

كسر القوالب Breaking the mold

#Breaking_The_Mold Arab Civil Society Actors and their Quest to Influence Policy-Making

Case Study #19

Country Palestine

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BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT AND SANCTIONS MOVEMENT

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The involvement, strategies and tactics of Palestinian civil society in isolating 'Israel' internationally through Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS)

BACKGROUND AND TIMELINE

The question of policy change in the context of Palestine is rather peculiar. While it can be said that there is a rich history of Palestinian 'civil society' – regardless of how narrow or wide the definition of this term may be – a study around its contour must be approached unconventionally. What does policy change mean under a regime of settler-colonialism, apartheid and occupation? While this paper does not seek to answer this question, it does seek to exemplify how such policy change could manifest in such a context. This paper examines policies qua political outcomes triggered by the Palestinian-led global BDS movement. Policy, in this case, is a matter of a political impact met by a political outcome.

In Palestine, organized boycotts have been used as a tool for resistance at least since 1922¹ in response to decades of illegal land acquisitions² and encroaching settler-colonialism by European Jewish settlers³. Boycott has then been used throughout the Palestinian struggle including more substantially from 1929 – 1936 and during the First and Second Intifadas. The Arab League also imposed direct boycotts on bodies affiliated to the Zionist project since 1945 onwards⁴.

After the Second Intifada, the situation in Palestine was looking grim: expanding Israeli colonies, continued ethnic cleansing and occupation, and a deadlock in the peace process⁵. In this context, Palestinian civil society issued a call for boycotting, divesting from, and imposing sanctions (BDS) on Israel⁶. The call was issued on July 9, 2005, a year from the date of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) that found Israel's wall illegal⁷. The BDS movement set out three demands addressing three basic Palestinian rights; namely, the return of refugees to their homelands, ending the occupation, and ending apartheid⁸.

BDS started gaining traction as early as 2008, and by 2014 the movement had gained popular international support⁹. In 2015, Israel's president officially declared BDS as a "strategic threat"¹⁰ and launched an offensive against the movement, ranging from the adoption of internal policies and legislation to lobbying foreign policy change as an attempt to attack the movement, its members, and its supporters in Palestine and abroad¹¹.

¹Asleh, F. (2017). 1948 – 1908 قراءة في تجربة المقاطعة الفلسطينية للمنتجات الصهيونية بين. Retrieved May 20, 2019, from <https://khazaan.wordpress.com/2017/11/25/قراءة-في-تجربة-المقاطعة-للمنتجات-الصهيونية-بين-1948-1908/>

²While it is commonly thought that land acquired prior to 1948 was through 'legal' land sale or other procedural acquisitions, Benny Morris explains that since early 1900 Zionists acquired land title deeds and other permits they were otherwise not allowed to legally acquire through bribery or pecuniary means. For more information see Morris, B. (2001). *Righteous victims: A history of the Zionist-Arab conflict, 1881-1999*. New York: Vintage Books pp. 41.

³Masalha, N. (2000). *Imperial Israel and the Palestinians: The Politics of Expansion*. London: Pluto Press; and Masalha, N. (2012). *The Palestine Nakba decolonising history, narrating the subaltern, reclaiming memory*. London: Zed Books.

⁴Asleh, supra 1.

⁵Mohamad, H. (2007). *The Peace Process and the Palestinian Political Landscape*. *Journal of International and Area Studies*, 14(1), 85-94. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43111468>; see also Said, E. (2000). *The End of the Peace Process: Oslo and After*. New York: Pantheon Books.

⁶BDSmovement.net (n.d.). "BDS Call" [online]. Available at: <https://bdsmovement.net/call> [Accessed: May 20, 2019].

⁷Advisory Opinion (2004). *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*. ICJ Reports 2004, p. 136.

⁸BDSmovement.net, supra note 4.

⁹Marfleet, P. (2019). *Palestine: Boycott, Localism, and Global Activism*. In *Boycotts Past and Present*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

¹⁰Omer-Man, M. S. (2015, May 28). *Israel's president calls BDS a 'strategic threat'*. 972. Retrieved May 20, 2019, from <https://972mag.com/israels-president-says-bds-is-a-strategic-threat/107156/>

¹¹Marfleet, P., supra 9; see also Thrall, N. (2018, August 14). *BDS: How a controversial non-violent movement has transformed the Israeli-Palestinian debate*. *The Guardian*. Retrieved May 20, 2019, from <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/aug/14/bds-boycott-divestment-sanctions-movement-transformed-israeli-palestinian-debate>

CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS' ROLE AND INVOLVEMENT

In 2005, more than 170 umbrella organizations, consisting of federations and coalitions that represent hundreds of political factions, unions, cultural organizations, and local NGOs issued and endorsed the BDS call.¹² Bodies across historic Palestine, including occupied Jerusalem and what is known as the '1948 lands' as well as what is known as the 'West Bank' and the 'Gaza Strip' endorsed the call¹³. Organizations based in refugee camps outside Palestine also partook in this endorsement¹⁴, highlighting yet another element of the unconventional contour of Palestinian civil society.

In 2008, as the movement grew, there became a need for a collective decision-making process that is representative of the coalition. Thus, the BDS National Committee (BNC) was formed and is considered the broadest coalition in Palestinian civil society today¹⁵. The BNC is responsible for coordinating campaign efforts and joint initiatives with local informal social movements and independent youth groups active across Palestine as well as regionally and internationally¹⁶. These may include rights-based groups, students' unions, workers' federations, and other bodies.

While the BNC is the steering body of the BDS movement, campaigns still operate in a largely decentralized manner. BDS is thought of as "an idea that people of conscience around the world adopt and therefore, an idea cannot die."¹⁷ According to Abdulrahman Abu Nahel, the BDS Gaza Strip Coordinator, this structure has enabled "the involvement of a myriad of organizations and activists globally through mushrooming local campaigns or local BDS chapters in cities and countries all over the world."¹⁸ Thus, those individuals and organizations are critical actors in the movement's structure and are the frontline implementers of the movement's strategy in their localities.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

The core strategy of the BDS movement is isolating Israel economically, politically, culturally, and academically on a global scale. The assumption is that isolation would decrease the current international impunity regarding Israel's accountability for its crimes. Isolation would render the continuation of its settler-colonial project unviable, making it a pariah state like the historical South Africa apartheid regime¹⁹.



If isolation reached a certain threshold beyond that which Israel could bear, then Israel would be forced to comply with its obligations under international law²⁰.

To translate this theory of change, the movement employs three master tactics, under which most of the movement's regional and international campaigns are framed.

Tactic 1: Boycott

Boycott is an organized, mass refusal to interact with the institutions that form the pillars of the Israeli regime. In the context of economic boycott, the primary targets are Israeli companies. An example of direct economic boycott is the campaign against Agrexco, an Israeli company that exported agricultural produce to supermarkets across the European Union. In 2006/07 a boycott campaign was launched against Agrexco, sparking "popular boycotts, blockades, demonstrations, and direct actions throughout Europe."²¹ Four years into the campaign, the company entered into a liquidity crisis and failed to lock-in any bids from potential creditors leading to its insolvency in 2011²². Economic boycott, by consumers and third-party establishments, may also entail international companies, i.e., secondary targets, complicit in Israel's violations of international law, such as HP²³.

As for academic boycott, Israeli academic institutions have been implicated in the Zionist settler-colonial project since its early formation²⁴ and continue to contribute to maintaining dominant structures of oppression through "ideological and institutional scaffolding."²⁵ For example, the University of Tel Aviv has developed the theory employed by the Israeli military against Lebanese and Palestinian civilians, in 2006 and 2008/09 respectively, known as the "Dahiya doctrine", which is rooted in the use of disproportionate force against civilians²⁶.

¹²Barghouti, O. (2011). *BDS: Boycott, divestment, sanctions: The global struggle for Palestinian rights*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, pp. 75.

¹³Ibid; For an in-depth analysis on geographic fragmentation of Palestinian society, refer to Hanieh, A. (2016). *Development as Struggle: Confronting the Reality of Power in Palestine*. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 45(4), 32-47.

¹⁴Barghouti, supra 12 at pp. 61.

¹⁵Awwad, H. (2012). *Six Years of BDS: Success! In The Case for Sanctions Against Israel* (pp. 77-85). London: Verso.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Abu Nahel, A. (2019, May 21). *Personal interview via Video Chat*.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Warschawski, M. (2012). *Yes to BDS! An Answer to Uri Avnery. In The Case for Sanctions Against Israel* (pp. 189 - 193). London: Verso.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Palestinian BDS National Committee. (2011, September 12). *Palestinian civil society welcomes Agrexco liquidation, calls for celebration of this BDS victory* [Press release]. Retrieved February 17, 2019, from <https://bdsmovement.net/news/palestinian-civil-society-welcomes-agrexco-liquidation-calls-celebration-bds-victory>

²²Awwad, supra 15.

²³BDSmovement.net (n.d.). *Boycott HP*. Retrieved May 29 from: <https://bdsmovement.net/boycott-hp>

²⁴The Hebrew University was founded in 1925 to serve the advances of Zionist colonization of Palestine, whereby it facilitated illegal immigration, provided intellectual framing on Zionist political discourses, researched 'Arab Studies' as a source of intelligence, as well as being used later as a military base for armed attacks. For more information see: Cohen, U. (2007). *University vs. Society in a Period of Nation Building: The Hebrew University in Pre-State Israel*. *Historical Studies in Education*, 81-110; see also Ben-Eliezer, U. (2019). *War over Peace: One Hundred Years of Israel's Militaristic Nationalism*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press; see also *Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East*. (2004, July). *Demographics of Historic Palestine prior to 1948*. Retrieved May 30, 2019, from https://www.cjpmc.org/fs_007.

²⁵Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, 'PACBI guidelines for the international academic boycott of Israel (Revised August 2010)' (1 October 2009), available at: <http://www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=1108>

²⁶BDSmovement.net (n.d.). "Academic Boycott" [online]. Available at: <https://bdsmovement.net/academic-boycott#tab1> [Accessed: May 20, 2019].

Israeli cultural²⁷ and sporting²⁸ institutions are considered equally complicit in Israel's violations due to lending Israel the veneer of a "democratic polity."²⁹ Israel funds many cultural projects and institutions, as part of and beyond its 'branding'³⁰ campaign, as a means to foster a favorable image of its regime.³¹

Academic and cultural boycott campaigns have, in many instances, effectively convinced international artists, filmmakers, and sports players to cancel participation in complicit events inside and outside 'Israel'³². For the vast majority of these cases, withdrawal or non-participation is considered the natural stance of Arab cultural figures and sports teams³³.

Tactic 2: Divestment

In the context of the Palestinian struggle, divestment is a relatively new tactic. Early beginnings of divestment efforts were led by Palestinian and Arab students studying abroad, in the wake of intersecting social justice struggles against the rise of neoliberal policies around the world³⁴. Making such connections was critical given that human rights – as a political discourse – was becoming more prevalent in international solidarity movements³⁵. According to local activists, "divestment today is one of the most effective tools of applying economic pressure on Israel because it targets the backbone of capitalist economies in our globalized world, which are foreign investments."³⁶

Divestment as a 'master tactic' is translated into action through categorical campaigns against industries profiting from human rights violations in Palestine through exerting pressure on international companies – the secondary targets – to withdraw their investments from Israel – the primary target. Examples of such multinational companies that were forced to divest from Israel as a result include G4S, Veolia, Orange, and CRH. Such pressure on secondary targets is applied by urging third parties – who are either investors or customers of these companies – to sell their shares or end their contracts.³⁷

Tactic 3: Sanctions

The essence of the third tactic lies in state-level measures against Israel as a form of accountability, and it ranges from suspending military cooperation and free-trade agreements to expelling Israel from international forums such as FIFA³⁸ or the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)³⁹.

²⁷Barghouti, supra 12.

²⁸Shuabi, Z. (2016, August 14). "ماذا كان على إسلام الشهابي أن يفعل؟" [Matha kan a'ala Islam Al-Shehabi an yaf'al?]. 7iber. Retrieved February 17, 2019, from: <https://www.7iber.com/sports-outdoors/boycotting-israel-in-the-olympics/>

²⁹McMahon, S. F. (2014). *The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions campaign: Contradictions and challenges*. *Race & Class*, 55(4), 65-81. pp. 69.

³⁰Winstanley, A. (2017, March 30). "The failure of Brand Israel". *Middle East Monitor*. Retrieved May 17, 2019 from: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170330-the-failure-of-brand-israel/>

³¹McMahon, supra 29.

³²Notable examples of recent successes include Lana Del Rey, Shakira, and Lorde amongst other renowned singers cancelling their concerts in 'Israel'; Argentina's national football team, led by their captain, Lionel Messi, abandoning its exhibition match with Israel; and six scientists withdrawing participation from a physics workshop at Ariel University. For more information see: BDSmovement.net (n.d.). "Cultural Boycott" [online]. Available at: <https://bdsmovement.net/cultural-boycott> [Accessed: May 20, 2019].

³³Abu Nahel, supra 17.

³⁴Erakat, N. (2010). *BDS in the USA, 2001-2010*. *Middle East Report*, (255), 34-39.

³⁵Deas, M. (2019, May 10). *Personal communication*.

³⁶Anonymous (2019, March 12). *Personal interview via video chat*.

³⁷Abujbara, J., Boyd, A., Mitchell, D. O., & Taminato, M. (Eds.). (2018). *Beautiful Rising: Creative Resistance from the Global South*. New York: OR Books (pp. 112 - 117).

³⁸BDSmovement.net (n.d.). "Red Card Israel" [online]. Available at: <https://bdsmovement.net/red-card-israel> [Accessed: May 20, 2019].

³⁹Palestinian BDS National Committee. (2013, July 9). *The Palestinian BDS National Committee calls for freezing "Knesset" membership in Inter-Parliamentary Union in Light of Racist Laws* [Press release]. Retrieved May 14, 2019, from: <https://bdsmovement.net/news/palestinian-bds-national-committee-calls-freezing-E2%80%9Cknesset%E2%80%9D-membership-inter-parliamentary>.

Assessing from the lens of the South African struggle against apartheid: state sanctions were imposed on South Africa about 30 years into the call for boycott and divestment campaigns and after decades of a multi-faceted struggle for liberation, including armed resistance⁴⁰.

Sanctions were the most difficult to attain because they involved disruption of other states' economic relations, a sector of foreign policy that is not as easily susceptible to pressure as other targets. However, while imposing sanctions was the most difficult aspect, it was also arguably the most effective⁴¹. The case is similar in the context of the Palestinian struggle and BDS vis-à-vis Israel. An observable pursuit towards sanctions are the efforts spearheaded by the Kuwaiti Parliament to suspend the Israeli Knesset's membership in the IPU⁴². In 2018, Chile's Congress and Ireland's Upper House Parliament voted by majority to ban imports from Israeli colonies. Beyond banning settlement goods, the Irish minister of state along with 50 parliamentarians urged Ireland to impose a military embargo on Israel.

Another way of understanding sanctions, beyond just the scope of the BDS movement, is through understanding the concept of 'anti-normalization' in the Arab world. Whether one categorizes it as a concept or a policy or a tactic — a worthwhile discussion beyond the scope of this paper — anti-normalization can be considered a form of sanctions that Arab states have imposed on Israel since the 1940s. Beyond state sanctions, the concept of anti-normalization is deeply embedded in popular consciousness across the Arab world "because the Israeli occupation is perceived as a threat to the livelihoods and social justice of all nations in the region"⁴³. On the grassroots level, anti-normalization overlaps more with boycott than sanctions. Anti-normalization has recently seen a sharp decline on an official state level, with the roots of this decline being a three-tiered regression on such policies that began with Egypt, followed by Jordan, and then the Palestinian Authority.⁴⁴

While other Arab regimes have followed or are following suit, popular sentiments against normalizing relations with Israel remain strong⁴⁵. This dichotomy between the will of the people versus the regimes presents both a challenge and an opportunity to the BDS movement today. On the one hand, Israel's efforts to normalize relations with Arab countries would directly undermine boycott efforts regionally and abroad. Some Israeli analysts see anti-normalization as a bigger threat to Israel than BDS⁴⁶.

⁴⁰Skinner, R. (2017). *The dynamics of anti-apartheid: International solidarity, human rights and decolonization*. In *Britain, France and the Decolonization of Africa: Future Imperfect?*(pp. 111-130). London: UCL Press; Welsh, D. (2011). *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball.

⁴¹Stefano, P. D., & Henaway, M. (2014). *Boycotting Apartheid From South Africa to Palestine*. *Peace Review*, 26(1) (pp. 24).

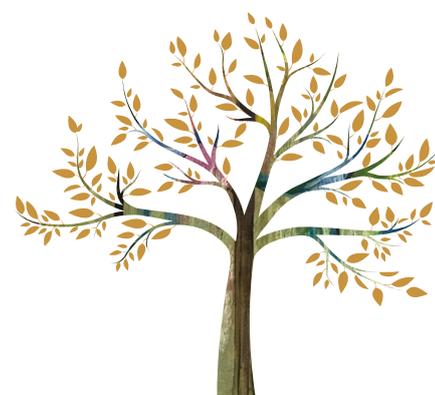
⁴²Palestinian BDS National Committee. (2017, October 18). *Palestinian civil society welcomes Kuwait's demand to the IPU to expel the Israeli Knesset from the Union* [Press release]. Retrieved May 5, 2019, from: <https://bdsmovement.net/ar/news/للجنة-الوطنية-للمقاطعة-ترحب-بموقف-الكويت-المطالب-بتردد-وقد-الكنيست-من-الاتحاد-البرلماني-الدولي>

⁴³Anonymous, supra 36.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Abu Nahel, supra 17.

⁴⁶For example, see: Weissman, S. (2017, July 18). "Forget BDS: It's anti-normalization you should be talking about". *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*. Other opinion pieces have been published on various Israeli media platforms including Haaretz and Ynet.



On the other hand, to confront this challenge, the BDS movement must build on the widespread popular support for anti-normalization. To do so, the movement would need to revisit its discourse within a context-sensitive frame, which would require it to transcend the limitations of international law and the technicalities of the international legal framework⁴⁷.

INFLUENCING FACTORS

Influencing factors range between opportunities that helped BDS become the global movement it is today and limitations, discussed above, that restricted its growth in some ways. However, to understand those opportunities and limitations, it may be useful to first address the question of the location of power and its embeddedness. Adam Hanieh provides a thorough analysis of three conceptualizations of power structures relevant to the Palestine-Israel context. Briefly, these are: direct domination through force and compulsion, indirect domination through psychological fixation on the lack of alternatives, and a sort of indirect spiritual domination where collective self-worth and collective action are perceived difficult to obtain and maintain⁴⁸.

In the aftermath of the second intifada, there was a widespread perception of defeat on all three levels. The signing of the peace treaty officially suspended armed resistance by the PLO. Although other armed factions remain(ed) active independently of the PLO, Israel's military apparatus, supported by its technological advances and tremendous support by the US and other states, render military power drastically imbalanced. Since the end of the second intifada as well, on the political plane, there has been a growing vacuum in representative national leadership. Thus, when the BDS call was issued in such a political context, it enabled Palestinians, individually and collectively, to reclaim some power, especially on the second and third conceptualizations. The BDS call addressed the different constituents of Palestinian society; the West Bank and Gaza, the 1948 lands, and the refugees in the diaspora. To some extent, this has enabled Palestinians to partially transcend their fragmentation and the BNC, as a coalition, brought together Palestinian political and civil society actors from across the national spectrum under a minimum common denominator represented in the three demands.

POLICY OUTCOME

The impact of the BDS movement has directly led to a number of political outcomes. As Abdulrahman Abu Nahel explains, "the movement has succeeded on a global scale in shifting the spectrum of allies. Many people and bodies in the neutral zone [towards the Palestinian struggle] became supporters, and those in passive opposition become neutral", and that seems to trouble Israel the most⁴⁹. As such, Israel has developed the counter-BDS 'Brand Israel' campaign, created to combat the movements' success in increasing supporters' and sympathizers' base globally⁵⁰. In 2016, Israel allocated \$26 million USD in its annual budget to fight BDS activities and formed a unit within its Ministry of Strategic Affairs that is responsible for coordinating anti-BDS attacks⁵¹. In this context, policy outcomes of BDS efforts are multi-layered and require a more complex understanding of impact beyond the binary 'successful-unsuccessful' or 'negative-positive' divide.

⁴⁷Another important discussion that is beyond the scope of this paper. It begs the question of using international legal frameworks as a tactical approach versus adopting international law as a political discourse.

⁴⁸Hanieh, *supra* 13.

⁴⁹Abu Nahel, *supra* 17.

⁵⁰Winstanley, *supra* 30.

⁵¹Thrall, *supra* 11.

CONCLUSION

For decades, Israel promoted itself as the 'only democracy in the Middle East' and actively sought to maintain this image, especially outside the Arab world. To confront decades of impunity, the BDS movement realized since its foundation that the battleground must shift from local and regional to include the international realm more substantively. In shifting the battleground from home to the rest of the world, it involved consumers in more mature economies who enjoy a higher level of independence in consumption-related decisions compared to consumers in Palestine, where the economy is restricted and dictated by occupation⁵². This independence has enabled consumer-activism on an individual and institutional level. Furthermore, Western regimes, especially the United States, are key supporters of Israel, yet shifting public and civil society opinion in Europe and North America has been critical towards increasing Israel's perceptions of its isolation internationally⁵³. Cultural boycott has been instrumental in shedding light on Israel's impunity to new audiences given the organically popular global followership by ordinary citizens of artists and sports teams.

BDS critics, some of whom are supporters of the movement and others are opponents, have argued that the weakest point in the movement is its lack of conceptualization of a tangible, political solution⁵⁴. Nevertheless, this criticism is irrelevant because BDS is a rights-based movement that should not, and does not claim to, represent the Palestinian people on a political plane. Thus, questions regarding a political solution may best be directed to political leadership. The more compelling question, however, at this critical juncture in history, is what conceptualization of a representative political leadership is needed to reclaim power and agency on a Palestinian national level as a prerequisite to effecting a political solution that fulfills the aspirations of the Palestinian people?

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⁵²Koos, S. (2012). *What drives political consumption in Europe? A multi-level analysis on individual characteristics, opportunity structures and globalization*. *Acta Sociologica*, 55(1), 37-57; and Grandinetti, T. (2015). *The Palestinian Middle Class in Rawabi: Depoliticizing the Occupation*. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 40(1), 63-78; see also Normand, R. (2000). *Israel's Accountability for Economic Warfare*. *Middle East Report*, (217), 32-34.

⁵³Telhami, S. (2018, Dec. 12). "Americans are increasingly critical of Israel". *Brookings Institution*. Retrieved May 22, 2019 from: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/12/12/americans-are-increasingly-critical-of-israel/>; See also Beauchamp, Z. (2018, May 14). "How does the world feel about Israel/Palestine?". *Vox*. Retrieved May 23, 2019 from: <https://www.vox.com/2018/11/20/18080086/israel-palestine-global-opinion>

⁵⁴McMahon, *supra* 29.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BDS	<i>Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement</i>
BNC	<i>BDS National Committee</i>
CRH	<i>Cement Roadstone Holdings</i>
G4S	<i>Group 4 Securicor</i>
HP	<i>Hewlett Packard</i>
PLO	<i>Palestine Liberation Organization</i>

INTERVIEWS

Anonymous (2019, March 12). BDS Activist. Personal interview via video chat.

Abdulrahman Abu Nahel (2019, May 21). BDS Gaza Strip Coordinator at the BNC. Personal interview via video chat.

Michael Deas (2019, May 10). Former International Campaigns Coordinator at the BNC. Personal communication.

BREAKING THE MOLD PROJECT

In mid- 2018, the “Civil Society Actors and Policymaking in the Arab World” program at IFI, with the support of Open Society Foundations, launched the second round of its extended research project “Arab Civil Society Actors and their Quest to Influence Policy-Making”. This project mapped and analyzed the attempts of Arab civil society, in all its orientations, structures, and differences, to influence public policy across a variety of domains. This research produced 92 case studies outlining the role of civil society in impacting political, social, economic, gender, educational, health-related, and environmental policies in ten Arab countries: Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Yemen, and the Arab Gulf.

Over two dozen researchers and research groups from the above countries participated in this project, which was conducted over a year and a half. The results were reviewed by an advisory committee for methodology to ensure alignment with the project’s goals, and were presented by the researchers in various themed sessions over the course of the two days.

THE CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS AND POLICY-MAKING PROGRAM

at the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs at AUB, examines the role that civil society actors play in shaping and making policy. Specifically, the program focuses on the following aspects: how civil society actors organize themselves into advocacy coalitions; how policy networks are formed to influence policy processes and outcomes; and how policy research institutes contribute their research into policy. The program also explores the media’s expanding role, which some claim has catalyzed the Uprisings throughout the region.

THE ISSAM FARES INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

The Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI) at the American University of Beirut (AUB) is an independent, research-based, policy oriented institute. It aims to initiate and develop policy-relevant research in and about the Arab region. The Institute is committed to expanding and deepening knowledge production and to creating a space for the interdisciplinary exchange of ideas among researchers, civil society actors, and policy makers.

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