Organizational Adaptation and Survival in a Hostile and Unfavorable Environment: Peacebuilding Organizations in Israel and Palestine

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Abstract

This article presents the results of a fifteen-year longitudinal study of the major educational peacebuilding initiatives in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, during times of relative peace and of acute violence (1993-2008). Using longitudinal field research data and surveys, it examines how peace initiatives, that work across conflict lines, adapt to hostile and unfavorable environments. Additionally, it investigates the criteria that allows some peacebuilding initiatives to survive and persist, when the large majority do not. Building on the organizational and social movement studies literature, I contend that organizations need to successfully attend to a variety of challenges such as maintaining resources, maintaining legitimacy, managing internal conflict, and maintaining commitment to have a significant chance for survival. Moreover, I argue that for organizations committed to working across difference and inequality in unfavorable and hostile conflict environments, it is critical for organizational effectiveness and survival to pay heed to the quality of the cross-conflict relationships, as well as, to matters of equality.

Keywords: peacebuilding; peace organizations; organizational survival; hostile environment; asymmetry; and Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

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Introduction

In the euphoria after the 1993 signing of the Oslo Accords, Israeli-Palestinian people-to-people projects multiplied.[1] While the individual goals of these initiatives varied, this undertaking sought to increase the involvement of the civil societies with the peace process, and enhance the dialogue and relations between the two sides (Baskin and Al Qaq, 2004; Herzog and Hai, 2006).

According to the conflict resolution and peace studies literature, this need for civil society involvement is well-founded. In the literature, there tends to be agreement that in long-standing identity conflicts, it is not enough for the two parties to simply sign a peace process, but there also needs to be a bottom-up process to complement and support the official top-down peace-making process (Kaufman, 1997; Lederach, 1997). This analysis is supported by the reality that while many contemporary peace accords have been signed, most have failed; and few have led to durable settlements (Lambourne, 2001; de Varennes, 2003). While it is understood that the reasons for this often involve contested struggles and problems in implementation (Rasmussen, 2001), it has also been argued that it is because peace processes fail to address the fear, hatred, mistrust, and bitterness between the involved groups (Zartman, 1989; Fitzduff, 2001).

With the eruption of the Second Intifada in September 2000, however, the large majority of these initiatives dedicated to the process of building peace stopped functioning and ceased to exist (Hassassian, 2002). In a conflict already mired in violence, these years stood witness to extreme violence—sieges, raids, assassinations, checkpoints, closures, housing demolitions, and land confiscations in Palestine, and suicide bombings in Israel. In addition to acute levels of physical and structural violence, the facilitating conditions for peacebuilding initiatives, which

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distinguished the Oslo period, vanished. Indeed, almost overnight, the external legitimacy these initiatives had received with the signing of the Oslo accords was retracted, the international funds that had previously supported these initiatives disappeared, and the hope, optimism, and sense of opportunities for peace that had characterized the Oslo period was no longer present to any substantive degree (Baskin and Al Qaq, 2002; El-Sarraj, 2003).[2]

While the large majority of these initiatives ceased to exist, remarkably, a handful continued operating in this exceedingly violent and hostile environment. While organizational survival should not be conflated with organizational success, especially if the latter is defined as impacting policy or gaining acceptance as a spokesperson for a legitimate set of interests (Gamson, 1990), organizational survival for peace initiatives is nonetheless of great import. Indeed, as long as peace organizations survive, they are carriers of cultural messages (Marullo and Edwards, 1994) that indicate, in the case of people-to-people initiatives, that peace is possible, and there is a partner on the other side with whom to talk (Gawerc, 2012). These cultural messages can help to create a feeling of possibility and a sense of mutual reassurance, which according to Kelman (2005), are two of the most critical elements of a supportive political environment for a peace process.

Moreover, in a context in which most of the joint peace initiatives ceased to exist, these remaining organizations help to maintain an infrastructure, resources, networks, and a collective identity, which have been recognized in the social movement literature as critical for future mobilization (e.g., Morris, 1984; Taylor, 1989; Gamson, 1990; Edwards and Marullo, 1995). Indeed, as Edwards and Marullo (1995, p. 910) argue, this "focus on the importance of preexisting organizational infrastructures and the availability of resources… suggests the

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importance of examining social movement organization persistence and mortality through prior periods of demobilization."

Just as importantly, Gamson and Modigliani's (1963) theory on integrative ties highlights that these cross-conflict ties themselves may matter for keeping a social system from breaking down or erupting into violent conflict. Indeed, arguing that tension is "the ratio of disintegrative forces to integrative ties existing between two nations… at any point in time (T=D/I)", they suggest that the existence of integrative/cross-cutting ties may serve to decrease tension (also see Gawerc, 2006). In fact, Varshney (2002) provides evidence that cross-cutting ties are effective for reducing violent conflict and fostering peaceful relations.

Thus it is critical to consider, what allows some people-to-people organizations to survive and persist in an unfavorable environment, when the large majority do not. The larger study, from which this paper draws, presents a longitudinal study spanning 15 years, of the major peacebuilding initiatives with an educational encounter-based approach in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, during times of relative peace and times of acute violence (1993-2008).[3] Utilizing longitudinal field research data and surveys, this paper examines how peace initiatives, that work across conflict lines, adapt to hostile and unfavorable environments, the challenges they face, and why are some able to adapt and survive while others are not. I address two aspects of adaptation: the ability to maintain resources and legitimacy with critical constituencies outside the organization, and the ability to continue functioning effectively as an organization. The latter includes the ability to operate in ways that staff and participants treat as legitimate, manage internal conflicts, and maintain staff commitment.

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The findings make clear that for organizational effectiveness, organizational survival, and ultimately, the effectiveness of joint peace initiatives in turbulent and inhospitable environments, it is just as important to focus on the relationships and the processes inside the initiatives, as it is to focus on the external goal of peace. Moreover, that in hostile and fundamentally asymmetric conflict environments, organizational effectiveness and survival also depends heavily on the organizations finding ways to manage the asymmetry and to practice equality.

Organizational and Social Movement Theory

Both the organizational and the social movement studies literatures highlight the range of needs organizations have and the challenges they face as they seek to operate and survive in their respective environments. For starters, the organizational studies literature indicates that organizations are not self-sufficient; they need to acquire resources (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978; Handel, 2003) and legitimacy from the environment in order to survive (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Powell and DiMaggio, 1991). Moreover, the literature suggests that organizations need to be able to operate in ways that staff and participants will treat as legitimate, as well as to manage internal conflicts, and maintain staff commitment, if they are to operate effectively; all of which can be influenced by the organizational environment (Scott and Davis, 2007). Indeed, given the profound impact of the organizational environment on organizations, organizational theorists have developed an extensive literature which argues that organizations *need* to adapt to their environment if they are to remain viable and functioning (e.g. Hanan and Freeman, 1977; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1986; Powell and DiMaggio, 1991).[4]

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Social movement scholars have likewise pointed towards the importance of the environment for understanding social movement organizations (i.e. formal organizations that share the goals of a movement). Indeed, the political process approach, the dominant perspective in social movements, focuses on the political environment—and more specifically the expansion or contraction of political opportunities for change—to explain the emergence and demise of social movements and social movement organizations (Jenkins and Perrow, 1977; McAdam, 1982; Tilly, 1995). More specifically, these studies tend to focus on: the relative openness of the institutionalized political system; the stability of the elite alignments; the presence of influential allies; and the state's capacity and propensity for repression (see McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 1996). While initially focused solely on political factors and conditions that enhance or constrict the chances for survival (as well as success), later political process theorists did not limit themselves to this and extended their view to include the relevant cultural and social factors—and the social and cultural environment in general (e.g. Gamson and Meyer, 1996; Meyer, 2004; Caniglia and Carmin, 2005; Hermann, 2009).[5]

The social movement literature also underscores the fundamental need that social movement organizations have to mobilize resources and legitimacy from the milieu, as well as to pay heed to internal organizational processes that are similarly impacted by the setting. This includes recruiting members, maintaining commitment, and managing conflict, for their survival and effectiveness (McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Gamson, 1990, 1991). In fact, given the range of organizational needs and the challenges involved in meeting them in any environment, Gamson (1990) argues that organizational survival should be viewed as a measure of success for social

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movement organizations regardless of whether or not they are able to achieve their declared goals (also see Minkoff 1993, 1995).

While the emphasis on the impact of environmental changes on social movement organizations has rightly sensitized us to the importance of the environment and the opportunity structure, it does little to explain, in the words of Ganz (2004, 179), "why one actor should make better use of the same opportunity than another." He rightly argues that, "It is often in the differences in how actors use their opportunities that social movement legacies are shaped." For this reason, Ganz (2004), Morris (2004), and Goodwin and Jasper (2004) argue that agency and strategic choice tend to be side-lined in this theory and researchers need to pay more attention to the actions taken by actors, as they adapt to their environment and their particular opportunity structure. Relatedly, Gould (2004) argues that scholars need to go beyond the narrow focus on movement emergence and decline, and start to pay attention to how movements (and movement organizations) *persist* in inhospitable arenas.[6]

As highlighted above, if organizations are to survive and operate effectively as organizations in unfavorable political and social environments, we would expect that they would need to adapt to their surroundings and find a way to maintain resources (McCarthy and Zald, 1977; MacDougall, 1997) and legitimacy with critical constituencies outside the organization (Minkoff, 1993; Marullo and Edwards, 1997). Moreover, we would anticipate that they would need to pay attention to internal processes including operating in ways deemed legitimate by staff and participants, managing internal conflict, and maintaining commitment (Gamson, 1991; Marullo and Edwards, 1997; Reger, 2002).

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While scholars have paid little attention to differences and inequalities, and the ways in which attention to the above may be critical for organizational effectiveness (except see Breines, 1982, 2006; Kurtz, 2002; Piatelli, 2009), this too could be presumed to matter for organizations actually dealing with these challenges. Paying heed to differences and matters of equality seem particularly relevant for organizations that work across conflict lines in settings of protracted conflict, given the often significant power imbalance and the lack of mutual trust (Baskin and Al Qaq, 2004; Gawerc, 2006). In fact, several peace and conflict resolution scholars have deemed asymmetry to be the most challenging aspect of joint peace work in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories (Chaitin, Obeidi, Adwan, and Bar-On, 2004; Kaufman, Salem, and Verhoeven, 2006; Golan and Kamal, 1999; Golan, 2011). Maoz's (2004) findings on Israeli-Palestinian peace initiatives provides support for the importance of paying attention to matters of equality for groups committed to working across disparity in settings of violent conflict. She astutely highlighted the high degree of equality and symmetry that existed in the Israeli-Palestinian initiatives that survived the Second Intifada (compared to those that did not survive).

In line with Ganz (2004), Morris (2004), and Goodwin and Jasper's (2004) argument, that attention needs to be given to agency and the strategic actions taken by movement actors—and Gould's (2004) argument that scholars need to consider how movement organizations *persist* in unfavorable environments—this article highlights the actions taken by peace initiatives that work across conflict lines to continue to operate and survive in an acutely violent and hostile environment.

Building on the above mentioned literature, I contend that organizations need to successfully attend to maintaining resources, maintaining legitimacy, managing internal conflict,

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and maintaining commitment to have a significant chance for survival. Moreover, I argue that for organizations committed to working across difference and inequality in hostile and unfavorable environments, being able to successfully meet these needs *requires* attention to managing the asymmetry/inequalities and efforts to work equally.

The next section provides contextual background for my study by discussing the challenges Israeli-Palestinian people-to-people organizations faced in their ever-changing environment.

People-to-People Organizations in their Environments

In the last fifteen years, people-to-people organizations operating in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories have experienced drastic changes in their environment. Like many peacebuilding organizations, these organizations were to a large degree, a product of the new environment created by the peace process. In addition to the new and profound opportunities for political and social change, Israeli-Palestinian peace initiatives also received, for the first time, an official sanction to operate, providing this undertaking with external legitimacy. Moreover, as a result of the political opportunities that opened up, as a consequence of the peace process, and the new-founded legitimacy for people-to-people initiatives, 25-35 million dollars poured in from the US and Europe to support these types of initiatives during the Oslo period: 1993-2000 (Hai and Herzog, 2005).[7]

As highlighted earlier, with the eruption of the Second Intifada—including the Israeli response—there were radical changes in the environment. While organizational theorists have developed an extensive literature examining how organizations adapt to turbulent environments,

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they have generally defined these environments in terms of market volatility, changes in the institutional context, and more recently, technological changes and globalization (Koberg, 1987; Barnett and Carroll, 1995; Zuniga-Vicente and Vicente-Lorente, 2006). Rarely have they considered radical changes such as popular uprisings, extreme levels of violence, acute ethnic polarization, accompanied by a massive withdrawal of resources from donors (and others in the environment), and the abrupt disappearance of legitimacy for an entire undertaking. Moreover, the organizational studies literature tends to view the environment as *independent* of the organization. Yet, peacebuilding initiatives that operate in hostile environments do need to consider external actors (i.e. authorities and antagonists) who are trying to influence or even destroy the organization, as part of *their* environment.

The social movement literature, on the other hand, has rarely considered peace movement organizations that work *across* an active conflict line—thus theoretically operating within at least two different and polarized environments—with the goal of creating social and cultural change (e.g. changing dominant narratives and beliefs).[8] Indeed, most of the literature on peace movement organizations in the social movement studies literature suggests that these organizations tend to *refrain* from working across conflict lines out of fear of losing legitimacy with one's authorities or civil society (see Cortright and Pagnucco, 1997; Hermann, 2009); which highlights one of the challenges these organizations face. Thus, it should be noted that the challenges faced by peace organizations committed to working across conflict lines during times of acute violence and polarization is of a different magnitude than those faced by most other organizations.[9]

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While many of the challenges these people-to-people initiatives faced were standard organizational needs and challenges (e.g. maintaining legitimacy, maintaining resources, managing conflict, and maintaining staff and participant commitment), because of the tumultuous and hostile environment in which they existed, the challenges were especially acute.

By definition, these people-to-people organizations worked across a basic conflict line. Furthermore, the conflict within which they worked, and also sought to address, became increasingly polarized and marked with high levels of violence, animosity, and mistrust. And yet somehow within this turbulent and hostile environment, the partners on each side needed to maintain legitimacy with their *own* civil society and authorities, as well as with their partners on the *other* side of the conflict line (Kelman, 1993; Gawerc, 2012).

To make matters more challenging, the organizations were dependent on that same hostile environment for a host of resources including funds, permits, facilities, and places to meet. While many of the funding issues that these organizations faced were universal, several were unique to peacebuilding organizations. These included: the rapid drying up of funds after the breakdown of the peace process, the organizations' dependence on international funders, the greater administrative costs that comes with having two directors (i.e., one Israeli and one Palestinian), and their reliance on permits from the Israeli Civil Administration in order to meet (Gidron, Katz, and Hasenfeld, 2002; IPCRI, 2002).

Meanwhile, organizations could not survive without staff and participant commitment, which was a challenge given the lack of societal legitimacy for this work, the challenges involved in working across the conflict lines (both psychologically and logistically), the uncertain resource flow (which had implications for job security and participant compensation),

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and the tensions involved in working in a partnership across an active conflict line (Dajani and Baskin, 2006; Hermann, 2006; Gawerc, 2012).

If this were not enough, these organizations experienced conflict over resources and distribution, control and autonomy, and goals and strategies. While these types of conflicts are standard organizational conflicts, these conflicts were even more numerous and flammable, given the particularities of people-to-people initiatives and the turbulent environment (Maoz, 2000; Reisman-Levy, 2008).

Asymmetry as a Complicating Factor

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges in these partnerships, however, was the asymmetry that permeated the environment, and inevitably, the organizations. The staff and participants lived in drastically different realities, which greatly fostered who they were, how they related to the conflict, and even, how they understood peace, and consequently, peacebuilding work. There were also significant differences in the ability of each side to acquire and maintain legitimacy with their respective civil societies and governing authorities. Most notably, while the Israelis who were engaged in this work experienced some societal disapproval, for Palestinians, such engagement could have a serious impact on their personal and professional status in Palestinian society, as well as potentially on their physical security (Endresen, 2001).

While there were differing perspectives in the Palestinian society, the mainstream belief was that relations between Palestinians and Israelis should not be “normalized” until the negotiations were completed and Palestinians had a state of their own; otherwise, it was normalizing the Israeli military occupation (Mi’Ari, 1999; Gawerc, 2000). While people-to-

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people activists tended not to see this work as normalization—and rather understood it as a component of the nonviolent struggle to end the occupation—it was construed as such by the Palestinian mainstream. And even before the environment took a major turn for the worse with the Israeli military response to the Second Intifada, some Palestinian peacebuilders had already started to feel ostracized from their community and faced threats due to their involvement in joint Palestinian-Israeli initiatives.

Beyond the inevitable psychological impact of this asymmetry, it also had practical implications. As many Palestinians noted, more of their time needed to be focused on trying to establish legitimacy in their own society as well as trying to recruit and maintain participant and staff commitment by "proving" that this work was not normalization. Indeed, one Palestinian peacebuilder, Mohammad Joudeh[10] argued, "All of the society is against this kind of [joint] meeting so it took 90% of our efforts, how to convince the people and how to prove that until now I am [still] Palestinian, I am a patriot, and I am not a spy [for Israel]. And 10% is to be a partner with the Israeli... The Israeli partner is 100% [focused on] how to build this project because... [in] his society, there is no one who wants to shoot him because of his [participation]."

Further complicating the situation, Israelis had significantly more state and societal resources to draw on than Palestinians given that they came from an established state. These resources included more professional and training opportunities, and potential institutional support. Consequently, this led some scholars and activists to argue that there was a "capacity gap" between the two groups that impacted many of the partnerships (Nasser-Najjab, 2004).

In addition to the above, given that the main donor offices tended to be in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem—and Palestinians had limited freedom of movement—Israelis tended to have greater

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access to the international funders. Moreover, because most funders would only allow for one "principal partner," when Palestinian and Israeli organizations partnered up and applied for a grant, they needed to decide, which organization this would be (i.e. who would be in charge). For various reasons including that Israeli organizations were more likely to be registered as NGO's (in contrast to Palestinian organizations for whom registering was significantly more complicated due to the taboo against normalization) the Israeli partners were more likely to be trusted by the predominantly Western donors (Hijazi, interview). Consequently, the Israeli partners were more likely to serve as the "principal partner" to the funders; thus receiving all the funds from the donor, being the main communication link, and ultimately being responsible for the project (Salameh and Zak, 2006).

If this was not problematic enough, given the asymmetrical situation on the ground, the two sides had very different needs, goals, and expectations for these initiatives. Indeed, as Naser-Najjab (2004, 128) pointed out, "While Palestinians considered dialogue as one form of their struggle against the Israeli occupation and its practices (which they saw continuing around them), Israelis came to meet Palestinians for cooperative purposes and to establish relations in an era of peace."

While neither side chose or perhaps even wanted this imbalance, it was a reality on the ground, and inevitably impacted the organizational partnerships. Perhaps not surprising given the asymmetry in resources, access, societal legitimacy, and organizational experience and capacity, there was a tendency during the Oslo period for Israelis to lead and even dominate in many people-to-people initiatives (Maoz, 2004; Naser-Najjab, 2004; Salem and Nasrallah, 2007). As

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several evaluation reports have noted, many Palestinians felt that they were just "added on" to initiatives and not equal partners (IPCRI, 2002; Baskin and Al Qaq, 2004).

The organizations that I investigated—those that operated for at least four years during the eleven year period (1997-2008)—were already some of the more equal organizations compared to the larger category of people-to-people initiatives that did not survive the Second Intifada (see Maoz, 2004).[11] Nonetheless, as Golan (2011) highlights, even for these organizations that took steps towards equality that went *significantly* beyond the asymmetric environment in which they were located, symmetry was still limited by external conditions (see also Gawerc, 2012).[12]

Methodology and Groups Studied

This study involved the collection and analysis of longitudinal field research data and surveys of peacebuilding initiatives in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories in order to investigate how organizations adapt to a radically changing environment and why some are able to adapt and survive while others are not. The field work and interviews cover a fifteen-year period that has experienced radically different contexts: a time of relative calm (the Oslo period, 1993-2000); a time of acute violence (during the Second Intifada, 2000-2005); and a more ambiguous yet still hostile and turbulent period following the acute violence of the Second Intifada (2005-2008).[13]

The twelve cases I examined include the major Israeli-Palestinian people-to-people initiatives that have involved educational encounters for at least four years, during the eleven year period, 1997-2008. Their activities included working with students in the classroom,

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working with youth in informal educational arenas, working with teachers, and the writing of educational curricula and historical narratives. It should be noted that this grouping does not include organizations that defined their agenda—during the Oslo period or at founding—as being advocacy, solidarity, or humanitarian *rather than* education, unless they simultaneously had a well-established educational program. My interest in the latter is due to the recognition that these educational initiatives are seen in the conflict resolution and peace studies literature as an integral part of peacebuilding (which should accompany the peacemaking process). While a strong argument could be made that advocacy, solidarity, and humanitarian action should also be understood as an integral component of peacebuilding (Schirch, 2005; Gawerc, 2012), there is no consensus on the former (see Gawerc, 2006; Kahanoff and Neumann, 2007).

Moreover, Hassassian (2002) suggested that it was these organizations concerned with education—most notably, changing attitudes, beliefs, and narratives—that were the *most likely* to fail and cease to exist after the breakdown of the Oslo Accords. Lofland (1993, p. 288) would likely not be surprised as he argued that organizations with a consensus orientation (rather than a conflict orientation)—which describes most educationally oriented peacebuilding initiatives—are likely "to slump as quickly as they soared" when the conditions that fostered them change.[14]

Further decreasing their chances of survival, these organizations all involve working *across* a protracted conflict line. While the majority of the organizations are joint Israeli-Palestinian organizations, this category also includes Israeli and Palestinian organizations that work together, and international organizations with local bases in the region.[15]

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Table 1: Organizations Engaged in Israeli-Palestinian Peacebuilding in Israel/Palestine.

Joint organizations[16]	***Israeli organizations***	***Palestinian organizations***	***International organizations with a local base***
Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information	School for Peace	Hewar Center for Peace & Development	Seeds of Peace
Middle East Children's Association	Sulha Peace Project	Center for Conflict Resolution & Reconciliation	Crossing Borders
Windows-Channels for Communication			
Peace Research Institute of the Middle East			
Parents Circle-Families Forum			
Combatants for Peace			

I collected extensive data on two of the leading initiatives both prior to and during the Second Intifada utilizing a semi-structured interview guide, organizational questionnaires, student questionnaires, and formal and informal observation. These initiatives include the Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information's Peace Education Program and the School for Peace at Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam. Furthermore, I engaged in participant observation with two additional initiatives during the Second Intifada—the Peace Research Institute in the Middle East's History Textbook Project and the Seeds of Peace Jerusalem Center for Coexistence.

The fieldwork in the post-Second Intifada period, included semi-structured interviews with the current Israeli and Palestinian directors and other staff of the various initiatives, as well as with previous directors (who left for varying reasons), organizational questionnaires, and formal and informal observation. Beyond the two for which I already had extensive data, and the

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two for which I had partial data, I had identified another eight initiatives, which met my criteria. These included Middle East Children's Association, Windows-Channels for Communication, Crossing Borders, Hewar Center for Peace and Development, Center for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation, Sulha Peace Project, and the educational initiatives of the Parents Circle-Families Forum, and Combatants for Peace. For these initiatives, which I broadened my study to include, I made every effort to reconstruct the past, while also collecting information on their status after the Second Intifada.

The remainder of the paper will discuss the ways in which the organizations adapted to the radically changing environment. As will be evident in this data section—and will be discussed further in the conclusion—one of the key aspects was how the organizations managed the asymmetry, which was critical for organizational effectiveness, while also meeting their need for resources and legitimacy from critical constituencies outside the organization.

Adaptation and Survival

Given the tremendous challenges these organizations faced and the hostility of the environment during and after the Second Intifada, surviving as an organization went against all odds. From an organizational standpoint, as argued earlier, their survival itself is a mark of success. This next section will look more closely at how the organizations managed the legitimacy issues, maintained a resource flow, and managed internal conflict in a hostile and radically fluctuating environment.[17]

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Managing Legitimacy

According to Scott (1995), an organization becomes construed as legitimate through the sanction and approval of particular actors in the environment. His 3-pronged framework includes: regulative legitimacy from actors who have a certain degree of sovereignty over organizations; normative legitimacy which flows from actors that define what is morally acceptable; and cognitive legitimacy resulting from the prevalence of similar organizational types.

In the case of people-to-people organizations, this translates into the necessity of achieving and maintaining legitimacy with the authorities (regulative legitimacy) as well as with the civil societies and powerful actors within these societies (normative legitimacy). Moreover, it also indicates that they are influenced by the prevalence of similar organizations (cognitive legitimacy). In addition to the above, these organizations had the fundamental challenge of needing to maintain legitimacy with one's partners on the other side of the conflict line.

All of this, of course, needed to be done in a highly tumultuous environment. These challenges can not be overstated especially during periods of acute conflict. During these periods, as Coser (1956) has indicated, the lines tend to be drawn more tightly and there is less tolerance for going outside the group perspective. Kelman (1993, p. 241) has suggested that by cutting across this basic conflict line, these partnerships constitute "an uneasy coalition."

Managing Legitimacy with the Civil Societies and Authorities

While maintaining legitimacy with the civil societies and authorities were a challenge for both sides (and at times this challenge led to a delicate balancing act), it was without a doubt,

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significantly more challenging for Palestinians. As noted earlier, this type of initiative was simply not acceptable in the widely accepted Palestinian cultural framework—especially during and after the Second Intifada.

Organizations needed to carefully consider legitimacy both during the Oslo years, as well as after the eruption of the Second Intifada.

Actions taken during Oslo. Perhaps to be expected, many of the organizations considered legitimacy prior to forming (which for the majority, was during the Oslo period). For some of the joint initiatives, this was clear in the symmetrical structure that they built (i.e. being co-led by both an Israeli and a Palestinian).

The serious consideration given to managing legitimacy was also apparent in the actions many of the organizations took to try and be "mainstream," or at least reach the mainstreams of the two sides. For example, several engaged both the Israeli and Palestinian Ministries of Education, which they believed would help provide them with broader legitimacy, as well as with a broader audience.

In addition to the above, the actors in the initiatives also framed the need for people-to-people in culturally acceptable ways. On the Israeli side, these initiatives—which were mostly founded during the Oslo years—were framed (and justified) on the basis that there needed to be efforts to educate the two sides towards peace if the two sides were going to engage in a peace process. On the Palestinian side, dialogue with Israelis was carefully framed as continuing the Palestine Liberation Organization's political decision to engage in dialogue with Israelis as a means to end the occupation. While these constructs may have been strongly felt, on both sides,

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these were also attempts to frame the innovation in ways consistent with the widely accepted cultural framework in Israel and Palestine, respectively.

Actions taken during the Second Intifada. During the Second Intifada—as the environment became significantly more hostile—many of the organizations sought to keep a low profile. Rather than fight the environment, these organizations carefully recruited from it. For instance, on the Palestinian side, many of the Palestinian peacebuilders resorted to recruiting participants through their alumni and word of mouth, rather than by publicly advertising it. While Israelis did not experience the same level of threats, several on the Israeli side, likewise sought to keep a lower profile.

In addition, after the eruption of the Second Intifada, many of the organizations began to focus on uni-national work and their activities inside the community (whether in Palestine and/or Israel). For the majority, while this was something of utmost importance in this environment, it was also a way of managing the normalization taboo on the Palestinian side.

Meanwhile—and to the chagrin of many of the Palestinian participants—some of the organizations sought to maintain legitimacy on the Israeli side by staying focused on educational matters and not participating in protest activities. The challenge was while the Israeli organizations could maintain legitimacy on the Israeli side if they were not seen as political, the situation was the *complete* opposite on the Palestinian side. If the message focused loud and clear on resisting the occupation and influencing Israelis to protest and end the occupation, the effort became significantly more legitimate for many in the Palestinian society.

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While it was inevitably a delicate balancing act—and there were no easy solutions—some of the organizations started to adopt more political content or engage in activism, during and after the Second Intifada, as a way of managing the legitimacy issues on the Palestinian side. Several other organizations began conducting humanitarian projects in the Palestinian territories. In the words of one Jewish Israeli interviewee, humanitarian activities were a way of showing Palestinians "that we really care [and we want to improve the situation on the ground]."

Finally, many organizations found that in order to give legitimacy a chance on the Palestinian street, it also became increasingly important to pay attention to the asymmetry and be able to indicate that the organization practiced equally. Indeed, as Maoz (2004) noted, working equally was a way of challenging the common criticism faced by Palestinian peacebuilders in Palestinian society—namely that their organizations "normalized" the situation of occupation by reinforcing and reflecting the asymmetric relationship.

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Managing Legitimacy with the Partner

An inherent problem for these organizations was that not only did they need to maintain legitimacy with their civil societies, but like other organizations, they needed to operate in ways that would be deemed legitimate by staff and participants. For these organizations that engaged in partnerships across the conflict lines, they also needed to maintain legitimacy with their partners. This was no easy feat as the environment hardened, trust between the two societies shattered, and many partnerships (in the larger people-to-people field) dissolved.

Actions taken. The key elements to maintaining legitimacy with one's partners were trust and commitment to the partnership, recognition of the need to help each side maintain legitimacy with their public, recognition of the asymmetry and willingness to work towards equality, and for some, shared political commitment.

Interestingly, while Palestinians needed to pay more attention to maintaining legitimacy with their public after the Second Intifada—a result of the strengthening of the normalization taboo—Israelis found themselves needing to pay more attention to maintaining legitimacy with their Palestinian partners.

Most notably, Israelis found that as the gap between the two communities grew, ironically, they needed to move closer to their Palestinian partner to help them maintain legitimacy with their public (given the asymmetrical challenge) and indicate a shared political commitment. One basic indication of this was that many, if not all of the organizations, began to discard terms such as "coexistence" and use terms that were more acceptable to Palestinians such as "dialogue" and "youth leadership."

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Even more consequential in the eyes of Palestinian peacebuilders was that as the environment became more hostile to people-to-people (especially in the Palestinian territories), more and more Israeli peacebuilders were willing to engage in peace activism; something that many Palestinian peacebuilders saw as fundamental. Rutie Atsmon from Windows-Channels for Communication was one of many Jewish Israeli peacebuilders who came to recognize that engaging in activism was critical for building and maintaining legitimacy with one's Palestinian partners. In her own words: "Many [Palestinian] organizations would be more careful in trusting Israelis, and one of the ways to gain the trust is if you are active also, in more direct action because education [itself] is a long process… We assume that if we work with many kids and teachers it will have an impact, but it's not going to change the situation tomorrow or make it easier for the Palestinians to live better tomorrow. So I think this was one of the things that helped us… We don't do humanitarian aid or participate in different direct actions because we want to build trust—we do it because we believe in action. But it definitely helps."

Similarly, after the eruption of the Second Intifada, it became increasingly clear to Israelis that if they wanted to maintain legitimacy in the eyes of their Palestinian partners that they needed to be mindful of the power asymmetry. Moreover, they needed to be willing to work as equally as possible.

As the above section indicates, the challenges of maintaining legitimacy and the actions required—both with critical constituents outside the organizations as well as with partners inside the organizations—was bound up with the radically changing environments. And ironically, as Marullo and Edwards (1997, p. 90) argue, "The constricting opportunities facing declining movements make legitimacy both harder to come by and more crucial to survival."

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Maintaining and Managing Resources

In addition to managing legitimacy, organizations need to draw on an array of resources from their environment, in order to survive (McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). Moreover, as Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) indicate, organizations also need to find ways to manage their dependencies on other entities for resources.

For people-to-people organizations, the critical resources took the form of funding, legal permission to operate, permits from the Israeli Civil Administration for Palestinians to enter Israel or to go abroad, spaces to meet, staff for their labor force, participants to recruit, and last but certainly not least, partners themselves. While all of the above were necessary, this section will focus predominantly on the overwhelming challenge of obtaining and maintaining funding, which for all these organizations came from abroad—whether in the form of larger governmental grants, foundations, or private grants.

Obtaining and Maintaining Funding

Most of the organizations viewed operational funds as fundamental in allowing them to develop, and at the same time, saw the maintenance of funds as part of the fight for their survival. While the challenges were tremendous, many of the funding issues these organizations faced were not all that different from the ones facing other non-profit organizations. For instance, the need of funders for accountability, the emphasis on funding something new even when existing programs were working well, the funders belief that they were providing seed money that the organization would eventually replace with other sources to keep programs running, and

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the desire of funders to fund specific projects rather than operating and administrative costs, are universals built into the funding system.

Nonetheless, because of the special circumstances—the asymmetry, the reality of two heads for most of the initiatives (and thus greater administrative costs), the tumultuous environment which meant that projects could not always be implemented as proposed, and the dramatic drying up of funds after the breakdown of the peace process—the challenges, as well as the consequences, were especially acute for these joint Israeli-Palestinian partnerships.

Actions taken. There were numerous actions that organizations took to try to maintain funding. For starters, given that the organizations were dependent on donors for financial resources, many of the organizations felt a need to align themselves with the donors' agendas. While this raised multiple issues for the organizations, one of the remarkable aspects was the creativity of many of the organizations as they sought to maintain their organizational commitments, while having it align with the donors' mandate. For example, the School for Peace was able to get considerably more funding to do dialogue work between Israelis and Palestinians, than between Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel, which was their *raison d'etre*. While they chose to follow the money, it was important to them to maintain a place for Palestinian Israelis. After some experimentation, they opted to include Palestinian Israelis in most of their projects as Israelis.

While some organizations suggested that the challenge was being able to be creative within the donors' agenda, other organizations argued that at times it was critical for them to draw boundaries with the funders; and not give in to these external pressures. Most notably,

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several of the Palestinians emphasized not accepting conditions. For instance, Noah Salameh argued, “Sometimes I don’t agree to take funding... if there are a lot of conditions, because there are some people who are put in roles and they do not have any clue about the situation… [And they say:] ‘We want the funds to go in this direction.’ No! I’m not doing this!... I don’t want to take your model and [approach]... I know my people, my culture, my situation, and I have to create and put a model suiting my situation… And sometimes you have to struggle with [this]. And even sometimes, you say, okay I don’t want [your funding].” As the above indicates, not only could this decision be seen as critical for maintaining legitimacy with one’s society, but just as importantly, it could be seen as critical for maintaining integrity within the project.

Several organizations wanted to cover activities that their larger funders did not want to finance. This led several of the organizations to find additional donors or have individual donors fund this activity. For example, Combatants for Peace found that some funders only wanted to subsidize their dialogue work and not their nonviolent protest activity. As a result, at one point in their fundraising, they made the distinction between their dialogue activities, and their direct action and civil disobedience activities. While they noted that donations could be made to either activity, they specifically requested donors to consider funding their protest and solidarity actions noting that it was significantly harder to get money for activities that take a step beyond dialogue and challenge the occupation and the status quo.

Meanwhile, when survival was on the line, organizations resorted to cutting costs, as would be expected. Some conducted fewer encounters, while others found cheaper (and perhaps less desirable) facilities for encounters, or reduced the number of participants. Several of the organizational directors also bore the costs themselves, taking a cut in their salary. Others

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resorted to laying off staff, and a couple of the organizations even chose to close centers. The younger and more grassroots organizations often survived by maintaining themselves as a volunteer-based organization, with few, if any, paid staff.

Finally, over time, several coalitions were created that brought the peace NGO's together to advocate for new funding. One, the Alliance for Middle East Peace (ALLMEP) was started in 2003 by a lawyer living in Washington D.C. He started the alliance as a pro bono project and sought to help the peacebuilding initiatives get more resources from the US government. The second, the Palestinian-Israeli Peace NGO Forum, was the brainstorm of several Israeli and Palestinian peacebuilders, and initially funded by the European Union. Beyond serving to build bridges between the organizations allowing for communication and strategizing, one of their main goals had been to try and obtain more financial support for these types of organizations. These coalitions have succeeded in advocating for more funds. Indeed, ALLMEP was able to get the House and Senate to authorize 9 million dollars for reconciliation NGO's. The Peace NGO Forum likewise succeeded in receiving some additional funding—1 million euros for 2009. As Rutie Atsmon exclaimed, "This is coalition work to convince donors!"

Managing the money

It should also be noted that for these organizations, the challenges did not end with maintaining a budget—it also involved managing the budget. As mentioned earlier, for a variety of reasons, the Israelis often served as the principal partner to the funders. Consequently, the money was most often sent to the Israelis, and the Palestinians were then in a situation of needing to account to their Israeli partner for all their expenses. This was an issue of high

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sensitivity for many of the Palestinians. Some went as far as to suggest that the Israelis were in control of the initiatives since they controlled the budgets. Indeed, in the words of Mohammad Joudeh, “They come with the money, they come with the experience, they come with the team… [They] have everything; this is power… [It feels] like occupation, [just] in a different way.”

While several of the Israelis recognized the sensitivity of this situation for Palestinians, several expressed feelings that they were in a complicated situation since they were the ones who would be held responsible by the donors. As the primary partners, the Israelis were often the ones who needed to provide full transparency and to indicate that they were following the project expenses diligently. This tension was only made more difficult for both sides by the fact that on the Palestinian side, transparency was not always possible in the form of receipts, and costs could change dramatically due to the rapidly changing situation on the ground. This combined with the perception that the donors did not understand the difficulties within which they were working, only increased the tension felt by both sides.

Perhaps not surprisingly, given the above, these organizations needed to give considerable thought to how they could manage the budget in a way that would build trust and equality (or at minimum, “do no harm,” to employ the words of Anderson, 1999).

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Actions taken with regards to building trust and equality. The following were some of the main actions taken by the organizational partnerships to build this trust and equality: requiring two signatures (one Israeli and one Palestinian) for any use of money; opening the bank account in Palestine (with the intention of reducing the asymmetry); and distributing the resources (between the partners as well as the two sides) equally.

While this adaptation was critical for the above mentioned reasons, these were not easy changes to make. As Nava Sonnenschein noted, "In funding, there is a very big difference between what the Israeli and Palestinian organizations get. And also [their] ability to raise funds is different. So I believe that you have to build it step by step, to examine all the time are you behaving like the oppressor or do you really try to work as equally as possible?"

It should be noted that not only did it require awareness and constant attention by the organizations to make sure they were not reflecting and reproducing the asymmetry in their partnership, it required doing this in the face of external policies of funders—which however unintentional—served to maintain and reinforce the distribution of power on the ground. While having one primary partner might be a way of ensuring accountability, it served to reinforce the relationship of asymmetry, which these initiatives were struggling to overcome.

Fascinatingly, while only a few organizations practiced equality of funding and control during the Oslo period, during the Second Intifada period, this practice began to evolve into a norm. And the more the environment fostered mistrust and inequality, the more important these practices became for organizational effectiveness (most notably, managing conflict).

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Managing Conflict

The literature on organizations is clear that the management of conflict is critical to the functioning of an organization (Kolb and Putnam, 1992; Reger 2002). Indeed, it recognizes that if conflict is not managed, it could lead to: increased job stress and burnout; reduced communication between individuals and groups; a climate of mistrust and suspicion; damaged relationships; reduced job performance; and decreased organizational commitment and loyalty (Rahim, 2001).

In these peacebuilding organizations, conflicts were seen as a given. Beyond the regular organizational challenge of managing projects with two leaders, these organizations had the persistent challenge of Israelis and Palestinians working alongside one another, in an intractable conflict within a tumultuous environment. In the words of Nir Oren, a Jewish Israeli, "It's not easy to run an organization with two heads—any organization! [And] it's not easy because it's Israeli-Palestinian! Basically I think that you can find within the organization a concentrated conflict of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which means everything is within… You know lack of trust, suspiciousness, disapproval, and debates—it can be similar to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

One of the major issues had to do with the asymmetry of power between the two sides. As noted earlier, many of the Palestinian interviewees' believed that equality was limited inside some of the organizations and that the Israelis had a tendency to dominate. Other organizational conflicts revolved around the tendency for Palestinians to be more politically driven, with a clear focus on ending the occupation, while Jewish Israelis tended to prefer learning about the other as a catalyst for building peace and better relations between the two groups. While this divide did

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not always fall along national lines (Kelman, 1993; Maoz, 2000), it often did, and constituted a pattern that has long been recognized in the field (Dajani and Baskin, 2006; Golan, 2011).

As also clear from the above, many of the conflicts were triggered by the fact that the two sides were in very different circumstances, with differing goals and ideas. Speaking to this, Mazen Faraj argued, "Peace for me—it's my freedom! Peace for the Israelis, it's security… So we have a different meaning for peace too and this is also [a source of] conflict. But they [the Israelis in my organization] respect that there is no security for the Israelis without my freedom. And [likewise] they have said that there is no freedom for the Palestinians without security [for the Israelis]… There are sometimes many problems between the staff inside the organization. It is not easy… we are different societies…, [and we often have very] different opinions!"

Managing Conflicts: Actions Taken

There were various actions taken to manage the conflicts including: discussions and talking it through; engaging mediation; making compromises; framing and treating issues as joint problems; and setting things aside when agreement could not be found.

Perhaps not surprisingly, discussions and talking it through were the main actions taken by the organizations to manage conflict. Most of the organizations brought people together whether in a regularly scheduled meeting or sporadically to talk through the conflicts and discuss whatever issues were coming up.

Other organizations engaged in mediation processes to resolve conflicts. Several of the heads of organizations were active in mediator roles between Israeli and Palestinian staff, as well as between the participants. And in the months leading up to the eruption of the Second Intifada,

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one organization, the Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information, designed a program on mediation and used this program to help manage the conflicts between the staff. They continued to use their mediation program throughout the acute days of the Second Intifada.

Given that people-to-people organizations involve conflicting groups, with different goals and agendas, compromises were also a critical tool for dealing with conflict. For instance, in the Sulha Peace Project, like many of the organizations, the Palestinian participants wanted the focus to be on issues of justice, whereas the Jewish Israeli participants wanted the focus to be on the cultural and educational level. Gabriel Meyer-Halevy, the Israeli Co-Founder stated, "Basically the Jews give way to some of the Palestinians issues of justice and the Palestinians have to let go a little bit of *immediately* solving stuff [connected to the occupation]. [For example,] the Palestinians in the West Bank have been saying over and over 'let's demonstrate against the wall.' [Yet] they are slowly realizing that you can't just focus on demonstrating against the wall—you have to see why people support the wall on the Israeli side, and how you are going to change their views… And the Israelis are realizing, 'Well, we can't say we just want to play our music [all together] when this Palestinian participant was stuck in a checkpoint for three hours, and his brother was just killed by a soldier. [So both sides are compromising]."

While both sides needed to compromise for the organization or organizational partnership to function effectively, individuals and organizations knew when they were not willing to compromise. For Noah Salameh, this took the form of insisting on the principles of equality inside any partnership. Noah explained, "All my partners know that I'm not [an] easy person, especially when it comes to the principle of how to be equal. I don't want another copy of

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occupation. And I feel that… if the Israeli takes the decision… the occupation is going on, even in the peace work."

Another common approach to managing conflict was to try to recognize problems as joint problems rather than as a zero-sum/win-lose game. While most of the organizations were able to do this, it was not far-fetched for there to be internal fighting, and at times, for it to be seen as one side winning and one side losing. Shimon Malka, who worked with Crossing Borders, believed that there was a direct connection though, between being able to frame an issue as a joint problem and the partners having a good relationship based on respect and openness. He noted, "If there is an open discussion that is respectful between the partners they can say [to each other], 'Well, I have to be seen as strong in this project for my participants… This is the only way that they will… start to touch this peace business.' And if it's clear that this is our *joint* mission—ours as a Palestinian, as a Jordanian, and as an Israeli—we will find a way. But if it is being [articulated] as a decision of one or as a take-over [of the project] that you're trying to do [against] me, immediately I will be against it and I will block you. If it's a zero-sum game—no way I will let you win! But if you will word it as *our* problem and you will say that in order to reach the [participants] in Palestine, we need to do 1, 2, and 3, than as an Israeli, it's also *my* goal to reach the Palestinians, so I will do whatever is needed, to reach them."

Notwithstanding the above, many organizations found that some of the conflicts could not be resolved since the underlying issues—Israel and Palestine for starters—were unresolved. Several organizations suggested that the challenge was learning how to live with the conflict, managing it if they could, and setting it aside if they couldn't agree. For instance, when a conflict would arise between the participants in the Peace Research Institute of the Middle East, the two

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heads would first seek to discuss the issues in the group, but if it was not working, they would change the group dynamic by going from the bi-national setting to the uni-national setting.

Strengthening Integrative Ties: Actions Taken

It is one thing to focus on the disagreements, which might encourage an organization or partnership to collapse—or even the concrete actions taken to manage manifest conflicts—but as Gamson and Modigliani (1963) suggest, while essential, this is not enough. There can be very severe conflicts, which involve the basic goals of organizations (or other entities) and yet these entities do not break down while other entities with comparable disagreements do. Hence, as Gamson and Modigliani (1963, p. 38) noted, "We must ask not only about forces of disintegration (disagreements or conflicts) but about integrative bonds… A disagreement of given severity is less dangerous for a relationship in which there are strong integrative ties… than it is for one in which there are weak ties."

Thus, perhaps not surprisingly, in addition to the concrete actions taken to manage the overt conflicts, there were also actions taken by the peacebuilders to build and strengthen the integrative ties between the two sides so they would be able to withstand additional disagreements. These actions included: building trust, confidence, and a sense of a shared mission in the partnership; respecting ones partners' sensitivities, abilities, and culture; meeting expectations; and efforts to work and manage resources as equally as possible.

Speaking to the importance of the above, Carola Becker, a European who had been involved with several initiatives over the last decade, suggested that trust and respect were two of the key components that made partnerships successful. She defined respect as, "Knowing that the

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other ones are trying to change the situation and are really trying to do something....” She defined trust as the belief that they will continue doing that. She argued, “I think this is the main thing. If you have doubts that the other side is really doing the best they can to change the reality [i.e. to end the occupation and the conflict], you might just end the partnership.”

Meeting expectations—especially after a violent attack or a significant injustice—was also a key component of building this trust and strengthening the cross-conflict relationships. At times, this involved a willingness to take stances on hard political issues such as state violence and suicide bombings. Hanna Siniora from the Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information believed this willingness to take stands was critical. Speaking about his partner Gershon Baskin, and himself, Hanna noted, “We have similar positions—even on suicide bombings. Myself, as a Palestinian, do not condone them. I called them immoral and I participated with Palestinians in popularizing this stand by putting an advertisement in Arabic in the local press and signing those advertisements… We expect also from our [Israeli] colleagues here to have a similar position on the violence of the [Israeli] state and the settlers.”

Last but certainly not least, a conscientious effort to work and manage resources as equally as possible was critical for maintaining a strong relationship that was able to withstand some degree of conflict—especially from a Palestinian perspective. In these organizations and partnerships, power relations were often scrutinized as being under a magnifying glass. Reflecting on one joint project, Noah Salameh from the Center for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation suggested that the history of Israeli dominance in many people-to-people initiatives combined with his feeling that his organization was being seen in a patronizing manner by his Israeli partner’s facilitators, “put me in a challenging position for the whole

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project and I became very strict in measuring things, especially during the first months until we [my Israeli colleague and I] built confidence between us as coordinators" (Salameh and Zak, 2006, p. 6).

Anat Reisman Levy, who worked with several of these initiatives, contextualized the importance of being attuned to the power relations. She argued, "When [participants and staff] start examining power relations [in the Israeli-Palestinian context]… [they] don't stop at the Israeli-Palestinian conflict [at the macro level]… If the organization does not reflect the same values and if the team does not reflect the same values [that you are teaching and encouraging, e.g. peace and equality] you cannot move on. [There will be], conflicts within the team, [and] conflicts with the organization… Power relations [are] not some sort of external envelope—all these components are to be examined. So the staff is being examined, the facilitators, and the organization. And if the organization is not symmetric, if the power relations in the organization are not symmetric according to what it says, then there's a lack of trust, towards the organization, towards the staff, and towards the team…"

As several interviewees noted, the conflicts in these initiatives were often reflections of the disagreements in the macrocosm. And the more polarized and hostile the environment became, the more important it became for the organizations to pay attention to the quality of the cross-conflict relationships as well as the tools at their disposal for dealing with and managing the conflicts.

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Conclusion

Addressing Ganz (2004), Morris (2004), and Goodwin and Jasper's (2004) call for more attention to be given to agency and the strategic actions taken by movement actors—and Gould's (2004) recommendation that attention be given to what allows some movement organizations to *persist* in an inhospitable environment—this article has highlighted the organizational needs and actions taken by peace initiatives that cross conflict lines to continue to operate and survive in a hostile and unfavorable environment. It is surprising that some of these organizations even survived, considering the odds. In addition to operating in a polarized environment filled with high levels of violence and mistrust, legitimacy and resources were often withdrawn by donors and others in the environment. In addition the initiatives needed to contend with external actors in both societies who would destroy the initiatives if they could.

As the literature has predicted, in order to survive and operate effectively, these organizations needed to find ways to maintain resources and legitimacy from the environment, while also operating in ways deemed legitimate by staff and participants, while managing conflict, and maintaining the commitment of staff and participants. Interestingly though, my research indicates that the ability of these organizations to meet the above mentioned needs, rested on giving critical attention to the quality of the cross-conflict relationships and the organizational processes, and above all, to matters of equality inside the organizations/partnerships.

As is the reality in numerous movement organizations which work across difference (see Kurtz, 2002; Breines, 2006; Piatelli, 2009), inequalities permeated the environment, and inevitably, the organizations (Maoz, 2004; Nasser-Najjab, 2004; Golan, 2011). To survive in the

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hostile and polarized environment following the breakdown of the peace process and the eruption of violence, it became critical to pay serious attention to managing the asymmetry, working equally, and ensuring that the needs and expectations of *both* sides were being met.

Indeed, a commitment to working as equally as possible, combined with an awareness of the reality, the needs, and the expectations of one's partner, was critical for building and maintaining trust and respect in the partnership; and for each side being able to preserve legitimacy with the other side (both within *and* outside the organization). Moreover, it was essential for having the stamina to withstand greater disagreements and to be able to manage the conflicts in the organization and partnership. Finally, it was fundamental in maintaining staff and participant commitment and motivation (see Gawerc, 2012).

Fascinatingly, building on the above mentioned authors, my research shows that in order to operate effectively as an organization—and to increase the chance for survival—in a malevolent environment, organizations that work across difference (at least in conflict settings) need to be mindful of the differences and power asymmetries between the groups involved, and pay heed to matters of equality.

The question that remains is whether these findings will be applicable for *all* organizations that work across difference and inequality in unfavorable environments or if these findings are mostly relevant for organizations operating in situations of protracted conflict. While future research will need to indicate the relevance for movements in general, there are reasons to believe that these findings will have relevance for other movements—including both transnational movements that work across vast inequalities (including the Movement for Democratic Globalization which has activists participating from both developed and developing

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countries), as well as national movements that work across race, gender, and/or class lines. After all, for organizations within these movements that work across divides, it is quite likely that their ability to maintain the commitment and motivation of participants from across the divide/s, manage conflicts, and operate in ways deemed legitimate, will rest to some degree on attention to difference (including the varying perspectives, needs, and goals) and a sensitivity to the inequalities.

The findings, however, are clear for joint peace initiatives in areas of protracted conflict. Asymmetries manifest themselves in peace initiatives, as they tend to do in other organizations, and if joint peace initiatives want to weather a hostile, polarized, and unfavorable environment, they will need to manage the power asymmetries and pay attention to issues of equality.

While it has been an immensely challenging process, these organizations have actually managed to survive. This involved finding ways to maintain and manage resources, maintain legitimacy with critical constituencies outside the organization, manage conflict, and maintain staff and participation commitment. In such a hostile and turbulent environment, marked with profound asymmetries, this is quite a feat.

As previously mentioned in the introduction, the survival of joint peace initiatives has social, cultural, and political import. In addition to being carriers of cultural messages (Edwards and Marullo, 1994) that indicate that peace is possible, and that there is a partner on the other side with whom to talk (Gawerc, 2006), these surviving peace organizations also allow for maintaining an infrastructure, networks, and a collective identity that are deemed as critical for future activism and mobilization in a more favorable environment (Morris, 1984; Edwards and Marullo, 1995).

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Furthermore, the attention these partnerships began paying to the relationships, the organizational processes, and matters of equality—suggests that these surviving initiatives which managed to survive the Second Intifada do not only have experience, but they also reflect quality. The quality of these initiatives is especially important for a field struggling for legitimacy in two conflicting societies and operating in the context of grave asymmetry. The quality of these organizations provides the hope and possibility that when the environment is more favorable, these partnerships could be the basis for an eventual infrastructure at the civil society level supporting a just peace.

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[1] Some of the material in this article draws from my recent book, Prefiguring Peace: Israeli-Palestinian Peacebuilding Partnerships (2012). This material has been adapted and reprinted with permission.

[2] For a more detailed description of the Oslo period and the Second Intifada environment, see Gawerc (2012).

[3] The field work and interviews were carried out between January 1997 and June 2008, with an update in December 2010. While I did not conduct interviews between 1993 and 1996, I made every effort through the interviews and looking at relevant organizational documents to reconstruct the experience of organizations during these early years of the Oslo process.

[4] While many organizational theorists posit that organizations can and do adapt in ways that aid their survival, the organizational ecology paradigm in organizational studies questions whether organizations are indeed malleable. This view point suggests that the need organizations have to mobilize resources when they are forming, and the strategies and structures they use to maintain these resources once acquired, commits organizations to a certain organizational strategy and structure, and that change becomes both rare and costly, with the risk of death (Hannan and Freeman, 1977). Stinchcombe's (1965) study which highlighted the link between the period in which an organization was formed and its structural characteristics provides evidence of this view that organizations do not tend to change and rather organizational forms tend to persist over time.

[5] Notwithstanding the fact that many theorists have broadened their conceptualization of the environment to include the social and cultural environment, a growing number of social movement scholars have argued that political factors, and the political environment in general, continue to be privileged in the literature (e.g. Goodwin and Jasper, 2004; Van Dyke, Soule, and Taylor, 2004; Armstrong and Bernstein, 2008). These scholars argue that the primary focus on political factors—and the suggestion that these are relevant for *all* movements—is problematic given that these factors are considerably less relevant for movements seeking to create cultural change and for whom, social and cultural factors are likely to be of more importance (Kreisi, 2004; Goodwin and Jasper, 2004; Hermann, 2009).

[6] As Gould (2004) suggests, there is a sizable literature on movement (and movement organization) decline. According to the literature, smallness, organizational "adolescence" (i.e., being between 3-8 years old), lack of a formal organizational structure, a narrow social change focus, partisan electoral activities, and a "consensus

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orientation" are some of the risk factors that tend to predict decline for movement organizations (Gamson, 1990; Lofland, 1993; Minkoff 1993, 1999; Edwards and Marullo, 1995; Gidron et al, 2002).

[7] Fascinatingly, while these initiatives were in their heyday, the Israeli peace movement on a whole—as Hermann (2009) convincingly argues—was facing a more challenging political opportunity structure. Hermann (2009) attributes this to frustration for not receiving credit for the Oslo breakthrough, for being distanced by the Rabin government, and having troubled relations with the governments that followed. It should be noted, Hermann (2009) also highlighted the institutionalization of some peace activities—most notably Israeli-Palestinian dialogues—as one of the factors that hurt the more political peace movement on a whole.

[8] Snow (2004) and Goodwin and Jasper (2004) would suggest that the main reason for this omission is that political process theorists have prioritized movement organizations seeking political change and targeting the state, at the expense of those seeking social and cultural change (e.g. changing cultural norms and dominant narratives), and targeting civil society.

[9] Peacebuilding groups have characteristics of both non-profit organizations and social movement organizations (see Gidron, Katz, and Hasenfeld, 2002). Like the former, these bodies provide a service to their participants and the public, in line with their goal of promoting peace. Similar to the latter, these organizations have, as their mission, to promote cultural values that diverge from dominant and institutionalized values, which create the potential for conflict with both the authorities and the public. Consequently, Hasenfeld and Gidron (2005) argue that these groups should be understood as hybrid organizations.

[10] Permission has been obtained to use people's real names.

[11] In an article that focused on the peacebuilding organizations that survived the Second Intifada, Maoz (2004) highlighted the higher degree of equality and symmetry that existed in many of these organizations. She highlighted their equal representation of Israelis and Palestinians in the organizational hierarchy; their use of offices in both Israel and the West Bank; and their use of either English as a "neutral" language or using Arabic in addition to Hebrew.

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[12] It should be noted that in some partnerships, gender was a further complicating factor. Indeed, inside the educational initiatives, the majority of Israelis were women, and the majority of Palestinians, were men. For more on the gender factor in cross-conflict initiatives, see Golan (2011).

[13] Field work and interviews were carried out during the following periods: January 1997-January 1998, August 1999-2000 (pre-Second Intifada); August 2001-July 2002 (during the Second Intifada); and September 2007-June 2008 (post-Second Intifada). I also updated the findings in January 2010, to include the post-Gaza War period. For more information on these different environments, see Gawerc (2012).

[14] These initiatives, it should be noted, are typically understood in the social movement literature as "consensus movements" (Lofland, 1989, 1993) or "restrained movements" (Downey, 2006).

[15] This category, it should be noted, does not include groups where the encounter is between Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel rather than Palestinians and Israelis given that the issues are different. Nor does it include internationally based initiatives if they do not have a center in the Middle East due to the differences in experiences.

[16] It should be noted that two of the Israeli-Palestinian joint organizations originally started as Israeli organizations: Windows-Channels for Communication, and Parents Circle-Families Forum.

[17] As noted above, maintaining commitment of staff and participants is an additional aspect of organizational effectiveness. While it will not be discussed here, it was discussed extensively in Gawerc (2012).

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