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# Collective action and social protest in Israel

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**Collective action and social protest in Israel**

by

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# CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Since the founding of the state of Israel in May of 1948, this unique democracy in the Middle East has attracted the constant attention of governments, politicians, scholars, and ordinary citizens. The many challenges faced by the state, as well as the uniqueness of Israel's circumstances, have been studied extensively. The evolution of its democratic institutions has been no exception, and appropriate focus has been placed on social movements, organizations, and protest groups. Two of the most well-known of these social movements, Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful, established in 1968) and Peace Now (established in 1978) have existed on opposite ends of the ideological spectrum and have in fact been political rivals. These two groups have a common overall goal: the survival and security of the state of Israel. The messages and strategies of each group, however, are polar opposites: Gush Emunim's mission is to acquire more land and expand the borders of Israel; Peace Now's objective is to withdraw from occupied Palestinian territory.

The ultimate objectives of each of these groups were identical; however, while Gush Emunim has achieved concrete goals since its inception in 1968 in the form of settlements in Palestinian territory, most of which remain to this day, its rival group, Peace Now, has been widely regarded as a failure. Gush Emunim sought to expand the territory of the State of Israel to encompass the entire Biblical Holy Land. While that has not happened, the heavy settlement of Jews in

disputed territories that were captured from Israeli's Arab neighbors in the 1967

Six Day War is an enormous victory for Gush Emunim. Not only were they able

to mobilize enough resources to establish and develop these settlements, they

were assisted in various ways by the Israeli government. In contrast, Peace Now

has tried, unsuccessfully, to pressure the government of Israel to return these

disputed territories to the countries from which they were captured in 1967.

Peace Now has been active in organizing demonstrations and rallies but has not

come any closer to realizing its goal than when it was first established in 1978.

The aim of this paper is to compare these two groups from several

theoretical perspectives that center on Mancur Olson's logic of collective action.

Specifically, this paper will investigate the reasons for the disparity between

Gush Emunim and Peace Now in terms of relative success. Why was Gush

Emunim able to make so much progress toward achieving its goals while Peace

Now achieved nothing?

This paper will be organized as follows. The first part of this paper will

introduce three theoretical perspectives, beginning with Mancur Olson's theory of

collective action, which is the most pertinent theory to this study. Following Olson

will be a discussion of the importance of collective identities and interpersonal

interactions to the success of a social movement, which is part of a theory of

group processes by Debra Friedman and Doug McAdam. The theoretical

overview will be concluded by a consideration of Bert Klandermans' emphasis on

the effect of 'success expectations' on the likelihood of the emergence of collective action.

Following the introduction of the theories I will provide details regarding the history and characteristics of Peace Now and Gush Emunim as well as information about the political culture and democratic institutions in Israel. This section will draw on the work of David Newman, Tamar Hermann, Uri Ben-Eliezer, and Eliezer Don-Yehiya, all of whom are respected scholars in their fields. Here I will discuss characteristics of the movements such as the trajectories of each, the context in which they evolved, the nature of the leadership of each group, the strategies employed by them, and their connections with the government of Israel.

Each of the theoretical perspectives will be applied to my cases. By doing this, I show that the failure of Peace Now relative to Gush Emunim can be explained in terms of the following: a) Peace Now suffers more acutely than Gush Emunim from the problems of collective action; b) for a social movement to be successful it must arise out of a previously existing network which ties people together in a collective identity; Gush Emunim did arise out of such a network whereas Peace Now did not; c) the expectation of success is an important factor in whether or not social movements succeed; Gush Emunim followers saw goals being accomplished daily while Peace Now followers did not; d) the unique political culture of Israel has played a major role in the relative success of Gush Emunim as compared to Peace Now.

# CHAPTER 2. THE THEORIES

In *The Rise and Decline of Nations*, Mancur Olson discusses the logic of collective action. According to Olson, this logic is such that a group made up of rational actors will not achieve its goal—a public good—because each individual will choose to do what is best for himself rather than to act in the best interest of the group as a whole. Therefore, there can be no public good, and each individual will be worse off than he would be if the collective good had been achieved.

The reasoning behind this can be understood through the example of labor unions. A union of workers enjoys a benefit if the resources can be gathered: each worker is protected from exploitation by being a union member. However, no individual will want to pay his dues because he assumes that his neighbors will do it and that he can therefore enjoy the benefit without the cost. If every individual uses this reasoning, argues Olson, there will be no resources and no union. Selective incentives, which can be positive or negative, can solve this problem. Labor unions in particular are often associated with negative incentives; Olson discusses some of the tactics historically used by tough-looking union members to frighten workers into paying their dues, thus creating a resource pool that is sufficient because it has been contributed to by everyone. He also uses the example of taxes to illustrate the effectiveness of negative incentives: those who do not pay their taxes are punished accordingly, after

which they still must pay their taxes (21). Positive selective incentives are goods that are available only to participants; their purpose is to motivate individuals to contribute to the collective good of the group by offering smaller 'rewards' to members. Groups that utilize positive incentives include organizations such as the American Association of Retired People (AARP), which collects dues from members in exchange for 'specialized' health and automobile insurance.

Mancur Olson believed that unless a large group, such as a social movement, offers selective incentives to its members and potential members, individuals acting rationally will refrain from making contributions for the benefit of the whole group, because each person will prefer to wait until someone else works to secure a collective good. Therefore, according to Olson, the only way to overcome the dilemma of collective action in large groups is through selective incentives.

Debra Friedman and Doug McAdam, in their work on the importance of interactions among individuals and the collective identity that arises from those interactions, argue that the strongest selective incentives of social movements are collective identities and affiliation (164). The authors define collective identity (of a social movement) as "a shorthand designation announcing a status—a set of attitudes, commitments, and rules for behavior—that those who assume the identity can be expected to subscribe to." In addition to advertising a person's status, however, collective identity conveys an individual's desire to be part of a group and to forge a shared identity with that group  (157).

Furthermore, the authors point out a flaw in the rational choice component of the collective action dilemma: the theory does *not* account for relationships among individuals. For example, rational choice theorists see the individual as being isolated when running cost-benefit analyses; however, it is the connections that exist between that individual and others (such as friends, family, co-workers, and colleagues) that determine the likelihood of individuals to participate in collective action (158). While not all actors who happen to be embedded in a network will be sufficiently persuaded to join a social movement, it is indeed the network that acts as a catalyst for the mobilization of those who do eventually join; the nature, identity, or ideology of any particular network (which, it is important to keep in mind, exists *prior to*, and is usually a *cause of* the emergence of a social movement) is typically the deciding factor in regards to which 'side' an individual decides to support.

Friedman and McAdam identify three developmental stages of a social movement to illustrate the dependence of new social movements on the networks and organizations that they emerge out of (162). The first stage sees this emergence itself. Selective incentives do not have to be employed in this stage of the process, because the movement is already supported by the appropriate individuals within an existing network. In addition, a collective identity already exists that binds members of the new movement together. In the second stage, however, the full realization and consolidation of a movement requires a committed and identifiable organization which is separate from that of the

network which bore it. Here, the need for incentives to attract new members and retain old ones becomes apparent. The new social movement organization (now formal and independent) must forge a new collective identity, which, according to Friedman and McAdam, this identity serves as the most important selective incentive, whose function is to promote activism. The creation of a new collective identity is necessary to maintain and increase levels of participation, because "uncoupling the movement from established organizations means that organizers can no longer rely upon the incentive structure of those groups to motivate participation" (163). Finally, in stage three, the solidarity incentive of collective identity is transformed into a public good and is therefore subject to the free-rider problem. Groups then must strike a balance between the desire to be influential (to affect policy) and the need to keep membership exclusive enough so that the incentive (collective identity) remains selective.

In *The Social Construction of Protest and Multiorganizational Fields*, Bert Klandermans focuses on the idea of collective consciousness as it applies to social movements and protests. He tries to identify a stage that he believes is the crucial starting point of collective action: a "significant transformation in the collective consciousness of the actors involved" (78). This transformation consists of the process whereby participants in a movement "define their situation" and "convince people that movement participation is effective" (77), and that these are processes "of signifying, interpreting, and constructing meaning" (78). In other words, "individuals behave according to a *perceived*

reality" (77). The task then, according to the author, is to figure out how such transformations occur.

Klandermans argues that collective beliefs are shared by people and proliferate through networks and groups, and that the transformation of such beliefs is the driving force behind collective action. In particular, Klandermans points to the potential for *success expectations* to spark such a transformation (85-6).

The *actual* success of any protest movement, according to Klandermans, is heavily dependent on a certain type of collective belief: the degree to which the public *expects* the protest movement to be a success. There are three types of 'success expectations': the effectiveness of collective action, the effectiveness of the individual's contribution, and the behavior of other individuals. Here, the importance of networks and groups is evident: each of the three types of success expectations is affected by the relationships and communication among individuals.

"The greater the number of individuals who believe that collective action will be successful, the more likely it is that mass action will materialize and that authorities will respond" (86). According to the logic of collective action as discussed above, we can understand these beliefs as part of the incentives component. In such a case, an individual's belief that he or she will make a difference (i.e., will make success more likely) serves as a (non-selective) incentive to get involved.

# CHAPTER 3. HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT

The Israel/Palestine conflict is one of the most highly charged issues in global politics today. It has been ongoing since the late 1800s, when the Zionist movement emerged among the Jewish people in the Diaspora (the 'scattering' of Jews outside of the land of Israel since Roman times, when they were driven out). Zionism is defined as a belief among Jews that they should return to the lands of Zion, from which they were driven by the Romans nearly one thousand years ago; Zion refers to the geographic area of the Holy Land in the Middle East, especially Jerusalem (Caplan 4, 18). Even more than simply advocating a return to Zion, however, the 'pioneering spirit' of Zionism called on followers to toil and sacrifice through settlement and farming, and stressed military defense as a necessary precaution against potential threats to the process (Peled 434). The first Jews of the Diaspora began to settle in Palestine according to the vision of the Zionist movement, eager to realize the dream of returning to their homeland. Jewish immigration occurred in several waves prompted by events in their home countries such as the Holocaust and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. These waves of Jewish immigration into Arab-inhabited lands caused much conflict, as followers of Zionism clashed with the local population.

The status of the indigenous Arabs in the lands of Palestine before the creation of the State of Israel is a point of contention in the conflict. Since the area went from Ottoman control to a Mandate under the British, many have

argued that the Palestinians never had a national claim to the land and that there is no such thing as a Palestinian. Under Ottoman control, the area was simply part of the Arab world and was not a separate entity. When the British took over, they engaged in a series of agreements with both the Jews and the indigenous Arabs, in which support for a future nation for each group was given, leading to such designations as the "much too promised land" (Caplan 57).

As the Jewish community in Palestine grew in the decades preceding World War I, an increasing sense of nationalism, among both Jewish pioneers already in Palestine as well as many  Jews who had not yet joined the movement, prompted Zionist leaders to appeal to outside powers in their quest for statehood/nationhood. Simultaneously, however, a movement had emerged, known as pan-Arabism, among Arabs in the Ottoman empire that envisioned an Arab nation. To fulfill this dream, Arab leaders also sought the favor of influential external powers. It was the British who were most involved in negotiations with Zionists as well as Arab nationalists. These dealings played a major part in the forming of the conflict, as the British appeared to have 'promised' the lands of Palestine to both peoples (Caplan 56-57).

In 1915-16 Sir Henry McMahon, the British High Commissioner in Cairo, corresponded with the Sharif Hussein of Mecca in an attempt to persuade Arabs under Hussein to revolt against the Ottomans. In return, promised McMahon, the British would recognize the independence of the Arabs. A short time later, the Sykes-Picot agreement designated Palestine as an entity that would be

administered internationally rather than being part of a Jewish national homeland or an Arab state. This agreement was forged between the British, who after World War I would have control of Palestine and Iraq, and the French, who would establish a mandate in Lebanon and Syria. Such mandates were imposed by the League of Nations at the end of World War I so that the victors of the war may control the areas to be mandated in order to prepare them for independence. In addition to Palestine, Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria (all from the fallen Ottoman Empire), the League created the state of Yugoslavia out of the ruins of the Austro-Hungary Empire (Mansbach 124).

Finally, in 1917, a document known as the Balfour declaration was released by the British government expressing Britain's decision to support a national home for Jews in Palestine (Caplan 56-59). This declaration was the product of a friendship between Lord James Balfour, British Foreign Secretary, and Dr. Chaim Weizmann, a Zionist leader who later became the first president of the State of Israel. Dr. Weizmann had been trying to seek the support of the West for a new state for the Jewish people in Palestine; the British, for their part, sought the help of the Jews in the fight against the Ottomans (Mansbach 208-09).

By 1947, the British had become quite exasperated at the constant barrage of complaints coming from both Jewish immigrants and indigenous Arabs. They decided to end the Mandate in Palestine, handing control over to the United Nations. This was done because the British no longer wished to expend

resources controlling an area that was rife with conflict. The UN then devised a partition plan for the region, which was to be the blueprint for two separate states of Israel and Palestine; however, both sides of the conflict rejected the plan out of disagreements over potential borders.

A subsequent sharp rise in tensions following the British departure resulted in a period of intense fighting during which the state of Israel declared its independence. Nearly a million refugees fled the area into the neighboring countries of Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt, many of whom remain in camps to this day (the United Nations estimates the 2008 refugee population, including descendents, to be about 4.62 million). About 160,000 Arabs stayed in the area during the fighting; when the war ended in 1949, automatic citizenship to the new Jewish state of Israel was granted to about 63,000 of those Arabs who did not flee (Peled 435). Those who did not receive automatic citizenship could apply for it. The new Arab citizens of Israel were subject to military law and were relegated to second-class status, being restricted economically and in movement (Peled and Shafir, 402). Immediately after Israel proclaimed its independence, a confederation of Arab countries declared war on the new state; armistice agreements would later put an end to this fighting (Caplan 1-78).

Since this period there have been several conflicts in the region, including a dispute over the Suez Canal in 1956, a preemptive attack on Egypt by Israel in 1967, and a surprise attack mainly by Syria and Egypt on Israel in 1973. In addition, there have been two major events known as *intifadas*, or violent

Palestinian uprisings. Conflict has been more or less continuous since the late 1800s in the region.

It is in this context that the Israel/Palestine border dispute began. Conflict over borders here is important because it is this issue that drives the continuation of hostilities in the region. Failure to agree on borders for a future Palestinian state means that the conflict that has been ongoing since the late 1800s will be without end.

# CHAPTER 4. POLITICAL CULTURE AND CONTEXT

Social movements do not happen in a vacuum, but are influenced by the environment in which they take place. The political culture of a country plays an important role in the formation and continued existence of a social movement. Political culture can also be a determining factor in the success or failure of a movement. For example, a society that tends to defer to authority will be less likely to view protest movements as legitimate than a society in which dissent is encouraged. This section will provide an overview of the Israeli political culture so that I may later apply this factor in the analysis of Gush Emunim and Peace Now.

In his analysis of the history of the Jewish migration into Palestine in the late 19th century, Uri Ben-Eliezer discusses the uniqueness of the institution of democracy in Israel and how they have evolved in the collective society. While Israeli voter turnout is very high (around 80 percent), voter efficacy is quite low (between 25 and 45 percent) (397-98). Voter efficacy refers to the extent to which a voter believes he or she can influence policy or the outcome of an election (Good and Mayer, 25). Why should this be so? The answer is a fascinating example of the kind of path dependency that seems to govern all of history and human interaction. The origins of the Israeli collectivist political culture can be found in the decades before the 1948 founding of the State: in settings such as the *kibbutz* (collective farms that were modeled after socialist and nationalist principles) and the socialist youth movement, as well as the

Palmach, the socialist military body that was formed in the early 1940s by native-born members of the Yishuv (i.e. the children of settlers of Palestine). Because immigration into the Palestinian lands was initiated by Russian Jews toward the end of the nineteenth century, these future Israelis brought with them their socialist-influenced heritage. This, according to Ben-Eliezer, is the key to understanding the origins of the collectivist characteristic of modern-day Israeli democracy (399-401).

A central feature of pre-state Israeli political participation was group discussion. These sort of 'town-hall' meetings would take place in the familiar settings of the *kibbutz* dining halls or around campfires; such events were viewed as necessary to the democratic, if nonliberal[1], nature of the Jewish homecoming movement. Furthermore, these energetic discussions were of utmost importance in an environment of general anxiety and apprehension as to what the future might bring. Members of these initial movements were therefore not at all content to allow the leadership to monopolize decision-making processes without at least lending their voices in critical political participation.

The curious nature of such discussions, which would go on to influence Israeli political culture for decades, can be attributed to what Ben-Eliezer calls 'critical compliance.' This term combines the verbal component of democratic participation, which was a persistent feature of pre-state life, and the strong tendency to obey orders and fulfill duties. This 'outspoken obedience' became

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[1] The use of the terms democratic and nonliberal together refers to the tendency of the pioneers to defer to authority and to respect law and order while still exercising their democratic right of verbal dissent.

ingrained in society and perpetuated through social norms, which persisted until and beyond the establishment of the State, and into contemporary Israel. Interestingly, the roots of this sort of political attitude can be found in the realization by the leadership that the public is much more easily controlled if it feels it has a say in matters of importance (402-04).

This perception of a 'collective will' has survived intact, and is used by Ben-Eliezer to explain the differences between Gush Emunim and Peace Now. Newman and Hermann (1992) describe Gush Emunim as being more legitimate in the eyes of the public and as having enjoyed more public support than Peace Now (524-25). Ben-Eliezer's explanation of the relative success of Gush Emunim can be understood in terms of the social norms of collectivism that first manifested themselves in pre-state times. The balance that Gush Emunim has struck between collaborating with the government, on one hand, and outwardly criticizing it, on the other, has contributed greatly to the movement's success. This is because it was able to use the government to its advantage when necessary, such as by gaining the support of influential members and by securing funds for building settlements. On the other hand, when Gush Emunim felt that the government did not go far enough in helping the group to realize its goals, the group had no qualms about engaging in illegal activities and directly challenging the government's policies. Conversely, Peace Now seems to lack a coherent set of principles that is reflected in the ambivalence of its members to

military service and the group's unwillingness to challenge the authorities and the law, as Gush Emunim has (407).

# CHAPTER 5. GUSH EMUNIM AND PEACE NOW

The characteristics of Israel are unique: it is a democracy in the Middle East, it is a relatively new state, it faces extraordinary security problems, and it is quite factionalized as far as the political culture goes; and yet, there is a great deal of social solidarity and collective identity. The diversity of Israeli ideology is reflected in the different social movements that have cropped up in the past few decades, and one of the most salient issues in Israeli 'intermestic' (international and domestic combined) politics has to do with the results of the 1967 Six-Day War. During this war Israel annexed the territories of Gaza and the West Bank, as well as Syria's Golan Heights and Arab East Jerusalem. The Egyptian Sinai was also annexed but was returned in 1979 after Egyptian president Anwar Sadat offered a peace treaty in exchange. The political talks accompanying this 'peace' offering were in danger of failing; Peace Now was formed in 1978 when a few hundred officers and reservists of the Israeli Army sent a letter to Prime Minister Menachem Begin asking for his consideration of returning all of the annexed lands to the Arabs. Five years earlier, in 1973, Egypt and Syria had launched a surprise attack on Israel; the resulting sense of vulnerability in Israel had given rise to Gush Emunim and its mission of settling the territories captured in 1967. The issue of the occupied territories continues to divide Israel between the 'peace camp' and the settlers, while at the same time Israelis are united against a common threat. The dynamics of the Israeli democracy and its

involvement in the war zone of the Middle East makes any inquiry into sociopolitical processes an interesting and important one.

### *GUSH EMUNIM*

The early days of Israeli statehood saw a growing tension between those who adhered to the nationalist-religious vision of Zionism and those who sought to build Israeli society on secular principles. Young Zionists began to coalesce into a distinct group that would rise up in opposition to such secularism and which would challenge the government and its policies. This group of individuals was highly cohesive, as members of this group had spent significant amounts of time together throughout school, in religious associations, and in military service after graduation (Peleg 52-54).

The catalyst that prompted these individuals to formally establish Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful) was the upheaval of the 1967 Six Day War and the subsequent 1973 Yom Kippur War. The first of these conflicts saw the annexation by Israel of the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula (from Egypt), the Golan Heights (from Syria), as well as the West Bank and Arab East Jerusalem (from Jordan), all of which were populated by Arabs. These events served to compel the founders of Gush Emunim into action in an attempt to revitalize the religious spirit of Zionism in the country (Peleg 54-55). Another goal of the group was to prevent another instance of the events of 1973, when Egypt and her Arab allies launched a surprise attack on Israel on the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur;

the group believed that God had punished the people of Israel with the attack because they were not moving fast enough toward redemption (Peleg 56 n6).

The dominant view in Israel in the years following the 1967 war was that the annexed territories were now rightfully owned by Israel and that they should be settled by Jews, either as a security precaution or, as argued by Gush Emunim, as a duty called for in Jewish prophecy (Efrat 35). Thus the context of the emergence of this movement was one of geopolitical upheaval at a time when the internal political environment of Israel was fostering the rise of nationalist/religious sentiments. The "low morale in the Jewish population" (Efrat 36) that resulted from the events of 1973, helped propel this shift toward a more conservative political environment, culminating in the election of the right-wing Likud party in 1977 in place of the long-dominant and left-leaning Labour party.

One party, the National Religious Party (NRP), had some influence in the Knesset despite its small size. The NRP had advocated the same goals as Gush Emunim; it was thus the logical choice for Gush Emunim to affiliate with the NRP in order to enjoy some access to decision making and the political process. At times, however, Gush Emunim distanced itself from the party when the NRP's position on various policies seemed too generous toward the Arabs (Peleg 79).

At this time, Israel was experiencing a growth in political activity that occurred outside the decision-making arena. This 'extra-parliamentarism' appears to have been the result of decreasing faith in the government, which in turn came about with the jarring assault of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. This gave

rise to groups like Gush Emunim: as support for the establishment significantly

waned in the 1970s, non-partisan forces gained legitimacy and the power to

sway and manipulate government policymaking (Newman and Hermann 510).

In his article detailing the history of Gush Emunim, Eliezer Don-Yehiya

offers a review of a collection of articles about the movement. He explores the

movement's ideological origins, which can be found in the teachings of Rabbi Zvi

Yehuda Kook, the son of the famous Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Hakohen Kook

(better known as simply Rav Kook). Rabbi Yehuda Kook is credited with

transforming the group from its informal status into a politically powerful entity in

1974 (Foundation for Middle East Peace). Don-Yehiya argues that while the

elder Kook conceived of 'holiness' as something that was inherent in the Jewish

people and which could be realized through abiding by the principles laid out by

the Torah, the younger Kook believed that a sovereign Jewish state in the Holy

Land was the manifestation of the holiness of the Jewish people and is ordained

by God:

> Rav Zvi Yehuda's conception of holiness is reflected in the strong emphasis
> which he places on the territorial-political dimension of Jewish redemption. In
> Rav Zvi Yehuda's view the sacred nature of the Land of Israel obliges Jews to
> fulfill the 'commandment of conquest' by settling the whole land and defending
> Jewish sovereignty over it. Since the fulfillment of that commandment is
> considered a significant part of the redemption process, any territorial
> compromise is conceived as a serious interruption in this God-ordained
> messianic process, and hence should be resisted by every available means
> with no regard for the attitudes and reactions of other nations (226).

His teachings thus inspired Gush Emunim to continue in the struggle for the

establishment of the Jews throughout the entire 'Promised Land,' which,

according to religious texts, includes the territory extending to the Euphrates River and encompasses parts of Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and possibly Turkey and Saudi Arabia. Gush Emunim's focus on territorial acquisition prompted the group to attribute the results of the Six-Day War (Israel's annexation of territories) to nothing less than an act of God (228).

Religion and messianic tradition is a powerful motivator for the group's support of expansionism; members and supporters, especially settlers themselves, tend to view events through the lens of prophecy. For example, the ability of the Jewish people to survive such a catastrophic experience as the Holocaust is seen by Gush Emunim as evidence of the 'chosen' status of Jewry, and the 1967 Six-Day War is believed to be a direct and forceful message from God regarding the true ownership and entitlement of the land of Israel. The ideologies and beliefs of the settlers are rooted in the Biblical ideal of the Promised Land, and an intense conviction that the settlers are carrying out God's will has been a driving force behind Gush Emunim's fearlessness and willingness to clash publicly with the law (Newman and Hermann 514).

The leadership of Gush Emunim has mostly consisted of middle-class Ashkenazi (those with European ethnic origins) Jews who tend to be highly educated; the leaders of the movement were mostly original founders (Newman and Hermann 516-517). These Ashkenazi tended to be young; according to Kimmerling, the movement was a sort of backlash by the youth against the older generation. These youth tended to be nationalistic and religious and perceived

the older generation as having turned away from religion and nationalism in favor

of secularism and socialistic principles of Zionism (169). In addition, the leaders

were charismatic and were thus very effective in gaining followers who were

drawn to the prophetic messages and goals of the group. The followers in turn

were instilled with a high degree of enthusiasm and a sense that their actions

and deeds were meaningful and were approved of by God (Peleg 64). One

strategy of Gush Emunim was to remain somewhat secretive and mysterious.

The group acknowledged no official membership and took care to conceal its true

size and reach from the general public. This was done in part to strengthen the

message of the group and to maintain a religious as opposed to a political quality

(Peleg 80).

Since Gush Emunim was a movement concerned with settling the lands of

the disputed territories, an undertaking that followers believed to be ordained by

God, the main strategy of the group was to facilitate the building of settlements at

all costs, even when illegal. The strategic outcome of doing this was that once a

settlement was established, it became very difficult if not impossible to reverse

the action. The means by which Gush Emunim disseminated its message

included using the established settlers as a tangible example of what the group

can offer supporters; Gush Emunim settlements were often showcased during

mass rallies at these locations. The first Gush Emunim settlement, called Kiryat

Arba, was established in 1968 east of the city of Hebron. Thirteen more were

created by the end of the year in the areas of the Golan Heights, the West Bank,

and the northern Sinai Peninsula. By 1973, settler population in these territories

numbered about 1,500. As of 2005 there were about 460,000 Jewish settlers in

the disputed areas of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights.

About 8,000 settlers had lived in the Gaza Strip until 2005, when they were

evacuated by the Israeli government because of difficulties with the Palestinian

population. Statistics available on the Foundation for Middle East Peace website

show a steady increase of settlers in these four areas between 1972 and 2006,

as shown in Table 1. According to Goldberg, however, the population of actual

Gush Emunim members amounted to only about 15% of the total Jewish settler

population as of the late 1980s (196).

Another main strategy of Gush Emunim has been to foster strong

connections with the Israeli government. Its support within and links to right-wing

governments and political parties in Israel, most notably the Likud party, has

been a major driving force behind the success of the group. In fact, settlement

activities that were previously illegal and categorized as approaching terrorism

were made legal by the Likud-dominated government that began in 1977.

Settlement projects have also been financed by the government. Between 1968

and 1976, the Israeli government invested 750 million dollars in settlements in

the West Bank (about 83.3 million dollars annually). When the Likud took power

in 1977 the amounts invested in the West Bank averaged 143 million dollars per

year. In 1984, a new government called the National Unity Government was

formed with both Likud and Labour parties, and the investment sums dropped to

**Table 1: Israeli Settler Population 1972-2006**

| Year | West Bank | Gaza Strip | East Jerusalem | Golan Heights | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1972 | 1,182 | 700 | 8,649 | 77 | 10,608 |
| 1983 | 22,800 | 900 | 76,095 | 6,800 | 106,595 |
| 1985 | 44,100 | 1,900 | 103,900* | 8,700 | 158,700 |
| 1989 | 69,800 | 3,000 | 117,100 | 10,000 | 199,900 |
| 1990 | 78,600 | 3,300 | 135,000 | 10,600 | 227,500 |
| 1991 | 90,300 | 3,800 | 137,300 | 11,600 | 243,000 |
| 1992 | 101,100 | 4,300 | 141,000 | 12,000 | 258,400 |
| 1993 | 111,600 | 4,800 | 152,800 | 12,600 | 281,800 |
| 1995 | 133,200 | 5,300 | 157,300 | 13,400 | 309,200 |
| 1996 | 142,700 | 5,600 | 160,400 | 13,800 | 322,500 |
| 1997 | 154,400 | 5,700 | 161,416 | 14,300 | 335,816 |
| 1998 | 163,300 | 6,100 | 165,967 | 14,900 | 350,267 |
| 1999 | 177,411 | 6,337 | 170,123 | 15,313 | 369,184 |
| 2000 | 192,976 | 6,678 | 172,250 | 15,955 | 387,859 |
| 2002 | 214,722 | 7,277 | 175,617 | 16,503 | 414,119 |
| 2003 | 224,669 | 7,556 | 178,601 | 16,791 | 427,617 |
| 2004 | 234,487 | 7,826 | 181,587 | 17,265 | 441,828 |
| 2005 | 258,988 | 0 | 184,057 | 17,793 | 460,838 |
| 2006 | 268,400 | 0 | N/A | 18,105 | N/A |
| 2007 | 282,000 | 0 | N/A | N/A | N/A |

*1986 data

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, 1992-2006 and *List of Localities, the Populations, and Symbols*, 1995-2005. *Statistical Yearbook of Jerusalem*, Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 1991-2004. Cited by Foundation for Middle East Peace, available from http://www.fmep.org/settlement_info/settlement-info-and-tables/stats-data/israeli-settler-population-1972-2006/.

an average of 125 million dollars per year (Goldberg 195). Newman and

Hermann argue that Gush Emunim has been used by the Likud government as a

vehicle for implementation of the types of policies which may be controversial

and viewed by the international community as undesirable; in this way, the

government does not have to take responsibility for implementing such policies

and can pass the blame onto a group over which it claims it has little or no power (525-26).

With its emergence in 1968 as an organization that facilitated the establishment of Jewish settlements in the territories annexed by Israel in 1967, Gush Emunim initially was completely independent of the government, which at that time was dominated by the Labour party. The movement was resourceful enough to make concrete steps toward fulfilling its vision as a force that would populate the occupied lands. The settlement activities in which the group engaged were considered illegal under the Labour government; Gush Emunim therefore did not derive much power from the state. In 1977, however, with the succession of the Likud government, the movement was vastly strengthened with the legalization of their settlement activities. It was at this time that it began "a process of partial institutionalization and acceptance within government circles" (Newman 1).

Gush Emunim ceased operating as a national organization in the 1980s and transitioned to a regional entity. According to Giora Goldberg, Gush Emunim shifted from a social movement in the 1970s to a "regional interest group" in the 1980s (p. 190), which may explain their dropping out of sight as a formal organization. Goldberg argues that, as a social movement in the 1970s the group had been mainly ideologically-based rather than policy-based, espousing ideals of a Zionist nationalism that needed to be revived to replace the secularism of the Israeli government and wider society. Focus was placed on disseminating the

religious rhetoric about the inevitability of redemption in the near future and what

God expected of the Jews at this point in the redemption process. In the 1980s,

argues Goldberg, the group began be more involved in the practicalities of

settlement formation and development. While their foundation remained an

ideological one, they became more policy-oriented as they began to work more

closely with the government in establishing settlements in the disputed territories

(190-94).

In December of 1987, the Palestinian community in the disputed territories

staged a violent uprising, the first intifada, against the Israeli occupation. This

revolt lasted five years and was in large part a struggle between Israeli settlers in

the West Bank and Palestinians, although it started out as a campaign against

the Israeli army. Gush Emunim suffered a setback as a result of this event, losing

some momentum as many secular Israelis, who had been attracted to the

settlements by economic benefits afforded them by the Israeli government,

decided not to take the dangerous risks of living in the disputed territories

(Goldberg 195).

In September 1993 a historic peace initiative was under way between the

Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

The meetings, hosted by US President Bill Clinton, were a tremendous step

forward for the two groups, which had refused to meet with one another or even

recognize one another until a preceding meeting in 1991. Issues such as

Palestinian self-governance were discussed as both parties tried to reach an

agreement that would normalize relations and bring the region closer to peace. Attempts were also made to allocate the disputed territories to one party or another based on population and other factors. Unfortunately, years of Jewish settlement in these areas had led to significant changes to demographic realities; Arabs and Jews had reached parity in numbers in the disputed territories but the Jewish portion was far more developed, organized, and capable. These complications helped lead to a breakdown of the Oslo talks as suspicion and mistrust abounded, Jewish settlements continued, and terrorism from both sides made a vicious comeback (Caplan 202-06). The violence culminated in the assassination, by a Jewish extremist with Gush Emunim ties, of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in November 1995.

The Gush Emunim community no longer identifies with that name; rather, the Israeli public and the media now refer to the group and its sympathizers as Ne'emanei Eretz Yisrael, translated as "those who are faithful to the land of Israel" (Frey 92). This designation refers broadly to the population of right-wing Zionists in Israeli society.


## ***PEACE NOW***

Peace Now (Shalom Achshav), was founded in 1978 amid fears that a chance at peace with Egypt would be a failure. In this year, on March 7, a group of 348 military personnel signed a petition which was published in various Israeli newspapers, expressing support for a peace treaty. The group's main objective

has been to influence Israeli public opinion on the best way of achieving peace

and security, which, members believe, can only be achieved by addressing one

of the most outstanding grievances of the Arabs: the status of the portions of

Arab-inhabited land, referred to as the 'disputed territories', that were taken by

Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War. Since 1978 Peace Now has been trying to

pressure the government to give back the occupied territories and return to pre-

1967 borders. Although the group still exists, they have not had success in

achieving their policy goals.

After the release of the "Officer's Letter" petition, popular support for the

movement surged. The public, in all sectors of society, appeared to be in favor of

the messages and goals of the petition (Helman 303). The group also gained

supporters abroad; in 1981 a sister group, Americans for Peace Now, was

established in the United States.

By the time Israel became involved in Lebanon's civil war in 1982, the

group began to experience difficulties. This was apparently due to the fact that

the soldiers who were peace activists were also participating in the war itself; this

in turn was due to the strong desire of Peace Now activists to abide by the law

and defer to authority, which meant military service. This identity crisis resulted in

"the estrangement of the militant sectors of the constituency" (Helman 304). In

1982, however, the group saw a spike of public support when about twenty

percent of the adult population of Israel attended protests held by Peace Now

which condemned a massacre that had taken place in a refugee camp in

Lebanon. The attacks had been carried out by Lebanese Christian militants who had been given access to the camp by the Israeli military, which had the camp under its control (Kaufman 66).

In 1985, Peace Now began an initiative with Palestinians to foster connections between the two groups. Special projects were undertaken and dialogue was encouraged; the dialogues continued through 1988 when Peace Now launched its "Speak Peace with the PLO" campaign, which provided a forum in which both sides could voice their frustrations and work together to come to a solution. In 1989, two years after the first violent uprising by the Palestinians against the Israelis, the group managed to mobilize 25,000 Palestinian and Israeli individuals who linked hands together in an expression of peace during an event called "Hands around Jerusalem" (APN).

In 1990, Peace Now began collecting data on the establishment, development, and activities of Jewish settlements in the disputed territories. Information acquired by the group is reported to newspapers and helps contribute to archives maintained by entities such as the Foundation for Middle East Peace. Data the group is interested in includes numbers of homes slated for construction and the destruction of Palestinian homes to make room for such construction.

The group was relatively quiet and inactive in the years following the 1993 Oslo Accords as negotiations faltered and both sides struggled to achieve their goals. The post of Prime Minister in Israel changed hands several times over a

period of only about six years. The group made a forceful comeback in 2001

when Ariel Sharon, a provocative former Likud member, was elected Prime

Minister. Sharon's hawkish policies were the target of Peace Now's

demonstrations and rallies (Kessler 146). Sharon has been accused of provoking

the second Palestinian intifada (uprising) by visiting a Muslim holy site in 2000.

However, although Sharon may have helped trigger the outbreak of hostilities,

his visit was by no means the cause of the violence as there had been many

factors which led to the second intifada.

In 1996, Peace Now organized a trip to the United States for both Israeli

and Palestinian youth, who traveled to various locations, including high schools

and the White House, to raise awareness of the issues and to offer possible

solutions to the conflict. Peace Now lobbied the US government 1997, pushing

for a responsible US role in the Middle East peace process, and in 1998

mobilized to encourage a continuation of the Oslo negotiation efforts. The

Officer's Letter, first issued in 1978 expressing dismay at the possibility of failed

peace talks between Israel and Egypt, was reissued in 1998 to mark 20 years of

Peace Now (APN).

As the centerpiece of the general peace movement in Israel, Peace Now

emerged in the context of a peculiar political culture which emphasized the

collective good while upholding democracy and the right to voice dissent. The

ability of Peace Now to materialize in a society facing severe existential threats is

a result of a long tradition in Jewish culture that stresses the duty of each individual to the overall good of the society (Norell 1-36).

In his study of Peace Now, Magnus Norell reconfirms the impact of this historic tendency. Reflections of this political culture can be seen in Peace Now's reluctance to partake in illegal activities, even while other peace groups espoused more radical forms of protest. Values of obedience to authority are apparent, even when that authority is seen as the wrongdoer. Norell argues that this attitude contributed to the lack of efficacy of the group (95-100). Kaufman points out another reason for the group's reluctance to break the law; Peace Now perceived the illegal activities of Jewish fundamentalist groups as a threat to Israeli democracy (68).

Peace Now, rather than being a strictly pacifist movement, views the attainment of peace largely in functional terms: the only way to ensure the security and well-being of the state of Israel is to remove or at least ameliorate the sources of Arab and Muslim political grievance. This, of course, entails making certain territorial concessions, a move which is highly repugnant to Gush Emunim members as well as many Israelis who view such concessions as showing weakness and even appeasing terrorists. Although Peace Now does stress moralist and universalist values, as well as equal rights for all of humanity, its primary concern is a secure future for the Israeli state. The movement's overarching goal is to influence Israeli public opinion of the Palestinian issue, and its core message is that a return to the borders that existed before the Six-Day

War in 1967, during which Israel annexed Palestinian, Syrian, and Egyptian territory as well as East Jerusalem, will to a great extent take the wind out of the sails of Middle East terrorism and will have a profound effect on the outlook for sustainable peace. National self-determination of the Palestinian people, Peace Now argues, is the best (indeed, only) guarantor of the security of Israel.

The leadership of Peace Now has been rather weak as a result of the group's operating philosophy. While the movement's origins consisted of a group of a few hundred Israeli military personnel who banded together to petition the government on behalf of a smooth peace process with Egypt, as a movement Peace Now emphasized a consensus-based decision-making process. While the high esteem in which the military has traditionally been held was a boon for the movement in the beginning, lending a high degree of legitimacy to its cause, the reluctance of the group to engage in 'majority rule' in the years following the implementation of the peace treaty caused it to suffer from the weaknesses inherent in such a decision-making style (Norell 100).

In his discussion of the strategies and tactics employed by Peace Now, Norell identifies two possibilities that would have confronted the group at the time of its emergence. The first of these entailed attaching itself to an established political party. This course of action, however, was abandoned; the organization believed that identifying itself exclusively with a political party would necessarily narrow the pool of potential supporters. Another reason for the group's reluctance to give up its extraparliamentary status was that it was "anti-

establishment in outlook" and "could draw a lot of support from the prevalent

feelings of frustration and disappointment with established politics" (Norell 102).

An alternate, more fitting, strategy was to bring the message directly to the public

through demonstrations and the like. As Norell points out, however, by taking this

route Peace Now was confronted by the problem of trying to mobilize followers

and dispel its message within the confines of the law. Nevertheless, the group

stayed true to its main objective of appealing to the greatest number of people as

it possibly could. As Newman and Hermann point out, Peace Now sometimes

tried to achieve this by trying to direct attention away from its "Ashkenazi stigma"

of elitism, extending its reach into issue areas such as poverty and

homelessness (516). This diversification was also an attempt to persuade the

populations of these traditionally Likud-backing neighborhoods to withdraw their

support from the right-wing government by advising them that funding for public

programs was threatened by the cost of developing and maintaining settlements

(Kaufman 68).

Peace Now found it difficult to influence policymakers because they did

not affiliate with a political party. While some lawmakers were public supporters

of Peace Now, they tended to belong to left-wing fringe groups of the Knesset.

Affiliating with these lawmakers was seen as potentially damaging to the

movement's reputation with the Israeli public. Furthermore, with the Likud

government's victory in 1977 over Labour, who had governed for thirty years,

Peace Now felt it could no longer safely identify with the latter due to the public's

rejection of it. Nor could they hope to accomplish anything with the right-wing

Likud, as the new government's platform was partially built upon the idea that the

disputed territories taken in the 1967 war belonged to Israel (Norell 100-102).

Peace Now has thus enjoyed only limited government access and very little, if

not zero, of the public funds that have been made available to its rival group,

Gush Emunim (Newman and Hermann 522).

# CHAPTER 6. HOW SUCCESS IS DEFINED

This study attempts to answer the question of why Gush Emunim was so successful relative to its political adversary Peace Now. The success of a social movement should be defined in terms of achievement of objectives; in these two cases, this means the attainment of policy goals. Success can also be measured in terms of the extent of mobilization and the lack of 'free riding'.

The policy goals of Gush Emunim centered on the ability to carry out settlement activity in the occupied territories without interference from the government. In achieving this goal they saw a great success in 1977, when the new right-wing Likud government legalized settlement activity which had been illegal under the previous Labour government. According to the Foundation for Middle East Peace, as of 2005 there were about 460,000 Jewish settlers in the disputed areas of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. About 8,000 settlers had lived in the Gaza Strip until 2005, when they were evacuated by the Israeli government because of difficulties with the Palestinian population. Statistics available on the Foundation for Middle East Peace website show a steady increase of settlers in these four areas between 1972 and 2006.

Peace Now's main goal is very clear: the State of Israel must withdraw from the territories captured in the 1967 Six Day War. This, the group argues, is the only way for Israel to survive and enjoy a peaceful existence. The group specifies a number of policy goals that would bring this main objective closer to

reality. According to their web site, Peace Now desires a two-state solution to the conflict that have a foundation in the borders that existed in June of 1967 but that cannot be exactly modeled today due to Israeli settlement activity. In addition, the city of Jerusalem would be shared in such a way that it would be an administrative capital for both Israel and a Palestinian state. Furthermore, a relationship between Israel and Syria should be forged in order to ensure peace for both Arabs and Israelis (Peace Now).

Differences in mobilization between Gush Emunim and Peace Now can also be used to measure success. Gush Emunim has been able to appeal to many different groups in Israeli society whose views are congruent with Gush Emunim's goals, whether for religious, political, or personal reasons. While the movement itself is based on religion, many participants in the settlements are doing so for political or even racist reasons rather than for religious redemption purposes. Gush Emunim did not suffer from free riding because they offered a selective incentive that was directly tied to their goals: by enabling settlers to build homes (the selective incentive) in the disputed territories, the group was able to preclude the possibility of Israel ever giving these areas back to the Arab countries from which they came. Any territorial concessions made by the government of Israel would necessarily mean that any settlements in those lands would be dismantled, a process that would affect hundreds of thousands of Israelis and would therefore be politically impossible.

In contrast, Peace Now has had intermittent support in the form of demonstrations that are themselves in reaction to government policies rather than ongoing activities. As mentioned above, the group was able to mobilize 400,000 supporters in a demonstration against a particular act of violence in a Lebanon refugee camp. This suggests that potential supporters are more likely to respond to specific events rather than to continuously expend their energies to persuade the government to begin a specific action (Kaufman 76). This tendency presents a problem in terms of lack of sufficient support and mobilization of resources. In addition, Peace Now suffers from free riding because they offer no selective incentives other than identity and affiliation, which is easy to gain without contributing any resources. One may simply sign up to be on the group's mailing list to receive updates on settlement activity, but the incentive to donate money or participate in rallies is weak.

# CHAPTER 7. ANALYSIS

The previously discussed literature on social movement theory and collective action can help us form an understanding of the relationship between Gush Emunim and Peace Now, the relationship of each to the Israeli government and public, and the relative effectiveness of each in achieving their goals and influencing public opinion. I identify four factors related to social movements that are central to answering the question of why Gush Emunim has been more successful than Peace Now. These are: selective incentives as elaborated by Olson; the collective identity as the most important of these selective incentives as argued by Friedman and McAdam; the expectation of success as a collective belief, as discussed by Klandermanns, and finally, the unique political culture and historical experience of Israel.

The logic of collective action as discussed by Olson is based on rational choice theory. This stipulates that individuals are rational actors and that they will compare the costs of contributing their effort to attain a collective good with the benefits of enjoying that collective good once it is attained. However, argues Olson, since a public good is applicable to all members of a group or a population, each individual will rationally choose to let someone else exert energy and spend time working for the public good. Therefore, no public good will be achieved, unless of course selective incentives exist to motivate individuals to participate.

In applying this logic to Gush Emunim and Peace Now, it is helpful to begin by assessing what types of collective goods are at stake. Since collective goods are those goods that apply equally to everyone, they are often non-excludable. Clean air and water, a security-providing military, and public transportation infrastructure are all examples of such public goods. Whether or not an individual participates in cleaning up the environment, he will enjoy the benefits of clean air and water; this is the essence of the free-rider problem of collective action.

The public goods that will come about if Peace Now is successful are, advocates argue, is public security. The primary argument advanced by Peace Now is that the state of Israel will be *more* secure if it makes the proper territorial concessions to the Palestinians (namely, those territories seized by Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War) and agrees to a two-state solution. Therefore, *peace* and *security* are the collective goods that will be achieved if Peace Now reaches its goals.

The collective good envisioned by Gush Emunim is also one of security, as with Peace Now, as well as religious fulfillment. While stressing the extreme importance of the continued survival of the state of Israel, they believe that by carrying out their settlement activities they are 'helping along' the redemption process, which will ultimately result in the complete fulfillment of religious prophecies (Don-Yehiya, 226). However, although this goal is abstract in nature and would be a collective good for all Jewish people (according to the

movement), it is not a goal that is interpreted in the same way by everyone. Even among supporters of Gush Emunim, for example, there are divergent views. Some believe that settlements truly are a God-ordained duty; others are along for the ride for political reasons; still others may be highly religious but believe God will punish those who ruthlessly attempt to establish sovereignty over *Eretz Yisrael* (the Biblical Land of Israel). Furthermore, there are many Israelis who do not support the movement, for whom the expansionist goal of Gush Emunim would *not* be a collective good at all. This is in contrast to the ideas of security and survival through peaceful means, which would benefit all Israelis (except for, perhaps, 'irrational' ones, who enjoy war for war's sake).

The selective incentive offered by Gush Emunim is that of a home for oneself and one's family in the context of fulfilling God's prophecy. Peace Now, on the other hand, have not offered any comparably concrete selective incentives. The only incentive offered to participants is that of affiliation, which will be elaborated upon with the application of the social movement theories of Friedman and McAdam (below).

Peace Now has not offered selective incentives beyond identification with the 'peace movement,' and Gush Emunim has been much better at mobilizing its members and recruiting new participants as a result of the selective incentive of a home and a place in the redemption process. Another reason for the difference in mobilization and the gathering of support is that the goals of Peace Now seem to be quite out of reach and perhaps unattainable. There have been no real gains

brought about by Peace Now's activities since its inception in 1978. Supporters believe in a highly desirable end, but have no real, concrete way of getting there. Conversely, Gush Emunim has not experienced the kind of collective action problems as its counterpart, largely because it has inched toward its ultimate goal incrementally and in very concrete ways. Indeed, these incremental advances may be viewed by some or many participants to be ends in themselves.

To elaborate on Gush Emunim's mobilizing successes, it is the establishment of settlements in Palestinian land (albeit annexed land), and the potential for more settlements, that is a highly motivating factor for supporters and participants of Gush Emunim. The steady expansion of the Jewish people into the Biblical *Eretz Yisrael* represents the continual realization of the movement's goal. In contrast, the faraway objective of Peace Now bears more resemblance to the finish line of a very long racetrack or obstacle course that must be crossed in order for success to occur.

These differences illustrate the degree to which the nature of the sought-after collective good can motivate individuals to participate in a social movement. For Peace Now, mobilization is difficult because people do not believe anything they do will make a difference. In this, potential supporters who are ideologically predisposed to support a peace movement will refrain from exerting themselves because they do not anticipate any benefits to reward the costs they incur in participating. Gush Emunim, on the other hand, does not face as acute a

dilemma of collective action because the gains to be had from participating in the

movement are of extreme value; in addition, they are likely to be achieved

through a little bit of hard work. Actual and potential participants are constantly

exposed to the successes of other settlers, and therefore calculate that their own

reward will be quite high relative to their effort.

The insight of Friedman and McAdam on the problem of collective action

can provide us with another perspective of Peace Now and Gush Emunim. The

authors argue that social movements progress through three stages of

development, with the first stage being the emergence of the movement from an

existing network, organization, or social group. This, according to the authors, is

a crucial indicator of the future success of a movement; it is at this stage that the

pre-existing collective identity is conferred upon the new movement, and by

virtue of a pre-formed identity, the free-riding problem does not occur because

members are already participants (162). Gush Emunim emerged in the aftermath

of the 1967 Six-Day War from the National Religious Party (NRP), whose identity

of being 'faithful to the land of Israel,' according to the translation for the Hebrew

name they were given by the Israeli media, was directly transferred to the new

'Bloc of the Faithful.' It was after the 1973 Yom Kippur war (a surprise attack on

Israel by the Arab countries) that this organization became independent from its

'parent' network (the NRP), thereby entering stage two of the process outlined by

Friedman and McAdam.

In contrast, Peace Now did not arise in such a manner. Although the initial organizers of the movement shared an identity with one another by being soldiers in the Israeli army, the movement was formed on an ad-hoc basis when the 1978 Israeli-Egyptian peace talks were in danger of failing. These soldiers and reserve officers were soon joined by members of the public, who offered their support for the initiative of the soldiers. This initiative took the form of a letter sent to the Israeli Prime Minister expressing the desire of Israelis to live in peace. Their request, however, involved the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories which were seized during the Six-Day War in 1967 (Peace Now), a highly questionable and quite repugnant idea that was seen by a great many as being the most dangerous of alternatives. It appears, then, that the movement did not undergo the critical stage one of the process, and instead materialized in stage two. The lack of a parent network and being formed in such an ad-hoc manner meant that Peace Now did not have a stable and meaningful collective identity with which to start. On the one hand, while the majority of Israeli citizens may have wished for peace, only a small minority was willing to make the concessions stipulated in the letter to the Prime Minister. Peace Now could certainly not count on the support of the rest of the society with such a goal. On the other hand, before the peace talks of 1978, the identity shared by soldiers and reserve officers was a military one. They identified with one another by being in the army and because they happened to regard a specific course of action as being the best method of obtaining peace, not by being peace activists.

Stage three, the period of tension and decline of a social movement, was curiously never reached by Peace Now, however. At this stage in the evolution of a social movement, the collective identity begins to be assumed by more and more people in a society, regardless of whether they contribute their resources to the group; this tendency is known as free-riding. As previously stated, the significant majority of the Israeli public was not and is not sympathetic to the stated goals of Peace Now. Without a large enough group of followers (i.e., a 'critical mass'), the movement has not seen such problems of free-riding. Peace Now can be regarded as a movement with a collective good (peace and security) as the ultimate goal but can offer no selective incentives of any value for nonmembers. As mentioned above, in contrast, Gush Emunim is a group that offers valuable selective incentives (settlements) that appeal to large segments of the Israeli population. Gush Emunim overcame the traditional free-rider problem with the selective incentive they offered. It also paired this with another goal of the organization, religious support from the sector of the population that believes redemption will result from settlement of the occupied territories. Thus, the magnitude of Gush Emunim participation has surpassed the critical mass.

As previously mentioned, Klandermans discusses the dissemination by the media of certain 'ideological packages,' which then play a significant role in shaping the issues and attitudes that are salient at any point in time in a society (79). For Israel, the most outstanding issue has always been one of security. Since the state's founding in 1948, the very existence of Israel has been

threatened by outside forces, and every single Israeli citizen who consumes media has been, and will continue to be, reminded of it every day.

The high salience of Israel's security issue has been taken advantage of by Gush Emunim, who then uses it as a tool to delegitimize its opponent, Peace Now. By portraying Peace Now as a group whose objectives are careless and not in tune with the realities faced by Israelis, Gush Emunim contributed to preventing its opponent from gaining support. The collective identity of Jews as being a persecuted people who must preserve the security of their country at all costs has not been kind to the proposition that by withdrawing from the occupied territories, the most pressing of the external threats will vanish. While such a strategy could in reality turn out to be the best way of achieving peace, it certainly does not guarantee the disappearance of these dangers. For many Israelis, this is too great of a risk to take, considering that the failure of such a strategy could be catastrophic and would undoubtedly leave the country in even more danger.

It is this collective identity and political culture that can be seen as the binding force behind the general distaste for Peace Now and the recognition of Gush Emunim. According to Friedman and McAdam, a necessary condition that must be met before an individual associates himself or herself with a social or political group is that the identity of the group in question must be at least somewhat similar to the identity that an individual attaches to himself. In other words, "people affiliate with groups for a variety of reasons, but they are not about to do so if the group's identity is incompatible with their image of

themselves" (164). Uri Ben-Eliezer's analysis of the collectivist nature of the democratic political culture in Israel supports this idea and helps to explain the relative success of Gush Emunim: "Espousing a collectivistic ethos, neither Labor [the left-wing government] nor its successor, the Likud [the right-wing government], could put up a firm resistance to Gush Emunim's settlement activities, which were portrayed as part of the past and present 'collective will'" (407).

In order to compare Gush Emunim and Peace Now, David Newman and Tamar Hermann trace the activities and impact of these two groups since their founding in the 1970s. It has been demonstrated in various studies and accounts that Peace Now has historically been less effective at achieving its goals than Gush Emunim; Newman and Hermann provide an excellent and informative comparison of the two in order to illustrate the reasons why this is so. One of the primary points of the authors' argument is that it is the relationship between a protest movement and the government, on the one hand, and the degree to which the public views the movement as legitimate, on the other, that determines the success or failure of any given protest movement in Israel (524). Similarly, Tamar Hermann notes in a separate work that the ability to influence the government while still conforming to sociopolitical norms is a mixture that is significantly advantageous to the success of a protest movement (160).

The uniqueness of the historical experience and the culture that grew out of that shared experience makes Israel an interesting case to study from any

perspective. The Jewish collective memory of mass persecution has contributed in a substantial way to the political culture of Israel, and the security-oriented attitude among Israelis that has necessarily been instilled due to an environment of constant external threat has given rise to a general legitimacy problem for groups that appear to trivialize these security issues. According to Newman and Hermann, it is this rather unreceptive political atmosphere that has plagued the Peace Now movement since its inception.

Edy Kaufman has identified four factors that have undoubtedly contributed to the inability of Peace Now to influence government policy: First, the peace movement, while espousing its share of militancy, is not nearly as aggressive as the settlement movement. This has resulted in a failure of members to sufficiently commit to its cause, preferring to continue to lead normal and busy lives which do not leave much room for continual activism. Second, Peace Now activists have been branded traitors and have even been accused of spying for the Palestinian Liberation Organization. The tendency for society to label the group as such has caused major legitimacy issues. Third, rather than taking initiative, Peace Now tends to react to events and decisions made by government personnel. This includes occasional demonstrations when events occur or major government decisions are made, rather than continuous activism. Fourth, the occupation has taken on a characteristic of irreversibility as more and more settlements are erected. It is widely believed that settlement activity in the

occupied territories represent a *fait accompli* that cannot be undone without

major difficulties and political unrest (Kaufman 75-77).

The ability of a social movement to operate effectively in this collective

political culture depends in large part upon the acceptance of its principles by

society as a whole, as well as the extent to which a group follows the rules of

society and appears to be looking out for the well-being of all citizens. It is in this

context that we may gain some insight for Peace Now's 'failure' and Gush

Emunim's 'success.' Edy Kaufman has an interesting perspective on the

sociopolitical backdrop against which Peace Now has had to operate:

> Certainly, a number of adverse trends have operated autonomously in Israeli society and are perhaps too strong to be countered by the forces of the peace camp: a powerful coalition of religiously inspired fundamentalists, who call for the retention of all the territories promised by God to the people of Israel; a belated nationalism which denies the rights of other peoples; a militaristic adventurism by those who think the power of arms can impose peaceful solutions by creating facts that are irreversible, and racist elements within Israeli society that emphasize the superior rights of the Jewish nation. No doubt, the minority represented by the peace movement cannot easily counteract such powerful trends (69).

# CHAPTER 8. CONCLUSION

In applying three theoretical perspectives to two rivaling social protest movements in Israel, we have gained much insight into the reasons behind the relative success of Gush Emunim as compared with Peace Now. We have seen how Olson's logic of collective action can be invoked to explain the effects of incentives (or the lack thereof) on the ability of a movement to mobilize participants. The emphasis placed on collective identities and social networks by Friedman and McAdam has shed light on how the development processes of social movements apply to Gush Emunim and Peace Now. Finally, Klandermans' treatment of 'success expectations' has allowed us to see the differences in efficacy between the two movements.

The fundamental difference in the nature of the goals of these two protest movements, is that while Gush Emunim's objectives are positive, concrete, and continuous, the goal of Peace Now bears more resemblance to a far-off and unlikely dream that is slipping away with every foot of Jewish expansion into the lands of Palestine. Gush Emunim has an advantage in the sense that it is easier to take an action than it is to get an entity to undo an action that has already been taken (Norell 99; Schelling 69-78). In order to achieve its objectives, Peace Now must compel the Israeli government to undo a fait accompli, a task much more difficult than that of Gush Emunim. Furthermore, while Gush Emunim carries out its tasks by incremental construction of what is more or less

permanent (especially since the legalization of settlement activity by the Likud government), and therefore enjoys a continuous sense of accomplishment, Peace Now conducts its business through petitions and demonstrations, the former of which has always been an unpopular political activity in Israel. As previously mentioned, the tendency of Israeli society as a whole to view Peace Now's activities as being unpatriotic and even dangerous has contributed to a general lack of public and governmental support for the movement. In contrast, the use of rallies by Gush Emunim, especially the ones that take place inside Palestinian 'territory' on Israeli holidays, succeeded in attracting large crowds of both supporters and people just looking for a 'good time.' The movement has been successful in projecting an image of being widely supported, which adds to its legitimacy (Newman and Hermann 518).

Another reason for the failure of Peace Now to achieve the level of success of its counterpart involves ethnic and socioeconomic divisions within the left-wing Jewish culture. Specifically, while Peace Now is made up of mainly middle-class Ashkenazi Jews (as is Gush Emunim), the propensity of the public to view Peace Now as being an elitist group is reflected by the existence of other peace groups made up of Sephardic Jews (516). This failure to consolidate political influence has not been suffered by Gush Emunim.

Organizationally, the centralized decision-making apparatus of Gush Emunim has made for a much more efficient movement than the decentralized Peace Now. While the latter has often experienced problems of communication

and disagreement on direction and programming, Gush Emunim's strong, cohesive, and exclusive leadership has allowed its policies and activities to run more smoothly. Furthermore, the low turnover of Gush Emunim's leadership has allowed the group to maintain close governmental ties over time. In contrast, Peace Now's relatively high turnover rate and low lobbying efficacy has prevented it from realizing its objectives (Newman and Hermann 517).

Another factor that can explain the goal attainment differences between Peace Now and Gush Emunim involves the Israeli public and the government. As argued by Uri Ben-Eliezer, the political culture of Israel today is a relic of its earlier, pre-state society. Ben-Eliezer's notion of 'critical compliance' grew out of the relationship between leaders and the public and is still apparent in contemporary Israel. Specifically, citizens have always felt intensely compelled to question the competency of the leadership and to criticize it when necessary, but this attitude was generally coupled with an equally intense desire to obey and to carry out duties (402-04). To Ben-Eliezer, then, the institution of democracy in Israel is collective rather than liberal in nature.

The case of social movements in Israel shows that political culture is an important indicator of whether or not a movement will be successful. If the public does not embrace a social movement or if the movement does not achieve a critical mass of supporters, it will likely fail to reach its goals (as long as its goals affect the public at large). To achieve critical mass a social movement must overcome the problems inherent in collective action. A group is more likely to

overcome these problems if it arises out of a previously existing network which connects individuals together. As a movement begins to emerge from a network its members will collectively assess the likelihood that movement will experience success. This expectation of success is an important factor because it encourages individuals to commit more time and resources toward making the group a success.

Further research should be done to assess the effect of collective action principles on protest movements. Studying collective action in other regions and contexts is important. However, political culture should be taken into account when assessing collective action and protest movements, because it shapes the way people interact with one another.

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