



Review Article

Settler Colonialism and Resistance Historical Roots of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

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**Abstract**

The paper is the historical trace of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, within the larger contexts of the colonization, settler projects, and world geopolitics. Starting with the emergence of political Zionism in late 19th century Europe, the paper reviews how antisemitism, imperialism, and frequent betrayals by world powers all came together to form a century of dispossession, violence and rebellion. The article studies critical turning points using a historical-analytical methodology, including the Balfour Declaration, the British Mandate, the Nakba of 1948, the six-day war, the Oslo Accords, and the ongoing humanitarian disaster in Gaza (2023- 2025). Rooted in settler-colonial and postcolonial theory, the discussion proves the way Zionism was both a national movement and a European colonial project. The conclusions outline that the Gaza crisis that has taken place today is not the singular battle, but rather the result of a 100 years-long process of displacement and subjugation. The paper ends by restating the moral, political, and scholarly urgency of re-forming Palestine as an incomplete project of decolonization of the world.

Keywords

Zionism, Nakba, Settler-Colonialism, Post-Colonial Theory, Genocide, Occupation, Decolonization.

1. Introduction

Israeli-Palestinian conflict is widely discussed (especially in media) as a primordial, irreducible struggle between Jews and Muslims, like that between ancient religious animosities. It is such a misleading display. Instead of being explained by the existence of predetermined identities or eternal religious hostilities, the essence of the conflict is explained by the contemporary historical changes: European colonization, nationalism, and conflicting imperialism interests of the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries (Khalidi, 2020; Sayegh, 1965). This paper will argue that Zionism, British colonial interventions, the dispossession of 1948, the occupation of 1967, and that of the present Gaza crisis should all be interpreted in the light of settler colonialism, dispossession and Palestinian resistance. Zionism took shape in politics, which is sometimes viewed as having been crystallized by the first Zionist Congress, held by Herzl in Basel in 1897. Part caused by European Jewish reactions to antisemitism persecution, that movement had an element of transplanting a European-Jewish social and political structure into Palestine, already inhabited by Arab communities. Zionism is so understood by a number of scholars: as not only refuge or asylum, but as an organized settlement of a new polity in territory occupied by other peoples (Pappé, 2006; Wolfe, 2006 in settler colonial theory). The logic of Zionism was made consistent with imperial power when the British during World War I accepted the Balfour Declaration (1917), in which they promised that the Jewish people had a national home in Palestine but failed to take proper measures to guarantee the political rights of the already established Arab people. The two-fold offer of, on the one hand, underwriting Zionist settler ambitions at the

expense of Arab political engagement can be seen as a classic colonialist argument, in which settler interests take precedence over native ones. According to [Erakat \(2019\)](#) and recent legal comment of the UN Commission of Inquiry, this is one of a series of privileging settlers and making dispossession normal ([United Nations, 2024](#)).

The tenure systems, taxes and immigration policy under British Mandate (1920-1948) were re-structured in a manner that discriminated the Arabs and favored Zionist settlement. Disposing of land by registration schemes, leasing policies, and expropriation practices also added to increasing dispossession ([Anderson, 2018](#)). Instead of stabilizing the territory, the Mandate increased the social stratification, landlessness, and antagonisms between the communities. The conflict between the goals of settlers and the existence of natives smoldered into the Nakba (catastrophe) in 1948: the mass exodus of more than 700,000 Palestinian people, the destruction of hundreds of villages, the formation of Israel. [Khalidi \(2020\)](#) insists that this was not the unfortunate consequence of war but an organization rather a structural attempt to evacuate a people to reorganize space in favor of Zionist settlement. According to Israeli archives and studies (both official and amateur) written over the past few decades, a lot of these expulsions were systematic ([Pappé, 2006](#)).

The 1967 war changed the conflict: the occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights by Israel made the military domination of Palestinian life institutional. The settlement growth, land seizure, division of infrastructure and harsh movement limitations became the most important tools of control ([Locker-Biletzki, 2025](#)). These changes, in settler colonial terms, not only represent military occupation, but ongoing processes of colonial consolidation and fragmentation of indigenous society. In the occupied territories, Palestinians have lived their daily life mediated by checkpoints, permit regimes, home demolitions and separation barriers. Spatial division, restriction of movement and disenfranchisement by law have limited collective Palestinian politics. These are not individual policies, but instead, using the settler colonial lens allows us to view them as tools of relations of control and elimination ([Badra, 2024](#); [Wolfe, 2006](#) in settler colonial theory).

Gaza nowadays is the clearest example of what this long course can lead to among all Palestinian territories. Its economy and society have been destroyed since the Israeli blockade on Gaza was enforced in 2007 ([Roy, 2016](#)). The war of 2023-2025 will be a new level of destruction: the destruction of infrastructure in large volumes, mass displacement, conditions of famine, and appalling violations of the international humanitarian law. In September 2025, the United Nations, through the independent international commission of inquiry, released a report that found Israeli forces guilty of carrying out acts that qualify as four out of five of the elements of the Genocide Convention and that the only possible conclusion that can be drawn based on the sum of evidence is that Israel acted with genocidal intent ([United Nations, 2025](#); [OHCHR, 2025](#)). This was echoed by the Amnesty international who reported that the evidence has now led to a request of international intervention. In its legal report, the COI thoroughly examines killings, imposition of conditions of life that are aimed at causing destruction and actions that are meant to prevent reproduction ([OHCHR, 2025](#)). Similar humanitarian pointers present a shocking image. There has been famine in Gaza as stated by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), where the Gaza City and vicinity is in formal famine According to UNRWA, Situation Report 189 (September 2025), the delivery of aid is badly restricted because of ongoing hostilities and infrastructural damage. In addition, killing of civilians in search of help, such as in distribution lines has turned out to be a tragedy: since May 2025, thousands of Palestinians have been shot at humanitarian distributions or near them. This is not a crisis that has been caused by chance. These trends, according to the UN and human rights institutions, are in line with an eliminationism population policy, and forced migration. In September 2025, the COI also determined that some of the statements by Israeli official's direct evidence of genocidal intent ([United Nations, 2025](#)). To be brief, Gaza is currently functioning as a place where the logic of settler colonial elimination is put into practice in its most radical ways.

In spite of all this disastrous, the struggle remains to be unilateral. Political, spatial, cultural and legal Palestinian resistance has remained as outbreak to colonial erasure. The approaches to resistance vary: mass action, lawful action through international courts, narrative struggle using memory and oral histories, and nonviolent action, mobilization of the civil society. Here, an example of computational projects exploring Palestinian oral history archives could include the ability of communities of refugees to maintain collective identity and resisting erasure ([Awwad et al., 2025](#)). Resistance in the settler colonial literature is not an accident, but it is a form of indigenous people defying the settler order not only by resisting their removal, but by reclaiming their presence, identity and other spatial imaginations ([Badra, 2024](#)). In Palestine, a counter-colonial logic is formed by memory of Nakba, the ongoing issue of refugees and daily resistance (agricultural return, graffiti, and international lobbying, etc).

This paper challenges the idea that the Israeli Palestinian conflict can be seen not as the eternal or timeless conflict but as a dynamic one, rooted in history, mediated by the forces of settler colonialism and Palestinian resistance. The title, *Settler Colonialism and Resistance: Historical Roots of the Israeli Palestinian Conflict*, maps out the analytic orientation: the lens of analysis is settler colonialism: the opposition is resistance; the opposition agent is the agency. To demonstrate

this the paper explores the principles of settlement colonialism of Zionism, the British Mandate and tools of displacement, the Nakba of 1948 and structural dispossession, and the occupation and fragmentation of Gaza in 1967 and the humanitarian disaster of Gaza as continuing colonization. When composing these layers, the point of focus is to change the conceptual framework on the concept of conflict (balance of antagonistic identities) to prevent the colonial order and resistance. This reframing invites the view of the Israeli Palestinian conflict as something that is not fixed and permanent but has been historically constructed, disputed, and has the potential to change. Besides the historical colonial buildings, the current geopolitical changes in the Middle East highlight how the logic of settler colonialism is entangled with the global economic and strategic networks. As an example, [Bukhari, Iqbal, and Khan \(2024\)](#) discuss the effects of the wars in Palestine and Ukraine disrupting the main economic routes, including China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), India-Middle East Economic Corridor (IMEEC), and the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) as an example, and emphasize that the territorial conflict is not only about land and people but the global trade, infrastructure and investment flows. Similarly, [Bukhari, Khan, and Haq \(2024\)](#) follow the history of relations between Iran and Israel prior to the 1979 Revolution to demonstrate the cooperative aspects of these relations which were subsequently converted to reflect the influence of ideology, diplomacy, and state power as dynamic components of an older history of regional colonial experiences and resistance.

2. Literature Review

Israeli-Palestinian conflict is often framed as a primordial, irreconcilable, religious conflict between Jews and Muslims though such understanding hides its European colonialist, modern nationalist, and imperialist historical roots, especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries ([Sayegh, 1965](#)). The political institutionalization of Zionism, which scholars like [Sayegh \(1965\)](#) also consider a settler-colonial ideology, came with the convening of the First Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897 and on a land that already had an indigenous Arab Palestinian society. Zionist aspirations not only reflected the experiences of the Jews in antisemitism and exclusion in Europe, but also intersected with the British plans in the Middle East of imperial expansion. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 had guaranteed the Jewish people a national home but in the same breath, it had made no similar guarantee to the political rights of the Arab majority in Palestine. This asymmetry reflected a broader colonial logic where the sovereignty of indigenous peoples was subordinated to settler interests ([Atran, 2025](#)).

The institutional character of Palestinian dispossession, and the impotence (or reluctance) of the colonial state to rectify it, is also exemplified in the article by [Charles Anderson \(2018\)](#) on the British Mandate policies (1920-1948), which enabled land transfers, institutionalized inequality and entrenched exclusionary settlement practices. These tensions are so severe that by the time of the foundation of Israel in 1948, people were displaced in masses and devastated. To Zionists, 1948 was the symbol of independence; to Palestinians, it was al-Nakba (the catastrophe), the displacement of more than 700,000 residents, the demolition of hundreds of villages and the creation of a huge refugee community ([Khalidi, 2020](#)).

Founded on European nationalism, antisemitism and colonialism, Zionism aimed not only to provide a safe haven to Jews but also to establish a European style nation in Palestine. [Derek Penslar \(2023\)](#) shows that European emotional culture and settler-colonial ideologies had a significant impact on Zionism, and so it is placed in the same global context as colony-based projects in North America, South Africa, or Australia. [Ilan Pappé \(2006\)](#) builds on this point of view arguing that the Nakba was not merely a sad outcome of war but an organized campaign of ethnic cleansing geared towards achieving a Jewish majority demographic. Expulsions, village destruction and forced removal, he suggests, are to be thought of as calculated settler-colonial practices of elimination.

This process was solidified by the aftermath of the Six-Day War in the year 1967. A regime of military law, land confiscation and economic dependence was institutionalized by the occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights by Israel. [Gershon Shafir \(2017\)](#) emphasizes that this job was being systematically denatured as a temporality, becoming a standard and integrated into the state policy. Instead of destroying the institutions of inequality, the Oslo Accords and the peace processes that followed reproduced and legitimized their institutions, in the sense that they divided Palestinian political unity and replaced partial autonomy with real sovereignty. International diplomacy in this sense served to strengthen the structural imbalance, but not to solve it.

Gaza is the extreme form of these dynamics. Economic collapse, social disintegration, and constant war are the three things that the territory has experienced since the blockade was imposed in 2007. [Sara Roy \(2011\)](#) puts the situation in perspective, as a process of de-development: a premeditated policy of weakening the economic and social pillars of Palestinian society. This confirms that the crisis of Gaza is not a mere humanitarian disaster which happens by chance, but a structural consequence of control and domination policies. [Locker-Biletzki \(2025\)](#) also puts the colonization of Gaza, the

West Bank, and East Jerusalem by Israel in the framework of a permanent settler-colonialism that generates structural inequality and realizes bio political and spatial displacement practices.

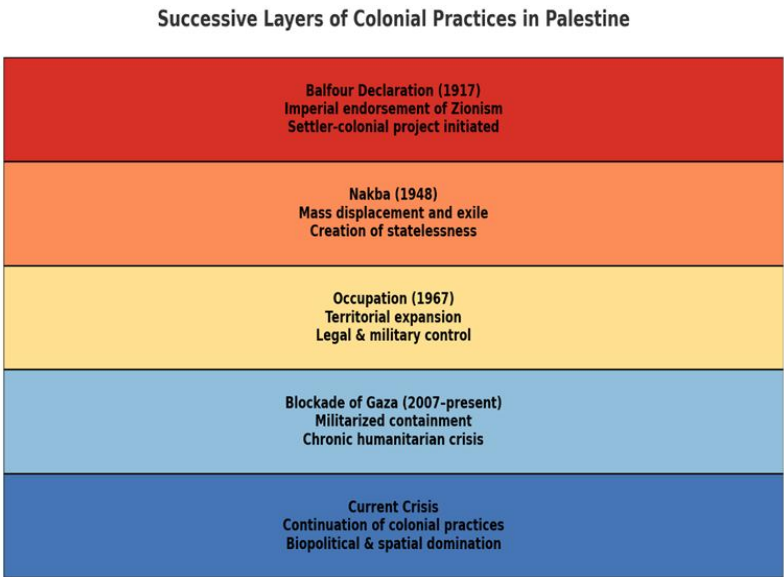
The latest Gaza war (2023-2025) has escalated this humanitarian disaster which had been long-standing. War crimes and widespread destruction have been documented and have spawned debates within the field of international law and even human rights scholarship regarding whether Israeli acts amount to genocide or not. [Amnesty International \(2024\)](#) and [United Nations investigations \(2025\)](#) expose patterns of mass civilian targeting, unlivable conditions, and systemic destruction of infrastructure. These results highlight the idea that the Gaza crisis cannot be perceived as a break and an exception. Rather, it must be placed in a longer history of settler colonialism and dispossession, one in which the logic of the Balfour Declaration, Nakba of 1948, occupation of 1967, and blockade since 2007 have been successive layers of a long and continuous colonial project ([Locker-Biletzki, 2025](#)).

2.1. Synthesis

The literature reviewed brings out three main insights into the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. To begin with, Zionism cannot be perceived as a simple nationalist movement but has to be placed in the larger framework of European imperialism as a settler-colonial project. It is this framing that helps to underline the fact that Zionism was incorporated into the logic of dispossession and territorial substitution and not in the neutral quest of a homeland. Second, Nakba of 1948 was not an isolated or one-time tragedy but a defining break that still affects the Palestinian identity, memory and experience. The organized extermination and displacement of Palestinian society at this time resulted in the conditions of exile and statelessness that cannot be solved. Third, the occupation of 1967 and the following blockade of Gaza are extensions of the process of dispossession, where previous colonial modalities of practice have been restructured into more coercive and militarized forms of control. These formations do not just end only at the conventional military occupation but comprises legal, spatial and bio political structures of subjugation. Meanwhile, there are silences in the literature that can be established. Despite the extensive literature on the Nakba and its consequences created by Israeli and Palestinian historians, very little of the discussions has focused on how the Palestinian struggle connected with the wider decolonization movements of the twentieth century in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Similarly, the humanitarian crises of Gaza have been the focus of much documentation, but the logic of settler colonialism is frequently pushed to the background by the rhetoric of humanitarian emergency. These framings are dangerous because they tend to make the destruction of Gaza a way of life instead of realizing it as a form of continuing colonialism. This paper thus tries to fill such gaps with references made to the settler-colonial and postcolonial theories in a historical-analytic framework. By so doing, it does not contextualize the Gaza crisis in terms of unique, humanitarian crisis, instead, it frames it as an incomplete global project of decolonization.

2.1.1. Visual Synthesis

Figure-1: Successive Layers of Colonial Practice in Palestine



3. Theoretical Framework

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the humanitarian disaster in Gaza, in particular, cannot be analyzed sufficiently in terms of the state-centric approach or short-term political perspective. Instead, it is a war that demands theoretical paradigms that preempts historical profundity, power and epistemic violence. In this respect, settler-colonial theory, post-colonial critique, and necropolises are mutually supportive theories that explain how Palestinian dispossession is not accidental and episodic, but a part of the global colonial structures. These theories demonstrate that the Palestinians dispossessions were not isolated incidents but processes which were entrenched in colonial practices, control of the narrative and control of life and death.

The formulation of [Patrick Wolfe \(2006\)](#) regarding the idea of settler colonialism is central to the settler-colonial theory: that settler colonialism is not an event, but a structure. Contrary to classical colonialism, which normally tries to exploit labor, settler colonialism tries to destroy and substitute native people. That reasoning is fulfilled in the Palestinian case, in the destruction and depopulation of villages in 1948 (the Nakba), in the settlements and infrastructure domination in the West Bank, and in the blockade and the siege of Gaza. All these activities do not occur as one-time historical events but rather constitute a continuous process of erasure, dispossession and land expropriation. Viewed in this perspective, it is impossible to solve the crisis through the implementation of temporary ceasefires or humanitarian interventions, since the root of the crisis is the lack of emergency conditions, but a structural regime of territorial exclusion and elimination ([Wolfe, 2006](#)).

The Postcolonial theory is a supplement to this because it questions that power is also working through knowledge, representation, and legitimacy. *Orientalism* (1978) by Edward Said reveals the process through which Western epistemic traditions created the irrational, backward and threatening image of the Orient. Tune the Palestinian case to this discourse and Palestinians are framed as naturally aggressive or radical and the violence of the Israeli state as self-defense or of necessity. These kinds of representations do not simply reflect on reality, but they construct and justify it. Over the past few years, this criticism has been expanded by academics such as Noura Erakat to the international law and human rights discourse, wherein the analyst believes that the law is often a location of epistemic violence, i.e. the colonizer is given the power to specify the legal and ethical conditions of redress ([Erakat, 2019](#); [Erakat, 2025](#)). As an example, a speech at the commemoration of the Nakba at the UN, Erakat gave a warning that when genocide becomes normalized with the help of legal apathy, one will have nothing left ([Erakat, 2025](#)). This unveils the conflict concerning whose voice matters, whose suffering becomes readable and understandable is in the core of the colonial logic of dispossession.

By revealing the manner in which sovereignty is imposed on the regulation of the conditions of death and life, necropolitics as proposed by [Achille Mbemba \(2003\)](#) offers an invaluable third dimension. Israeli domination of food, water, electricity, movement and rebuilding in Gaza produces a regime of slow death interrupted by periodic bursts of mass violence. The blockade, bombings, and limitations on reconstruction make Gaza what Mbemba calls a death-world a place where life is under threat, where death is rationed and normalized, and where being alive is precarious. In April 2024, a peer-reviewed article on Israeli necropolitics and the pursuit of health justice, reported the functioning of health systems in Gaza under direct threat, which revealed the way bio political control becomes the core of Israeli strategy, rather than being marginal ([Hanbali et al., 2024](#)). Under this argument, it is not just that he (or she) dies, but that he (or she) can be permitted to live, and under what abject circumstances.

Collected together, these structures provide a more far-reaching and scrutinizing perspective. Settler-colonial theory explains why displacement and exclusion are structurally integral, postcolonial critique explains how displacement and exclusion are meditated, and necropolitics explains how life itself is distributed and made risky. This combination enables us not to regard the Gaza crisis as an isolated humanitarian crisis, simply a singular instance, but as part of a long-standing colonial framework. In fact, in her report *Anatomy of a Genocide: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967* ([United Nations, 2024](#)), [Francesca Albanese \(2024\)](#) outlines the current attack on Gaza as a step in a settler-colonial project of erasure. The report stresses the fact that Gazan destruction and circumstances applied are in line with a logic of elimination that is heavily based on territorial exclusion and colonial domination.

Through a synthesis of these theoretical perspectives, the current paper places the Gaza crisis in the unfinished international project of decolonization. It does not hold the notion that the suffering of Gaza is a unique humanitarian anomaly, but places it on a spectrum of colonial violence and struggle- maintained by infrastructure as well as by discourse, laws and even by death itself.

4. Methodology

The approach of this study is qualitative, historical-analytical, to understand the crisis in Gaza from the viewpoints of settler-colonial theory and postcolonial theory. Its aim is to read Gaza not only as humanitarian crisis in this sense but as a structural concretization of processes of settler-colonial domination and necropolitics. Using evidence base sourced from primary and secondary sources, the study has established a broad base of evidence. Primary sources include United Nations resolutions, reports of Special Rapporteurs, official government documents, NGO reports, and international media and secondary sources include journal articles, scholarly monographs and particularly contributions to critical theory and decolonial scholarship. This combination of sources gives both an empirical base and a theoretical depth, and both the structure and the discursive dimensions of the conflict are subject to full interrogation. Each combines methods of discourse analysis, structural analysis and comparative historical analysis. This paper argues that discourse studies enable interrogation of the ways that Palestinian speech has been represented or silenced in the mainstream of global power narratives, and delegitimised. Structural analysis allows to trace continuities between historical moments in which the Nakba in 1948, the occupation in 1967, and the blockade in 2007 are all - rather than peculiar crises - but different phases of an interconnected settler-colonial project. An intertemporal perspective places Palestine within and among the broader struggles over decolonisation in Africa, Asia and Latin America, drawing out continuities and differences in the tactics of colonial nativity, pressure and resistance.

4.1. Limitations and Position of Research

Occupation, blockade and denial of access to the Palestinian territories prohibited ethnographic fieldwork or gathering of first-hand testimonies. Therefore, the research is mainly based on mediated accounts and secondary resources. While this removes sensibility and immediacy of ethnographic data, this is counter-balanced by employing tools of critical triangulation, cross-referencing of sources and an appeal to decolonial narratology, which puts minority voices at the heart of discourse. The work usually does not raise questions that could otherwise be solved by doing on-the-spot fieldwork, as the organization reports and testimonies contained and written by non-governmental organizations including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the United Nations, help ensure that Palestinian voices predominate in the analysis.

4.2. Ethical Considerations

The research is led by the principles of ethics which involve raising the Palestinian voices and resisting hegemonic discourses that depoliticize their struggle. It incorporates oral histories, testimonies, and decolonial scholarship not so that Palestinians can be objectified as passive victims of history, but so as to be recognised as active agents of resistance and continuity of history. Methodologically, this orientation places the structural logic of the settler-colonialism at the centre of its analyses, puts Gaza into cosmopolitan colonial histories, and anticipates insights heretofore marginalised in mainstream scholarship. Through practicing a combination of these qualitative techniques and actively making informed choices to adopt epistemic fairness, the study brings analytical richness and methodological justification. Moving beyond coordinative aid discourses, and recognising Gaza's constant evolution as a paradigmatic example of settler-colonial endurance and international indirect complicity, Uleman reveals the structural dimensions of this suffering, and the possibilities for survival.

5. Results and Discussion

This study highlights the inability of humanitarian or security based frameworks to adequately explain the destruction of Gaza. While such views elevate the suffering and vulnerability of the Palestinian people, they also, at the same time, obfuscate underlying structural and historical factors. When Gaza can be addressed only as a humanitarian emergency, it is an anomaly rather than part of a settler colonial project of domination and dispossession. Similarly, discourses of security emphasize defence and threat on the part of Israel, deemphasizing Palestinian voices and resistance and silencing them. An expanded understanding is essential that involves contextualising Gaza in relation to the long history of Zionist settler-colonial expansion, international complicity and continued modes of resistance and highlight the inadequacy of humanitarian discourse.

5.1. Palestine and movements of Global Decolonization

The Palestinian struggle cannot be seen outside of the wider history of global decolonisation in the twentieth century. Just as anti-colonial struggles in Africa, Asia and Latin America challenged European imperialist rivals, so Palestinians are fighting against a settler-colonial regime which has many similarities with them. For example, the Algerian narrative of liberation from the colonialism of the French, which involved the systematic expulsion of the population, militarised re-

pression and a discourse of "civilising" domination maps well onto the Palestinian experience under Zionist colonial expansion. Similarly, the opposition against apartheid in South Africa is very comparable to the current segregation, land dispossession, and disenfranchisement that is negatively impacting the people of Palestine. But there are also differences: while most other former colonies eventually gained statehood after violent liberation wars, Palestinian statehood is still under the shield of international indifference and the continuing settler-colonial occupation and entrenchment. Placing the Palestinian cause into this global history, however, nestles the cause into a continuation of failed struggles for decolonization that, in turn, enriches scholarly and activist critiques and analytic solidarity across contexts.

5.2. Partial Examination of the Complexity of Internal Palestinian Politics

While the paper has focused on the external factors of subjugation and come up with a collective view of resilience, it has paid less attention to internal factors of Palestinian politics. The organizational fragmentation of Palestinian politics, the policies of Hamas, Fatah, PFLP, etc., and their Nm's of resistance have almost decided both the achievements as well as the shortcomings of the Palestinian struggle. Under AS, the Palestinian Authority (PA) continues to play the vague role - stuck between administering and sharing rule-and remains almost always discussed in relation to (the memory of) Oslo. All of these internal complexities make it tricky to talk about the greater picture of resistance and illustrate how a sense of unity as well as differences has shaped the course of Palestinian politics.

5.3. The Pervasiveness of Settler- Colonial Politics in Gaza

The first and most important of these, is that Gaza is a classic example of what is structural permanence of settler-colonialism. As Wolfe (2006) puts it, settler-colonialism is not an event but a structure, characterized by 'the eternal striving to extirpate and expel the indigenous culture' (p. 5-6). This model affects Palestine directly, where the Nakba of 1948 led to a process of dispossession that is being carried out until today by occupation and land expropriation and the siege of Gaza. The systematic destruction of villages and forced displacement, and the setting up of refugee camps were not part of an isolated series of events, but parts of a protracted project of erasure (Pappe, 2006; Khalidi, 2020). The four-year embargo waged on Yemeni men and women since the beginning of 2007 is a classic illustration of this logic, colored by restrictions on movement, suffocation of economic growth, and pushing more than 80 percent of the population into more reliance on humanitarian assistance (UN OCHA, 2023). There are repeated military attacks (in 2008-2009, 2014 and 2021) that systematically destroy civilian infrastructure, water facilities, cultivated land and power plants. This long-term attack is a form of what Nixon (2011) describes as "slow violence" in which living itself becomes precarious. Gaza is therefore not an exceptional 'humanitarian crisis' but a settler-colonial way of life.

5.4. Becoming Complicit with the Global commons and the Geopolitics of Power

The state of affairs in Gaza cannot be lived properly outside of the Global order that makes it possible. Western states, especially the United States, have repeatedly protected the government of Israel from its responsibility by diplomatic immunity and military support such as vetoes at the UN Security Council. By focusing on humanitarian relief rather than tackling structural injustice, the European Union has produced what Roy (2011) calls a paradox: aid deprives the immediate suffering people from their rights; aid fosters dependency and results in a generalisation of pushing along suffering as a consequence of the underlying nature of many crises. This dynamic makes humanitarianism an alternative to political responsibility. Orientalist discourse is also cited by Said (1978) as an explanation for Israeli aggression as it presents Palestinians as unreasonable aggressors and Israelis as logical defenders; Palestinian culture as primitive and dare-devilous vs. the present and civilised. Bukhari (2024) draws attention to the ways such narrations can make international policy that creates hierarchies between what lives are mourn able and which are expendable.

5.5. Rings of Defiance and Persistence

Under duress and dire deprivation Gaza has become the site of ongoing resistance and creativity. Survival itself becomes a form of political action, with communities contributing to their own subterranean forms of a network of underground water resources and decentralized energy from solar technologies with grassroots cultural and artistic projects (Roy, 2011). The different ways in which political mobilisation - from the Great March of Return in 2018-2019 to everyday mobilisation in the areas of education and healthcare - constitutes a denial of erasure. To borrow from Mbembe's (2003) necropolitics theory, Gaza could be considered a "death-world," where the logic of sovereignty ensures control over life and death. Yet Palestinians are continuously stating their right to live, struggle and dream of decolonial futures. Erakat (2019) emphasises how Palestinian resistance is not merely about reactive violence, but is an enduring struggle for recognition, sovereignty and liberation. This resilience gives us a sense of impossibility of a complete colonial domination.

5.6. Beyond the Language of Humanitarian Assistance

Well-meaning efforts to address short-term suffering though, can risk depoliticising Palestinian experiences because they present the idea that occupation and blockade are akin to natural disasters, and therefore apolitical. Organisations like [Amnesty International \(2024\)](#) and [Human Rights Watch \(2023\)](#) have drawn their own conclusions and determined that Israeli policies constitute apartheid, but there is limited international reaction aside from aid. Unless the structural causes of dispossession and colonial violence are confronted, there is a danger that humanitarianism instead of justice will become pacification. Situating Gaza in longer histories of colonialism and incomplete decolonisation struggles in the Global South explicates that it is not a marginal and isolated tragedy but movement in a global arc of domination and resistance ([Khalidi, 2020](#)).

5.7. Integrating the Findings

Taken together these insights prove that Gaza is not only the scene of a humanitarian disaster, but a paradigmatic example of settler colonial continuity and international complicity. The crisis has structural foundations which are illuminated by successive layers of knowledge: the blockade, military devastation and lack of sovereignty. At the same time, the resilience and resistance of the population indicates the limits of colonial domination and the endurance of possibilities of decolonial futures. Studying Gaza involves shifting from humanitarian and security logics to include the deeper logics of colonial rule, international complicity and Palestinian subjectivity. Hence the destruction of Gaza cannot be conceived of as mere episomal episodes, but rather has to be located within the history of Zionist settler-colonialism, the complicity of global powers, and the discursive violence of hegemonic narratives. The way out of this predicament is not through aid or short-term cessation of combat but by accountability, justice, and decolonisation.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Showing that the crisis in Gaza cannot be reduced to a humanitarian emergency or cyclical outburst of violence, this paper illustrates how the crisis must be understood as a structural manifestation of settler colonialism, supported by postcolonial hierarchies within the world-system. From the Nakba of 1948 to the current blockade, Israeli policies of dispossession, siege and systematic bombardment follow a colonial logic whose goal is to displace or contain the native population. Gaza's ghettoization, with its denial of basic rights and the collaboration of the international community especially the US and European powers, naturalises Palestinian misery and at the same time subverts international justice. Yet, amidst systematic violence, Gaza emerges as an example of maintenance, political agency and self-determination through both organised resistance and cultural survival.

Based on these findings, a number of recommendations are derived for research and policy. First, international engagement needs to go beyond short-term humanitarian intervention to structural justice which confronts the causes of dispossession and siege. Second, there must be actions through the system of institutions such as the United Nations and the International Criminal Court, to make sure that when international law is violated there are doodles attached. Third, decolonial approaches should underscore the need to fit Gaza within struggles against colonial domination all over the world, and should not view it as an exception, but as part of a global unfinished project of decolonisation. Fourth, policy making, advocacy and research must be centres of Palestine experience, insights and manipulation of Palestinian voices and agency, challenging orientalist frameworks of erasure of indigenous realities. Fifth, the international solidarity movements and transnational networks should strengthen campaigns for states, corporations and international organizations to stop occupation and blockade and make practical those connections of movements for justice to wider struggles for justice. Finally, the way forward must be driven by a long-term comprehensive negotiating outcome ensuring sovereignty and right to self-determination so as to address directly the structural injustices of colonialism and occupation, building a just and sustainable future.

Taken together, these points signal the urgency of the need to move away from depoliticised humanitarian framings to a de-colonial paradigm based on justice, accountability and the notion of sovereignty. It is only through such a reframing that the international community can start to shape meaningful solutions that recognise Palestinian rights and help create a more equitable and balanced world order.

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Conflict of Interest

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