held in support of the residents of Sheikh Jarrah were criticized by pro-Israel groups in the US, who accused the rallies of being anti-Semitic. One particular rallying cry, “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free,” sparked a debate over its meaning. Israelis and pro-Israeli groups claimed it was a call for the eradication of Israel and its people as they interpreted it as a call for genocide against the Jewish people (AJC, n.d.).

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) released a report called “Anti-Israel Activism on US Campuses, 2021–2022,” about the anti-Israel and antisemitic practices by pro-Palestine groups in the US universities. One section of the report focuses on the language used by these groups to describe Israel that the report listed as anti-Israel or antisemitism. The Sheikh Jarrah advocates’ frames used throughout the advocacy campaign to describe the events and the Israeli practices like “ethnic cleansing”, “settler colonialism”, “apartheid” and calls for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel and Israel based companies, are all listed as anti-Israel and some as antisemitism in the report. In addition, the report calls attention to American universities inviting Mohammed Al-Kurd, a leader of the Sheikh Jarrah campaign whose family is under threat of eviction from their home in Sheikh Jarrah, to speak at their events. ADL claims that by inviting Al-Kurd, the American universities

support of antisemitism. ADL has labelled Al-Kurd an antisemite due to his advocacy efforts for the Sheikh Jarrah issue on social media (ADL, 2022).

Alarmed by the growing support for Palestine in the US, major Jewish organizations such as AIPAC have taken action to counter the growing support for the Palestinian cause among Democratic members of Congress. AIPAC has invested large amounts of money to influence Democratic primary elections in 2022, with the aim of blocking candidates who are likely to support progressive members of Congress who have criticized Israel. One example of this was the primary contest in Michigan, where AIPAC's efforts led to the defeat of Andy Levin, a vocal supporter of Palestinian rights who introduced the "Two-state Act" bill in September 2021 and criticized the eviction order on social media (Anderson K. B., 2022). Similar tactics were used in North Carolina and Pennsylvania to prevent the election of pro-Palestinian candidates (McGreal, 2022).

In fact, while Biden criticized the settlement activities in East Jerusalem and declared his rejection of the settlement policy considering it illegal since he took office, he remained cautious in publicly criticizing the Israeli violations. Biden has been a close friend to the Jewish coalitions throughout his career. Upon taking office, Biden's new administration's significant positions were filled with experts from the American Jewry, like Antony Blinken and David Cohen among many others (JTA, 2021). By avoiding public criticism, the Biden administration maintained its promise that he would refrain from openly criticizing Israel. A pledge that Secretary of State Blinken made in a webinar in May 2020 organized by a pro-Israel Democratic group stating that "Joe Biden believes strongly in keeping your differences as far as possible between friends, behind doors, maintaining as little distance in public as possible" (Kampeas,

2020).

While the US successfully pressured Israel to halt advancing some settlement plans in East Jerusalem, the Biden administration kept a strong supportive position for Israel in the international institutions. The US strongly opposed the UN Human Rights Council's resolution that resulted from the special session on the human rights situation in the OPT to conduct investigation based on the Sheikh Jarrah issue escalations in 2021. While the resolution passed, the US released a statement of opposition to the investigation which was signed by 22 states including Israel, the US, Britain, Austria, Bulgaria, Brazil, Canada, Cameroon, Colombia, Croatia, Asvetini, Germany, Guatemala, Hungary, Liberia, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Northern Macedonia, the Netherlands, Palau, and Togo. The US stated that the UN Human Rights Council's Commission of Inquiry was "one-sided and broken" and that it was "highly politicized, deeply flawed, and morally bankrupt". The US further stated that the Commission of Inquiry was "a transparent effort to isolate and delegitimize Israel" (Morag, 2022).

In its support for Israel, the US went so far as to reprimand UN member states for criticizing the Jewish state and thus preventing any potential procedural action against Israel. The US has openly expressed its disapproval of the UNSC's monthly meetings on the Israel-Palestine conflict, suggesting that attention should be paid to other areas of conflict. The US Ambassador to the UN, following her visit to Israel, declared in the 30 November 2022 UNSC meeting that the international community's stance on Israeli violations of international norms is unjustly single-out and delegitimizes the state, denying it's the right to exist. At the same time, she stated that the Israeli settlement activity has reached a crucial point, rendering the two-state solution

unfeasible.

The Biden administration's position towards the Israeli settlement policy is characterized with contradiction. While it disapproves the advancement of the settlement plans and pressures Israel to halt some, like the cases of Sheikh Jarrah, E1, Atarout settlement, and Lower Aqueduct, the Biden administration have been strongly defending Israel in the International institutions blocking any attempt for the international community's substantial pressure on Israel. Most recently, on 13 February 2023, the Israeli government declared to legalize nine settlements which were previously unauthorized outposts and advance plans for some 10,000 new homes in the West Bank. The US joined France, Germany and Italy, and the UK in a statement opposing the Israeli government decision (Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, 2023). However, the US revealed that it does not support a proposed UNSC resolution that expresses similar condemnation.

Critics of Biden argue that he has fell short of his promise made in his election campaign about pursuing a foreign policy that would center on human rights. Through his attitude revealed in the 2021 events in the OPT, Biden did not take measures against Israel to uphold the human rights principle and solve the Sheikh Jarrah residents' issue. On the contrary, upon the outbreak of the events in East Jerusalem, the Biden administration released a neutral statement that reflects the passive position of the US. However, under the escalation of the domestic and international pressure, the Biden administration declared its disapproval of the Israeli practices, while maintaining a supportive language to Israel. Furthermore, the US diplomatic support for Israel in the international institutions showed the US insistence on preventing the escalation of the international pressure on Israel. Critics argue that Biden fell short of his promise not



only in the case of Israel, but in several cases like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Myanmar, Turkey and others. The Biden government, on multiple occasions, have neglected concerns regarding human rights in order to prioritize national security objectives and maintain diplomatic relations with other nations.

Defendants of Biden's foreign policy approach argue that he is pursuing private diplomacy to human rights as it is more effective since publicly naming governments is not helpful (Lewis & Pamuk, 2021). They argue that the private diplomacy approach to human rights in regard to Israel has been effective in deescalating the events of May 2021, on both issues; the escalation of violence between Israel and Hamas and the evictions of Sheikh Jarrah residents. According to Biden defendants, the US played a major role in the ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas. In a speech delivered an hour before the ceasefire was set to commence, Biden acknowledged that his administration's "quite and relentless diplomacy," as well as Egypt's efforts, were instrumental in achieving the agreement (Collins & Liptak, 2021). Biden also acknowledged the need to enhance the situation for the Palestinians stating. In fact, halting the forceful evictions of Sheikh Jarrah residents as well as halting the advancement of other settlement plans in East Jerusalem show that Biden had in fact pursued private diplomacy with Israel.

On the other end of the spectrum, critics argue that the private diplomacy approach of Biden is not fruitful. Vice president of communications at J Street stated that "of course there is a place for quiet, private diplomacy, but this hasn't borne fruit" (Spinelli, 2021). J Street has been increasingly aligning with democrats who have been increasingly publicly criticizing Israel and disapproved Biden's approach to the 2021 events. The delay of Biden's response to the events of 2021 was criticized by his critics.

While the events in Sheikh Jarrah began in Spring 2021, the US's disapproval of the Israeli behavior came in 19 January 2022. In addition, while the outbreak of exchange of fire between Hamas and Israel started on 10 May 2021, the US did not immediately start the mediating effort, rather waited 11 days to intervene showing reluctance to intervene. Thus, Biden critics argue that his late intervention in the 2021 escalations came as a result from the increasing domestic pressure and criticism for his supportive position to Israel in this particular period rather than his commitment to human rights principles (Spinelli, 2021).

In fact, Biden's position towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and particularly the Israeli settlement policy is that it should be solved bilaterally without international intervention. A position that was historically adopted by the US as well as the Jewish coalitions of the Israel lobby. Between the domestic and international criticism for Biden's public passiveness towards the Sheikh Jarrah problem, his historical steadfast supportive position for Israel and the impact of the Jewish coalitions counter advocacy, the US made its stance. The Biden administration's private diplomacy had influenced Israel to halt the evictions of Sheikh Jarrah residents and to deescalate the violence in the region including ceasefire with Hamas; however, the US intervention was not strong enough to put an end to the settlement expansion in Sheikh Jarrah due to two factors. First, the special relations between Biden and Israel based on Biden's strong belief of the strategic importance of Israel to the US national interests, therefore, avoiding any move that would jeopardize the relations with Israel. Second, the Jewish coalitions counter advocacy that resonated widely among the republicans and the old generations of the democrats who are historical supporters of Israel. Therefore, the American pressure on Israel was mild limited to private conversations while

maintaining its diplomatic support for Israel in the International institutions, thus, preventing the escalation of the international community's measures against Israel to commit to the international norms.

#### **5.4. Conclusion**

The neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah, which was gradually and quietly transforming into a Jewish settlement by displacing the Palestinians since 2002, has now become an international symbol of the Palestinian struggle against Israeli settlements in the OPT. The grassroots movement that was launched in 2009 to fight against the forceful eviction of Palestinian residents from their homes has transformed into a massive transnational network as of 2021. This advocacy network succeeded in halting the displacement of Palestinian residents and granting them the right to prove their ownership to the lands, demonstrating the viability of the boomerang-spiral model of "transnational advocacy networks". The model was built on hypothesized phases that explain the advocacy network's creation, transnational-international mobilization, and its impact on the target violating state's policies to make the desired change. The Sheikh Jarrah network manifested the applicability of the model's phases as the network was formed to prevent the evictions of Palestinian families, which was achieved by March 2022.

According to Keck and Sikkink's boomerang pattern, the activation of the transnational advocacy network results from a violation of international law that cannot be redeemed domestically due to the blockage of communication channels between the domestic actors and their government. The forceful eviction of Sheikh Jarrah residents from their homes and their replacement with Jewish settlers in the aim of expanding the Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem has proven to be a violation of

international law. The Palestinian aggrieved residents of the neighborhood, along with their Israeli left-wing supporters, failed to build a communication channel with Israeli decision-makers to solve the issue. Thus, they had no other choice but to rally in the neighborhood, attracting domestic and international supporters, and establish a social movement.

Along with the first phase of the spiral model, the Sheikh Jarrah network succeeded in placing Israel on the international agenda, as the conditions that the model stipulates were met. According to the model, accessibility to information, using effective mobilization tactics, and the openness of the international political opportunity structures guarantee the network's success in placing the violating state on the international agenda. The Sheikh Jarrah residents' problem started since 1972 and continued until 2009 in utter silence when the Palestinian residents were struggling alone in the Israeli court. However, since 2009, information about the neighborhood started spreading with the efforts of the "Solidarity Sheikh Jarrah" movement that informed the public about the issue and organized protests. Until the activists started gathering information and spreading the word, the violation was performed without a noise.

By 2021, the activists expanded the network, recruiting conventional as well as modern mobilization tactics that guaranteed the advancement of the issue among wide audiences worldwide. The activists recruited the communication technology of social media platforms as the main communication channel between the network's actors. The analysis of the Twitter network showed that the network expanded across a massive geographical area, including 87 countries, with the main influencers located in 30 countries. While the network was built by independent activists, it included major

international organizations as well as grassroots movements. The grassroots movements transformed online activism into offline action by organizing protests across 150 cities worldwide.

On another level, the transnational and international human rights organizations created a legal base for the Palestinians’ claims, which took the issue to a higher level of influence, namely the UN institutions. According to Keck and Sikkink as well as the social movements theorists, information politics that involves effective framing is a major mobilization tactic for a network to be effective. This tactic was utilized by the Sheikh Jarrah network, which created various frames using international norms as the generic theme under which the frames were crafted. As a result, after nearly two decades of mobilization, the Sheikh Jarrah network was able to advance Palestinian claims and place Israel, at the international agenda while the international opportunity structures were open. Figure 14 below shows the mobilization development.

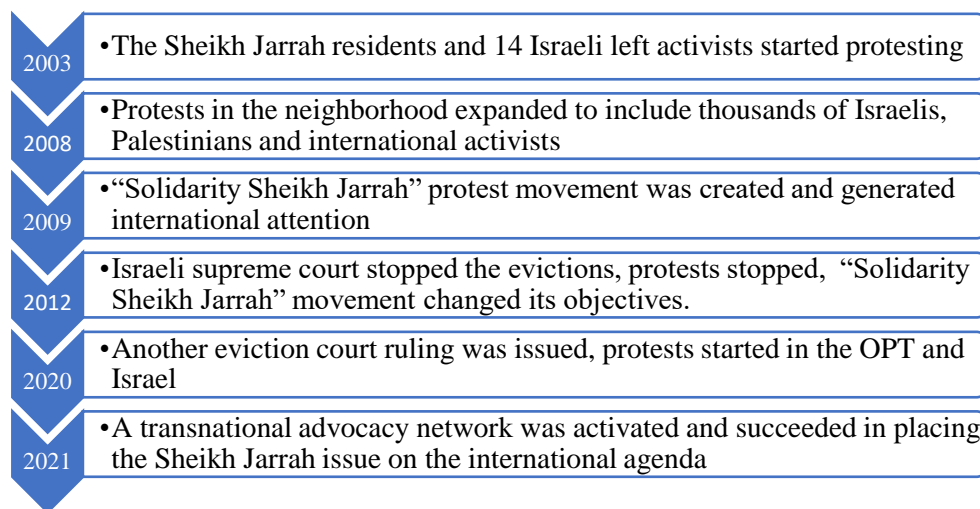


Figure 14. The Sheikh Jarrah mobilization development

Sikkink identifies the openness of international opportunity structures through the supportive public opinion, international media coverage, the willingness of donor countries to support advocacy efforts, and the supportive discursive positions of

foreign governments (Sikkink, 2003). The Sheikh Jarrah residents enjoyed support from a wide foreign audience who expressed their solidarity through participating in the online network and solidarity demonstrations. While most of the activists in the online network shared information and facts, a large portion of the participants expressed their disapproval of Israeli practices in the neighborhood compared to those who accepted them. Furthermore, hundreds of thousands of people from around the world participated in the worldwide solidarity protests, indicating the supportive international public opinion for the Sheikh Jarrah residents' cause.

Despite variations in issue framing and the scale of coverage adopted by major international media outlets such as CNN, BBC, Fox News, and MSNBC, the issue had caught their attention. Not only was the issue reported in the media, but activists and Palestinian official figures were also hosted by major international media outlets, narrating their story and exposing the international public and decision-makers to the Palestinian side of the story. This move is considered an advancement for the Palestinians, whose voices are usually underrepresented. Muhammad Al-Kurd, one of the online network's soft leaders, and Husam Zomlot, head of the Palestinian mission to the UK, were among the faces who appeared repeatedly on news channels discussing the Sheikh Jarrah issue from the Palestinian side.

The web campaign generated the attention of international institutions, leading to several legal analyses of the case by various bodies. Foreign governments also declared their positions on the situation. While the language used by these governments varied, there was a consensus among the international community that Israeli practices in the neighborhood were unacceptable. The majority of the international community has been expressing rejection of the Israeli settlement policy

since its inception. European states, for instance, have been regular donors to Israeli and Palestinian human rights NGOs advocating against the Israeli settlement policy for several decades.

Funding from European countries comes directly from their governments, such as the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) program of the European Union. In contrast, the US, while not approving of the Israeli settlement policy, refrains from providing government funding for human rights NGOs and does not publicly criticize Israeli practices. However, under the increased international and domestic pressure due to the advocacy network’s efforts, the US joined the international community in criticizing Israel regarding the Sheikh Jarrah case, which was a significant move. Figure 15 below summarizes the position of the international actors towards the Sheikh Jarrah issue showing the gap between the dominant supportive atmosphere in comparison with limited unsupportive actors.

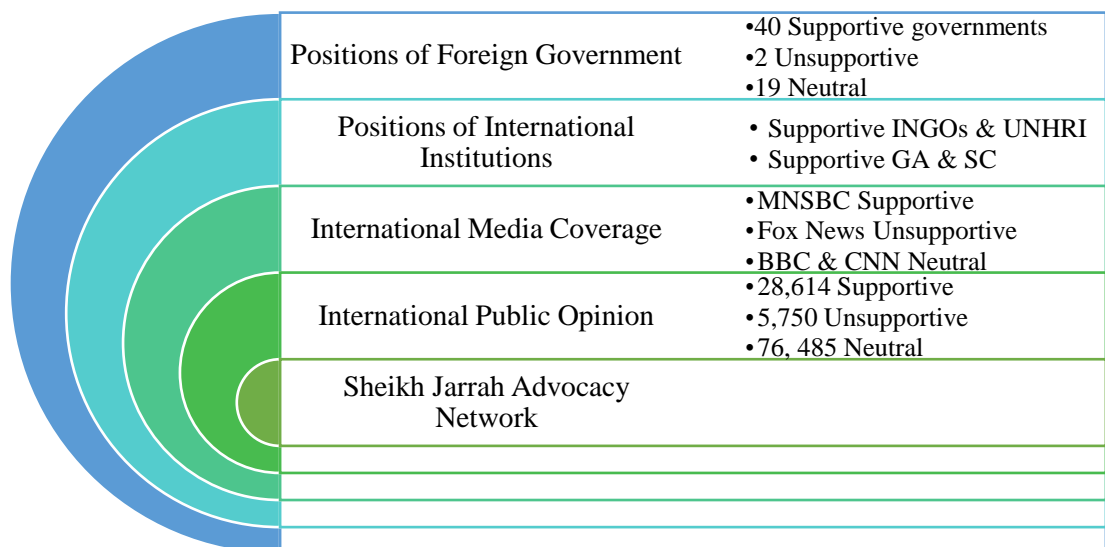


Figure 15. Summary of the international actors’ positions

Since Israel’s violation of international law was brought to the attention of the world, the next phase of the spiral model was reached, which is denial. Israel’s

narrative about the Sheikh Jarrah issue has not changed; they deny any accusations of human rights violations. From their perspective, the issue is merely a legal dispute between Palestinian residents and a settler organization. However, due to the escalation of international criticism, especially after the US joined the international community in verbal criticism on Israel, the next phase of the spiral model can be observed.

The decision to halt the evictions and grant the Palestinian residents the right to prove their right to the lands can be considered a tactical concession by the Israeli government to evade international criticism and escape further escalation internationally. Therefore, it can be concluded that the first three phases of the boomerang-spiral model were fulfilled: the occurrence of the violation leading to the activation of the transnational advocacy network through gathering information and utilizing effective mobilization tactics, the violating state denying the accusation, and the violating state making a tactical concession to release international pressure.

The boomerang-spiral model postulates that upon the placement of a state's violation on the international agenda, Western liberal states are inclined to censure the violating state, which, in turn, may respond with tactical concessions aimed at evading international scrutiny. However, Western liberal states remain resolute in upholding their liberal values and continue to intensify pressure on the violating state to demonstrate genuine commitment to international law. This ultimately prompts the violating state to advance to the fourth and final phases of the spiral model, characterized by a prescriptive status and eventual rule-consistent behavior. However, the Sheikh Jarrah case did not proceed along the model's phases. The court ruling in the Sheikh Jarrah issue provided a temporary solution to the issue to shut down



international criticism. However, the threat of eviction still remains, and Israeli settlements plans are advancing in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. In this case, international pressure was limited to vocal expressions of rejection of the violating state's behavior and did not escalate to procedural pressure.

The boomerang-spiral model assumes that Western liberal states have a constant and unified position due to their adherence to liberal values. This assumption explains the escalated pressure on violating states. However, in the Sheikh Jarrah case, international criticism did not result in procedural pressure as expected by the model authors. Although the international community criticized the Israeli court ruling to evict Palestinian residents and issued a resolution to investigate the case, the US, which has the highest leverage over Israel, blocked the international community's effort to hold Israel accountable for its policy. This demonstrates that Western liberal states do not have a unified position and their adherence to liberal values is not guaranteed, which impedes the transition through the model's phases. The unequivocal American support for Israel, despite its consistent breach of international norms, challenges the spiral model's postulate.

The Palestinian-Israeli-American case shows that norm-based advocacy does not take place in a vacuum; there are other factors that impact the leverage liberal Western states positions, which explains American decision-makers' willingness to turn a blind eye to Israeli violations. First, American foreign policy that incorporates liberal norms promotion and securing the American regional interests, which has produced a clash between American commitment to liberal values on one side and its security interests on the other. However, a historical review of the consequent American administrations showed that the US have always prioritized the security concern over the promoting

liberal values when the American security interests require that. Even the administrations that claimed centering human rights in their foreign policy like Carter and Biden had prioritized their perceived national security interests over human rights concerns. Thus, the Biden administration's supportive public position towards the Israeli violations in Sheikh Jarrah comes out of his concern over the American security interest in the Middle East as he constantly declared Israel a vital ally.

The second factor is the material-based counter advocacy by the Jewish coalitions in the US which are supportive to Israeli settler groups. The Jewish coalitions in the US have historically adopted effective double-rationale advocacy approach. First, advocacy based on the American security concerns presenting Israel as a safeguard for the American security in the region, thus, presenting Israel's security threat by Iran and Hamas as direct threats to the security of the US. Second, advocacy based on morality, presenting Israel as a vulnerable moral case that deserves the American support at the public and political officials' levels.

Given these two factors, the US constantly prevents escalation of the international community's pressure which in turn prevents the Palestinian and pro- Palestinian advocacy's efforts from advancing along the boomerang-spiral model's phases. After the Israeli government implemented the tactical concession of halting the evictions of the Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah, it refrained from making any public declaration regarding the decision. Thus, avoided being trapped in any statement that could be used to advance the pro-Palestinian advocates claims. In return, the Israeli government supported by the Jewish coalitions in the US upholds its rhetoric denying the occurrence of any violation to the international laws.

## **Chapter 6. Conclusion**

The research question that this research aimed to answer is: what explains the Israeli decisions in halting specific settlement plans while pursuing the settlement policy in the OPT? The study posits that the Palestinian actors and the anti-settlement movement effectively generated a transnational force, which exerted significant international pressure on Israel, ultimately leading to the suspension of the specific settlement plans like the case of Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. However, this approach failed to produce a durable solution for the issue at hand. Although the pro-Palestinian international advocacy demonstrated the capacity to influence short-term Israeli decisions, it was unable to generate enduring solutions, largely due to its inability to sustain international pressure on Israel.

The efficacy of the pro-Palestinian transnational advocacy network in mobilizing international pressure on Israel is contingent upon the stance of the US on this issue. Given the US's significant leverage on the Israeli government and its substantial impact on international institutions, the capacity of the Palestinian international advocacy to generate sustainable international pressure is circumscribed by two primary factors: the foreign policy approach of the US and the influence wielded by pro-Israel Jewish coalitions in the US.

Through answering the research question, this study addressed existing empirical and theoretical gaps in the literature while simultaneously achieving two objectives. The first objective pertained to comprehending the Palestinian domestic-transnational-international network-building mechanism, as well as determining the extent to which it influences Israeli decision-makers. By achieving this objective, the research addressed a major limitation of previous empirical studies, which overlooked

investigating the impact of Palestinian international advocacy on creating tangible changes on the ground. The second objective of the study aimed to identify the circumstances under which an advocacy network falls short of achieving its ultimate goal, despite making significant progress. Through achieving this objective, the research also addressed a significant limitation of the boomerang-spiral model, which is its inability to explain instances where norm-based advocacy fails to generate the desired change in cases that are of geostrategic importance to liberal Western states.

To answer the research question, the study employed a theory testing process tracing approach through a single case study method to test the boomerang-spiral model. The model's main objective is to explain how a domestic oppressed group can activate a transnational advocacy network TAN to generate international pressure that influences the behavior of a violating state until it complies with international liberal values and international law. The case study focuses on the Israeli settlement policy in the OPT with the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood as its unit of analysis, based on which the research hypotheses were identified. The first hypothesis that was tested is: the Palestinian international advocacy led to halting the evictions of the Palestinians in Sheikh Jarrah through generating international pressure on Israel. The second hypothesis is: the Palestinian international advocacy was unable to generate sustainable international pressure on Israel due to the US position that is determined by the impact of the Jewish coalitions in the US and the American foreign policy.

The research traced the model's phases, starting from identifying the international law violation represented by the settlement policy. Then examining the domestic and transnational influence of the actors endorsing the settlement policy as well as those opposing the policy on the decision makers. The closure of the communication

channels between anti-settlement actors with the decision makers domestically and transnationally, particularly in the US, led them to resort to grassroots mobilization. The Palestinian aggrieved group and the Israeli anti-settlement movement mobilized a transnational force that was able to raise the issue at the international agenda. The international criticism of Israel was first faced with denial by the Israeli government but then led to halting the high-profile settlement plans which, according to the model, is considered a tactical concession. However, the advocacy network's mobilization was unable to generate sustainable international pressure, which impeded the transition along the model's phases, resulting in no long-lasting solution for the settlement expansion.

The hypotheses identified two main variables, the transnational advocacy as an independent variable and the Israeli government decisions regarding settlement policy as a dependent variable. The causal mechanism between these variables is traced, generating a detailed sub-set of variables. The first sub-set of variables includes the Sheikh Jarrah transnational advocacy network as independent variable and halting the evictions order is the dependent variable. The intervening variables for the first sub-set are; first, the mobilization tactics including the network's type, size, frames and communication channels; second, the international opportunity structures including the international public opinion, the mainstream media positions, the international donors' support, and the discursive positions of the foreign governments and international institutions. The second sub-set of variables includes the Sheikh Jarrah transnational advocacy network as independent variable and reversing the settlement expansion in the neighborhood as the dependent variable. The intervening variables for the second sub-set of variables includes the Jewish coalitions counter advocacy and

the American foreign policy priorities.

The study employed a data triangulation method to investigate the two hypotheses. The first hypothesis that focuses on mobilization tactics and international opportunity structures were analyzed through the identification of the advocacy network, which was achieved by examining the actors' presence in the virtual sphere. Twitter data was collected using the hashtags used by the advocates within the timeframe between 9 February to 19 December 2021 and was analyzed using social network analysis and topic modelling. Each component of the international opportunity structures was measured using different datasets and analytical methods, including analyzing the text tweets using sentiment analysis, international news media outlets coverage of the issue using term frequency analysis, publications of actors' websites, press statements on states' ministries of foreign affairs official websites, and coverage of UNSC meetings were examined using thematic analysis. The second hypothesis that investigated the counter advocacy of Israeli settler groups and their transnational counterparts in the US and the US foreign policy approach were discussed based on qualitatively analyzing the data from actors' official websites, news media, and opinion articles. The discussion of the US foreign policy approach relied on published scholarly books and articles.

The analysis results showed that Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood has become an international symbol of Palestinian resistance to Israeli settlements in the OPT, due to the transnational advocacy network that was activated in Spring 2021. The Sheikh Jarrah transnational network was built on a grassroots movement that was launched in 2009 to resist the forceful eviction of Palestinian residents from their homes, which has grown into a massive transnational network as of 2021. This advocacy network successfully halted the displacement of Palestinian residents and secured their right to

prove ownership of their land. This success serves as evidence of the efficacy of the boomerang-spiral model of transnational advocacy networks, which posits that the creation, mobilization, and impact of these networks can lead to the desired change in the target state's policies. The Sheikh Jarrah network, which was launched in Spring 2021 exemplifies the model's phases as it was formed to prevent the evictions of Palestinian families, which was achieved by March 2022, proving the first hypothesis.

The "boomerang pattern" by Keck and Sikkink explains that transnational advocacy networks are activated when international laws are violated and communication channels between domestic actors and their government are blocked. The eviction of Sheikh Jarrah residents and their replacement with Jewish settlers proved to be a violation of the international laws represented by international humanitarian law and human rights principles. The Palestinian residents and their Israeli supporters were unable to communicate with Israeli decision-makers to solve the issue. As a result, they rallied in the neighborhood, attracting domestic and international supporters, and established a social movement. This movement succeeded in placing Israel on the international agenda, using effective mobilization tactics and utilizing the openness of international political opportunity structures.

The communication technology of social media platforms was used to mobilize networks of Sheikh Jarrah residents' supporters. The analysis of their Twitter network revealed that it expanded across 87 countries, with main influencers located in 30 countries. The network consisted of independent activists, grassroots movements, and major international organizations. The network's effective use of framing, which is a major mobilization tactic, was instrumental in advancing Palestinian claims and placing Israel on the international agenda. The grassroots movements played a vital

role in organizing offline action represented by protests in 150 cities globally. Additionally, transnational and international human rights organizations helped create a legal basis for the Palestinians' claims, elevating the issue to the UN institutions. Thus, the first intervening variable identifying the condition for the advocacy network's success that is utilizing effective mobilization tactics was met.

Sikkink (2003) identified the international opportunity structures as conditions shaping the outcomes of advocacy efforts. In the case of Sheikh Jarrah, the international opportunity structures were open allowing for the advancement of the Palestinians' claims. A large international audience expressed their solidarity with the residents through online networks and worldwide protests, indicating a supportive international public opinion. Major international media outlets covered the issue, and Palestinian officials and activists were given a platform to share their perspectives, exposing decision-makers to the Palestinian side of the story. The attention generated by the advocacy campaign led to legal analyses by international institutions and declarations of position by foreign governments, the majority of which expressed rejection of Israeli practices in the neighborhood. The funding of Israeli and Palestinian human rights NGOs by European states, for instance, demonstrates a long-standing commitment to advocating against the Israeli settlement policy. The US, on the other hand, refrains from government funding of human rights NGOs and does not publicly criticize Israeli practices.

The US is a historical supporter of Israel as both states enjoy a special relationship based on shared interests and values, according to the declaration of the American administrations and the Israel lobby in the US. Therefore, the US did not publicly criticize the Israeli decision to evict the Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah and



released a statement declaring its neutral stance to the issue. However, with the increased international and domestic pressure resulted from the advocacy efforts, the US responded by joining the international community in rejecting the Israeli decision.

Along with the boomerang-spiral model phases, the initial response of the Israeli government and its supporters of the Jewish groups within the Israel lobby in the US is denial. Israel denied the occurrence of any violation of the Palestinians human rights, on the contrary, portrayed the events as a security threat to the state of Israel. However, with the escalation of the international pressure, particularly after the US criticized the Israeli behavior, Israel declared halting the forceful eviction of the Palestinians of Sheikh Jarrah. According to the boomerang-spiral model, this decision is considered a tactical concession as the violating state responded not because of its acknowledgment to the advocates' claims, but to avoid material loss. Israel responded by halting the evictions because it does not want to jeopardize its relations with the US, especially that the American Jewish groups made it clear to the Israeli Prime Minister that defending the Israeli position is becoming challenging. This development indicates the fulfillment of the first three phases of the boomerang-spiral model, including the activation of the transnational advocacy network, and the violating state's denial of accusations, followed by a tactical concession to relieve international pressure.

The Sheikh Jarrah case has not followed the expected phases of the boomerang-spiral model. Instead, it has regressed as the Israeli government has refrained from making any statement regarding the eviction orders. This move has thwarted the advocates' attempts to use Israel's rhetoric against it, which was anticipated by the model. On the contrary, Israel has continued to deny any violation, supported by American Jewish coalitions and the lack of significant international pressure. Despite

this, the international community has shown a willingness to take action against Israel. The UN Human Rights Council passed a resolution forming an independent commission of inquiry to investigate the case. The resulting report recommended that the UNGA request an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice regarding the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, which was done. However, the US has staunchly opposed these efforts, which is not surprising given its historical position.

The inadequacy of the boomerang-spiral model in explaining the Israeli- Palestinian scenario arises from its underlying assumption that Western liberal states possess a unified stance of unwavering commitment to international norms and values, which translates into escalating pressure on the violating state. However, this assumption does not account for other factors that shape the Western liberal states' position, which, in turn, affects the model's applicability. In the case of Israel, the international community and the US do not share a common ground. Given the US's significant influence on the international community and its leverage on Israel, the US position is pivotal to the model's viability.

By presupposing that a commitment to liberal values is the sole determinant of the Western liberal states' position, the model overlooks other factors that shape their stance. The US, for instance, has a history of prioritizing its security and national interests over upholding liberal norms, particularly human rights, in its foreign policy approach. In the case of Israel, the US considers it a critical strategic ally, a consideration nurtured by Jewish coalitions in the US, that has been effective since 1967 leading to intensified cooperation which influences the US's stance. In addition, the Israel lobby in the US shapes the US position towards Israeli violations. Beside the

American security concern that is prioritized over human rights, the Israel lobby's advocacy is another factor that shape the position of the US towards the Israeli violations. Prominent groups within the lobby supported the promotion of the Israeli narrative in the Sheikh Jarrah evictions, presenting the violence in East Jerusalem as a security threat that provoked American security concerns. Simultaneously, the lobby adopted the moral advocacy rationale by describing Palestinian advocacy as defaming Israel, using the rhetoric of anti-Semitism, which has historically proven to be a successful advocacy tactic. Thus, the second hypothesis of the research is supported.

Based on the comprehensive analysis of the case, the research posits a proposal for modifying the boomerang-spiral framework by incorporating certain variables identified by the study. These variables encompass the counter advocacy efforts of rival interest groups and the influence of Western states' foreign policy priorities. The adaptation of these two variables necessitates the formulation of two distinct scenarios, which are delineated in Figure 16 and Figure 17.

Figure 16 delineates the model's adaptation under the first scenario, wherein the counter advocacy by rival interest groups fails to impede the norm-based advocacy pursued by the TAN, while Western liberal states remain steadfast in their commitment to liberal values. This alignment culminates in heightened international pressure exerted on the violating state. Consequently, the proposed model suggests the introduction of a novel phase titled "recognition," wherein the target state acknowledges both the occurrence of the violation and the validity of the TAN's assertions. Upon reaching this phase, the subsequent transition to the prescriptive status phase ensues, culminating ultimately in complete compliance, as prescribed by the original authors of the boomerang-spiral model.

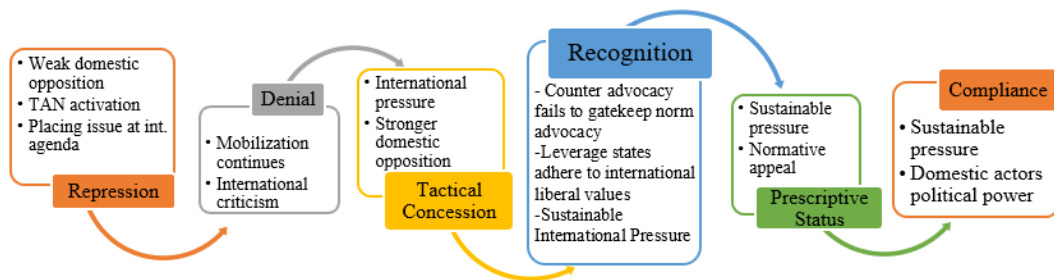


Figure 16. The boomerang-spiral model modification based on scenario 1

Conversely, the second scenario postulates that the counter advocacy by interest groups successfully prevents the dissemination of norm-based advocacy by the TAN, thereby enabling Western liberal states to prioritize their security concerns over the promotion of liberal values. Consequently, the target state persists in its denial of the violation, necessitating a regression to the initial phase of repression. Figure 17 provides a visual representation of the phases of the boomerang-spiral model, as applicable within the framework of scenario 2.

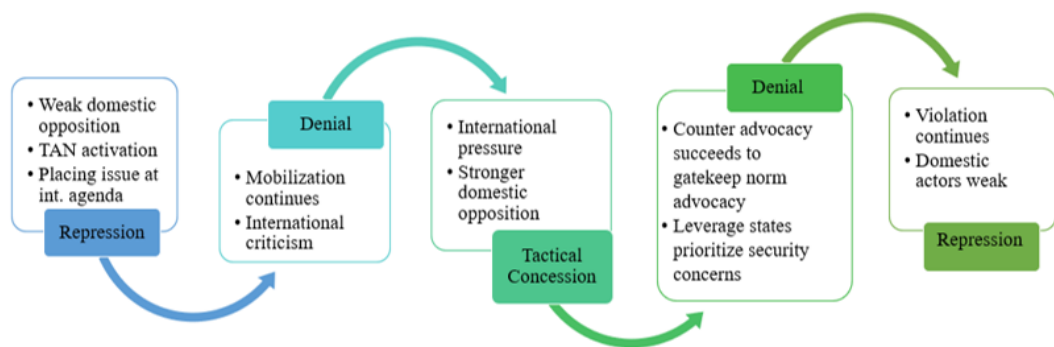


Figure 17. The boomerang-spiral model modification based on scenario 2

The Sheikh Jarrah advocacy network, despite successfully garnering support from the international community, ultimately fell short of its ultimate goal. While the network was successful in halting the eviction order against the Palestinian residents in Sheikh Jarrah and securing their right to prove the ownership of their properties, it was unable to secure an order that would permanently cancel the eviction order. The case of Sheikh Jarrah serves as an example of the Israeli settlements' expansion at the

expense of Palestinian rights, a situation that remains prevalent in other neighborhoods throughout the OPT, which suggests that the Sheikh Jarrah case follows scenario 2. Although the advocacy efforts succeeded in raising Sheikh Jarrah's issue to the international agenda, norm-based advocacy against the settlement policy cannot be successful without addressing the obstacles identified in this research. While the American foreign policy prioritizes security, the only viable way to advocate against the settlement policy and follow scenario 1 is to overcome the moral advocacy approach adopted by the Israel lobby. Pro-Palestine advocates need to generate consensus among the American public and political elites and pressure the US to change its stance. The Israel lobby's advocacy has dominated public discourse for decades, impeding any attempt for pro-Palestine advocacy in the US. However, the Sheikh Jarrah case has shown that the atmosphere in the US is amenable to change, providing hope for Palestinians.

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