century, a time when events of great moment, locally, regionally, and globally, were afoot. The book not only explores what happened, but how it happened and how it was covered by the press. It also explores the economic and logistical challenges of competition for readership and advertising revenues, which shaped the papers' content. The book could have been richer if it included a chapter solely dedicated to the history of the Hebrew press worldwide, especially the Jewish diaspora in Europe and beyond. Nevertheless, Elyada's work is very much relevant to historians and academics whose interests cover the history of the Hebrew and Jewish press in Palestine during the Ottoman Empire, including the beginning development of those newspapers, their media techniques, procedures, challenges, and contents.

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YAEL WARSHEL. *Experiencing the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Children, Peace Communication and Socialization*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, August 2021). $99.99 hardback. ISBN 9781108485722.

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Experiencing the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict was published in the context of escalating violence and a pending cease fire between Israel and Palestine in May 2021 and the May 2021 publication of a dissertation by J. R. Reiling, a retired army officer, who attempted to employ soft power strategies to change hearts and minds of Iraqis during the 2007–08 surge. Yael Warshel's book evaluating *Sesame Street* programming for Israel and Palestine is also a study of soft power, which, as in Iraq, brought few desirable results. Following the conventions of writing dealing with policy issues, Warshel, like Reiling, makes recommendations for future peace-building efforts. Both authors find that a lack of national will makes it impossible to overcome cultural differences and find solutions to political, social, and economic issues. Leaders like Nouri al-Maliki in Iraq and Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel are thus enabled to advance their own political interests as opposed to national interests.

I recall watching *Sesame Street* on a black-and-white television in my one-sheet hotel in Amman, Jordan, in 2000 and wondering whether the show was doing more than educating children. Now I have my answer. No!

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Warshel asks whether *Sesame Street* achieved its programming goals for children in Israel and Palestine. The book is also an advocacy piece for advancing the subdiscipline of Peace Comm. I should clarify that Peace Comm does not just apply to academic studies, but refers to organizations, primarily nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) or civil society and religious groups that work toward peace and conflict resolution, independently from the efforts of governments.

The original *Sesame Street* started in 1969 with the Children's Television Workshop and aired on U.S. public television stations. Co-productions of *Sesame Street* have occurred in some 20 countries. Their programming goals are to develop children's cognitive skills by teaching numbers, letters, and vocabulary and to tap into viewers' affective domain or to socialize them by promoting values such as tolerance of diversity, cooperation, and positive strategies of conflict resolution. These goals were shared by the originators of the Palestinian production *Shara'a Simsim* and the Israeli production of *Rechov Sumsum*. Both shows, funded by a USAID grant, aired for two seasons starting in 1998.

One chapter is devoted to interviews with individuals involved in these two productions. Sadly, after Season One, joint planning meetings and cooperation ended, and the two crews decided to work separately. Some Palestinians saw their Jewish counterparts as "arrogant," and some Jews saw their Palestinian counterparts as too bureaucratic. The crews created two Sesame Streets, utopian worlds where humans and puppets had equal status and shared the same goals. The characters visited each other, but they did not live on the same street. They might share hummus and falafel, but at the end of the day, they retreated to their own neighborhoods. In effect, a two-state solution existed. By 2002 the cross-over segments were eliminated with the rationale given by project director Shari Rosenfeld, "The possibility of finding an Israeli and a Palestinian on the same street is so far removed from reality, and imaginary, that we thought that the kids wouldn't be able to connect it."[1]

Warshel measured the affective domain and interviewed some 320 five- to eight-year-old children and 230 parents from three communities: Palestinians from East Barta'a, Jewish-Israeli children from the settlement Alfei Menashe in the West Bank and Arab-Israeli children in Umm al-Fahm. The interviews included a questionnaire, and the children viewed a mock episode of clips from the series' two seasons. Warshel uses anthropologist Geertz concept of "thick description" to describe and explain her interviews to see whether that second goal to socialize and promote friendships was achieved. I assume the author conducted the Hebrew interviews, because she only indicates the use of a translator for the Arabic interviews. She basically uses a snowball method to find her sample. The field work covers the years of 2001 and 2004–06.

Devoting a chapter to each of the three interviewed groups, Warshel builds a case for *Sesame Street*'s failure as a form of soft power. "I demonstrate how,

[1] Yael Warshel, *Experiencing the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Children, Peace Communication and Socialization*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, August 2021), 104.

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through their own actions, the children reproduced the very conflict the series attempted to mediate. As a result, their behaviors helped render *Sesame Street's* peace building experiment a failure . . . and helped make the Israeli–Palestinian conflict more intractable."[2]

Overall, the children experienced a disconnect between what they observed in their daily lives and the characters in the programs. Palestinian children negatively characterized Jews as "military" and "police" who wore uniforms. Since none of the characters in the programming wore uniforms, the characters could not be Jewish. Despite contacts with Palestinian laborers who came to work daily in the Jewish settlement of Alfei Menashe, those children could not visualize that the children they saw in the programming were Palestinian. In their minds Palestinians were "terrorists" and "want to kill us." Certainly, they would not be allowed to interact with Jewish children.

It would be helpful if the findings were summarized in a table, and I am troubled by statements like 60 percent reported, when I do not know the total *n* of the given sample in each city. I recognize that this is a qualitative study, not a quantitative study, but presenting such information in addition to the children's sample stories would strengthen her findings.

We do not know whether parents talked about the programing with their children, although there is some indication that they watched with them. The two-step flow developed by sociologists Lazarsfeld and Katz might apply here if parents functioned as opinion leaders or relayed stories of their contacts, which for many Palestinians would be negative, with Israeli checkpoints, problems with securing employment, and periodic bombings of their homes and schools.

Warshel's interviews show that the two streets are isolated in daily life. There was no contact between the interviewed Israelis and Israeli-Arabs. Palestinians in Israel and in Palestine had limited family contacts. Israeli-Palestinians characterized the Palestinians as less educated, wearing dirty clothes, and less modern. Many of these Israeli-Palestinian children are older now and may have set aside these stereotypes to participate in the recent work strike in Israel to show solidarity with Palestine.

Space does not permit a discussion of the literature on attitude change; suffice it to say Warshel finds no magic bullet.

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[2] Warshel, *Experiencing the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, 60.

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