

**SETTLER COLONIALISM AND RESISTANCE IN PALESTINE FROM
2009 TO 2019**

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UNIVERSITI MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR**

2023

SETTLER COLONIALISM AND RESISTANCE
IN PALESTINE FROM 2009 TO 2019

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THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY

FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
UNIVERSITI MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR

2023

UNIVERSITI MALAYA
ORIGINAL LITERARY WORK
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SETTLER COLONIALISM AND RESISTANCE IN PALESTINE FROM 2009 to 2019

Field of Study: **Political Science And Civics**

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SETTLER COLONIALISM AND RESISTANCE IN PALESTINE FROM 2009 TO 2019

ABSTRACT

In 1948, Israeli forces took over most of the Palestinian territory and forced the majority of Palestinians to leave their homes. Since then, Israel's colonial endeavour against Palestinians has continued, and Palestinians have faced numerous attempts to erase their presence. Despite its efforts, Palestinian resistance has not achieved the end of Israeli control. This study examines the continuation of Israeli settler colonialism in the West Bank and Gaza Strip between 2009 and 2019. The research aims to provide insights into these key questions: what are the influencing factors on the Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip? How do the influencing factors shape the Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip? How are the Palestinians affected politically and demographically by the Israeli treatment of them in the West Bank and Gaza Strip? Why is the Palestinian resistance unable to end Israeli settler colonialism? This study adopts the transformative paradigm, a research framework that emphasizes analysing power dynamics, promoting social change, and exploring the potential for transformative shifts that empower marginalized groups. A qualitative research method involving a case study approach is used here. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews and documentation. Purposive sampling was used to select the research informants. The theory of settler colonialism and Square of Resistance were used as conceptual frameworks to analyse the data. The results indicate that the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip was influenced by various internal and external factors. Internal factors include political structure, ideology, public opinion, and the indigenous people's response. Regional (dis-)order and the US-Israel alliance are external factors.

The bulk of these factors has driven a violent Israeli approach toward Palestinians. This study also explained Israeli tendencies to eliminate Palestinian political viability and demographic existence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. On the other hand, various political, economic, cultural, and armed obstacles have hampered the Palestinian efforts to end Israeli settler colonialism. Internal Palestinian divisions were found to be a major impediment to achieving decolonization. The establishment of the Palestinian Authority has shifted Palestinians' attention away from the struggle for national liberation and towards governance and internal power competition. The Palestinian economy has been heavily reliant on the Israeli economy. Little effort was made among Palestinians to preserve national traditions and arts. Palestinian consciousness suffered as a result of the internal schism. The armed resistance was found to be lacking as various local and regional forces have targeted it, and it has become less proactive in the Gaza Strip. Palestinian movements have not engaged in a broad-based decolonization struggle in recent years.

Keywords: Palestine, Israel, settler colonialism, elimination, decolonization, resistance

ABSTRAK

Pada tahun 1948, Tentera Israel merampas hampir kebanyakan wilayah Palestin dan memaksa majoriti penduduk Palestin meninggalkan rumah mereka. Sejak itu, usaha penyingkiran rakyat Palestin oleh penjajah Israel telah berterusan, dan rakyat Palestin telah berhadapan dengan beberapa cubaan untuk menghapuskan kehadiran mereka. Di sebalik usaha tersebut, penentangan rakyat Palestin belum berjaya menamatkan cengkaman Israel. Kajian ini meneliti berlanjutannya pendudukan penjajah Israel di Tebing Barat dan Semenanjung Gaza antara tahun 2009 hingga 2019. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk memberikan gambaran sebenar kepada beberapa persoalan utama: Apakah faktor yang mempengaruhi tindakan kerajaan Israel ke atas rakyat Palestin di Tebing Barat dan Semenanjung Gaza? Bagaimanakah faktor-faktor tersebut mempengaruhi bentuk tindakan kerajaan Israel ke atas rakyat Palestin di Tebing Barat dan Semenanjung Gaza? Bagaimanakah rakyat Palestin terkesan dari segi politik dan demografi oleh tindakan Israel ke atas mereka di Tebing Barat dan Semenanjung Gaza? Mengapakah penentangan rakyat Palestin gagal menamatkan pendudukan penjajah Israel? Kajian ini mengambil kerangka teori penyelidikan Paradigma Transformatif yang memberi penekanan pada analisis kuasa dinamik, menggalakkan perubahan sosial, dan menerokai potensi bagi anjakan tranformatif yang mendaulatkan kumpulan yang menjadi komuniti yang tertindas. Kaedah penyelidikan kualitatif melibatkan pendekatan satu kajian kes digunakan dalam hal ini. Data dikumpulkan melalui temu bual separa berstruktur dan dokumentasi. Persampelan bertujuan telah digunakan untuk memilih informan-informan kajian. Teori Kolonialisma Pemandang dan Penentangan Empat Penjuru digunakan sebagai kerangka asas bagi menganalisis data. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa tindakan kerajaan Israel ke atas rakyat Palestin di Tebing Barat dan Semenanjung Gaza adalah dipengaruhi oleh beberapa faktor dalaman dan luaran. Faktor-faktor dalaman termasuk struktur politik, ideologi, pendapat umum, dan tindak balas penduduk peribumi. Kekacauan Serantau dan

pakatan AS-Israel merupakan faktor luaran. Bebanan faktor ini telah mendorong pendekatan ganas Israel terhadap rakyat Palestin. Hasil kajian ini juga menunjukkan kecenderungan Israel untuk menyingkirkan kelangsungan politik rakyat Palestin dan kewujudan demografi di Tebing Barat dan Semenanjung Gaza. Di samping itu, pelbagai rintangan politik, ekonomi kebudayaan dan ketenteraan telah menghalang usaha rakyat Palestin dalam menamatkan pendudukan penjajahan Israel. Perpecahan dalam kalangan rakyat Palestin didapati merupakan penghalang utama bagi mencapai penyahjajahan. Penubuhan Pihak Berkuasa Palestin telah mengalihkan tumpuan rakyat Palestin daripada perjuangan bagi pembebasan kebangsaan kepada persaingan kuasa dan tadbir urus dalaman. Ekonomi rakyat Palestin juga terlalu bergantung pada ekonomi Israel. Tidak banyak usaha yang dilakukan oleh rakyat Palestin dalam mengekalkan tradisi dan kesenian bangsa. Kesedaran rakyat Palestin terjejas akibat perpecahan dalaman. Penentangan bersenjata didapati semakin berkurangan kerana menjadi sasaran beberapa kuasa tempatan dan kuasa serantau, dan penentangan sudah kurang proaktif di Semenanjung Gaza. Pada tahun-tahun kebelakangan ini, pergerakan Palestin juga sudah tidak lagi mengadakan perjuangan penyahjajahan berskala besar.

Kata kunci: Palestine, Israel, pendudukan penjajahan, penyingkiran, penyahjajahan, penentangan

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

All praise and thanks are due to Allah, the All-Knowing and All-Provider. It is only through His blessings that I was able to embark on this PhD journey and reach its completion.

I am deeply humbled and grateful for the guidance and support provided by my supervisors, Dr. Raja Noriza Raja Ariffin and Professor Makmor Tumin. Dr. Raja's motherly support and insightful comments were invaluable to me, and Professor Makmor's critical assessments helped shape the direction of my thesis.

My deepest appreciation and respect go to my parents, who have inspired me with their hard work and sacrifices. Their passion for education and unwavering support have been instrumental in my journey, and I am proud to dedicate this work to them as a token of my gratitude. To my siblings, I share this achievement with you, and I consider it ours. My wife deserves special mention for her unwavering support, love, and care throughout this challenging journey. I cannot express enough gratitude and admiration for her patience and selflessness. To my children, Joud, Quds, and Misk, who bring joy and hope into our lives.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to all those who have supported me throughout this venture, including friends, in-laws, extended family, consulted academics, and experts, and faculty staff.

Finally, I dedicate this work to Palestine and to all those who have sacrificed so much in the struggle for a better future. The aim of this work was to deepen the understanding of the colonial situation and contribute to efforts to end this oppression in our beloved homeland. To all the martyrs, the injured, the prisoners, and all those who continue to resist, your efforts and sacrifices are an inspiration to us all and give meaning to this work. Your efforts and sacrifices keep our cause alive.

شكر وتقدير

أحمد الله عز وجل على توفيقه ومنه عليّ بإتمام كتابة هذه الأطروحة، وأسأله تعالى أن يكتب بها النفع والفائدة وأن تسهم في إثراء النقاش وتوجيه الاهتمام نحو جوهر المشكلة وأمثل الحلول للقضية الفلسطينية. وأتشرف بكل تواضع بأن أهديتها لوالدي العزيزين اللذين سهروا وبذلوا من أجل أن أكون، وكان ولا زال حرصهم لا ينفك بأن نكون خيراً مما كنا عليه في أمسنا وأن نقطف العلم حيث كان ولو في أقاصي الأرض حيث أقيم. وأشكر زوجتي التي كانت عوناً وسنداً في سبيل تحقيق هذا المراد وصبرت واهتمت ببناتي بكل تفان واهتمام. وأهديتها لمن أضافوا لحياتنا جمالاً ومعنى إضافياً حيث جود وقدس ومسك. وأقدمها هديةً بكل حب لأشقائي وأختي ولأفراد عائلتنا الممتدة وأصهاري الكرام. ولا يفوتني في هذا المقام أن أشكر أصدقائي وزملائي وكل من كان لنا نصيب من نصحه وإفادته ودعائه. ويحضرني مقام إخواني الشهداء الذين سطروا صفحات المجد والتحرير بدمائهم وكانوا ملهمين لنا على الاستمرار ومواصلة طريقهم الأجل. هنا تأتي فلسطين التي لم تغب يوماً لأقدم هذه الرسالة وصلأً بها وأملأً في أن تعود أو بالأحرى أن نعيدها عما قريب.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- NGO** : Non-Profit Organisation
- OCHA** : United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
- PA** : Palestinian Authority
- PCBS** : Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
- PLO** : Palestinian Liberation Organisation
- UN** : United Nations
- UNCTAD** : United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
- UNSCO** : The Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East
Peace Process

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

The Zionist movement had emerged from the Jewish community in Europe to create a home for the Jewish people in Palestine, where they claim historical and religious links. In 1897, the First Zionist Congress was held in Switzerland to promote the idea of establishing a Jewish national home. Since its establishment, the movement has shown extreme interest in land possession and a lack of concern for the fate of indigenous peoples (Khalidi, 2009).

Theodor Herzl established the Zionist organization as he aimed to establish a recognized home for the Jews in Palestine. Towards that end, Herzl maintained close contact with British officials and public figures.

The Zionist leader also negotiated with the Ottoman empire a proposal to colonize a specific territory in Palestine. The negotiation with the Ottomans failed. The discussion with British leaders examined proposals to establish Jewish colonies in various locations, including in El Arish city in Egypt and near Uganda, which was on the agenda. The Zionist leaders intensified their efforts to establish their colony in Palestine. To highlight an important episode in this course, the second president of the Zionist movement, Chaim Weizmann, repeatedly met with the British Lord Balfour, where the issue of a Jewish national home was discussed (Mayir Vereté, 1970). In 1917, Britain's Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour, sent a letter to a leading advocate of the Zionist movement, Lord Rothschild (Balfour Declaration), to announce support for establishing a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. The letter reads as follows:

“His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the

rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country” (Hollis, 2016, p. 7).

The British involvement became even more overt. According to Ediz (2019), Britain’s mandate administration in Palestine aimed to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish nation-state there. The British role in facilitating the establishment of Israel was materialized during the British Mandate in Palestine, which formally began in 1920 as Zionist settlers were allowed to land and settle in Palestine (Husan, 2014).

In 1948, Britain terminated its Mandate. The Zionist forces concurrently occupied more than 77% of Palestine’s land, and over 60% of Palestinians were displaced from their homes (Aloufi, 2007; Abu-Lughod & Sa’di, 2007) (see Figure 1.1; Figure 1.2).

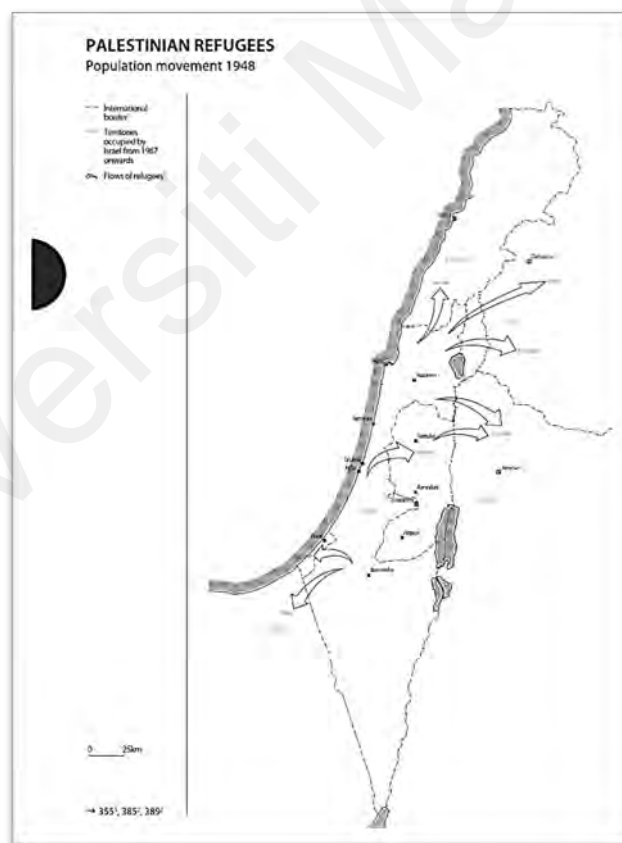


Figure 1.1: Palestinian refugees’ movement in 1948
Source: (Shoshan, 2010)



Figure 1.2: Destroyed Palestinian villages in the aftermath of Israeli invasion in 1948

Source: (Shoshan, 2010)

The Israeli occupation extended to the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, and the Israeli government and religious Zionists established settlement points in different locations (Sasley & Sucharoy, 2011, Shafer Raviv, 2018). The Israeli authorities occupied the entire land of Palestine in the aftermath of the 1967 military expansion (See Figure 1.3).

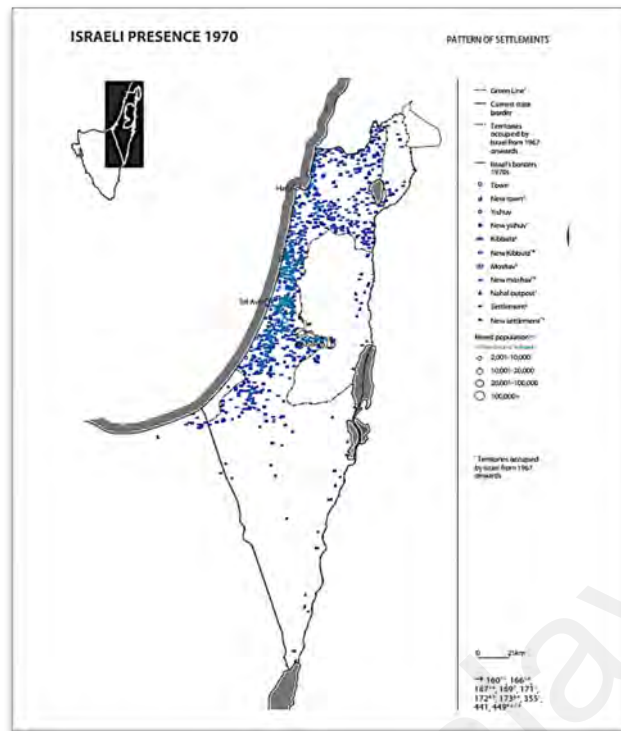


Figure 1.3: The Israeli presence in Palestine and occupied Syrian territory in 1970
 Source: (Shoshan, 2010)

Turner (2012) demonstrates that the Oslo Accords, which were signed between the Israeli government and the leadership of the Palestinian Liberation Movement (PLO) in 1993, have ingenuously led Israel to withdraw from Palestinian high-density areas and allowed the Palestinian Authority to claim control in some parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Turner shows that the agreement divided the West Bank into areas, which include Area A (under the Palestinian Authority (PA) civilian and security control), Area B (under PA civilian control and Israeli military control), and Area C (under Israeli control).

Ultimately, Israel maintained control over more than 70% of the West Bank. The Oslo Accords have deepened the Israeli dominance in Palestinian territories where ‘internal’ Israeli borders were created, and more settlements were established (Turner 2012) (see Figure 1.4; Figure 1.5).

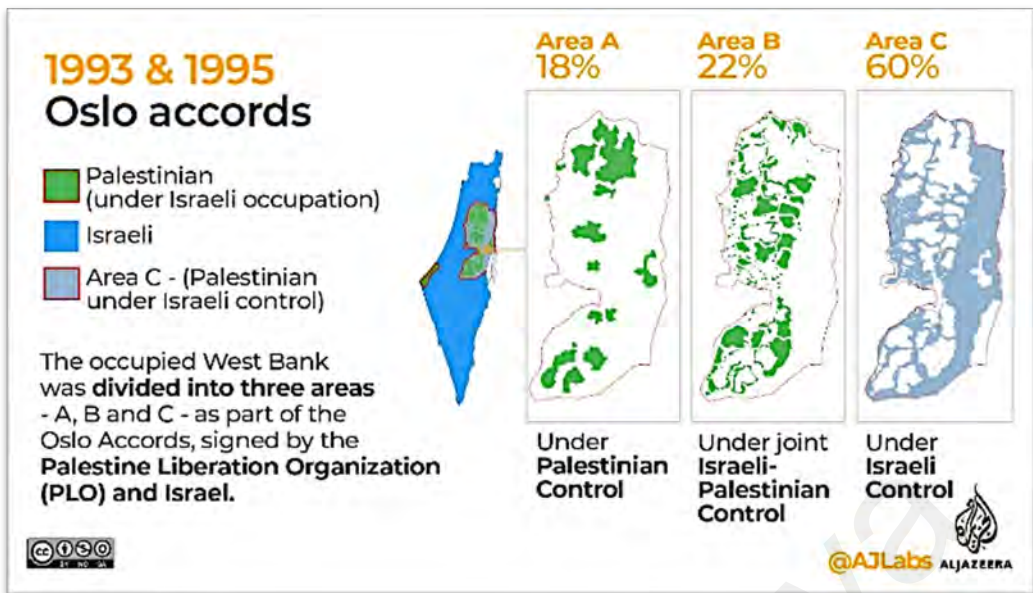


Figure 1.4: The division of Palestinian territories after the Oslo Accords
 Source: (Aljazeera, 2020)

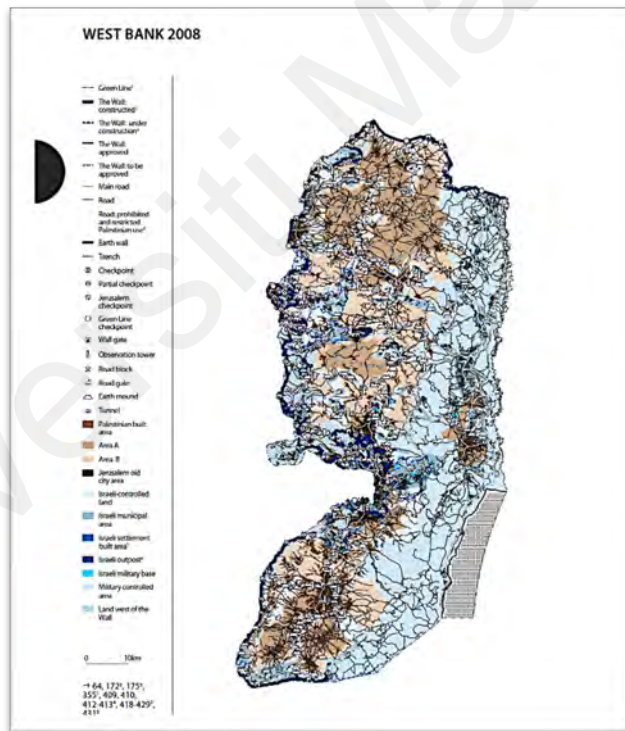


Figure 1.5: The map of West Bank in 2008
 Source: (Shoshan, 2010)

1.2 Problem Statement

Palestine experienced fateful settler colonialism in 1948 as Zionist forces expelled more than 750,000 Palestinians from their villages and cities and established the state of Israel over 77% of historic Palestine (see, Aloufi, 2007; Abu-Lughod & Sa'di, 2007). Zionism was defined as the movement of Jewish resurrection that aimed to end the Jewish diaspora and send the Jews to Palestine (ElMessiri, 2002).

The establishment of Israel in 1948 has affected the demographic situation in Palestine as the majority of Palestinians were forcibly replaced by Jewish settlers, and it also led to Israeli control over most of historic Palestine. Before the Israeli domination, according to the UN's Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (1982), Palestine, towards the end of the First World War in 1918, came under British rule after 400 years of being part of the Ottoman empire. It shows that it was agreed in 1919 that Palestine would be included in the new League of Nations Mandate System. Later in 1920, the United Kingdom was named Mandatory Power of the Palestinian Mandate, and the British Mandate was in effect until 1947. In 1947, the General Assembly voted in favour of the Palestine Partition Plan, which stated that independent Arab and Jewish states must be established. The Arabs rejected the partition because it violated the United Nations Charter provisions that grant people the right to determine their destiny (Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, 1982).

Israel was established on most Palestinian territory in 1948, while Egypt held the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank became part of Transjordan until 1967 (Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, 1982). According to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (1982), in 1967, Israel seized the remainder of Palestine, and the Palestinians in the West Bank and

Gaza Strip were brought under Israeli domination. The West Bank and Gaza Strip became under Israeli military control (Sasley & Sucharoy, 2011; Shafer Raviv, 2018).

The Israeli domination in Palestine has continued for more than seven decades until now. According to Christine Cohen (2017), the Israeli government, led by Benjamin Netanyahu, was increasingly following a hardline approach toward the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

A deeper review of the establishment of Israel indicates that Israel is no exception from settler-colonial movements, which have mainly adopted, among other things, four significant characteristics: military conquest, population expulsions, land alienation, and genocide (Aruri, 2011). Since 1948, Israeli control in Palestine has been perpetuated by a settler-colonial regime comprising executive, legislative, and judicial branches.

There were attempts to loosen the Israeli rule over parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but the situation remains practically unchanged. Despite the signing of the Oslo Accords between the Israeli government and the leadership of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in the 1990s, which resulted in the establishment of the Palestinian Authority to govern the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Israel has continued to maintain its military control over the two areas ever since. Israel still has military checkpoints and settlements inside and between Palestinian cities in the West Bank, carrying out regular raids within the area.

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the ongoing Israeli occupation throughout the West Bank has caused further fragmentation of the area and posed risks to life, liberty, and security (OCHA, 2019). Israel controls most of the Gaza Strip's borders and has imposed a tight siege on the area for over a decade. The Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have experienced three Israeli wars

from 2008 to 2014, which resulted in the death of thousands of causalities and dire living conditions.

The Israeli treatment of the Palestinians has shown to have negative associations with the power dynamics in Israel. The Israeli settler-colonial regime used to be predominantly led by the Left from 1948 to 1977. In 1977, the right-wing won the general election and most of the subsequent general elections. The right governments have promoted the question of the Greater Israel for years which manifests an expansionist tendency to increase the size of Israel. The right-wing, particularly the Likud party, has also shown a hawkish approach towards the Palestinians over the years. For instance, Agdemir (2016) estimated that the results of the Israeli parliamentary election in 2015 would bring up one of the most right-wing administrations that had no plan to resolve the conflict with Palestinians.

Research studies, such as Shahak (2008), indicate that ideological underpinnings in Israel have relevance to the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians. Although Judaism as a religion has not advocated for a particular approach to dealing with the Palestinians, Rynhold (2005) argues that the religious factor has been used in Israel to promote a hawkish tendency towards Palestinians. In 2018, Israel was officially declared a Jewish state after the Knesset passed the Nation-State Law, which says that the right to self-determination is exclusively given to the Jewish people who solely have historical and natural links to the "Land of Israel." Ben-Youssef and Tamari (2018) conclude that the law has promoted the erasure of indigenous Palestinians and entrenched the supremacy of Jewish settlers.

Some studies, such as Maoz and McCauley (2008), argue that Israeli public opinion has played a role in this context. Maoz and McCauley (2008) show that the Israeli Jews' perceived threats from and dehumanization of Palestinians led them to support the

transfer of the Palestinian population and encourage the government to adopt concrete and coercive actions against Palestinians. In addition, multiple scholarly works have emphasized the relationship between Israel and the U.S. as an essential factor that facilitates the Israeli settler-colonial project (see Lewis, 1999; Chomsky, 1999; Noreng, 2007; Berrigan, 2009). Chomsky (1999) explains that the U.S. provides concrete support to Israel in diplomacy, military affairs, and economy.

Some scholars have suggested that the political situation in the surrounding region may have had a direct impact on the situation. For instance, Beck (2016) demonstrates that Israel has sought to legitimize and prolong its occupation of the Palestinian territories by securitizing Iran where the occupation was framed as a necessary measure to protect Israel from the Iranian threat.

On the other hand, Palestinian national movements have engaged with the Israeli settler-colonial regime for years and declared they wanted to decolonize Palestine from Israel (Bucaille, 2011; AlMadani, 2017). However, Palestinian national movements have adopted conflicting approaches toward Israel. The Fatah movement leads the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank, and it adopts the option of a peace process with Israel to achieve a sort of national liberation while abandoning the armed resistance (see, Zureik, Lyon & Abu-Laban 2010; Turner, 2012; Amir 2013; Mustafa, 2015). The Hamas movement, which governs the Gaza Strip, has endorsed the resistance option, particularly the armed resistance against Israel (AlMadani, 2017). More research is required on the factors that facilitate the continuation of the Israeli government's violent treatment of Palestinians and why Palestinian movements could not resolve this problem.

The continuation of Israeli settler-colonialism was shown to have detrimental effects on the Palestinians. It is becoming an increasing concern for Palestinians, Palestinian national movements, and many international bodies. According to a report

published recently by UN Human Rights Council, Israel is violating: the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, the right to have a demographic and territorial presence, and the right to permanent sovereignty over natural resources (UN Human Rights Council, 2013). When a settler-colonial project takes place, it operates through a logic of elimination, seeking to eradicate the natives through violence and other acts and replace the existing system with a settler society (Wolfe, 2006). Addressing this problem will give Palestinian national movements and policy-makers insights to review and adjust their approaches towards Israel, improving responses from international bodies in dealing with the situation in Palestine and contributing to a more nuanced understanding of settler colonialism in current times.

This study analyses the continuation of the Israeli treatment of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It attempts to determine the factors influencing the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians. It also examines the Palestinians' anti-colonial resistance in the face of Israeli settler colonialism. This study provides insights into the present dynamics of the Israeli settler colonial regime concerning the Palestinians and determines why the Palestinian resistance has not led to decolonization.

1.3 Research Questions

There are four research questions for this research, and they are as follows:

RQ1 - What are the factors influencing the Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip?

RQ2 - How do the influencing factors shape the Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip?

RQ3 - How are the Palestinians affected politically and demographically by the Israeli treatment of them in the West Bank and Gaza Strip?

RQ4 - Why is the Palestinian resistance unable to end Israeli settler colonialism?

1.4 Research Objectives

Based on the above key questions, the research aims to meet the following objectives:

- 1- To identify the influencing factors on the Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip;
- 2- To explain how the influencing factors shape the Israeli treatment of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip;
- 3- To explain the political and demographic effects of the Israeli treatment of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip;
- 4- To examine the Palestinian resistance's failure to end Israeli settler colonialism.

1.5 Scope of the Research

The scope of the present research was determined by the problem statement and, therefore, it is focused on the continuation of Israeli settler colonialism in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with the aim of answering research questions regarding the treatment of indigenous people and decolonization. Thus, while the research is limited to Palestine, in the literature review, this thesis will appraise specific experiences of settler colonialism in other countries to better understand the issue and the uniqueness of the Palestinian case. This research adopts the transformative paradigm as its underlying framework, which places a strong emphasis on understanding power dynamics, fostering social change, and exploring the potential for transformative shifts that empower marginalized groups. In line with this paradigm, this study will delve into how a problem of violent colonial treatment against indigenous people exists and thoroughly examine its impacts on their

lives. It will also address the obstacles that hinder a decolonial agenda. In this way, the research is guided by the four research questions.

The ongoing settler colonialism in historic Palestine could be an incessant quest. Since Israeli settler colonialism has continued for decades on the whole of Palestine, various questions might have to be responded to. However, this study will be limited to studying the four objectives of the research, i.e. to identify influencing factors on the settler-colonial treatment of indigenous people, to explain how the influencing factors that shape this treatment, to explain the political and demographic effects of the treatment and to examine the reasons for the failure to end settler colonialism, within the selected case for the research, trying to shed light on the key questions.

The study will focus on the West Bank and Gaza Strip and cover the period between 2009 and 2019. Between 2009 and 2019, the Israeli governments were formed by right-wing parties that launched several wars in Palestinian territories and adopted a hardline approach against the Palestinians. This study cannot cover the entire experience of settler colonialism in Palestine. Instead, this research adopted the case study in a relevant way by covering a recent period, and the chosen territory witnessed most of the interactions between the settler regime and indigenous people.

1.6 Significance of the Research

The significance of this research can be viewed in the following five points:

- 1- Addressing recent developments in the settler-colonial context could identify new techniques of dominance and subjugation, thereby enabling the indigenous people to avoid them.

- 2- This study may put the Palestinian issue in a context that reveals the Israeli zero-sum tendencies towards the Palestinians and their land. It may contribute to clear misunderstandings and misconceptions about Palestinians.
- 3- Policymakers may find guidelines that help them understand the settler-colonial dynamics, which can be essential to chart effective plans and initiate actions to encounter the elimination of indigenous people and preserve their existence.
- 4- Indigenous peoples may learn about things that undermine their strength and hinder their struggle for national liberation in the fields of political resistance, economic resistance, cultural resistance, and armed resistance.
- 5- Researchers may find fresh inputs to the literature on settler colonialism that may not be the same as other studies conducted in different places and during older times. There could also be points of departure for further studies within the framework of settler colonialism, including military conquest, population expulsions, land alienation, and genocide.

1.7 The organisation of Chapters

The research is organized into seven chapters. Chapter One provides a roadmap for the rest of the thesis.

Chapter Two presents an extensive literature review where topics are thematically organized to address settler colonialism in general and the case of Palestine in particular.

Chapter Three discusses the research methodology and the process of data collection and data analysis.

Chapter Four presents findings from the interviews on the internal factors influencing the Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Chapter Five presents the result of the discussions on the external factors affecting the Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Chapter Six presents findings from the interviews on the political and demographic effects of the Israeli treatment of Palestinians and the obstacles that hinder the Palestinian resistance from achieving decolonization.

Chapter Seven offers a detailed discussion of the research results and provides a comprehensive conclusion with recommendations for practical implications and further studies.

Universiti Malaysia

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Reviewing the relevant literature on the continuation of Israeli settler colonialism in Palestine, this chapter starts with a general overview of the literature on the Palestine-Israel context. The second part addresses the Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinian people and the determinants of the Israeli government. It discusses the demographic erasure of Palestinians by Israel and academic works on the politicide of Palestinians. It also reviews some instances of settler colonialism in other cases, particularly those that examine indigenous peoples' treatment. The third part presents available literature on decolonization and focuses on studies examining the Palestinians' struggle to end Israeli settler colonialism. The fourth section of this chapter delves into the literature concerning settler colonialism and is followed by the conceptual framework.

2.2 Historical Overview

Israel was established in historic Palestine in 1948. Most of the literature concerning Israeli dominance in Palestine is contentious, if not polemical. These studies, for the most part, can be identified with one side or the other. The academic debate in this context seems to be significantly affected by the relationship of researchers to the subject of research (Dowty, 2013).

Many relevant studies conducted by Israeli academics tend to locate Israel as a normal state with historical and religious foundations in Palestine. Spyer (2005) demonstrates that scholars of Israel frequently adopt theories of nationalism in this context. They mainly focus on studying Israel as a normal state with familiar aspects of identity and development similar to other Western democracies (Spyer, 2005). Haddad (1974) shows that Zionists and Israelis believe Israel is not an entirely new venture, but a Jewish state restored after a temporary disruption.

On the other hand, other studies critiqued Israeli claims about the historical and religious rights of Jews in Palestine. First, ElMessiri (2002) examined the narrative that Jews used to be one homogenous and cohesive entity in the past. This narrative implies that the Jews belong to one civilization and have shared history and interests as people who once had a Jewish nation in Palestine centuries ago. ElMessiri (2002) critiqued this narrative and showed that Jewish groups lived in different parts of the world and within diverse societies and civilizations. For instance, ElMessiri demonstrates that the Yemeni Jews lived in an Arab community in the desert during the nineteenth century while the Dutch Jews were simultaneously part of Western and modern society. The inhabitation of Jews across different spatial and cultural settings made it hard to discuss a single Jewish identity as they were shaped by and part of diverse cultures and societies. According to ElMessiri (2002), the number of Jews in the 1st century BC reached between five to eight million, and only a third of them had lived in Palestine. This variety contradicts the idea that the Jews are eternally associated with Palestine.

Masalha (2000) questioned the idea that events described in the Old Testament prove the right of Jews in the twentieth century to create an ethnic Jewish state in Palestine. Masalha explains that the narratives of Genesis and Exodus provide the origins of the traditions that bind the Hebrew and Israelites tribes to the land of Canaan (modern Palestine).

However, Masalha shows that despite the enormous efforts of multiple generations of scholars, no historical or archaeological evidence for the events or personages mentioned in these books was discovered. Moreover, the professor of archaeology and ancient studies at Tel Aviv University, Zeev Hertzog, concludes that the decades-long excavation activities in Palestine contradict the narrative regarding Jewish rights in Palestine as the patriarch's acts are legendary; Israelites did not conquer the land of Canaan in a military campaign and did not pass it on to the twelve tribes, and neither

is there any trace of the empire of David and Solomon (Haaretz, 1999; Masalha, 2000). Moreover, Sand (2012) shows that the construction of the mythos of a wandering Jewish people uprooted from their homeland two thousand years ago is entirely based on historical fabrications.

Regardless of the debate on Jews' historical and religious rights in Palestine, establishing a Jewish national home in the land gained momentum in the nineteenth century. The actual deliberation on the establishment of Israel came under the banner of Zionism. ElMessiri (2002) demonstrates that the term Zionism is believed to be first coined by the Austrian Jewish writer Nathan Birnbaum as he wanted to define Jewish groups based on their ethnicity and nationalism. The definition of Zionism in this context was: "the movement of Jewish national resurrection that aims to end the Jewish diaspora and return the Jews to their ancestors' land to resume their history." Zionism was also defined as the movement of liberating the Jewish people. These ideas gave rise to the slogan on Palestine: land without a people for a people without a land (ElMessiri, 2002).

However, some studies show that the question of Zionism is not an exclusively Jewish issue. ElMessiri (2002) explains that Zionism is not a mere Jewish phenomenon. Still, it was also a Western endeavour that wanted to get rid of the Jews from their societies and have a colonial entity in that region (ElMessiri, 2002). Said (1980) has also linked the Western support for Zionism with old Western prejudices about Islam, the Arabs, and the Orient.

Ultimately, ElMessiri (2002) demonstrates that the Zionist notion transformed into a settler colony in 1948 as the Zionist forces forced most Palestinians to leave their country and established the state of Israel. However, some studies highlight that Jewish settlers purchased Palestinian lands before 1948. Stein (1984) explains that Jews bought only a tiny percentage of Palestine's total land by May 1948 as they acquired

approximately two million of Palestine's 26 million dunams. Wolfe (2012) cites that Jews in Palestine owned around 7% of the total land of Palestine before the establishment of Israel.

2.3 Israel and the Removal of Palestinians

Many academic works have focused on the implications of the establishment of Israel on the Palestinian population and Palestinian cities and villages. Masalha (1992), in his book *Expulsion of the Palestinians: The Concept of "Transfer" in Zionist Political Thought, 1882-1948*, studied the foundations of the Zionist movement and the Israeli endeavour toward the Palestinians.

It shows that Zionism emerged in the late nineteenth century as a political movement, calling for the congregation of all Jews and the colonization of Palestine. Masalha traced the foundations of the Zionist movement when it organized its First Zionist Congress in 1897, resulting in participants agreeing to establish a publicly and legally secured home for the Jewish people in Palestine. Masalha shows that the Zionist opposition to the Palestinian presence began before the military conquest in 1948 as, for instance, the leadership of the Zionist movement and Yishuv (the Jewish Community in Palestine) had earlier considered the demographic transfer as a strategic solution to what they termed as the Arab question in Palestine (Masalha, 1992).

Rebhun and Malach (2012) demonstrate that the demographic question is historically central to the Zionist movement and Israel. Since the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, the maintenance of the Jewish majority was tackled as Israel has focused on the numerical ratio of Jews to Palestinians who dwell in historic Palestine.

For Della Pergola (2015), demography holds a significant weight not by itself only but with its association with political, cultural, national, and religious factors. Della

Pergola particularly highlights the involvement of ethnic and religious identities in the interaction between the Palestinians and Israelis. In this context, the importance of demographic figures has often led to conflictive episodes between Israel and the Palestinians (Della Pergola, 2015). Maoz and Eidelson (2007) also show that population transfer has existed in the Jewish-Israeli political discourse since the early 20th century.

Indeed, the literature on Israel and the Palestinians has described Israel's treatment of the Palestinians in various terms as scholars offer interpretations about the topic using different terminologies. Nonetheless, many scholarly works in this context share a common idea that Israel adopts a zero-sum treatment of the Palestinians. For instance, many pieces have referred to the Israeli treatment of Palestinians as ethnic cleansing (Abu-Lughod, 1971; Khalidi, Elmusa, & Khalidi, 1992; Pappé, 2006; Sa'di & Abu-Lughod, 2007).

Gordon and Ram (2016) study ethnic cleansing as a productive force to secure and normalize a new political order while revoking old legal and spatial formations. They suggest that a complete ethnic cleansing creates a refined form of settler colonialism, as shown in other North American and Australian cases. However, Gordon and Ram suggest that ethnic cleansing is not complete in parts of Palestine, notably the West Bank, and this case resembles intermediate settler colonialism (Gordon & Ram, 2016).

Some scholarly works have examined the relationship between Israeli land expropriation and population displacement. Hanafi (2012) describes Israel as a colonial project with a 'spacio-cidal' character (as opposed to genocidal), arguing that Israel targets the land to inevitably cause the voluntary transfer of the Palestinians from their living space. Green and Smith (2016) demonstrate that the Israeli military was involved in a systematic scheme of forced evictions of Palestinians through village and house demolitions, settlement expansion, and the separation wall. Green and Smith explain that

the process of forced displacement and annexation has continued in a bid to create new spaces that exclude Palestinians and pave the way for more Israeli Jewish settlers (Green & Smith, 2016).

Lagerquist (2004) studied the separation wall and surveyed the genealogy, ideological underpinnings, and diplomatic issues concerning the Israeli separation wall in the West Bank and its implications. Lagerquist suggests that the wall would lead to the Bantustanization of the West Bank, transfer of population, fragmentation of the Palestinian society and economy, and expansion and consolidation of the Israeli settlement (Lagerquist, 2004). To Usher (2005), the Israeli separation wall is part of the Israeli quest to deal with the native problem through exclusion, control, and containment.

Some studies have examined Israeli official institutions' role in targeting the Palestinians' existence in their cities. Jabareen (2010) demonstrates that Israel's public planning was used to achieve demographic and geopolitical ends. Jabareen (2010) shows that the Israeli planning process in Jerusalem revolves around three interrelated political strategies: the politics of demography which aims to minimize the Palestinian population in favour of a more significant Jewish presence, the politics of exclusion that attempts to exclude the Palestinians from any strategic planning for the city, and politics of geography which is employed to expand the Israeli jurisdiction by confiscating more Palestinian lands (Jabareen, 2010).

Abdulla (2016) shows that Israel has deliberately employed demographic engineering to fragment territory and people to impose demographic, economic, and political Jewish dominance. Jadallah (2014) also demonstrates that Israel has marginalized and excluded those who do not belong to its ethnoreligious identity. In particular, Jadallah shows that Israel seeks to incorporate territory and exclude 'unwanted demographic elements' in Jerusalem. For Israel, a prominent Palestinian population in

the urban space poses a demographic, political, and discursive challenge, especially in Jerusalem. It upsets the democratic foundation of the ethnocentrically defined project to make Jerusalem an undivided capital of the Jewish people (Jadallah, 2014).

The exclusion tendency was also institutionalized within the Israeli parliament, as Ben-Youssef and Tamari (2018) explain that a tendency to erase indigenous Palestinians has existed among Israeli lawmakers. The article reviewed the Israeli Nation-State Law and highlighted the law's central premises, including the erasure of indigenous Palestinians and the entrenched supremacy of Jewish settlers. The law text indicates that only Jewish people have a historical and natural link to the 'Land of Israel.' However, Israel failed to eliminate the Palestinians but still attempted to make the occupied people politically irrelevant (Ben-Youssef & Tamari, 2018).

Rabinovich (2009), who worked as Israel's ambassador to the United States and chief negotiator with Syria, explained that the Israeli attitudes towards Palestinians since 1948 were largely shaped by a zero-sum mentality. This has led to a situation where only unacceptable Israeli terms could meet Palestinian demands and expectations. Further, Shafer Raviv (2018), who premised his study on rare first-hand access to Israeli archives, demonstrates that the issues of deep concern for the Israeli leadership included the pacification of the Palestinian people, the demographic balance of Jews/ Arabs, and the status of 1948 refugees.

To trace the roots of the zero-sum tendency toward the Palestinians, Shlaim (2014) explains the Iron Wall notion, articulated by the Zionist ideologue Ze'ev Jabotinsky and endorsed by many Israeli leaders, outlines much of Zionism's thought and praxis toward the Palestinians. The Iron Wall advocates for the fait accompli of a Jewish majority in the "land of Israel" with an unassailable military strength, while the remaining Palestinians would be induced to compromise in the long run (Shlaim, 2014).

2.3.1 Israel and the Politicide of Palestinians

Several academic studies demonstrate that the elimination of the Palestinians is carried out on their political existence in the land. Some studies define this process as politicide. According to Amir (2017), politicide eradicates political viability and sabotages people's transformation into a polity. Amir (2017) suggests that Israel has used the threat of extinction as a performative reiteration to help pave the way for the securitization of its rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to rationalize Palestinians' politicide. This is done by portraying Palestinians as a monolithic group that is intent on destroying Israel, and by exaggerating the threat that they pose.

Furthermore, Amir (2013) examines the Israeli military checkpoints and their effects on the population. Amir acknowledges that the Israeli checkpoints in the West Bank have caused dire consequences for individuals and communities, significantly impacting the local economy and obstructing the pursuit of an independent political entity. It concludes that Palestinian sovereignty is construed, given the checkpoints as an epiphenomenon of the Israeli control apparatus.

Le More (2005) shows that the Israeli multi-faceted territorial, socio-economic, and political fragmentation has deteriorated Palestinian self-determination and well-being prospects. Turner (2012) indicates that the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been subject to multiple Israeli practices, such as extraction and control of resources and settlement activities that undermine the Palestinians' self-determination. Turner also explains that the Israeli rule was assisted by the deliberate Western engagement that deteriorated the Palestinian potential to establish their state and manage national affairs. Turner demonstrates that Western donors were mainly involved in mission civilisatrice to undermine any development strategy for national liberation while facilitating a colonial peace with offers of contingent autonomy (Turner, 2012).

Further, Anziska (2017) has studied the shift in the United States' commitment to territorial partition between the Palestinians and Israelis. Given the U.S. shift in favour of Israel, Israeli leaders have proposed various plans, such as limited autonomy without political sovereignty to Palestinians and some other forms of separation and continued control. It finds that these models constituted a severe risk to Palestinian self-determination and gave a setback to the two-state proposal.

2.4 Israeli Politics and Palestinians

Some studies have examined the connection between the zero-sum tendency towards the Palestinians and Israeli politics. Freeman-Maloy shows that the sentiment of Palestinian exclusion continues to be a driving force in Israeli Jewish politics (Freeman-Maloy, 2001).

Shlaim (1994) examines Israeli approaches toward the Palestinians from the lenses of the right-wing Likud party and left-wing Labour party, which have dominated the Israeli political scene for decades. Shlaim acknowledges that both political forces have differences in ideology and practical policies. At the same time, both of them oppose Palestinian nationalism and the right to self-determination. Shlaim shows differences between the two old dominant Israeli political parties regarding their routes to the Palestinians' final status. The Likud adopts Biblical beliefs that inform their endeavour for "Greater Israel", as seen in the insistence to annex the West Bank, perceived among Jews as a historical part of the Land of Israel. It suggests that all the Likud can offer Palestinians is limited Palestinian autonomy to run their daily lives. On the other hand, the Labour party traditionally viewed Jordan as a viable option to counter Palestinian nationalism and assumed that Israel could reach a settlement on this issue with Jordanian authorities by giving most, but not all, of the West Bank to Jordanian rule (Shlaim, 1994).

In this respect, the Palestinians' struggle has played a role in shaping the Israeli political discourse. According to Shlaim (1994), the Palestinian first uprising (Intifada), which took place in 1987, influenced the political discourse of the Labour party. The then Labour leader and Israeli defence minister, Yitzhak Rabin, conceded to announce that they needed to approach the Palestinians with two feet of military and political attitudes. In this regard, the change of Labour position came after feedback received from military commanders during the first Intifada that the Palestinian issue was a political problem with no army solutions (Shlaim, 1994).

Chomsky (1999), in his book entitled, *Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians*, explains that Israel had been found rejectionist of peace with the Palestinians. Chomsky highlighted that the two major political groups that led Israeli governments were the Labour party and the Likud coalition. It explains that the two groups did not have fundamental differences concerning the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Both parties agree to control them, and both generally reject any declaration of Palestinian national rights in the west of Jordan. Chomsky (1999) concludes that Labour and Likud have agreed on rejecting the Palestinians, but they may have differences over the arrangements in the occupied territories. Labour governments adopted the "Allon Plan," proposed by former minister Yigal Allon and premised on principles that Israel should maintain control of the Gaza Strip, much of the West Bank, Golan Heights, and parts of the Eastern Sinai. The Allon Plan aimed to divide the West Bank and annexe about 40% of the area. The Palestinians in affected dense areas would be stateless or under Jordanian rule to avoid the so-called "demographic problem," which is the possibility of adding too many non-Jews into the Jewish state.

On the other hand, according to Chomsky (1999), the Likud had moved to extend the Israeli sovereignty in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and annex the Golan Heights. The extension of Israeli sovereignty is a subtle device that would allow Israel to seize what it wants and simultaneously confine Palestinians to ever-narrower ghettos to remove the leadership and possibly much of the population. The logic of the Likud's position on Palestinians is to reduce the population by all means necessary. The former Likud leader Ariel Sharon reportedly hoped to expel all Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza and push them to Jordan. For the West Bank particularly, the two Israeli groupings called the area Judea and Samaria, which implied the endorsement of biblical terms to possess the area (Chomsky, 1999).

Nonetheless, Chomsky's work mainly covered the involvement of the Labour and Likud parties in the 1980s and 1990s. However, the Labour party became less relevant in the political scene after then, as it repeatedly lost general elections and has not led Israeli governments. In recent years, the Likud seems to have endorsed plans to impose Israeli sovereignty on parts of the West Bank. The treatment of Benjamin Netanyahu's government towards Palestinians in recent years appears to be not the same as Netanyahu's during his first term. These developments indicate a need to conduct new studies.

Some studies focus on how the Israeli political system may influence the treatment of Palestinians. Shahak (1997), in his book, examines Israeli nuclear and foreign policies and surveys the involved actors. It shows that the defence and security establishment in Israel became the determining factor in this context. Shahak argues that Israeli long-range plans are determined by army generals, intelligence leaders, and senior officials, while the government and prime minister rarely initiate policies.

Gazit (2003) explains in his book *Trapped Fools* that from 1967 to 1980, the minister of defence and the security establishment used to form Israel's administration policy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The influence of the General Staff of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) on the guidelines in the two areas used to be known as marginal and rare. However, it appears that the involvement of the General Staff increased when Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin became the acting defence minister in 1980 as he gave power to his subordinates in IDF (Gazit, 2003).

In this context, Gazit (2003) demonstrates the influence of the Palestinian first uprising (1st Intifada) on the Israeli approach toward the Palestinians. Gazit suggests the 1st Intifada led to the dominance of military considerations in the Israeli thinking about the West Bank and Gaza Strip in contrast to civilian-economic and political aspects.

Further, Ranta (2015) has studied the engagement between the Israeli government and the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, especially from 1967 to 1977, which was the first decade of the occupation in the two areas and the last decade that witnessed the dominance of the Labour party in the Israeli political sphere. Ranta reviewed archival materials and Israeli newspapers and conducted interviews with relevant informants, concluding that Israel had faced internal and external difficulties in defining a specific and long-term approach towards the occupied territories and the Palestinian population.

Nonetheless, Ranta (2015) demonstrates that the Israeli deliberation regarding the Palestinians involved the Israeli cabinet, different ministries, dignitaries from the United Nations (UN) and American officials. Still, Ranta argues that the Israeli government did not formulate, approve or implement a policy that answers pressing issues and challenges in this respect. In some instances, the Israeli government acted ad hoc based on short-sighted operational needs, political calculations, risk aversion, and even a non-decision

attitude. Ultimately, the lack of coherent policy in this respect can be explained by: Israel's fragmented political party system and decision-making process, the escalation of religious nationalism, and the absence of significant international pressure on Israel (Ranta, 2015).

2.5 Israeli Public Opinion and Palestinians

Some studies examine the Israeli public opinion about Palestinians and their preferences on how the Israeli government deals with them. Maoz and McCauley (2008) discuss the Israeli public opinion on Israel's retaliatory and aggressive policies towards the Palestinians. Maoz and McCauley demonstrate that the Israeli Jews' perceived threats from and dehumanization of Palestinians led them to support the transfer of the Palestinian population and encourage the government to adopt concrete and coercive actions against Palestinians. The association of hawkishness and socioeconomic situation with an endorsement for aggressive retaliatory policies among the Israelis was mediated mainly by threat perception (Maoz & McCauley, 2008).

Maoz and Eidelson (2007) studied Israeli Jews' preferences for extreme policies toward the Palestinians. This survey study indicates that the Israelis' have strong beliefs in ingroup vulnerability, injustice, distrust, and superiority. These beliefs may explain the Israelis' support for the transfer of Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip to neighbouring Arab countries rather than other policies of territorial compromise (Maoz & Eidelson, 2007).

2.6 Ideology in Israel and Palestinians

Several studies have examined the involvement of ideology in Israeli interactions with Palestinians. Rynhold (2005) analyses the relationship between religion and Israeli

approaches concerning Palestinians. It argues that while Judaism advocates for no single approach to the conflict, religion has become correlated with Israeli hawkishness since 1967. It associates the former relationship with the use of Judaism in reinforcing ethnocentricity among Jews. Rynhold shows that the Israeli political culture used to be less ethnocentric and more liberal within the framework of post-modernization, but the religious community opposed that, possibly laying the ground for effective hawkishness in Israel since 1967 (Rynhold, 2005).

In a relatively related view, Wayne et al. (2016) studied the interrelation between accountability and ideology in Israelis' political attitudes toward the Palestinians. After two experimental studies, the impact of accountability was contingent on its interaction with ideology, and the ideological factor seems to have a polarising effect on the Israeli attitude towards the Palestinians. Nevertheless, the former polarization depended on the specific conflict context as, for instance, rightists were affected by security concerns and leftists by negotiations with Palestinians.

In contrast, Frisch and Sandler (2004) argue that religion did not hold a dominant position in current conflicts, including Israel and the Palestinians, as the current international system bolsters the nationalist pattern. For Frisch and Sandler, conflicting parties' constituencies marginalize the religious groups, particularly in Israel, where the consociational arrangement with the national religious camp floundered in various circumstances (Frisch & Sandler, 2004). Though invaluable, Frisch and Sandler's article was based on relatively old data. Recent developments in Israel suggest that the ideological factor may have gained a stronger position as, for instance, national-religion parties have pivotal roles in Israel's recent elections and governments. More studies are needed.

2.7 Israel and Regional (dis-) Order

Few studies have discussed the effect of regional disorder in the Middle East on Israel and Palestinians in recent years. The Middle East seems to have experienced domestic conflicts and regional instability, and the rivalry among regional powers has intensified in recent years. Ehteshami (2014) demonstrates that the Middle East's regional order was declining, and power relations in the region were fluid. Ulutaş and Duran (2018) show that the Middle East faces a range of rivalries and conflicts in the aftermath of the Arab Spring and a new polarization between Iran, Israel, and the Gulf states. Given this regional status, Ulutaş and Duran show that regional actors like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Israel, and the United States agreed on specific issues, seeking to redesign a fractured regional order.

Salem (2016) explains that countries' internal and external conflicts are mutually exacerbating under unstable regional order. Internal tensions in one country prompt external alignments and fuel regional proxy conflicts. On the other hand, regional conflicts could likely lead to domestic contests and push states towards failure. In contrast, the state of regional stability will reduce the divisive pressure on struggling states and societies (Salem, 2016).

Israel seems to use the regional disorder in the Middle East as it, for instance, has attempted to fuel the regional rivalry between Arab states and Iran to marginalize the Palestinian issue. Beck (2016) shows that Israel has worked to legitimize and prolong its occupation of the Palestinian territories by securitizing Iran in the regional context. The regional factor seems to play a significant role in this context, and new studies may explain its implications further as the available literature seems less conclusive.

2.8 Israel and Alliance

The alliance relationship between Israel and the United States is one of the central issues that dominate the Israeli strategic position and capabilities (Lewis, 1999; Chomsky, 1999; Noreng, 2007; Berrigan, 2009). In this context, the involvement of international powers seems to be an essential topic for academic works, as Israel appears to rely significantly on Western countries' support.

Chomsky (1999) demonstrates that Israel receives concrete support from the United States, which offers various sorts of diplomatic, economic, and military aid to Israel. Freeman-Maloy (2011) has also discussed the Western support for Israel and explained that the Israeli capacity to use violence continues to be bolstered by international, mainly Western, support. Nonetheless, the studies on the relationship between Israel and the United States appear to give little insight into how such U.S. support has influenced Israel in recent years.

2.9 Other Cases of Settler Colonialism

The literature offers insights into the approaches that settler-colonial regimes adopted toward indigenous peoples in other cases across North America, Australia, and Africa (e.g., Glenn, 2015; Woolford and Gacek, 2016; Choi, 2016).

Many native studies scholars and anticolonial critics argue that the European colonial settlement in North America affected indigenous peoples' existence as settler regimes committed genocide, dispossession, and forced removal against the natives (Schotten, 2018).

In analysing the United States settler-colonial experience, Glenn (2015) demonstrates that the settlers' objective of dispossessing lands and resources required the

removal of indigenes, which was accomplished through direct and indirect violence topped with militarized genocide. Fixico (1986) shows that the US endorsed termination policies to hinder the recognition of native Americans as unique political groups. Glenn (2015) also suggests that the elimination of natives was premised on a settler ideology that refers to indigenes as savage, heathen and uncivilized.

Woolford and Gacek (2016) studied Canada's carceral practices against indigenous people and asked whether that affected a group's physical, biological, and cultural destruction. Woolford and Gacek suggest that the carcerality contributed to multi-focused efforts to destroy Indigeneity in Canada. Woolford and Gacek show that the settler regime removed indigenous children from their parents and sent them to fenced residential schools to diminish their indigenous identities. Woolford and Gacek (2016) also demonstrate the use of the so-called reserve in Canada, where an indigenous population was required to remain sedentary on a portion of their territory. These reserves share conditions of forced removal and wasteland, in which the natives were forced into a space that could not sustain life (Woolford & Gacek, 2016).

In Algeria, Choi (2016) shows that French settlers had employed intense wars and massacres to eradicate the country's Muslim presence to the European majority's advantage. The French invasion's announced goal, which began in the nineteenth century, was to implant French civilization and help displace the 'backwards and stagnant' customs of the Arabs. Despite the inability to eliminate the native inhabitants, French authorities continued to carry out forceful removal operations using treaties and extra-legal transactions amid land conflicts. Choi explains that the natives had hampered the removal attempts by, for instance, remaining resilient in their numbers during the colonial period and by resistance movements. The Algerians were immune to European pathogens that had razed indigenous populations in other colonial cases (Choi, 2016).

On the part of Australia, Barta (1987) demonstrates that the primary fact of Australian history has been the conquest of the country by a European group and the destruction and dispossession of the Aboriginal people. Barta elaborates that the Aborigines became a minority after they were driven from their lands, deprived of traditional food supplies, and killed mainly by acts of violence and introduced diseases.

Cavanagh and Veracini (2016) show that during the twentieth century and into the first two decades of the twenty-first century, the Australian authorities have continued to embark on the logic of elimination, attempting to erase native alterity. The former tendency was pursued by insisting on being a white and British nation, adopting racist policies, and through the removal of indigenous children and policies of assimilation. On the other hand, the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islander people in the 1960s-70s were involved in resistance activities against the settler state through an emerging national movement over rights, in particular land rights, and sovereignty (Cavanagh & Veracini, 2016).

2.10 Israel and Decolonization

The recent turn to the settler-colonial framework has enabled an emerging and growing generation of activist scholars working on Palestine-Israel to address decolonization as a substitute for the official conflict-management-focused peace process (Todorova, 2020). Decolonization is commonly concerned with ending or overturning colonial domination structures, which historically happened chiefly through the withdrawal of colonial powers and achieving independence for the colonized (Buchanan, 2018). Reuveny (2003) has reviewed colonial cases and suggested that colonialism had remained intact as long as the native population accepted its presence. Once natives moved to secure their

independence, colonialism eventually collapsed peacefully or by fighting (Reuveny, 2003).

However, the 'undo' of colonialism is deeply contextual (Jansen & Osterhammel, 2017). In the Palestinian context, some studies indicate two major approaches where several Palestinian movements adopt anti-colonial resistance, namely armed resistance. In contrast, others have recently prioritized a peaceful settlement with Israel.

2.10.1 Peace Process

Some argue that the peace process with Israel can be part of decolonization, but several studies show that the peace process has consolidated the existence of Israel (Zureik, Lyon & Abu-Laban, 2010; Turner, 2012; Amir, 2013; Mustafa, 2015).

The Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), supported by the U.S. and the European Union, have created an inconsistent model of security-led governance of the Palestinian Authority (PA). Some academic works show that the PA has served as an enforcer for Israel instead of driving Palestinian aspirations for national liberation (Turner, 2012; Mustafa, 2015). Mustafa (2015) shows that much of the assistance from Western governments to the Palestinian Authority has prioritized the Security State Reform (SSR). SSR is a European idea that illustrates the phenomenon of aid securitization in development. SSR has become the dominant framework in the Western powers' intervention in and regulation of non-Western societies. Mustafa demonstrates that the Palestinian Authority has mobilized bio-political initiatives at the Palestinians on the micro-level of Israeli colonialism and macro-level of Western interventions (Mustafa, 2015).

In addition, some studies show that the role of PA has directly undermined the anti-colonial resistance. The PA must inform Israel of resistance suspects or any activities and prevent such activities toward Israeli settlements and infrastructure (Zureik, Lyon &

Abu-Laban 2010). Amir (2013) demonstrates that the Palestinian governing authority in its current form has contributed to the continuity of Israeli rule over the Palestinians. It relieves Israel from being responsible for meeting the needs of the Palestinian population under its control (Amir, 2013).

Tilley (2015) shows that since the signing Oslo Accords, the guiding principles of resolution for peace are: the identity and rights of the Palestinians and Israelis and Israel's sovereignty or lack of over historic Palestine. Tilly argues that these premises have paradoxically proved ruinous to the welfare of Palestinians by accepting as legitimate the Jewish-settler ideology that ethnically dismembered the Palestinian people.

For Allegra and Napolitano (2011), the studies on peace need to focus on structural elements of the situation in Palestine more than the viabilities of proposed solutions. After analysing the historical backgrounds of Palestinian and Israeli leadership, discourses, and policies in this context, Allegra and Napolitano demonstrate that the current situation could unlikely lead to the adoption of either a one-state solution or a two-state solution outcome of the peace process.

Some studies examine the two-state option as one of the main proposals in this context. Nimni (2020) analyses the two-state solution and concludes it is unworkable on multiple counts. First, the high population density renders partition of the territory between Israel and Palestinians impossible unless 'unwanted pockets' of one people leave the land to the other. Second, Nimni argues that the Israeli government cannot dismantle the settlements in the West Bank without encountering a civil war. In light of this paralyzed situation, Nimni suggests a model of nonterritorial autonomy which provides self-government without territorial control for the Palestinians.

The former conclusion of Nimni (2020) shares a common ground with Le More (2005) as the latter suggests that the two-state solution has become increasingly out of reach in light of the developments on the ground in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Le More shows that the international community's aid can be considered a sort of financing for the continuation of the Israeli occupation. It served as a substitute for a global political win, compensating for the lack of serious negotiation between the two parties. Despite introducing a two-state solution, Le More shows that Israel continues with its agenda at the expense of the well-being of Palestinians, their right to self-determination, international law, and even the international community's development and political agendas. It concludes that the potential of a Palestinian state became unviable under such conditions (Le More, 2005).

Golan (2020) suggests that obstacles that hinder the two-state solution include psychological barriers, as both sides contest the identity and narratives of the other. Nevertheless, the more concrete challenges, according to Golan, come from the many settlements in the West Bank, which accommodate over 500,000 Israeli settlers, and from other physical and political barriers that include the political situation in Israel, the Palestinian refugees' issue, and complex international environment (Golan, 2020).

2.10.2 Anti-colonial Resistance

Much of the reviewed literature on the Palestinian anti-colonial resistance primarily focuses on non-violent or public resistance against Israel. Johansson and Vinthagen (2015) propose a framework of "Palestinian everyday resistance," which refers to the steadfastness of Palestinians who believe that life must go on in the face of Israeli dominance. According to Johansson and Vinthagen, this form of resistance could be understood through its historic and dynamic relationship with a contextual configuration of power while considering the time and space factors. The proposed framework rests on the dimensions of everyday resistance repertoires, agents' relationships, spatialization,

and temporalization. (Johansson & Vinthagen, 2015). However, this sort of resistance study is limited as it revolves around maintaining the status quo in colonial settings. At the same time, this framework seems to lack studying efforts to change and end such conditions.

Joronen (2017) also studied Palestinians' "non-violent resistance" practices in the context of Israeli settler colonialism in the West Bank. It examines the resistance to Israel's expanding settlement, demolition and land confiscation orders, and livelihood destruction in two Palestinian places. Joronen focuses on peculiar forms of non-violent resistance grounded in the concept of the destituent power of Giorgio Agamben. Joronen demonstrates that the acts of destituent resistance were practised by using potentialities of the targeted form of life that the settler-colonial apparatus attempted to cancel, overrule, control, weaken, criminalize, and erase. (Joronen, 2017). Nonetheless, the study of this sort of resistance addresses practices to slow down and hamper the repressive functions of the colonizer. Still, it does not mainly cover the dismantlement of settler colonialism.

Hamdi (2011) examined how Palestinian artists have used the concept of bearing witness to tragedy as a means of resistance and ensuring that the idea of liberation is alive. On the other hand, it shows that Israel perceived the resistance matter seriously and has used assassination to extinguish the will of the Palestinians to resist the occupation, targeting political leaders of resistance movements and cultural and literary figures. Moreover, after studying the popular Palestinian resistance and community resilience, Dana (2019) shows that the Palestinian self-identity has contributed to the 'non-violent resistance.'

Gade (2020) conducted seventy-one interviews to study the connection between Israeli isolation practices and the Palestinians' resistance. Gade shows that the Israeli

checkpoints engendered hopelessness and fostered support for individual resistance among Palestinians instead of forcing them to comply with Israel. It indicates that checkpoints may isolate a community as a whole. Still, the within-community social connections and hope for change remained, facilitating a preference for collective resistance (Gade, 2020).

Regarding Palestinian resistance movements, AlMadani (2017) used media archives and academic sources to survey the main Palestinian factions and their endeavour toward Israel. AlMadani shows that the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) used to be arguably perceived as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. It demonstrates that the PLO had earlier been involved in an armed struggle against Israel but signed the Oslo Accords with Israel in the 1990s. Meanwhile, AlMadani shows that the other major political force in Palestine, the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), was established in the 1980s and continued to adopt armed resistance against Israel. AlMadani particularly examined an updated political charter that Hamas published in 2017. It shows that Hamas has accepted establishing a Palestinian state on the 1967 borders as a unifying ground with other Palestinian forces while the armed struggle continued to be exercised by the movement. AlMadani concludes that Hamas could identify alternatives to solve the Palestinian question while preserving the Palestinian national constants. Adwan (2019) also examined Hamas's 2017 political document and compared it to the movement's old charter of 1988. It argues that Hamas has used modern language and redefined itself as a liberation movement.

With a focus on the experience of the Palestinian National Liberation Movement (Fatah), Bucaille (2011) examined the armed resistance in South Africa against apartheid (1980-1990) and in Palestine against the Israeli occupation. It studies the experiences of two sets of veterans who have participated in the South African and Palestinian struggles. Bucaille argues that while South Africa dismantled the apartheid system and Israeli

control still exists, African National Congress (ANC) veterans tend to view themselves as victims. On the other hand, Palestinian veterans from Fatah often perceive themselves as heroes. It concludes that the heroization or victimization of self does generate from a collective political imagination and is related to the construction of self-esteem.

Nonetheless, Dana (2019) emphasizes that the Palestinian national movement failed in achieving its objectives as its leadership has put the statehood ambition over the liberation precondition through the Oslo process. It demonstrates that the Palestinian national movement became stripped of structures, functions, and characteristics associated with national liberation movements.

2.11 Theory of Settler Colonialism

As developed by Patrick Wolfe and Lorenzo Veracini, the theory of settler colonialism is used to study the continuation of Israeli settler colonialism in Palestine. In recent years, more studies have adopted the settler colonialism framework in the context of Israel-Palestine (e.g., Salamanca et al., 2012; Lloyd, 2012; Veracini, 2013; Hilal, 2015; Hughes, 2020). Pappé (2012) suggests that settler colonialism is currently the most useful paradigmatic framework for Palestine-Israel.

Some studies have employed the settler colonial framework to study issues related to Israeli domination in Palestine. For instance, Freeman-Maloy (2011) discussed the Western sponsorship of Israel in this context and critiqued Western liberal pretensions in light of the Israeli state's crimes toward Palestinians. Lloyd (2012) used the settler colonial paradigm to analyse contradictions in the Israeli discourse. Lloyd shows that some studies portray Israel at once as normal – a normal democracy, a normal Western society, a normal state – and at others as exceptional: a democracy threatened by hostile neighbours, a democracy that defines itself as a state for a single people and religion, and

others. Lloyd emphasizes that characteristics of settler colonialism, such as settlement and displacement, can define the reality of Israel. However, there seems to be a lack of studies examining the continuation of Israeli settler colonialism and power dynamics within the Israeli settler regime.

Wolfe (1999) made a remarkable academic turn in manifesting “settler colonialism,” which provided a distinct interpretation of the colonial phenomenon. Wolfe emphasized that settler-colonization is a winner-take-all project that premises on the dispensability of the indigenous population; its dominant feature is not exploitation but replacement. It defines settler colonialism as a continuous structure based on the terra nullius (empty land) and the displacement of natives. For Wolfe, the primary object of settler colonialism is the land rather than the derived surplus value from the ground. In Wolfe’s theorization, the leading settler-colonial cases that initially informed the theory of settler colonialism are the United States, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand.

Veracini (2010) shows that “colony” as a term may refer to two distinct connotations. For Veracini, a colony is a political body governed by an exogenous agency, and an exogenous entity reproduces in a specific environment. These two meanings address two situations, but both traits inherently relate to the settler-colonial phenomenon. Veracini demonstrates that settler colonialism involves permanent community movement and reproduction and the dominance of an exogenous agency over an indigenous one.

Building on Patrick Wolfe’s theorization of settler colonialism, Veracini (2015) explained the term through negation, showing what it is not. Veracini explained that the distinction between post-colonial and settler colonial studies could be found in the notion of “post”, as settler colonialism implies protracting and unreformed immanence of unequal relations between the indigenous people and settlers. Veracini also demonstrates

the differences between colonial and settler colonial modes of domination. Veracini heuristically refers to the diverse operation of viruses and bacteria to help explain the distinction between colonialism and settler colonialism. Both viruses and bacteria can be considered exogenous elements, often dominating their destination locales. Still, viruses can operate in living cells, while bacteria attach to surfaces and may or may not depend on the organisms they attack (Veracini, 2015).

Veracini (2015) explains that the colonizers and settler colonizers are both exogenous elements that seek to dominate their destination locales, with a peculiar colonial system of relationships that premises on the presence and subjugation of exploitable 'Others'. A typical slave-master relationship emerges in colonialism as colonizers depend on colonized peoples (Veracini, 2015). Also, Elkins and Pedersen (2005) explain settler colonialism by distinguishing between it and imperial expansion. It shows that the imperial expansion aimed at military advantage or trade, whereas imperial overlords were less concerned about a land seizure or internal governance. The imperial powers have undertaken their mission through reliable indigenous partners or chartered companies (Elkins and Pedersen, 2005).

Elkins and Pedersen (2005) demonstrate that the logic of elimination has guided the settlers' approach toward the indigenous peoples, and it was certainly not the logic of exploitation. The colonial settlers seek to seize the lands and expel the indigenous people beyond an ever-expanding frontier of settlement rather than governing the natives and enlisting them in their economic ventures (Elkins and Pedersen, 2005).

Colonialism and imperialism employ the logic of exploitation and subjugation of colonized people rather than the logic of elimination in the context of settler colonialism. Abernethy (2000) defines colonialism as a set of formal policies, informal practices, and ideologies employed by a metropole to retain control of a colony and benefit from power.

In other words, modern colonisation experiences revolve around territory takeover, expropriation of material resources, using labour, and intervention in political and cultural structures (Loomba, 2005).

The logic of elimination constitutes the settler-colonial tendency towards the indigenous people. Wolfe (2006) indicates that settler colonies, by and large, have been premised on eliminating native societies. Wolfe explains that elimination refers to the summary liquidation of indigenous people that comes together with negative and positive dimensions. Negatively, it seeks to destroy native societies while erecting a new colonial society on the expropriated land. The elimination of natives operates through violence and other genocidal acts, seeking to replace the existing demographic, political, and cultural presence of natives with the settler society (Wolfe, 2006).

Looking into the political aspect, Coulthard (2014) describes settler colonialism as a structure of domination premised on the dispossession of indigenous peoples' land and termination of their political authority. Kimmerling was cited in Wolfe (2006) as the former discussed "politicide" to explain the Israeli endeavour to eradicate the political viability of the indigenous Palestinians. Kimmerling defines politicide as a process covering a wide range of social, political, and military activities whose goal is to destroy the political and national viability of a whole community of people. Amir (2017) defines politicide as eradicating a population's political existence and further sabotaging a people's transformation into a polity.

Veracini (2015) explains that settlers attach to the land with no specific need to the indigenous people for their reproduction and operation. Settlers often prefer to operate in environments that Baruch Kimmerling defines as "high frontierity", which means low indigenous population density, among other things (Kimmerling, 1983; Veracini, 2015). Ultimately, Veracini (2015) shows that settlers typically consider the removal or transfer

of the encountered indigenous peoples. Further, it seems that settlers seek to adjust the colonized environment to facilitate their settler-colonial endeavour. Veracini (2015) demonstrates that settlers typically seek to reshape the landscapes they encounter and purposefully enact systematic environmental transformation. Settlers often describe such processes as improvements or Europeanization, where local biotas go through a complete change along with the domestication of settlers (Veracini, 2015).

Some studies discuss the involvement of several actors in initiating the interactions within the settler-colonial situation. Elkins and Pedersen (2005) identify four key actors that have driven settler colonialism in contemporary times: an imperial metropole where sovereignty formally exists, a local administration, a significant indigenous population, and a settler community. The struggle and negotiation involving these four actors and the institution of settler privilege could define twentieth-century settler colonialism's ideal type (Elkins & Pedersen, 2005). Veracini (2015) describes the indigenous people as the original inhabitants of a particular place. Despite that polity in this context derives from settlers' military and demographic expansions, the permanence of indigenous peoples can characterize metropolitan, colonial, and settler colonial contexts (Veracini, 2015).

On the other hand, according to Mamdani, the settler is referred to as someone who has no ancestral homeland or lives apart from his ancestral homeland (Veracini, 2015). In settler colonialism, the settler is a member of a collective that involves erecting a permanent land by displacing natives (Cavanagh & Veracini, 2016).

It appears that the settlers often established and operated through settler-colonial regimes. Veracini (2015) shows that settlers can be characterized as founders of political orders where they conquer and move across spaces while holding sovereignty claims with them. Establishing settlers' colonial orders implies that settlers structurally disavow or deny the indigenous sovereignty where the settlers' colonial charges exist. According to

Veracini (2015), the disavowal of indigenous sovereignty involves asserting the terra nullius doctrine or signing treaties they avoid honouring. Settlers may declare the colonized territory blank or impose a custom control apparatus on the indigenous people (Veracini, 2015).

Elkins and Pedersen (2005) also discussed the political structure of settler colonialism. Political structure refers to the organizational arrangement and patterns of interaction that make up a political system (Goldstein, 1991). They show that the caste distinction between the settler and indigene incorporated into the political system, economy, and law, with specific economic activities and political privileges only granted to the settlers. In general, Elkins and Pedersen (2005) emphasize that institutionalized settler privileges characterize settler colonialism, and they argue that the twentieth century has been marked by “state-oriented expansionism” in contrast with the nineteenth century “settler-oriented semi-autonomy”.

Wolfe (2006) shows that the settler political order operates the logic of eliminating indigenous people through violence and other genocidal acts. Veracini (2010) indicates that “founding violence” is compelling for the foundation of settler political regimes, where the founding collective uses military and reproductive capability. However, Veracini highlights that this “anti-indigenous violence” is often portrayed in settler colonial narratives as a defensive battle to ensure the settler community’s continued existence, not as “founding violence” per se. Veracini (2010) cites that settlers have a recurrent repudiation of the founding violence while they continue to experience anxiety and fear from the indigenous people. Some studies show that the settlers’ anxiety about “indiscriminate indigenous violence” appeared in most settler-colonial circumstances. The settler-colonial situation entails persistent concerns caused by existential threats, paranoid fear of ultimate decolonization, degenerative manifestations in the settler social

body, geopolitical position, and unfavourable demographic balances, among others (Bardon, 1992; Veracini, 2010).

Veracini (2010) concludes that the repudiation of founding violence and indigenous presences systematically shapes settler perception. Such tendencies seem to significantly influence settlers' regimes that pay attention to public opinion. The topic of public opinion appears to be not thoroughly studied in the context of settler colonialism. Nonetheless, some studies discussed the importance of public opinion in shaping governments' decisions. Linde and Peters (2020) show that the public perceives a government that manages to act according to the preferences of the majority of citizens worthy of support. Elkins and Pedersen (2005) show that Saitō Makoto, the Japanese settler leader in Korea at the beginning of the twentieth century, had adopted a strategy of "enlisting public opinion" to mobilize elite support for his policies.

In addition, Wolfe (1999) has discussed the ideological underpinnings in the context of settler colonialism. Wolfe finds that ideology has a higher systematic weighting in settler-colonial formations. To Veracini (2015), the settlers may employ the ideology factor to make settler-colonial relationships devoid of human interventions. Veracini also shows that the settler endeavour has had significant ideological consequences: legitimatizing settler hegemony and its naturalization. However, Elkins and Pedersen (2005) demonstrate that the significance of "settler tyranny" lay not simply in settlers' racist ideological underpinnings but in the institutionalization of settler ideologies and dominance within the state system.

Ideology as a term was defined by McCloskey (1964) as a system of belief that is elaborate, integrated, and coherent, that justifies the exercise of power, explains and judges historical events, identifies political right and wrong and sets forth the interconnections (causal and moral) between politics and other spheres of activity. Seliger

(1976) considers ideology as a set of ideas used by men to posit, explain and justify ends and means of organized social action, particularly political action, irrespective of whether such activities aim to preserve, amend, uproot or rebuild a given social order.

Some studies have examined the involvement of international power in facilitating settler colonial projects. Elkins and Pedersen (2005) have reviewed the participation of global forces in the settler-colonial context. Elkins and Pedersen show that the rivalry among countries in the world has covered their ambitions to expand their spheres of influence or acquire foreign possessions through settlement and economic integration. The settlement projects constituted a vital part of imperial domination across various regions of the world (Elkins & Pedersen, 2005). However, more research is required to explain the relevance of international involvement in the current settler-colonial situation.

Furthermore, numerous scholarly works have discussed the prospect of decolonization in the settler-colonial situation. Though, the debate on decolonization seemed not fully covered in Wolfe's (1999, 2006) academic accounts that consider settler colonialism impervious to regime change and indicate that settlers come to stay indefinitely. However, some scholars have recently delved into anti-colonial resistance and indigenization within the settler colonial theory. They simultaneously opened the debate on the meaning of decolonization in this context.

Veracini (2015) has notably discussed indigenous peoples' efforts to resist and decolonize settler colonialism. Veracini emphasizes that the anticolonial resistance that fails to target the structure of settler colonialism is considered ineffective. For instance, declaring equal rights for indigenous peoples is not a decolonizing step, as this sort of emancipation in the context of settler colonialism can be considered a powerful weapon in the continuous denial of indigenous rights and sovereignty (Veracini, 2015). According

to Veracini (2010), the endeavour to decolonize in this context may take three approaches: settler evacuation, promotion of indigenous reconciliation, and denial associated with an overt dismissal of the idea of changing the settler body politic.

Veracini (2010) demonstrates that settlers would stay as long as a colonial and settler-colonial world remained in place. Veracini cites Frantz Fanon's similar argument as the latter prophesied that settlers lack the interest to stay or co-exist in the colony when the colonial context disappears (Fanon, 1963; Veracini, 2010).

Moreover, as Veracini (2015) likens settler colonialism to bacteria, it refers to resistance as an equivalent to antibiotic treatment that could offer a therapy. This point matched Frantz Fanon's advocacy for direct "anti-settler violence" as a critical path in the self-affirmation of the colonized (Veracini, 2015). Still, Veracini (2015) argues that anti-colonial resistance should be adopted in a restricted manner. It suggests that on some occasions, no treatment is a better substitute for lousy treatment. Veracini explains there can be more treatment options, whereas both bacteriostatic antibiotics – such as a settlement construction freeze – and massive doses of probiotics – such as the strengthening of the indigenous social fabric – may constitute a robust approach for treatment. Veracini (2015) shows that settlers perceived the political unity among indigenous peoples as a genuine existential threat. Veracini explains that settlers can perceive indigenous political unity as a real potential danger to the very viability of their project. Nonetheless, Veracini (2015) suggests that there should be a timely diagnosis of settler colonial conditions to find appropriate treatment in this context.

There seems to be a lack of discussion on decolonization in the context of settler colonialism. Some studies have examined the role of anticolonial resistance in achieving decolonization. Cabral (2016) offers a unique reference to critical-theoretical thought and praxis over resistance and decolonization. The value of Cabral's contribution derives from

his reflections on decolonial revolutions worldwide and his leading role in directing and organizing the triumphant revolutionary process of Guinea and Cape Verde. Cabral's view matches Veracini's (2015) argument that anti-colonial resistance should target the colonial structure. Cabral (2016) defines resistance as the destruction of colonial domination to construct a new state. In essence, Cabral suggests that resistance needs not to be reactionary only but must come in line with decolonization as a whole.

Cabral's (2016) work can offer a theoretical lens to examine the obstacles to decolonisation in Palestine's anti-colonial resistance. Cabral (2016) outlines four corners (square) of resistance: political resistance, economic resistance, cultural resistance, and armed resistance. To Cabral, the political resistance aims to realize national unity and place it entirely; to garner exterior and international political support to win over allies and political support; to isolate the enemy from its partners and supporters; to orient and operate the struggle politically. According to Cabral, the economic resistance aims to destroy the exploitative economic relations of the colonialists over the occupied people and construct a new indigenous economy. While cultural resistance, as explained by Cabral, involves liquidating the colonial culture and negative aspects of its own culture, creating culture-based indigenous traditions, and remaining open to valuable foreign inclusions. Taylor (1871) defines culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."

Cabral (2016) also includes armed resistance in his resistance framework and suggests that the armed resistance aims to arrange all the necessary means to destroy the vital forces of the enemy. According to Dan Wood, the four corners of Cabral's Square of Resistance are inseparable and must be oriented to be mutually reinforcing (Cabral, 2016).

In addition, Wolfe (1999) cites some factors that hamper the resistance of indigenous peoples to settler colonization. These factors include the differences in firepower, ravages of newly introduced diseases to which they lacked immunity, the actions of native police or troopers recruited and equipped by settler authorities to suppress their tribal enemies, and other internecine tensions caused by the refugee crisis happened by the invasion (Wolfe, 1999).

2.12 Conceptual Framework

Using the settler colonialism theory and square of resistance, the continuation of Israeli settler colonialism, as seen in the violent treatment of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the Palestinian anti-colonial resistance, is conceptualized and analysed. In fact, by studying the present effects of settler colonialism, namely the removal of indigenous people and politicide, it may become apparent how Israel seeks to eliminate the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Also, the factors influencing the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians within the scope of settler colonialism can be examined by studying interactions in the political structure of the Israeli settler-colonial regime, settler ideologies, settlers' public opinion, involvement of international powers, and others. Further, the framework also explains why settler colonialism has continued in Palestine, mainly why the anti-colonial resistance has not been effective in this context. Hence, examining obstacles to decolonization, particularly political, economic, cultural, and armed barriers, can help explain why Israeli settler colonialism still exists.

This framework shows settler-colonization premises on the indigenous people's dispensability; its dominant feature is a replacement rather than exploitation (Wolfe, 1999). The elimination of native societies is a crucial concept here. The elimination here

refers to the summary liquidation of indigenous people; it involves destroying native societies and the erection of a new colonial society on the expropriated land (Wolfe, 2006). Also, it shows that settler colonialism relies on the dominance of an exogenous agency over an indigenous one (Veracini, 2010).

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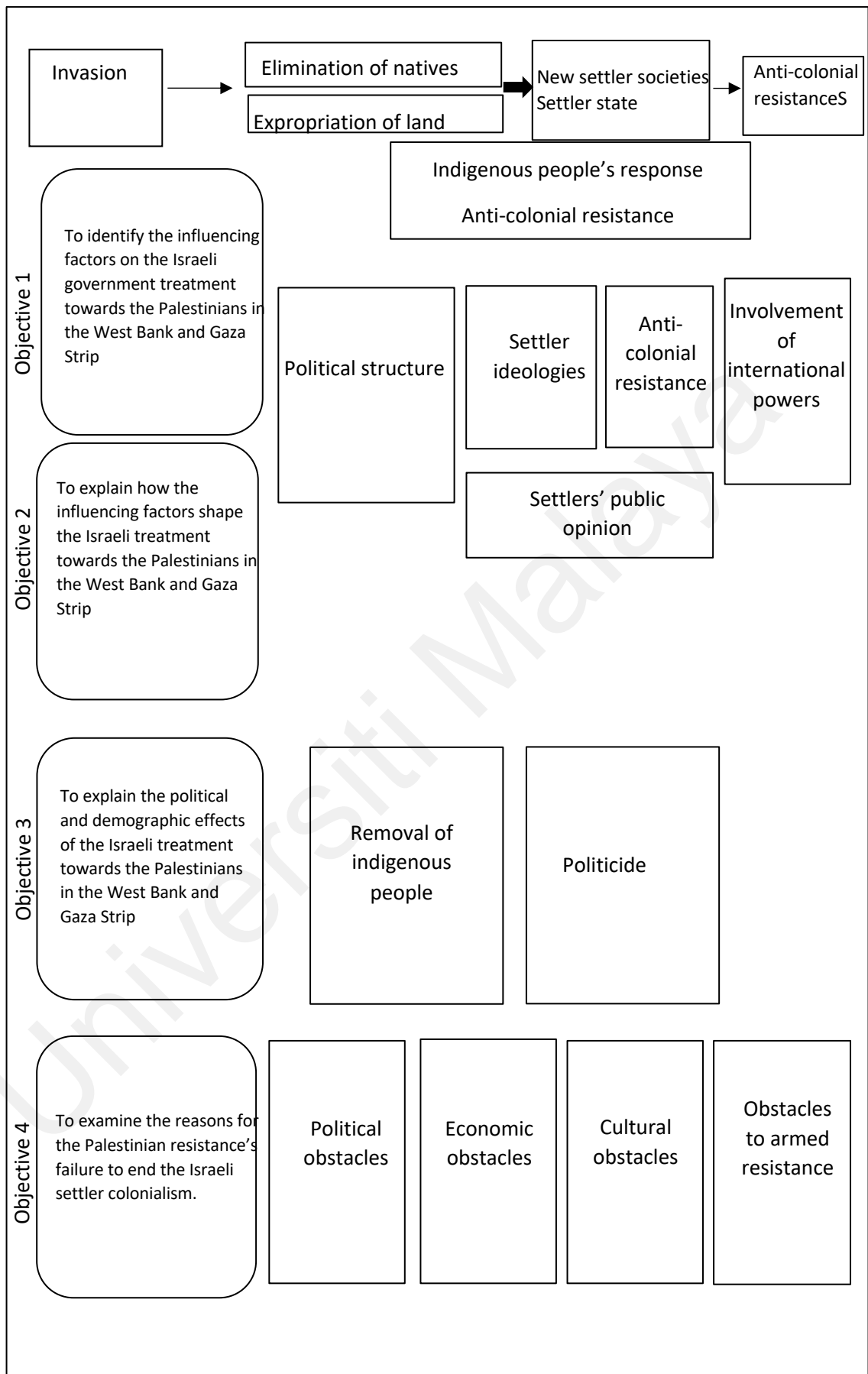


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework of the Research

The upper part of the framework (Figure 2.1) introduces a simple design of the theory. The left side of the framework exhibits the four research objectives (effects of settler colonialism on indigenous people, influencing factors on the treatment of Palestinians, and why resistance has not led to decolonization). Within the framework, relevant concepts that relate to the questions were added. The examined ideas concerning the first objective are removing indigenous people and politicicide. For the second and third objectives, the relevant concepts are political structure, settlers' ideologies, public opinion, international powers, and anti-colonial resistance. As for the third question, the framework presents the following: political obstacles, economic obstacles, cultural obstacles, and obstacles to armed resistance.

This study seeks to offer a deeper perspective on Israeli dominance in Palestine as it looks at the effects of the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip within the context of settler colonialism. It further develops to focus on the influencing factors of the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians. After diagnosing the settler-colonial situation, this study examines why the Palestinian anticolonial resistance failed in undoing Israeli settler colonialism. Therefore, the interaction between Israel and Palestinians, including the effects of the Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinians, influencing factors on the Israeli treatment, and anti-colonial resistance, are studied in light of the theory of settler colonialism and the Square of Resistance.

2.13 Conclusion

There is an obvious lacuna in the literature on studying the Israeli tendency to eliminate the Palestinians within settler colonialism. Further research is required to examine the potential eliminatory political and demographic effects of the Israeli treatment of the Palestinians. Much of the existing literature primarily shows that the Israeli treatment of

the Palestinians is carried out in the name of Israel's security. Still, other potential factors seem to have not been well examined in this context. Notably, the critical question of why Israeli settler colonialism continues remains to be answered. The literature gap guides this study to tackle questions on the political and demographic effects of the Israeli treatment of the Palestinians, influencing factors on the Israeli treatment of Palestinians, and why the Palestinians could not end settler colonialism.

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CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the research methodology adopted in this study, which includes the overall approach to the research process, from the theoretical underpinnings to the collection and analysis of data. The chapter elaborates on major methodological decisions: which research paradigm was adopted, and which methodological approach was thought to be the most appropriate to meet the research requirements. The transformative paradigm was selected, and the study adopts the qualitative approach. The methodological process led to the selection of the case-study method. The chapter also discusses the data collection method and the process and tools that were utilized to collect the data. Further, it explains in detail the process of data analysis as well as the validation of data.

3.2 Methodology

The selection of research methods and approaches is complicated as there are various ways, and these methodological choices must be compatible with the nature of the research. The method has to identify and explain the influencing factors on the Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, explain the political and demographic effects of the Israeli treatment of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and examine the reasons for the Palestinian resistance's failure to end Israeli settler colonialism.

These research issues are complex as they involve multiple aspects that could be perceived and interpreted through different meanings and perspectives. In undertaking this research, a significant decision was required for the research paradigm. This study adopts the transformative paradigm. The methodological literature shows research paradigms that engage subjective inquiries, including constructivism, transformative, and

pragmatism (see: Creswell & Creswell, 2017). These three paradigms can be relevant in this context, but this study adopts the transformative paradigm for many reasons. This study examines the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians, where Palestinians face existential threats. It also examines why Palestinian resistance could not end Israeli settler colonialism. Relatedly, the transformative paradigm is specifically concerned with the reality under the conditions of oppression and struggles for liberation (see: Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), the transformative approach was articulated by individuals who considered that other research paradigms did not fit marginalized peoples or issues of power, social justice, and oppression. Moreover, Cram and Mertens (2015) demonstrate that the inclusion of research on indigenous peoples within the transformative paradigm can acknowledge indigenous aspirations for self-determination and decolonization.

The transformative paradigm focuses on diverse marginalized and oppressed groups and how their lives are constrained by the oppressors and their strategies to resist, challenge, and subvert these constraints (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Mertens (2010) demonstrates that this paradigm requires the research inquiry to be associated with politics and a political change agenda to challenge oppression at whatever level it happens. In comparison, transformative inquirers believed that the constructivist paradigm did not go far enough in advocating for an action agenda to help disadvantaged peoples (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Creswell and Creswell (2017) explain that for social constructivists, the research's goal is to rely as much as possible on the participants' meanings, which are varied and multiple, of the issue being studied.

The transformative paradigm was selected in this study to explain the influencing factors on the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This study also examines the political and demographic effects of the Israeli

government's treatment of Palestinians. Also, the research focuses on the change in the situation in Palestine and asks why the problem of Israeli settler-colonialism still exists. These aspects suggest using a transformative paradigm, which addresses the issues of oppression and domination and why such power relationships exist. In general, Mertens (2010) presents key features of the transformative paradigm:

- It gives primary importance to the research on the lives and experiences of traditionally marginalised groups and how oppressors constrained their lives. It also focuses on these peoples' strategies to resist, challenge, and subvert the constraints.
- It links political and social actions to inequities caused by asymmetric power relationships.
- It employs a program theory of beliefs about how a program works and why the problems of oppression, domination, and power relationships exist.

3.3 Research Approach

This study used the qualitative research method. Yin (2016) explains that qualitative research involves studying the meanings of people's lives as experienced in their real-world conditions and represents the various views and perspectives of the people. The participants in qualitative research can give their views about various issues in their own words and are not limited, for example, to responding to pre-established questionnaires as in the case of quantitative research.

Creswell and Creswell (2017) demonstrate that quantitative research examines the relationship between variables to test objective theories where these variables can be typically measured on instruments. The difference between qualitative and quantitative research has often been framed in terms of using words in the former rather than numbers

in the latter. Hence, given the need to address diverse and complex issues that must be deeply examined in this study, selecting a qualitative approach seems most appropriate.

The qualitative method provided a systematic and subjective approach to highlight and explain the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians and provided proper meaning shared by the research participants. It allowed people to open up flexibly and give new insights into the factors influencing the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians. Using data collected in real-life settings helped explain why Israeli settler colonialism still exists.

3.4 Method

This study used the case study method. The research focuses on a contemporary issue where it examines the Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip between 2009 and 2019. It also questions how several influencing factors have shaped the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians and why the Palestinian resistance failed to end Israeli settler colonialism.

Multiple research methods were discussed in the literature, which include narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, case study, arts-based research, action research, and critical theory (Yin, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Yin (2017) shows that the case study method may outweigh other options when a study focuses on contemporary phenomena and mainly poses 'how' and 'why' questions with little or no control over behavioural events. The case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, institution, person, process, or social unit (Merriam, 1998).

The characteristics of the subject of the present research require a case study model to be applied. The case study is a territory. This study focused on occupied Palestinian territories, particularly the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It specifically examined the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the Palestinian anti-colonial resistance in the area between 2009 and 2019. The West Bank and Gaza Strip have a surface area of about 6000 square kilometres and have been under Israeli dominance since 1967. This area is home to over 5.2 million Palestinians subject to Israeli colonial violence and arguably facing existential threats. The case is selected with a wide range of interests in mind. Between 2009 and 2019, Israel launched several wars within the area; Israel has increasingly disregarded the political viability of Palestinians in the area; the Israeli government generally adopted a hardline approach towards the Palestinians in the area, and the Israeli settler colonialism has continued despite the anti-colonial resistance from the area. During these years, the Israeli government was formed by right-wing parties with Benjamin Netanyahu as the prime minister.

3.4.1 Data Collection

The characteristics of qualitative data collection that were considered in this study include:

- **Natural setting:** the data were collected from participants who experienced Israeli settler colonialism in Palestine and engaged with research issues at different levels. These participants include veteran UN senior officials who were stationed in Palestinian territories, Palestinian officials and political leaders, and experts in Israeli and Palestinian affairs who directly experienced the situation in Palestine in recent years.

- Researcher as a key instrument: the researcher personally collected the data. The researcher personally contacted informants and conducted interview sessions with all interviewees. The data were manually transcribed and analysed.
- Multiple sources: the data were collected from numerous sources, including interviews with informants from different backgrounds, including UN veterans, Palestinian officials and leaders, and experts. This study also used documents from UN agencies and other organizations and news reports. Several materials were obtained from official Israeli websites, including the website of the Israeli government and the parliament (Knesset).
- Participants' meanings: this study focused on learning the participants' definitions of the research issues. For instance, participants viewed the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians as an eliminatory attempt toward Palestinians' demographic and political presence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
- This study sought to develop an unreduced picture of the continuation of Israeli settler colonialism in Palestine. It involved the factors influencing the Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinians in recent years. It then showed how this Israeli treatment affected the Palestinians politically and demographically. Finally, it examined obstacles that hindered the Palestinian resistance's ability to end Israeli settler colonialism.

The conceptual framework of this study was modified and developed based on participants' views and emerging issues. This study first adopted the theory of settler colonialism, as adopted by Wolfe (2006), which explains a situation when colonizers invade and settle on lands inhabited by other people. Wolfe (2006) demonstrates that settler colonialism operates through a logic of elimination, seeking to eradicate natives through violence and other acts and replace the existing systems with those of the settler society.

The theory was used as a source of guidance to examine the effects of and influencing factors on the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians. However, some research informants raised issues that seemed to be not covered in Wolfe's theory. For instance, some informants discussed the involvement of international powers in the operations of Israeli settler colonialism, and this aspect seems less present in the original theory. Moreover, Wolfe's theory appears to give less attention to the influence of natives or indigenous peoples in this context. Most of his original texts seemed to focus on the logic and actions of settlers. The research participants explained that the Palestinians had influenced the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians. Hence, the involvement of international powers is part of the conceptual framework.

Furthermore, this study also examines why the Palestinians could not end Israeli settler colonialism. Wolfe's texts seem to give little attention to the struggle for national liberation or decolonization. The research used the Square of Resistance developed by Amilcar Cabral, focusing on anti-colonial resistance to achieve decolonization. Cabral's text demonstrates that there are various aspects of resistance, which include: political, economic, cultural, and armed ones. Cabral discusses several obstacles that undermine the anti-colonial resistance in this context. Hence, the conceptual framework incorporates these factors to provide a starting point for the inquiry about the inability of Palestinians to end Israeli settler colonialism. It may be argued that the original context of the Square of Resistance, which Cabral initially developed in a colonial context in Africa, may differ from the situation in Palestine. However, this study's use of a conceptual framework serves as a theoretical lens rather than an explanation for behaviours and attitudes.

3.4.2 Data Collection Methods

The data collection methods were semi-structured interviews and documentation. The case study can potentially employ various evidence, including documents, interviews, artefacts, archival materials, and observations (Yin, 2016).

3.4.2.1 Interviews

This study relies mainly on interviews to collect the data. After reviewing the types of interviews, the semi-structured interview was selected because of its potential to address the research's main issues flexibly, allowing further questions and insights to be developed during the session.

This study adopted purposive sampling to select the research informants. It sought informants who could meet some of the following criteria: involved in Israeli deliberations regarding the Palestinians; knowledgeable about the Israeli approaches towards the Palestinians; experienced the situation in occupied Palestinian territories in recent years; familiar with the case in the West Bank and Gaza Strip; or involved in the Palestinian struggle against the Israeli settler colonialism. There were consultations with political figures, academics, and journalists to identify informants contributing to this study. Also, this study explored open databases of the United Nations to find contact details of senior UN staff who worked in occupied Palestinian territories in recent years. Further, it examined available documents about Palestinian political movements to identify informants from these movements. This study explored media outlets' and research centres' websites to select Israeli and Palestinian affairs experts.

The priority was to choose informants at the senior level, including those involved in or engaged with Israeli deliberations regarding the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Also, the leadership of the Palestinian movements had priority. The quality of data at this level can be exceptional even if the number of informants is not large, as senior informants can provide firsthand information and deeper perspectives. Further, it was challenging to conduct interviews with senior officials regarding sensitive topics, such as the Israeli dominance in Palestine, to avoid leaking confidential information or fearing potential harm.

More than 50 interview requests were sent to potential informants through electronic emails, texts to phone numbers, and personal meetings. The researcher contacted the offices or assistants of the selected individuals to increase the possibility of delivering the request to them. Fourteen requests were entertained by informants, while some others declined to participate. Many of those contacted have not replied to the demand for months despite multiple attempts to get them. The list of informants' categories is as follows:

- Category one: two former senior United Nations (UN) staff who worked closely with Israeli and Palestinian officials in historic Palestine for years.
- Category two: five Palestinian leaders from the Fatah movement, the Hamas movement, and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).
- Category three: one senior official that handled negotiations between the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Israeli government.
- Category four is one head of an international organization that manages development projects in Jerusalem.
- Category five: four experts in Israeli affairs and Palestinian affairs.
- Category six: one Middle East expert and historian.

The interview questions were generally categorized into three sections. The first section examined the political and demographic effects of the Israeli treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip between 2009 and 2019. The second part looked into the factors influencing the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians. The questions covered issues such as the change of Israeli governments, military involvement, public opinion, and the external environment. The third segment included inquiries about obstacles that hindered the Palestinian resistance from ending Israeli settler colonialism. Various political, economic, cultural, and armed predicaments were discussed.

Several research interviews were conducted in Turkey, which is home to many Palestinian leaders and experts in this field. The interviews took place via online platforms when the in-person meeting was unfeasible. The research faced a real challenge in conducting interviews during the Covid-19 pandemic as governments restricted the movements inside and between countries.

The interview sessions began with brief introductions about the researcher and research, followed by a request to record the interview. An interview guide was used to ensure that the inquiry issues were covered. The interview guide included the topics and subtopics of the inquiry issues. Indeed, four sets of interview questions were prepared for different groups of informants. Each interview guide was drafted considering each group's scope of knowledge and experience. The main groups include United Nations-linked staff, government officials, political leaders, and Israeli and Palestinian affairs experts.

However, the research questions were not rigid, and some were added or excluded during the interviews. In addition, the questions were open-ended to give participants the space to share opinions and meanings in their own words. Probes and prompts were used in the sessions to seek further elaborations and clarifications and, in certain instances, to politely guide the discussion to issues related to the research.

Most of the interviews lasted longer than one hour. While the interviews adhered to the research guide, the direction and content of the interviews were largely determined by the flow of insights from the interviewees. In certain instances, the researcher tried to obtain further elaborations or redirect the discussion to research issues by asking the interviewee politely.

The anonymity and confidentiality of the interviewees are maintained. The names of the participants are not disclosed in this study. Instead, the informants were cited by a coding system (see Appendix 6). The interviewees' positions and expertise were highlighted to put their statements into context. The codes are IE for former senior United Nations employees, PL for political leaders, NT for an official negotiator, IO for international organization staff, and ET for experts.

The researcher could not conduct interviews with Israeli officials for various reasons. The Israeli Basic Law of Government generally prohibits Israelis from disclosing information about the decision-making of foreign affairs and security policies. However, the literature informs that on some occasions, Israeli officials have discussed the treatment of Palestinians with United Nations representatives and United States officials. Consequently, several interviews were undertaken with former top UN personnel who worked in historic Palestine within the research's scope. Multiple and repeated attempts were made to interview officials or former officials from the United States, but no one replied to the requests. Nonetheless, this study used numerous documents from official Israeli sources to obtain more data about the Israeli perspective.

Fieldwork

The researcher could not go to the primary research field in Palestine due to the political situation in the country. The West Bank is closed for the researcher because of Israeli procedures that blocked the researcher from entering the area. Also, the Rafah crossing at the border between Egypt and the Gaza Strip was randomly opened by the Egyptian government in recent years. Even if the researcher succeeded in reaching Gaza, the researcher might not be able to depart for years. Nonetheless, the researcher travelled to Turkey twice in 2019 to meet informants who were deported from Palestine in recent years by Israel and meet with experts.

Also, online interviews were conducted in 2020 with informants living in Palestine and other informants in other countries. Most online interviews took place after the Covid-19 pandemic hit the world in 2020. It was almost impossible to travel at that time as governments around the world have imposed restrictions on the movement of people to limit the spread of the virus.

Pilot Testing

Before the pilot testing, a guideline for interviews was developed after considering the background of Israeli settler colonialism and the interactions between the Palestinians and Israelis from the existing literature and relevant documents. The interview guideline was sent to two academics from the University of Malaya, one from the International Islamic University Malaysia, and a Middle Eastern research centre chief focusing on the Palestinian issue and the conflict with Israel. The guideline was also discussed with four colleagues from Palestine.

The respondents submitted eight responses containing comments on the research scale and whether the questions were biased or overly broad. As a result, the scope of research was limited to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where information sources can be more accessible than in other areas. The experience of Palestinian refugees living abroad and those living inside the area occupied in 1948 was excluded accordingly. The interview guideline was then revised. In addition to the above pilot test, one interview conducted in Turkey was used as a pilot test for subsequent interviews. It directed the guideline to merge some questions and exclude others embedded in other questions. For instance, broad questions regarding the effects of Israel's treatment of Palestinians were adjusted to focus on the political and demographic outcomes.

3.4.2.2 Documentation

Documentation includes letters and other correspondence; personal documents, such as diaries, agendas and minutes of meetings; administrative records; formal studies or evaluations; and news clippings and articles appearing in the media (Yin, 2017). This study used various documents, including reports from the United Nations and its agencies on the situation in Palestine, interactions between Israel and Palestinians over the years, and records on peace resolutions between Israel and Palestinian officials.

The study also used reports from other international and local organizations to document Israeli plans and actions toward the Palestinians. Moreover, news reports from major media outlets offered rich data on the Israeli internal political environment. The news articles reported the positions of the Israeli government and Israeli leaders on matters related to the Palestinians on various occasions. More media reports provided specific inputs on the situation in Palestine and interactions between Israel and Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in recent years.

Moreover, this study reviewed the official websites of the Israeli government and the Israeli Knesset, which offer data on minutes of cabinet meetings, decisions made by the government, and speeches delivered by the Israeli prime minister, among others. These Israeli official sources' available data helped demonstrate influencing factors that shape the Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. These electronic data sources also shed light on how the official Israeli bodies dealt with the Palestinians and their considerations in this context.

However, some scholars suggest using documents with caution in case study research. For instance, Yin (2017) demonstrates that documentation is applicable but may not always be validated. Yin recommends using documentation to corroborate and

augment evidence from other sources. Indeed, this study also employed different methods for data collection.

3.5 Data Analysis

This study used thematic analysis as an analytic approach to categorize the data and identify patterns from the text. Fereday and Muir-Cohrane (2006) define thematic analysis as pattern identification within data, with emerging themes becoming analysis categories. Data analysis involves multiple steps in processing and making sense of it. The interview data collected for this study were separated from their original context and labelled so that some portions of data could be examined together.

This process of coding the data aimed to facilitate the development of themes, which captured the following: the influencing factors on the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians, the effects of the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians, and obstacles that constrained the Palestinian resistance ability to end the Israeli settler colonialism. Creswell and Creswell (2017) demonstrate that qualitative data analysis includes sorting the data categorically and chronologically, continuous reviewing, and coding.

The data related to the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians were separately categorized to identify patterns that can show the factors influencing the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians. The analysis of this data set progressed towards overarching themes that captured several internal and external influencing factors on the Israeli government as described by informants in this study. This study gathered additional data from related documents to corroborate the themes and provide a confluence of evidence that shows how each factor was influential. It relied on texts from official Israeli websites, memoirs of Israeli leaders, and previous studies. In addition,

these elements were discussed and explained in light of past literature and theoretical writings, particularly in the context of settler colonialism.

The interview data set about the effects of the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians were coded to identify patterns of these effects within the data set. Data coding showed that Palestinians faced various political and demographic-related issues in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Further processing of this data set led to identifying overarching themes that captured specific political and demographic effects of the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians. This study used data triangulation through documents published by the United Nations and other relevant sources concerning Israeli actions toward Palestinians. The analysis of this part of the data extended to cover the theoretical discussion on the effects of settler colonialism on indigenous peoples.

The interview data about why the Palestinian resistance could not end Israeli settler colonialism were segmented and categorized to identify patterns across the data set. The themes from these codes show that various political, economic, cultural, and armed obstacles hindered the ability to end Israeli settler colonialism. The themes were interpreted to derive meanings about the anti-colonial struggle for decolonization.

The data analysis employed thematic and document analysis to segment, categorize, and reconstruct data to derive meanings from the texts and answer the research questions. The data analysis process included triangulation, where documents corroborate, refute, elucidate, or expand on the interview data. The documentation sources include UN reports, media articles, official Israeli announcements, and personal documents. The content of these sources was examined through document analysis to identify patterns within the data set. This study applied the codes from interview transcripts to a range of documents. Bowen (2009) shows that document analysis involves coding the content and identifying themes as interview transcripts are analysed. Brown

suggests using predefined codes, especially when the document analysis is supplementary to the study.

In brief, the general themes of this study were: influencing factors on the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians, elimination of Palestinians, and obstacles to decolonization. The influencing factors were divided into internal factors and external factors. The subthemes under internal factors included: political structure, ideology, public opinion, and the indigenous people's response. The external factors were categorized into regional (dis-) order and the US-Israel alliance. The themes under the elimination of Palestinians were politicide and demographic removal. The obstacles to decolonization were divided into the following: political obstacles, economic obstacles, cultural obstacles, and obstacles to armed resistance.

Each theme was discussed and explained in light of the research data. The interviews offered unique perspectives to this study, where the informants shared their experiences and knowledge about the research issues. The analysis process extended to discuss the data considering the existing literature and the research objectives. It demonstrated the contribution of this study to the debate on the Israeli treatment of Palestinians within the broader context of settler colonialism. The study also provided fresh input on the obstacles to decolonization in this context. The discussion examined the research objectives and identified the segments of data that correspond with these objectives. The following section explains more details on the data analysis process.

3.5.1 Transcribing Data

Transcribing the interviews was conducted through several steps to transform the recordings into texts to prepare the data for analysis and interpretation. The interviews were either in Arabic or English, and most of the interview sessions lasted more than one hour. The researcher personally transcribed the recordings into texts. The interviews

conducted in Arabic were initially transcribed into Arabic text, followed by translating selected verbatim quotes into the study's language, English. The translation process was carried out carefully by the researcher to retain the meaning and content of each material.

The researcher tried during and after each session to make sense of the delivered information and its meanings to make the transcription easier. The researcher took notes during the interviews and scanned the recordings afterwards.

3.5.2 Codes and Themes

After transcribing the interviews, the next step was to code the data. According to Rallis and Rossman (2012), coding is a process of organizing the data by bracketing chunks (text or image segments) and identifying a category. Tesch's (1990) approach was used for coding, which consists of eight steps: reading all the transcriptions and getting a sense of the data, picking one interview and going through it looking for underlying meanings, and writing thoughts in the margin, repeating the former step with other interviews and making a list of emerging topics about the ideas in the margin and clustering together similar topics into major, unique, and leftover topics. Tesch's method also involves abbreviating the issues as codes and writing the codes next to the appropriate text segments; reducing the list of category topics by combining comparable themes; making a final selection on the abbreviation for each category and alphabetizing these codes. Collect each data material and do preliminary analysis; then, consider recoding the existing data.

The interview materials were read numerous times to comprehend the data and embedded meanings. The process included identifying keywords or ideas that connect to the research objectives in the transcript sheet. The similar or related words were collected and combined as codes in a separate document. These steps were repeatedly for all interview transcripts. The codes were compared and reviewed across the interview texts.

The related codes were then clustered into groups. The code clusters were reviewed multiple times to identify themes. Manual coding was employed to immerse the complicated data set and gradually find connections between the different perspectives. Although the manual coding took a long time and required close attention, the process enabled the researcher to interpret the data, combine and categorize them, and then flexibly discuss them.

Furthermore, this study used a hybrid approach of deductive and inductive reasoning to identify the themes of this study. The influencing factors on the Israeli government's treatment were essentially inductively recognized from the data. The data also determined the political and demographic effects of the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians. On the other hand, though the interviews detailed the obstacles to decolonization, the research was guided by Cabral's (2016) categorization of anti-colonial resistance that can achieve decolonization, which includes: political resistance, economic resistance, cultural resistance, and armed resistance. Hence, this study looked into impediments to each form of resistance. The themes of this study are as follows:

- First: the internal and external factors influencing the Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinians. The researcher inductively observed the transcription of interview answers about the factors influencing the Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This observation of interviews guided the researcher to highlight text sections in different colours with codes to describe their content. The interview extracts corresponded to various codes, which include: government, state, power, right-wing, political party, security, army, minister, authority, cabinet, control, left-wing, ideology, religion, Zionism, Jewish Israelis, vulnerability feelings, inimical attitude, threat, afraid, majority, electability, Palestinians division, Hamas, PLO, struggle, schism, isolation, internal situation, peace process, resistance,

Palestinian Authority, negotiation, representation, Fatah, reconciliation, armed resistance, steadfastness, Arab Spring, Sunni-Shia divide, region, Gulf states, Arab regimes, the Arab world, normalization, legitimacy, Egypt, Muslim Brotherhood, influence, United States, Trump, USAID, and Washington.

The interview data on the influencing factors were collated into groups identified by these codes. Later, a number of patterns among the codes and themes were uncovered. The themes included: political structure, ideology, public opinion, the colonized people, regional (dis-) order, and the US-Israel alliance. A more detailed examination of themes led to their consolidation into two categories: internal influencing factors on the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and external influencing factors on the Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinians. Each theme was discussed and explained with examples from the data as evidence. In addition, the documents provided more data to support the themes.

- Second: the political and demographic effects of the Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinians. The interview data on the political and demographic impact of the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians were coded to categorize data extracts. The codes of data concerning the political effects included: isolation, disintegration, confinement, Bantustan, control, road blocks, denial of political rights, independent Palestinian state, self-determination, existence, control of natural resources, blackmailing, Palestinian Authority, tax money, municipal authority, political authority, confiscation, COGAT, toppling the Palestinian Authority, occupation interests, weak Palestinian Authority, conflict management, end of conflict agreement, transitional agreement, arrangement, red herring, and exploitation of peace process.

These codes were read and re-read multiple times to recognize patterns among them. This process led to identifying the following themes: undermining the Palestinian state and self-determination, weakening the Palestinian Authority, and disregarding mutual agreements. The settler colonialism theory suggests that settler-colonial regimes seek to eliminate the indigenous people's political viability in a process called politicide. Politicide was recognized and added as a general theme concerning the political effects of the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians.

On the other hand, the research data concerning the demographic effects of the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians were coded to categorize data extracts. The codes that emerged from the texts included the following: youth migration, leaving the land, displacement, making life miserable, appropriate revocation of residency rights, the centre of life, confiscation of identity cards, demographic growth, unlivable place, and size of the family. The general theme in this part is the indigenous people.

- Third: the obstacles to decolonization: political obstacles, economic obstacles, cultural obstacles, and obstacles related to armed resistance. The research data on the barriers hindering the Palestinian's ability to end Israeli settler colonialism were coded to categorize the data. The codes that emerged from the text included the following: concession of rights, Oslo Accords, agreements, legitimacy, national unity, internal conflict, lack of political will, international relations, economic boycott, Paris Economic Protocol, dependence on Israel, self-capabilities, integration with the Israeli economy, return of tax revenues, dominance of political voice, cultural formation, distortion of narrative, social behaviour, armed resistance, deterrence, security coordination, and development of arms. This study used the Square of Resistance to help categorize these codes. The general themes in this part are political obstacles, economic obstacles, cultural obstacles, and armed resistance obstacles. The Square of Resistance

demonstrates that the struggle for decolonization adopts various types of resistance, which include political, economic, cultural, and armed aspects.

The researcher studied, compared, and contrasted the many inputs and perspectives offered throughout the data gathering stage to answer the study questions. This thesis has premised on these themes regarding the political and demographic effects of Israeli treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the influencing factors on the treatment, and the Palestinian resistance's inability to end Israeli settler colonialism in light of the conceptual framework. Notably, following the transformative paradigm, this study considered the need to change the situation and explored how the Palestinians could overcome Israeli settler colonialism.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

This study used the triangulation tool for the validation of data. Data triangulation means that a case study's findings have been supported by more than a single source of evidence (Yin, 2017). In this study, the other data sources are documents. It also adopted certain criteria to select the interviewees and avoid bias, such as involved in Israeli deliberations regarding the Palestinians. Also, UN veterans and experts came from diverse backgrounds and had no clear conflict of interest. The researcher can also judge the findings based on first-hand experience in the research field.

3.7 Summary

The emphasis of this study was to understand the Israeli treatment of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and to examine the reasons hindering the Palestinian resistance's ability to end Israeli settler colonialism. The transformative paradigm was selected for the research. It adopted the qualitative approach. The data collection methods

were interviews and documentation. The thematic analysis helped derive meanings from the raw data, answering the research questions in an organized and comprehensive manner.

Universiti Malaya

CHAPTER 4: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL INFLUENCING FACTORS ON ISRAEL'S TREATMENT OF PALESTINIANS

4.1 Introduction

The approach to data analysis considers the whole picture of the internal and external influencing factors on the Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The themes that have emerged in data analysis concerning the internal factors were political structure, ideology, public opinion, demographic concerns, and the indigenous people's response. As per the external factors, the data analysis revealed two themes: regional (dis-) order and alliance. Most of the former factors appear to have enabled the violent Israeli treatment of the Palestinians in recent years.

The themes that were developed guided the study of the interviews data. The data analysis combines subjective information, objective facts, and personal opinions. Each theme is addressed independently, but due to the complex and diverse nature of research, the themes are inextricably linked and will be discussed wherever relevant.

The perspectives of each group of interviewees contribute to the study from different points of view. For instance, the former top United Nations officials offered insights about their experience on the ground and their engagement with Israeli officials. The Palestinian leaders have notably provided data linked to their interactions with Israel. The academic credentials of these leaders offered a theoretical perspective on their views. However, the leaders may have tried to justify their movements' positions and avoid direct criticism. Hence, the experts' inputs can offer more data that is not directly linked to a particular party.

The advantage of experts' views in this research includes theoretical perspective and insights based on direct experience in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip. The insights from a senior Palestinian negotiator with Israel offer an essential account in this context as the inputs most likely demonstrate Israeli and Palestinian perspectives. The data

offered a vast and complex collection of inputs, enabling this study to deal with voluminous material regarding the continuation of Israeli settler colonialism in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Overall, the data provided a broad and complex set of information on the external factors influencing the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

4.2 Political Structure

Israel is a parliamentary democracy where political parties with the majority of parliament seats often make mutual arrangements to form coalition governments. This study shows that no single Israeli political party could have obtained a simple majority in recent decades, and the governments are often composed of several parties. The interviews demonstrate that the right-wing parties dominated the Israeli government between 2009 and 2019, which have influenced the Israeli treatment of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

A former top UN official, who has spent years on the ground in Palestine and reported directly to the Secretary-General of the UN, showed how successive Israeli right-wing governments have determined the prospect of existence for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in recent years:

“I was briefing the security council every month that was back to 2011. I started to warn the security council and to talk about an emerging one-state reality instead of two states. I felt it became more and more difficult in terms of all the changes on the ground and the fact that the settlement movement was actually in power or empowered by successive Israeli governments.”
(IE1)

The Israeli government seemed has constrained the potential of political settlements with the Palestinians in recent years. A senior Palestinian political leader also highlighted that

there was no outcome from the negotiation between Palestinian officials and the Israeli government between 2009 and 2019:

“We are talking about the duration between 2009 and 2019, during which Netanyahu was the leader; this means that the Zionist right-wing was ruling. Furthermore, (expectedly) there was no gain or result from negotiating with Palestinians in these ten years.” (PL1)

An expert in Israeli and Palestinian affairs cited the dominance of the right-wing in the Israeli government as one reason for the Israeli rejectionist approach towards Palestinians:

“These extreme movements have become determinant and active in Israeli decision-making, linked to an overall tendency to reject the two-state solution. While (Israel was) dealing with the Palestinians with further inferiority to the extent of not allowing them to have more than autonomy in place.” (ET4)

This trend of right-wing dominance in Israel is linked to the same direction that has taken place in Western countries, where politicians employed fears and concerns among the public to mobilize support:

“In Israel, you see a bit the same as what we have seen in other societies (...), and I refer you, particularly to Western societies. There was always left and right in Western democracies. That has all changed now. It has become more personalized, more and more probabilistic. People are not satisfied with their rulers. (...) I feel that Netanyahu has been very, very clever in manipulating these fears and these concerns.” (IE1)

Another interviewee has partially associated this right-leaning in Israel with the dynamics of the second Palestinian Intifada (uprising):

“The second Intifada (uprising), which began in 2000, has further intensified the extreme right-wing position in the Israeli society as Sharon came to power and enforced colonial realities on the Palestinian land, such as the Apartheid Wall (Separation Wall).” (PL5)

Furthermore, the interviews show that the Israeli government empowered the military to play a determinant role in matters related to the Palestinians. It seems that most of the Israeli engagement with the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including civilian affairs, was carried out by the military. This involvement has advanced security and military considerations which often caused violent treatment of Palestinians. Several interviews discussed the influence of the military in this context:

“Well, you know, the army and generals do have an important influence in Israel again because of the security; security is being considered so important by every Israeli.” (IE1)

Another interviewee who is an expert in Israeli affairs also highlighted the involvement of the Israeli military:

“I think that during the years from 2009 to 2019, the Israeli policy relies more on the security determinant, and it is rational then to assume that the security establishment has a role in adopting the Israeli policy.” (ET3)

A former senior UN official recognized the prominent role of the military in this context and particularly highlighted the increasing involvement of the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) in the daily life of Palestinians:

“What is true, and I think that when it comes to dealing with the Palestinians on the ground, whether in Gaza or in the West Bank, it is, of course, the army, it is COGAT, the general, the Coordinator.” (IE1)

Also, the United Nations’ activities concerning the Palestinians had to be approved by the Israeli military:

“The Coordinator for the territories, with whom I always had very close contact because if you want to deal with anything in the West Bank or in Gaza, you cannot go around him; of course, he is a very important player in all of this, and he is involved in many, many cabinet meetings about the Palestinian issue.” (IE1)

A former top UN official confirmed that the Israeli military had the power to pursue steps affecting Palestinians that even some Israeli ministers were not aware of:

“To give you one example, it was this general of COGAT who came to me after the war asking me if I could actually rekindle my contacts with Qatar and make the very, very secret first shipment of money for Gaza, and he did that, he could not have done that without the knowledge of Netanyahu, but apart from Netanyahu and his own minister of defence, nobody else knew about it in the cabinet, because it was so sensitive to actually do something which was money.” (IE1)

Palestinians in their daily life have notably felt the growing role of the COGAT as the Coordinator, for instance, involved in issuing permits for them to move across Palestinian cities and to work as well:

“The role of the Israeli Coordinator has been enlarged in the last four years to the extent of overriding the function of the Palestinian Authority, which is their partner in peace and security coordination. The Israeli Coordinator has opened direct communications with the people offering them permissions.” (PL1)

However, A former top UN official who was in direct contact with the Israeli government explained that there was a limit for the COGAT when it came to major Israeli decisions:

“But it is certainly not so that the Coordinator can take, has a lot, he does not take the political decisions. He does not decide whether Israel goes to war or not. That is always (...) in the cabinet. You have the so-called security cabinet within the Israeli cabinet, of which a number of ministers are members, and that is always led by the prime minister.” (IE1)

Moreover, the role of the Israeli prime minister was pivotal in setting the direction and making of significant decisions about the Palestinians. This factor was found more significant during the premiership of Benjamin Netanyahu, the longest-serving prime minister in the history of Israel. According to a former high-ranking official of the UN:

“Mr Prime Minister who very much makes the policy (on the Palestinians), (and) certainly since Netanyahu more so than the defence, even than his defence minister sometimes, so that is how it works.” (IE1)

A senior Palestinian official negotiator with Israel has particularly mentioned the role of Netanyahu in exploiting the dominance of the right-wing at the cost of the Palestinians:

“He (Netanyahu) figures out that to do so (stay in power), he will have to earn the support of the Israeli extreme right, the middle right, the centre-right. And to destroy the left. And to play into the settlers' demands, and (to adopt) the conservative Jewish notion of control, taking Zionism to its full extent.” (NT1)

A Palestinian lawmaker and former minister in a Palestinian government that dealt directly with Israel in recent years acknowledged the role of Netanyahu in shaping the Israeli treatment of the Palestinians:

“The Netanyahu premiership labels this period between 2009 and 2019 in Israel, and Netanyahu and political allies are known for their extremism and hate towards the Palestinians.” (PL3)

4.3 Ideology

Some interviewees demonstrated that ideology is vital in shaping Israeli interactions with the Palestinians. A former top UN official said:

“And now we come to religion also. It was not a religious conflict in the beginning. (...) Of course, you can say that religion can always play a role, but it certainly; it was not how they looked at it on the Israeli side. But, of course, that has also changed on the Israeli side. So now you have a government that is propelled by Zionists, by settlers, religious settlers also in particular.” (IE1)

This ideological factor was found more evident in the matters related to the Palestinians in the West Bank, where claims of religious and historical links were advocated and reflected on the ground by the Israeli government in recent years:

“In the recent four years, you need to note that there have been different procedures even among the West Bank cities. The right-wing government has given special treatment to cities with religious and historical values for them. Hence, they tighten their actions in areas such as Hebron, Salfit, Ariel, or Gush Etzion. For instance, the number of settlers in Salfit is more than the number of the Palestinians.” (PL1)

The role of ideology in the Israeli treatment of Palestinians has entrenched in recent years. The Jewish Nation-State Law, adopted by the Israeli parliament (the Knesset) in 2018, mandates that the right of self-determination in the Land of Israel is limited to the Jewish people. Several interviewees showed how the ideology has made inroads in Israel and demonstrated that such beliefs render Palestinians outsiders:

“For the Israeli side, there has been an increase and dominance of extreme religious and national movements which resulted in the passing of the so-called Jewish Nation-State Law.” (ET4)

Some interviewees suggested that the definition of Israel as the Jewish state contradicted democratic values:

“The declaration of Israel as a Jewish state put democracy in a secondary position, and apparently, the religious aspect emerged in recent years. For instance, the conflict in the West Bank moved in a different direction from the one before the Oslo Accords. The West Bank has been seen as a historical and cultural issue (for Israelis).” (ET1)

“The Zionist project is premised on the belief that historic Palestine is Jewish land, which is entrenched through the passing of the Nation-State Bill in 2018. The law implies that the right of self-determination in the ‘Land of Israel’ is only dedicated to the Jews, and such right would not be granted to Palestinians.” (PL5)

It appears that ideology constitutes a vital determinant in Israel’s interactions with the Palestinians:

“The ideological factor is strongly present (in Israel), and it has been considered in the internal Israeli discussion when they address the Palestinian question.” (ET3)

4.4 Public Opinion

Israeli public opinion has influenced the Israeli treatment of Palestinians between 2009 and 2019. The Israeli officials were concerned about the public views when they dealt with the Palestinians. On the other hand, the data show that the majority of the Israeli

public did not favour granting the Palestinians the right to establish their state and was inclined to use force against the Palestinians. Two former UN officials who have worked on the ground in historic Palestine and engaged with many Israelis concluded that many Israelis opposed the Palestinian state and pushed for poor treatment of Palestinians. One of the interviewees had this to say:

“I lived for seven years there (Israel/Palestine). I also made some Israeli friends and not only political friends. I was struck by how many Israelis simply did not believe it was possible for them to grant Palestinians (the right to) self-determination. Because they were convinced that such a (Palestinian) state will become a Hamas state, meaning a mortal danger for them.” (IE1)

A former UN official linked the inimical Israeli public views towards the Palestinians to the former’s fear and cautious feelings when it comes to the whole Arab world in the Middle East:

“I know Israel is by far one of the strongest states in the Middle East by now, but this is not the way many Israelis look at that. They still feel that vulnerability in an Arab world which is still largely inimical to them.” (IE1)

Another former UN official, who was stationed in Palestine in recent years, shared similar observations:

“Most of them (Israelis he met) believes that all is theirs, (and) this idea that everybody is always out to get them; that if they give a little bit of room, then (other) people; everybody is out to kill them.” (IE2)

“They (the Israelis) basically, the whole narrative that has been drummed into them for years that if we show the Palestinians any sign of weakness, then it will be another holocaust. People feel in a constant sense of feeling threatened and making sure you feel afraid.” (IE2)

The majority of Israelis rejected the presence of an independent Palestinian state:

“The majority in Israel today does not want an independent state of Palestine next door to it.” (NT1)

The Israeli public opinion concerning Palestinians was considered by Israeli leaders as the latter were concerned about their political future and electability. A former top UN official said:

“It also means that an Israeli leader, when he is showing weakness to Palestinian violence, showing weakness to Hamas, he will be next elections out of power.” (IE1)

For instance, an Israeli prime minister (Benjamin Netanyahu) seemed to take reprisal measures toward the Palestinians to respond to public opinion:

“He (the Israeli prime minister) is also thinking about that in terms of his future electability and all that which sometimes leads him to take decisions you would prefer him not to take in terms of taking reprisals measures after Palestinian violence and all that.” (IE1)

It appears that Israeli politicians were mindful of public opinion as they wanted to win public support:

“The (Israeli) politicians all had their own considerations, their own electoral to be mindful of.” (IE1)

Moreover, Israeli public opinion has also played a role in shaping the decisions of military officers as they consider their possible future in politics as well:

“Then you know your career in the army very often also is a big help in the rest of your career, in society or in politics, you make your friends in the army in Israel, because if you have to serve in the Israeli army. It is not just one year, you know, it is three years, and if you become an officer, very often longer, so it is, of course, in that sense (where) the society where the army does play an important role, also in social and political time.” (IE1)

4.5 Demographic Concerns

The size of the Palestinian population was one of the Israeli determinants when addressing the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The interviews show that the population growth of Palestinians was perceived as a real threat to the Israeli settler-colonial project

that favoured a Jewish majority in Palestine. One interviewee has brought up the question of population and its effects on the Israeli approach towards the Palestinians:

“Demographically, Israel is worried, of course; that is why they want to isolate the Arab neighbourhoods. They are worried that, long-term, the Palestinian population will overthrow the Israeli population, so this (is) a driving force. (...) Also, they are taking parts of the West Bank, especially Area C, expanding the settlements to expand the territorial control, and populating area C with Israeli settlers.” (NT1)

An interviewee who worked for the United Nations in Palestine noted that the Israeli government was worried about the rise of the Palestinian population. The interviewee had this to say:

“Then, of course, if you look at the demographic situation in Israel-West Bank, there is still a Jewish majority of the, form, of Palestine, so you know these demographic factors are important.” (IE1)

4.6 The Indigenous People’s Response

The Palestinians’ response to Israel seems to significantly influence the Israeli interactions with them. If the Palestinians surrender and leave their land to the Israelis, the issue will likely become irrelevant. However, the Palestinian influence in this context seemed to grow or decline depending on their internal status and responses. Some interviews suggest that the political division between the two major Palestinian political factions, Fatah and Hamas, made Israel less constrained and possibly more violent when interacting with the Palestinians. A former top UN official had this to say:

“Because, of course, the Palestinian division is playing a negative part on their side; because as long as Hamas reigns in Gaza and you have the PLO and PA in the West Bank, it is a very simply divide and rule play for Israelis.” (IE1)

A Palestinian official who was involved in negotiations with Israeli officials also talked about the negative impact of the Palestinian division:

“The schism between Fatah and Hamas has been very, very detrimental to our national struggle, and it has been used by Israel and the international community as well. To use the situation, Israel plays the internal schism directly to the Israeli policies of controlling the territories; keeping the division; keeping the West Bank and Gaza isolated and expanding the settlements quickly.” (NT1)

An expert in Israeli affairs explained that Israel has benefited from the Palestinian division as it could enforce more violent measures on the Palestinians while the Palestinian house is not in order:

“Israel has also benefited from the Palestinian internal condition. First, since 2007, the Palestinian internal condition has been tragic as there has been a political and geographic division. And this situation is convenient (for the Israelis) to impose whatever policy. The Israelis exploit this Palestinian situation in order to escape forward from any obligation that could be demanded through the peace process.” (ET3)

Another interviewee suggested that Israel promoted and exploited the Palestinian division for years:

“Netanyahu wanted to keep or provoke the Palestinian division because that would serve the right-wing politically as it distances him from the international pressure to respond to Abu Mazen (the president of the Palestinian Authority) and give commitments to the negotiation project and peace.” (PL1)

Some interviews show that Israel has used the Palestinian division as a scapegoat to ignore international demands to take positive steps toward the Palestinians:

“In internal talks, Netanyahu asked with whom I negotiate. And there was a case when a political leader pressed him to do something in this respect; Netanyahu said the Palestinians are divided, and Abu Mazen (Mahmoud Abbas, president of the Palestinian Authority) did not represent all the Palestinians. However, when he (Netanyahu) was asked what if the Palestinians reconcile, he replied that these are terrorist organizations that he would not negotiate with them.” (PL1)

A former top UN official also explained how Israel could use the Palestinian division to avoid making agreements with Palestinian officials:

“On the Palestinian side, we have sad division, so with whom should Israel conclude an agreement? As long as that is the case, I am afraid it is a very, very sad situation.” (IE1)

Moreover, the interviews demonstrated that the internal division between Fatah and Hamas affected the Palestinian political field in various ways. The Fatah movement has controlled the West Bank through the Palestinian Authority, and Hamas has controlled the Gaza Strip through its administration in the area. The differences between the two movements include their approach toward Israel in recent years. The Palestinian Authority continued seeking a political settlement that adopted the United Nations resolutions and the peace process with Israel. In recent years, the Palestinian Authority has opposed the armed resistance and coordinated with Israel on security matters. Some interviews demonstrate that the Palestinian Authority targeted those involved in armed resistance in the West Bank.

For the Gaza Strip, various interviews demonstrate that the Hamas movement and other factions continued to advocate for armed resistance and develop local military power. The resistance movements in the area practised armed resistance through various acts, including launching rockets and conducting military operations against Israeli targets. A Palestinian official explained some differences in both movements’ (Fatah and Hamas) approaches toward Israel:

“I think, as I said, you have Hamas and Fatah, different tactics, and different relationships. Hamas has never recognized the state of Israel. Fatah, through the PLO, has certainly recognized the state of Israel. So, that has created a different relationship between Israel and the PLO and Israel and Hamas” (NT1)

The internal political division seemed to weaken the Palestinian position in the face of Israel:

“The Palestinian factor is relevant in this context as there has been a divided and weak Palestinian environment as well as a client Palestinian Authority which serves the occupation goals and relieves the occupation authorities from doing many tasks that are considered dirty.” (ET4)

Some interviews recalled that Israel has publicly opposed Palestinian reconciliation and threatened the Palestinian Authority against signing agreements with the Hamas movement. One former UN official highlighted some of the opposing Israeli reactions to the reconciliation attempts:

“I felt that acutely also when I was there in Jerusalem that whenever there was any serious talk of (the Palestinian) reconciliation, the Israelis got very nervous, particularly, of course, the present Israeli government, which is so easy to divide and rule over the Palestinians.” (IE1)

In this respect, the Israeli government has given Palestinian Authority officials some personal privileges, which Israel later used to blackmail the officials against ending the Palestinian division. One senior Palestinian leader highlighted these privileges:

“The Israeli authorities granted leaders of the Palestinian Authority special cards called VIP Cards to facilitate their movements and gave them permission to enter the areas Israel had occupied in 1948 and travel overseas.” (PL1)

Nonetheless, the Palestinian resistance, especially in the Gaza Strip, served as deterrence to Israel. A former top UN official reflected on the interactions between Israel and the resistance movements in the Gaza Strip:

“Gaza is such; it is another dead end in Israeli politics. They do not know what to do with Gaza.” (IE1)

Various interviews argued that Israeli generals became concerned about the consequences of wars with the Palestinian resistance movements in the Gaza Strip, which consequently paved the way for some Israeli mitigation:

“But it was (mitigation to the Palestinians in Gaza) coming directly from the generals directly responsible for the situation, understanding that Gaza would explode again, meaning that another war would come much sooner if this would not be done.” (IE1)

A Palestinian leader argued that the Palestinian armed resistance had constrained the Israeli government’s violent approach towards the Palestinians:

“The armed resistance has become a real factor in the Gaza Strip, but that is not the case in the West Bank. The armed resistance has destabilized the occupation. However, on the other hand, the occupation (authorities) exploited the resistance to wage atrocities toward the unarmed Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Nonetheless, the occupation has certainly considered the armed resistance (when dealing with the Palestinians), especially in the Gaza Strip.” (PL5)

An expert in Israeli and Palestinian affairs demonstrated that the armed resistance confused the Israeli government in maintaining its settler-colonial order:

“The Palestinian resistance is an active and influential factor in Israeli policymaking, particularly the strength and steadfastness in Gaza, which has caused a headache to the Israeli side (...). The resistance also has a role in other parts of Palestine and causes anxiety to the Israeli occupation.” (ET4)

Moreover, the interviews indicate that the Palestinian resilience and steadfastness made it difficult for Israel to achieve its objective of eliminating the Palestinian presence in their territory:

“I think being very resilient and tenacious ourselves and not giving up on our rights and not accepting Israeli policies and conditions has proved to be a challenge to the Israeli establishment.” (NT1)

“And then, of course, there is one other thing (laughing) I have learnt being amongst the Palestinians; they are a very proud and optimistic people. They

will not be deported; they will not make the mistake they made maybe in 1948 to abandon their lands believing they would come back.” (IE1)

4.7 Regional (dis-) Order

Traditionally, Israel has considered the Arab and regional response to its treatment of the Palestinians. In the past, many Arab states were involved in wars and military confrontations with Israel. All countries that share land borders with historic Palestine, namely Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan, have previously confronted Israeli attacks.

When the domestic situation became chaotic and unstable inside many of the region’s countries, the interviews show that Israel acted more freely with fewer constraints on the Palestinians. The interviews argued that Arab governments and rulers mainly focused on their power position, which they felt challenged in the wave of revolutions and counter-revolutions in the region since 2011. Some Arab leaders believed that foreign support, particularly from the United States, was vital. The interviews show that some Arab leaders made rapprochements with Israel to enhance their relationship with the United States. Those leaders viewed Israel as one of the United States’ closest allies and estimated that an association with Israel could facilitate US support for them. Also, the public support for the Palestinians from the region has declined in recent years.

A former top UN official explained that the unstable regional situation had detrimental effects on the Israeli government’s treatment of Palestinians in recent years:

“Well, I am afraid largely (the region’s influence), I see it negative (...). If you look at the Arab states themselves, of course, since the Arab spring, particularly after that, it further marginalized the conflict (Palestine-Israel). I think it had already started a bit before but certainly after the Arab spring.” (IE1)

Some interviews argued that Israel's and Arab regimes' common hostility towards Iran was used to justify the leaning towards Israel in the region:

“Iran increasingly became an issue, the Sunni Shia divide in the region. It all led to a situation where we know that it is now a corporation between Israel and a number of Arab Gulf states.” (IE1)

It seems that the regional leaning towards Israel has contributed to promoting the Israeli political position against the Palestinians:

“It is noted that there was a sort of building up a relationship (between Israel and Arab regimes) in this context, and that certainly influenced the Israeli policy towards the Palestinians. (...) After the Arab Spring, Netanyahu was no longer talking about the two-state solution, which happened due to the absence of pressure to accept this proposal.” (ET3)

An expert in Palestinian and Israeli affairs explained how Israel had used the regional environment to facilitate the violent treatment of Palestinians:

“The current environment in the Arab world can be characterized by the submission of authoritarian and corrupt regimes to the American hegemony. (...) The US conditioned their response to these regimes by meeting the Israeli demands or by the normalization of ties between these regimes and the Israeli side.” (ET4)

A Palestinian leader suggested that the Arab role is supposed to deter Israel from the violent treatment of the Palestinians, but that seems to have become irrelevant for years now:

“Until now, no real deterrent has stopped Israel from continuing its current approach towards the Palestinians, and there has been no real threat that forced the occupation to step back. Those regional states which are supposed to face them (Israel) have recognized the occupation and gave legitimacy to Israel, even in terms of the measures towards the Palestinians.” (PL3)

However, the interviews emphasised that the regional situation had briefly constrained the violent Israeli treatment of Palestinians when the so-called Arab Spring in Egypt gained momentum with the democratic election of the president of Egypt in 2012. A UN

veteran who was officially representing the UN in the region at that period explained that Egypt intervened to restrain Israeli military actions towards the Palestinians when the former Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi was in power:

“I wanted to tell you about Egypt, Egypt under Morsi, of course, the (Muslim) Brotherhood was in power, I had many contacts with the Brotherhood, I also had many contacts on the Israeli side, Israel was very concerned about the developments, and their perspective was, of course, understandable, at the same time they were very curious to find out what Morsi was going to do.” (IE1)

One interview suggested that the involvement of Egypt’s Morsi helped end the Israeli war on Gaza in 2012:

“And then Morsi showed his leadership, in my view, during the second Gaza war when he actually effectively influenced Hamas to accept another ceasefire which was basically brokered by him together with Hillary Clinton and for the UN, we also played a role.” (IE1)

However, the toppling of President Morsi and the fall of the Arab Spring appeared to have negative repercussions on the Palestinians. A former top UN official had this to say:

“But I wonder what (Egypt) they can actually contribute (to the two-state solution). And it certainly has not been contributing if they actually compound the problems for Gaza; that (is) what Sisi (president of Egypt) certainly has been doing since he came to power. Because there is now we always talk about the blockade; there is now a joint blockade of Israel; you should realize, both are (sworn) enemies of Hamas, Israel and Egypt now, and that means there is a little of collusion in what is happening now.” (IE1)

4.8 US-Israel Alliance

While Palestine has relatively limited natural resources and Israel faces many threats, it appears that Israel cannot only rely on its own to carry on with its colonial endeavour without solid support and alliance. Indeed, the very existence of Israel came only after the facilitating role of the British. The interviewees have cited the international alliance as a factor influencing the Israeli government’s treatment of the Palestinians. For

instance, the Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinians became more violent after Donald Trump became the president of the United States:

"What I have seen is that the Americans, first of all also for the peace process, close to themselves, you know, there was also a Middle East Quartet, but do not believe that the Quartet was really directing the peace process. It was always the Americans. It was also what the Israeli only wanted." (IE1)

A Palestinian official who was involved in peace talks with Israel and engaged with international mediators gave some insights about the US's supportive role to Israel:

"The US has played the broker's role in the peace process, and unfortunately, successively, they have not been able to get an agreement because they also have their interest and are much closer to Israel. And with Trump, it becomes very, very clear that they are one-sided." (NT1)

An interviewee gave some examples about the US-biased role in this context:

"They shut the (Palestinian) diplomatic mission to Washington, to the point where they have suspended US Aid operation to Palestine, and they have suspended all relations with us." (NT1)

An expert in Israeli affairs has also referred to the U. S's unwavering support for Israel in its endeavour toward the Palestinians:

"Effectively, the current Israeli policy towards the Palestinians is the policy of total ignorance to (peaceful) settlement. This policy is not only supported by the U.S., but the US administration further follows it." (ET3)

Some interviews linked the Israeli plans to annex parts of the West Bank with U.S. support:

"During the years of Trump's presidency, the Zionist right-wing and Netanyahu have aspired for the annexation of large parts of the West Bank as they also addressed the area differently." (PL1)

Also, several interviews discussed the association between the Israeli endeavour to undermine the Palestinian political viability and the support of the Trump administration.

For instance, an interviewee has this to say:

“The Israelis recognized an opportunity through the new US administration and Trump’s support (...), and the Israelis became less interested in allowing the Palestinian Authority to continue its function as a ruler of most of the West Bank.” (PL1)

An expert in Israeli and Palestinian affairs explained that the international engagement with the Israeli actions towards the Palestinians seemed to have not constrained Israel on most occasions in recent years:

“The Israelis feel that they have an entity or state above the law with strong relationships with not only the United States and Western countries but also with Russia, China, and India. The influential international actors have not played a fundamental role in supporting the Palestinian people or the Palestinian issue. Eventually, the occupation violated international law and committed heinous and brutal acts without fearing sanctions or real repercussions.” (ET4)

4.9 Israeli Objectives

The Israeli objectives regarding the Palestinians, which Israel seemingly sought to achieve, align with its settler-colonial foundations. Israel wanted to eliminate the Palestinian political viability and push the much possible people to leave the West Bank and Gaza Strip. A former UN official reached the former conclusion:

“The objective, I believe, the objective is to make life so miserable for Palestinians, so unbearable that they will leave.” (IE2)

The same interviewee explained his conclusion in other terms:

“We (the Israelis) are going to make life so miserable to them that they are going to, quote and quote, voluntarily leave, and we are going to take over their land.” (IE2)

A former senior UN official indicated that Israel intends to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state:

“Very simply, red lines on the Israeli side they will never allow the Palestinian state to emerge in the way, you know, Gaza has also been a very negative example for Israel in terms of the Palestinian state....” (IE1)

An official Palestinian negotiator also discussed the elimination of Palestinian political viability after meetings with Israeli officials for years:

“I do not believe, judging over the last twenty years or so, that Israel had the intention to give total, full, complete sovereignty and establish a fully independent state next door to Israel.” (NT1)

A senior Palestinian negotiator with Israel also recognized the Israeli objective to prevent the potential of a Palestinian state:

“The strategic goal is one. They do not want to give up the land; they want to maintain the stronghold of the entire territory. So, what they want, they want to frustrate us into accepting self-rule, self-governance, but not a fully independent state.” (NT1)

The elimination of the Palestinians constituted a significant objective for Israel:

“Netanyahu and his allies seek to eliminate two things: the elimination of Palestinian geography and the elimination of the Palestinian. As I said, the second Israeli objective of their criminal escalation against the Palestinians and their land is to push the Palestinians who remain alive. It aims to oust the largest possible number of Palestinians. Based on my knowledge and presence in society, I tell you that the percentage of Palestinian youths who left the country has increased in recent years more than any other period.” (PL3)

A member of the Palestinian National Council and a lecturer in political sociology commented on the Israeli goals in one sentence:

“I think (the goal) is for them (Israel) is to control the land as much as possible with the as little population as could be.” (PL2)

An expert in Israeli affairs argues that Israel aims to eliminate Palestinian existence:

“The Zionist settler came to replace the Palestinian (...), there were attempts to control the land and displace the people. It was a replacement colonialism.” (ET2)

An expert in Israeli and Palestinian affairs explained some of the Israeli goals concerning the Palestinians:

“Another aspect of the Israeli treatment can be seen in the Israeli bid to create certain circumstances; dismissal environment to the Palestinians in all parts of Palestine by making their life difficult and subsequently pushing them to leave the land.” (ET4)

Causing weakness in the Palestinians was one of the Israeli central goals:

“The Israeli side wants to prevent the Palestinian reconciliation and promote the weakness of Palestinians; it has been involved in arresting members of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLO); it intervenes in Palestinian elections; it intervenes by arresting people in a way that was designed and cooperated with the Palestinian Authority to side with one Palestinian party against another one,” (ET4)

4.10 Summary

The Israeli government’s treatment of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip was influenced by several internal and external factors. The internal influencing factors in the context of Israel-Palestinians explain to a large extent how the domestic environment shaped the Israeli treatment of the Palestinians. The internal factors were the political structure, public opinion, ideology, demographic concerns, and the indigenous people’s response. The external factors were the regional (dis-) order; and the alliance. The political structure in this context addresses the involvement of the Israeli governing coalition, the prime minister, and the military in shaping the Israeli treatment of Palestinians. In recent years, the Israeli governing coalitions were mostly from right-wing

parties, which have adopted a violent approach towards the Palestinians and deliberately sought to undermine the Palestinian political viability. The coalitions became more extreme as religious parties entered the government. During the studied years, the prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, came from the right-wing Likud party and sought to maintain his public and political partners' support through more violent treatment of the Palestinians.

The Israeli government authorized the military to take charge of most Palestinian affairs. Israel has launched numerous wars and military operations against Palestinians. It appeared that the armed resistance served to deter Israel in this respect. The Israeli public opinion appeared to be hostile toward the Palestinians, which has resulted in implications for the politicians' decisions regarding the Palestinians. The ideology factor has gained momentum in Israel as religious parties became more politically active. The Zionist ideology appeared to influence the Israeli interactions with Palestinians. For instance, the Israeli government tightened its treatment of Palestinians in West Bank cities with historical and religious values for Jews. Israel has accorded the right to self-determination to only the Jewish people in "the land of Israel" as per the Nation-State Law.

However, it emerges from the findings that the Palestinian resistance, particularly in the Gaza Strip, often served as a deterrence to Israel. It pushed Israel to relatively mitigate the dire living conditions in the Gaza Strip and restrain from causing immediate and significant political and demographic changes in recent years.

As for the external factors, in recent years, the regional environment has made it easier for Israel to act on the Palestinians, as Arab states were primarily preoccupied with internal turmoil. These countries used to play supportive roles toward the Palestinians under less challenging conditions. Notably, Israel has exploited the internal turmoil to

find common ground with ruling regimes in the region. On the other hand, the US-Israel alliance played a supportive role in Israel's violent treatment of the Palestinians with no talks about a serious peace process, especially during Donald Trump's presidency.

In essence, the Israeli treatment of the Palestinians was guided by eliminatory objectives that target the Palestinians' demographic and political positions in Palestine.

The interviewees came from diverse backgrounds, which helped offer rich and multiple insights into the study. In recent years, the former UN officials worked in historic Palestine and directly engaged with Israeli officials and other involved parties. Their views were of high importance in this respect. They give insights based on their experience on the ground, their candid discussion with stakeholders, and their understanding of the Israeli perspective. Indeed, as it was almost impossible to get insights from Israeli officials, the UN's former officials enriched the research with views showing the Israeli perspective on different occasions.

The interview with a Palestinian official negotiator who led negotiation teams with Israeli officials focused on political and legal aspects. The negotiation official also reflected on the Israeli perspective based on direct engagement with Israeli officials. The interviews with Palestinian leaders offered some insights about the influencing factors on Israel as they have dealt with Israel in various ways for years. The Palestinian and Israeli affairs experts offered inputs to this study based on solid knowledge largely premised on their access to Hebrew-based information. Some experts also have experience-based information from living in historic Palestine.

CHAPTER 5: DECOLONIZATION UNDER OCCUPATION: AN ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTS OF ISRAELI MEASURES ON PALESTINIAN POLITICAL STATUS AND DEMOGRAPHY

5.1 Introduction

The approach to data analysis considers the whole picture of the dynamics of Palestinians' interactions with Israel in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It mainly addresses the effects of the Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinians and the obstacles that hinder ending Israeli settler colonialism. The main themes that show the effects on Palestinians include demographic removal and politicicide. The themes that categorize the barriers to ending Israeli settler colonialism included: political obstacles, economic obstacles, cultural obstacles, and armed resistance obstacles.

The data set was examined and coded to find patterns of meaning from within. The analysis of data provides a variety of subjective information, objective facts, and personal opinions. Though each theme is dealt with separately, the themes are primarily interrelated as the context is complex and multifaceted.

The diverse groups of informants helped contribute to the study from different points of view. For instance, the former top United Nations officials who worked in the West Bank and Gaza Strip offered insights from their experience on the ground where they followed the interactions between Israel and Palestinians.

The Palestinian leaders have offered rich data in this context based on their involvement and first-hand knowledge about the status of Palestinians. The leaders' views were highly significant as they reflected on their inability to end Israeli settler colonialism. The academic credentials of these leaders added a theoretical perspective to their views. However, these leaders may have tried to justify their positions and avoid directly acknowledging their failures. The views from experts offer more data that are

less likely to be biased. The data opened the potential to work with vast information on the effects of the Israeli treatment of the Palestinians and the inability to end Israeli settler colonialism.

5.2 Effects on Palestinians

5.2.1.1 Politicide

The political viability of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip was challenged by Israel in recent years. The interviews show that the Israeli government has involved in eradicating the potential of Palestinian political authority. The political elimination or politicide was viewed through the systematic Israeli undermining of the Palestinian state and self-determination, weakening of the Palestinian Authority, and disregarding previous agreements with Palestinian officials.

5.2.1.2 Challenges to Palestinian Statehood

According to interviewees, the Palestinian ability to have a state where they can exercise the right to self-determination and sovereignty proved to be declining recently as Israel worked to prevent this possibility. A top Palestinian leader who held different ministerial positions and is a member of the central executive committee in a national movement explained how Israel undermined the Palestinian state through territorial disintegration:

“Israel has tried to isolate the Palestinians in segregated cantons by increasing the checkpoints and barriers of which some are temporary, and others are fixed, and they all have acted as borders to disintegrate the Palestinian land and make it possible for Netanyahu to say no to the Palestinian state” (PL4)

An interviewee shows that the Palestinians were isolated into segregated areas where it became almost impossible to have a Palestinian polity in a disintegrated territory:

“You are confined in a certain territory, in a certain enclave, in a certain Bantustans, and this took place in both 48 (Palestinian localities in the

area that Israel occupied in 1948), and the West Bank where the settlers receive a large part of the West Bank” (PL2)

It seems that Israel can only impose control and governance in such a status of fragmentation:

“When the Israeli army or the Israeli settlers want to cut, say Ramallah from Nablus, it is straightforward because they control the road, set up roadblocks, make checkpoints, et cetera. So, the movement is controlled. Also, the borders.” (PL2)

An interviewee said that the Palestinian state is no longer possible under Israeli dominance:

“I believe that the Palestinian state is no longer possible; if you want to go for such a state, that would become a Bantustan state.” (IE1)

A Palestinian leader shared the same point saying it became difficult to establish the Palestinian state:

“It has become difficult to establish the independent Palestinian state due to the Israeli policy of breaking up Palestinian demography and geography and also because of the settlement policy.” (PL5)

Israel has notably denied the political rights of Palestinians:

“The political rights, of course, are fundamental; the whole issue is, in a sense, a political one. (...) Political rights are denied, that, the right of self-determination, the right of control of natural resources, the right to free movement, the right of, to, economic investment, and et centra.” (PL2)

Several interviewees noted that Israel used economic tools to undermine the political position of the Palestinians. For example, one interviewee showed that Israel undermined Palestinian financial independence:

“They do not want to offer you an independent economy; they do not want you to stand on your feet because, as I said, the economy is one of the

country's foundations, and if a state could exist, then there should be a strong economy.” (IO1)

5.2.1.3 Decline of the Palestinian Authority

Israeli measures weakened the Palestinian Authority, which takes control of the Palestinian public sector. A member of the Palestinian Central Council pointed to the ways in which the financial restrictions have weakened the Palestinian Authority:

“Israel blackmails the Palestinian Authority in different ways such as the suspension of the Palestinian tax money (Muqasah) because of the allowances that the Palestinian Authority provides to the families of martyrs and prisoners.” (PL5)

A senior Palestinian political leader said that Israel attempted to topple the Palestinian Authority:

“Israel wants peace for peace and has distanced from the demand of peace for land. This (Israeli position) indicates a shift from the two-state solution to the enforcement of the Israeli will in finishing off the two-state solution and underestimating the Arab identity while toppling the Palestinian Authority and deepening the Palestinian division between the West Bank and Gaza Strip.” (PL4)

Some interviews argued that Israel wanted to transform the Palestinian Authority to become no more than a municipal authority:

“In the case of the West Bank, there is certainly a security policy, but it is not the only one. (...) There are other components other than security as there has been an attempt to prevent political activities and to let the Palestinian Authority survive and transform it to a municipal authority rather than a political authority.” (ET3)

On the other hand, an interviewee blamed the Palestinian Authority as it seemed to first assist Israel in targeting the Palestinian resistance in the West Bank. Once the armed resistance was to a large extent neutralized, Israel moved to undermine the Palestinians Authority with less resistance or constraints:

“The occupation government coordinated in terms of security with the Palestinian Authority, while on the ground, the Israelis continued to confiscate lands, bulldoze olive trees and lands in some areas, and widen the settlements.” (PL1)

Israel assumed some of the Palestinian Authority functions eventually:

“The role of the Israeli Coordinator has enlarged in the last four years to the extent of overriding the function of the Palestinian Authority, which is their partner in peace and security coordination. The Israeli Coordinator has opened direct communications with the people, offering them permissions and reliefs.” (PL1)

An expert in Palestinian and Israeli affairs referred to the declining role of the Palestinian Authority:

“The Israeli side has succeeded in transforming the Palestinian Authority from an authority that aspired to become a state to merely an administration that would serve the occupation interests.” (ET4)

For a former top UN official, the Palestinian Authority has become very weak, and its relevance has become questionable:

“But it also looks pretty desperate at this point to me because you have a very weakened Palestinian authority, and everyone should question now what that authority is still for; because, at the moment, it is a kind of Bantustan situation in the West Bank.” (IE1)

A Palestinian leader said that the Israeli measures against the Palestinian Authority were meant to punish it for not endorsing the “Deal of Century” (an American plan that recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and supported more Israeli settlements):

“In the West Bank, the focus would be on weakening the Palestinian Authority if it rejects eliminatory settlements as what has appeared in the Trump-Netanyahu deal known as the Deal of Century, which would terminate the capabilities of the Palestinian Authority.” (PL5)

5.2.1.4 Violations of Mutual Agreements

A senior Palestinian official who led negotiation teams with Israel said that Israel did not want peace agreements with the Palestinians in the first place:

“Israel did not want to sign a treaty with us; they do not want to sign a peace treaty in the first place; they do not want to sign an end of conflict agreement. Instead, they want a transitional agreement, (or indeed) not even agreements; they want arrangements.” (NT1)

Some interviews emphasized that Israel reneged on the arrangements they agreed on initially, except for those that serve their interests:

“All the arrangements they have signed with us, they have reneged on completely, and they just maintain the aspects of the relationship that serve their interests.” (NT1)

A Palestinian political leader demonstrated that Israel wanted to waste time instead of achieving peace from their negotiation:

“Israel has sought to exploit the peace process to keep the parties involved in a process rather than to achieve peace. Israel has sought to waste time with no results in the end.” (PL4)

Some interviews show that Israel has never wanted to adopt the two-state solution:

“The Israeli claims (about peace) were indeed red herring. They were meant to give the impression that Israel is serious about implementing international resolutions within the framework of a two-state solution. However, it was found that Israel has used them as mere covers to waste time.” (PL4)

5.2.2 Demographic Removal

Many interviews indicate that Israel has targeted the Palestinians' physical existence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This Israeli endeavour seemed to be mainly carried out through indirect coercive methods that would pressure the people to leave their land to find a better life elsewhere. The interviews showed that certain age groups, namely the youth and some geographies, were more affected than others in this context. A Palestinian leader explained some demographic effects of the Israeli treatment that took place in recent years:

“Since the withdrawal of the Israeli occupation from the Gaza Strip, the (Israeli) focus was made offensively on the three million Palestinians in the West Bank by all sorts of means, including imprisonment of tens of thousands of people in this short time, injuries, killings, hunting for people, houses demolition, trees uprooting, destruction of infrastructure.” (PL1)

An interviewee said that the Palestinian youth was primarily affected in this context:

“The occupation government attempts to pave the way for Palestinian youth to emigrate. (Again) all of these criminal actions used by the Zionist enemy against our people in the West Bank to push them to surrender or leave the area.” (PL1)

Some interviews indicate that Israel purportedly tightened the living conditions for the Palestinians to push them outside of the land:

“The Israeli displacement methodology (...) looks obvious as Israel put the Palestinians under tight and extortive conditions in the West Bank.” (ET1)

An interviewee suggested that business people and youths were more vulnerable groups in this context:

“Many (...) youths and businessmen have left the area to search for job opportunities, future and education potential out of the West Bank. The treatment (of Palestinians by Israel) is systematic, institutional plan or institutional method.” (ET1)

It appears that the Israeli restrictions on movement and the Israeli settlements have made life miserable for the Palestinians and caused demographic implications: “In the West Bank, you know, the checkpoints, the settlements, it is geared towards making life miserable for Palestinians.” (IE2)

The Israeli total control and restrictions in some areas of the West Bank made life difficult for the Palestinians:

“The demographic effects can be seen in Area C of the West Bank, which constitutes 60% of the whole area, but its population has not exceeded 150000 people. Israel directly controls the place at the military, security, and civil levels, making it difficult for the Palestinians to reside there.” (PL5)

The demolition of Palestinian homes by Israel in the West Bank seemed to push those affected to search for new places to stay:

“The Israeli policy of house demolition towards the buildings that are marked as unlicensed has certainly left an impact on the population. The policy has intensified recently, especially in the last two years. It negatively affected the population and accumulated pressure on them to secure a suitable shelter. In the end, those affected by the house demolition started to search for options to live in appropriate residences.” (ET4)

Specifically, the Palestinians in Jerusalem, which Israel claims as its “eternal capital”, have faced adverse demographic effects. A former UN official recognized some impact on the Palestinian population in Jerusalem:

“They have all these policies that are geared towards just pushing people out, suddenly or not suddenly. One example is the Palestinians in East Jerusalem. The Palestinians in East Jerusalem, if they leave Jerusalem for an extended period of time, like if they go abroad and study for more than five years and this kind of things, then the Israelis revoked their residency rights.” (IE2)

An interviewee remarked that if Palestinians have to work in a city that is not their city of residence, then the Israeli authorities may revoke their residency right in the latter city:

“Palestinians who stay (...) in East Jerusalem, but, for example, (...) work in the West Bank, then you know quite often, the Israelis will come and say (...) your “centre of life” is not Israel anymore, your centre of life is the West Bank, so then again, they move towards taking away your residency right.” (IE2)

The city of Jerusalem was much affected in terms of demography in this context:

“There is also pressure on the population in Jerusalem through houses demolition; banning the construction of new houses; confiscating Palestinians’ identity cards, and that pushed some of them to leave to the West Bank or to Jordan, which affected the demographic growth in the city.” (PL5)

A chief of a research centre indicated that Israel revoked thousands of ID cards from Palestinians in the West Bank:

“Palestinians who leave the city (Jerusalem) would lose their ID cards. In recent years, more than 16,000 Palestinians from Jerusalem have lost their ID cards because their absence lasted for six months or more; this is part of the displacement policies.” (ET4)

The restrictions on living conditions was a milestone in the Israeli demographic endeavour toward the Palestinians. The Gaza Strip has become, to a large extent, an unlivable place for the Palestinians. A member of the Palestinian National Council and a university lecturer explained the unlivable situation in the Gaza Strip:

“If you read some of the UN’s documents on Gaza, they have been saying that by 2020, by next year, Gaza will become unlivable. Because of the water problem, the problem of gobs, the overcrowding, the restrictions, the siege, etc.” (PL2)

An expert in Palestinian and Israeli affairs also mentioned the demographic implications for the Palestinians in Gaza Strip:

“The Israeli authorities attempt to make Gaza an unlivable place for the Palestinians as Israeli statements show that they wish to push the Gaza Strip to Egypt; they want to get rid of the Palestinians as they tighten their living conditions and accordingly drive them out of Gaza,” (ET1)

Many Palestinian youths have left the Gaza Strip in recent years to search for jobs and better life:

“Here in Istanbul, you see youths from Gaza who came to find jobs and life. This may be the worst example of displacement that Gaza has been facing.” (ET1)

An expert in Middle East affairs and a university lecturer also conformed to the former view:

“They (Israel) tried to make Gaza unlivable; they first besieged them (Palestinians) and, as announced several times, they wanted to transfer Palestinian to Sinai too.” (ET5)

A member of the Palestinian Central Council also said that Israel tightened the living conditions for Palestinians to cause the voluntary departure of a large number of Palestinians:

“The Israelis count on their restrictions over the livelihood (of the Palestinians) to cause voluntary departure of large numbers of Palestinians, especially the young people, to other countries, and this would affect the human resources which are important to the development efforts and the steadfastness ability.” (PL5)

Israel seems to have purportedly made a hostile dismissal environment for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip:

“The Israeli side has exploited the situation to make the Palestinian environment serve their interests while making it dismissal to the

Palestinians to get rid of the highest possible number of Palestinians.”
(ET4)

A senior Palestinian leader has also showed that difficult living conditions caused a negative impact on the Palestinian demographic growth:

“That (difficult living conditions) would affect those young graduates seeking to secure job opportunities and get married and later have children. Hence, here we see why Israel has caused such a difficult situation as Israel is afraid of more demographic growth among the Palestinians.” (PL3)

An interviewee explained how Palestinian families tend to become smaller in light of the dire living condition:

“When you see Palestinians now, they want to leave the country, and those who already left do not want to return. And those who still live there are not the same as before; the families were previously large, but the economic situation, pressures, and current problems led the family to become very small.” (ET5)

One other interviewee also brought up the impact of the complex living condition on the size of the family, which was preferred to become smaller in some instances:

“In such hard circumstances, many youths were forced to delay their marriage plans. (...) Also, the Palestinian youths no longer prefer a large family as they used to be, and new couples tend to have only one or two children; this factor is reflected in the percentage of Palestinian birth rate recently.” (ET4)

In general, a member of the Palestinian National Council and a university lecturer gave some observations on the demographic aspect of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where Israel made it difficult for them to remain in that territory:

“They (the Israeli authorities) attempt to push the Palestinians out of their land. (...) There are economic difficulties and hardship as well as insecurity, pushing people, especially the young people and graduates, to look for (better living conditions).” (PL2)

However, the actual number of Palestinian migrants in this context was not accessible for this study, but some interviewees estimated that tens of thousands of Palestinians have left the country:

“Many Palestinian youths have immigrated to work or study abroad with no ability to return, and the number of them is not small. We do not have exact figures, but the number may have reached 100,000 people in the last two decades.” (ET4)

Another interviewee estimated that more Palestinian youngsters departed the West Bank and Gaza Strip in recent years than at any other time in his memory:

“I tell you, based on my knowledge and presence in the society, that the percentage of Palestinian youths who left the country has increased in recent years more than any other period.” (PL3)

Nonetheless, several respondents said that these demographic changes had minimal impact on the overall demographic status of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, owing to Palestinians’ steadfastness:

“There is one other thing I have learnt being amongst the Palestinians; they are a very proud and optimistic people. They will not be deported; they will not make the mistake they made maybe in 1948 to abandon their lands, believing they would come back.” (IE1)

An interviewee indicated that the population growth had outnumbered the departure of some Palestinians:

“But this (demographic implications) will not affect the situation largely as the population growth is high” (PL5)

The next part will address why the Palestinians have been unable to end the Israeli settler colonialism that caused the studied treatment.

5.3 Obstacles to Decolonization

At various political, economic, cultural, and armed levels, the obstacles significantly explained the Palestinians' inability to change the situation.

5.3.1 Political Obstacles

Several interviews highlighted several political obstacles to the Palestinians' struggle for decolonization in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Palestinians were divided into conflicting political movements with different political programs, negatively affecting their overall struggle and international relations.

5.3.1.1 Internal Condition

The Palestinian movements seem inconclusive about a joint national project regarding Israel. Some Palestinian movements adopted the resistance option, centrally the armed resistance, and others endorsed the peace process and United Nations resolutions. A Palestinian political leader from the Hamas movement indicated that the adherence to liberating entire Palestine constitutes the essential aspect of their political resistance:

“With respect to the political resistance, the most important aspect is the solid adherence to our principles and rights.” (PL1)

The leader of Hamas described several main disagreements between Hamas and Fatah, which revolved around agreements to concede Palestinian lands:

“While it is true that the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) or particularly the Fatah movement has conceded some of our Palestinian lands through agreements; through the Oslo Accords, but they still declare that some other principles and rights still maintained, and they will not abandon” (PL1)

In contrast, a senior leader from the Fatah movement explained that peace agreements with Israel meant to end the Israeli occupation:

“We always repeat the saying of Faisal Al Hussaini that we made the agreement to end the occupation, and it is different to go for agreements to end the occupation under an international auspice and based on the international legitimacy within the framework of the Quartet,” (PL4)

The Fatah leader acknowledged that Israel took advantage of the peace process:

“Israel exploited the process of peace to buy time with the process and not achieve peace. (...) I believe the Palestinian factions agree now on the need to unite and ally together.” (PL4)

An interviewee confirmed that the Palestinian political position was weakened by division and lack of consensus regarding the national struggle:

“The Palestinian political performance has been marred because of the conflict between the peaceful settlement camp and the resistance camp.” (ET4)

Some interviews indicated that the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), which was supposed to serve as the unifying platform for the Palestinian movements to address Israeli settler colonialism, has become less relevant:

“The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) had lost its fundamental role in leading the Palestinian people. Indeed, the current leadership of the PLO is inactive and incapable, and its members are very old in terms of age, and it is largely limited to members from one Palestinian faction, the Fatah movement.” (ET4)

Some interviewees questioned the legitimacy of the current leadership of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) as no elections to select its representatives have taken place:

“The Palestinian National Council became exhausted as its latest normal session convened 25 years ago. Notably, the average age of its member is about 72 years old. (...) So, there has been a failure in weakening the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and its institutions.” (ET4)

A member of the Palestinian Central Council reflected on how the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) has become ineffective:

“The decisions of the Palestinian National Council and the Palestinian Central Council should be implemented. (...) These resolutions include stopping the recognition of Israel, the full membership of Palestine in the United Nations, the activation of efforts in the International Court of Justice in respect to the cases of Israeli war criminals, promoting the BDS campaign and solidarity campaigns, mobilizing international (supportive) positions.” (PL5)

The internal division and disorder inflicted a negative impact on the image of Palestinians and the Palestinian issue abroad:

“Certainly, the Palestinian division resulted in a negative image of the Palestinian and the Palestinian issue overseas.” (ET4)

5.3.1.2 Political Relations

Several interviews recalled that the Palestinian factions have engaged with foreign parties to promote the Palestinian issue. However, there appears to be a lack of forming alliance relationships between the two sides. A senior leader of the Hamas movement gave some insights into the movement’s political relations:

“Our political resistance includes opening relationships with free people globally, with Arab and Islamic countries or even foreign countries that support Palestinian rights. The Hamas movement works to highlight our people’s rights and positions through its relations with governments, parties, and peoples.” (PL1)

An interviewee suggested that the scope of the political resistance has included the attempts to prosecute Israel on international platforms:

“In addition, the Islamic movement seeks to convict the occupation by filing cases in the West over the occupation actions, including houses demolitions, killings, torture of prisoners, etc. Moreover, (we seek to) submit cases to international organizations and human rights organizations, which is an important part of the political resistance.” (PL1)

A senior leader from the Fatah movement explained that their political resistance included forming relationships with foreign countries and organizations as well as preparing its cadres to become politically conscious:

“The Fatah movement was established based on a political vision and carried out its cadre development (programs) in light of this vision.” (PL3)

The Fatah movement adopted a pragmatic approach to its foreign relations:

“When we talk about diplomacy and international relations, (we need to realize) that what you say and do at home, you do not do it at your brother’s home. In international relations, the protocols and implications of international and diplomatic relations require some positions that may not meet your beliefs.” (PL3)

Above all, many countries provided humanitarian aid to the Palestinians and called for a solution to the Palestinian predicament based on the United Nations’ relevant resolutions and within the framework of the two-state solution:

“The Palestinians still have the compassion of most countries in the world, and the average of 142 to 145 states voted for Palestine in the United Nations, the General Assembly over the previous years.” (ET4)

However, most of the foreign support to Palestinians lacks the substance to create a meaningful change and restrain the Israeli government:

“But unfortunately, these states are not the international decision-makers and are not capable of enforcing an international will on the Israeli entity. The influential international actors have not played meaningful roles in supporting the Palestinian people or the Palestinian issue. Eventually, the occupation violated international law and committed heinous and brutal acts without fearing sanctions or real repercussions.” (ET4)

5.3.2 Economic Obstacles

There seem to be economic obstacles to the Palestinians’ struggle for decolonization in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where Palestinians have depended mainly on the Israeli economy. Several interviews pointed out that the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) leadership institutionalized the dependence on the Israeli economy as it signed the Economic Protocol, known as the Paris Protocol, which integrates the Palestinian economy with Israel’s. A Palestinian leader and lawmaker argued that the Palestinians were unable to boycott Israel in recent years:

“I do not think that the Palestinians are currently involved in or can practice any economic boycott. But if the Palestinians become free from the Israeli control, then they could” (PL3)

An interviewee demonstrated that the high number of Palestinian workers in Israel indicates the extent to which the Palestinians rely on the Israeli economy:

“You have tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of Palestinian workers in Israel, and if you just decide to boycott Israel, so who will feed them? If you pay them 10 USD daily, you need half a million USD daily. Who will pay for that?” (PL3)

A member of the Palestinian Central Council acknowledged that the Paris Economic Protocol caused a Palestinian dependence on the Israeli economy:

“The problem lies in the Paris Economic Protocol, which has deepened the dependence on the Israeli economy. It is demanded the economic resistance has to be practised by moving away from the dependence on the Israeli economy; and by relying on self-capabilities, domestic initiatives, and the association between the education and labour market.” (PL5)

The Palestinian economy appears to be in peril:

“The obstacles that hinder the ability to utilize the Palestinian capabilities include the Paris Economic Protocol, the dependency on and integration of the Palestinian economy with the Israeli economy, and the entire reliance of the Palestinian Authority on the return of taxes revenues by Israel (Muqasah) and donors’ fund.” (PL5)

One interviewee demonstrated that the economic agreements between the Palestinian Authority and Israel led to a Palestinian reliance on Israel in imports and exports transactions:

“The Israelis received about 85% of the Palestinian exports, and more than 60% of the Palestinian imports came from the Israeli entity.” (ET4)

An interviewee suggested that there is a lack of public will to adopt the economic resistance:

“One of the issues that hinder the economic resistance is the culture of the people and their willingness to sacrifice (for a greater good). For instance, customers in the West Bank would choose Israeli products with higher quality and lower prices than the Palestinian ones due to their hard-economic conditions and regular customer preferences.” (ET4)

There seems to be a lack of economic support for the Palestinians from other countries:

“The current regional estranged situation also takes part in the economic challenge as, for instance, the Palestinian Authority tried to secure 100 million dollars monthly as a safety net to liberate from the Israeli dependence and blackmail, but some Arab states rejected the proposal.” (PL5)

A former Palestinian minister explained how Israel had undermined the potential for Palestinian economic independence:

“I was once the Minister of Communication. I can say that Israel controls geography, demography, and space, including the frequency spectrum used to operate the TV, radio, and all forms of telecommunication, including mobile phones. When Israel controls the frequency spectrum, then it suffocates you in this sector because you will not be able to work comprehensively, and you know the communication sector is attractive (for investment).” (PL4)

An interviewee said that society should play a leading role in achieving economic independence:

“We talk about a society that is capable of achieving the needed sustainability; a society that can get rid of the Israeli market; a society that chooses the Palestinian product.” (PL4)

A member of the Palestinian Central Council showed various challenges in the economic field, which ranged from governance to education:

“We can link the education process with development aspiration; there is a lack in this respect. There is a failure in developing entrepreneurship initiatives and a lack of motivating Palestinians to return to the land; the public service has been oversized. Fresh graduates tend to work in public service instead of on productive projects. (...) Palestinian businessmen abroad have been in the dark about investing in a volatile area.” (PL5)

A senior Palestinian leader highlighted the need for self-reliance among the Palestinians:

“Another aspect of economic resistance is self-reliance. I remember in the first Palestinian Intifada (uprising) before the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, the people were trying to start small farms where they raised chickens and some animals such as goats, cows, et Cetra. The self-containment with the little available inputs and the steadfastness is one facet of the economic resistance, which could be viewed in the Gaza Strip these days.” (PL1)

5.3.3 Cultural Obstacles

Palestinian identity awareness received ample attention in recent years. However, it seems that politics and culture are inseparable in this context. It appears that the Palestinian cultural activities were, to a large extent, guided by political messages. A member of the Palestinian Central Council emphasised the political character of culture:

“The cultural resistance has gained momentum recently as the risk has intensified on the Palestinian issue by, for instance, the Deal of Century, the annexation plan, and the normalization of ties with Israel. Indeed, the political character has dominated the cultural scene meaning that the political voice is dominant, with some exceptions regarding literature, poetry, and art.” (PL5)

One other interviewee also mentioned the influence of politics on the culture:

“Any people who fight without culture would not be able to achieve victory. (Nonetheless) I do not want to hide that our political crisis was reflected in the Palestinian society's cultural formation, interests, and priorities. In this regard, the Palestinian division has contributed to distorting the Palestinian narrative.” (PL4)

In practice, a senior Palestinian leader talked about artwork and the utilization of technology in the Palestinian cultural field:

“The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) and the Palestinian people, generally, have employed the arts in their struggle. Yes, it is soft, but it is also influential. In the West Bank, many theatrical performances exposed (Israeli) interrogation techniques and promoted resistance. As we said, we have films, cartoon films, and TV series that were aired on Palestinian channels, such as the Awlad Al Mokhtar (Children of the Family Chief) series and Al Fida'y (The Redemptive).” (PL1)

Many of the artistic works aimed to raise awareness about Israeli settler colonialism and mobilize the people to remain in their land regardless of the Israeli measures:

“These art productions aimed mainly to raise awareness among the next generation and our Palestinian people on the dangers of the occupation and to motivate them to remain steadfast. It meant to mobilize the public and

motivate people to remain on their land and sacrifice for it. Also, these artworks presented role models that the people could imitate.” (PL1)

Some interviews pointed out that artworks also aimed to promote good social behaviour and national identity:

“In addition, it meant to rectify social behaviour, promote resistance and public morality, and avoid negative manners. The art resistance seeks to reaffirm the Islamic and Arab identity of Palestine and bolster the belonging to the land.” (PL1)

The scope of artistic works also seemed to tackle the Israeli narrative:

“There have been art productions to respond to the enemy’s allegations and to counterbalance Israeli works in this context. Other efforts target the enemy and its people to discourage them (from the continuation of settlement) and respond to Israeli claims.” (PL1)

An expert in Palestinian affairs explained how the culture promoted the interest in education among Palestinians:

“For the cultural dimension of the Palestinian resistance, the Palestinian people are educated, and Palestinians have probably the highest number of PhD and postgraduate (degrees) holders among the Arab countries. The percentage of school enrolment among the Palestinians is (one of) the highest in the Arab world, and Palestine is among the highest regarding the literacy rate.” (ET4)

5.3.4 Obstacles to Armed Resistance

The armed resistance was adopted by Palestinian movements, especially in the Gaza Strip, while the Palestinian Authority has rejected it in recent years. The armed resistance appeared to face a sort of containment in recent years. A senior Palestinian leader from the Hamas movement gave a brief background about the armed resistance:

“For 72 years, since the erection of occupation and even before that during the British colonial era, our Palestinian people have been innovative in resisting the occupation, starting from throwing stones to tire-burning to

using knives. Then they developed to manufacturing and using simple weapons; simple firearms.” (PL1)

An interviewee suggested that the Palestinian internal division caused a lack of armed resistance in the West Bank:

“The development of the armed resistance took place in the West Bank before the Palestinian internal division to the extent of launching several small rockets, the primitive Qassam rockets. (...) However, it stopped (in the West Bank) after the Palestinian division (particularly in 2007), while it has continued to develop up to an excellent level in the Gaza Strip.” (PL1)

A member of the Palestinian Central Council also noted the lack of armed resistance in the West Bank and its condition in the Gaza Strip:

“The armed resistance has become a real factor in the Gaza Strip, but that is not the case in the West Bank. The armed resistance has destabilized the occupation, but, on the other hand, the occupation has exploited the resistance to wage atrocities toward the unarmed Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Nonetheless, it is certainly true that the occupation (authorities) has taken the armed resistance into account, especially in the Gaza Strip. However, I think the resistance has become a tool of deterrence and is used to strengthen the rule of Hamas in the Gaza Strip.” (PL5)

An interviewee explained that the declining presence of the armed resistance in the West Bank relates to a crackdown from the Palestinian Authority:

“The signs of resistance are present and alive (among the Palestinians), but it (armed resistance) faces difficulties from a failing and trouble-making Palestinian Authority due to its security coordination (with Israel) in recent years.” (ET4)

The interviewed Fatah leaders avoided saying that armed resistance is not allowed in the West Bank, and they tried to explain that their movement adopted a comprehensive approach with a focus on political means:

“The Fatah movement cannot deny or condemn the armed struggle as long as it (Fatah) neither achieved the liberation nor the establishment of the Palestinian state. The armed struggle is one of the main approaches, if not the main one, in the conflict with the entity of the Zionist enemy. However,

it needs to meet certain conditions to be used at this period or otherwise delay it in light of the circumstances.” (PL3)

The interviews indicate that the leadership of the Fatah movement endorsed political means in dealing with Israel, and the armed resistance appears not on their agenda for the time being:

“The current leadership comprehends the current situation from a political perspective over which we can agree or disagree. However, while their methods are correct, the question is whether we should adopt only these methods or extend them. I think other things should be added to the current political behaviour.” (PL3)

A member of the most senior executive committee of the Fatah movement affirmed that the Fatah movement was not involved in the armed resistance in recent years due to political considerations:

“All the revolutions in the world end up on the negotiation table. (...) The revolutions ended with retaining the rights, and accordingly, the Palestinians moved to meet the international desire to make peace and end the occupation under international auspices and interventions. The point here is not that Fatah has postponed the armed resistance option, but rather (this is) a political situation with international guarantees that created a Palestinian expectation that it will lead to a state and end the occupation. However, eventually, it is clear that the Israeli objective was to engage in a process rather than peace.” (PL4)

Above all, the armed resistance seemed to contribute to making the Palestinian issue active and present:

“This form of resistance (armed resistance) has kept the Palestinian issue alive among our people and within the Arab and Islamic nations and free people around the world. It made the Palestinian issue active and present in all fields.” (PL1)

An interviewee discussed the status of the armed resistance in the Gaza Strip and highlighted its improved capabilities:

“(The Palestinians in the) Gaza Strip have developed their arms under tough circumstances and humiliated the Israeli military in three consecutive wars in 2008/2009, 2012, and 2014. The arms development reached a level where rockets can reach any part of the Israeli entity.” (ET4)

One interviewee demonstrated that the regional environment posed challenges to this sort of resistance:

“There have been challenges from corrupt and authoritarian Arab regimes that are inimical to resistance forces and political Islam parties.” (ET4)

5.4 Summary

The Israeli government’s treatment of Palestinians has had political and demographic effects. Political implications reveal themselves in the undermining of Palestinian self-determination, weakening the Palestinian Authority, and disregarding peace agreements. The demographic effects may be more pronounced in certain demographic groups, such as the Palestinian youngsters seeking a better future beyond their current plight, particularly in the Gaza Strip. Additionally, the Palestinians in Jerusalem faced significant demographic hurdles, as Israeli authorities, for example, regard them as foreigners with residency permits. Essentially, Israel seemed to make life miserable for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to push them outside the colonized territory.

On the other hand, the Palestinian resistance’s failure to end Israeli settler colonialism was due to various political, economic, cultural, and armed resistance impediments. The Palestinian movements have been fragmented and unable to agree on their battle for decolonization. Armed resistance was particularly active in the Gaza Strip, while Israel and the Palestinian Authority opposed it and targeted it in the West Bank. Economic impediments included Israel’s stronghold on Palestinian resources and borders.

The official Palestinian consent for economic integration between the Palestinian and the Israeli economies was a barrier.

The informants were not all agreeing, and the diversity of their backgrounds aimed to provide rich and varied insights. Former United Nations personnel worked in Palestine and interacted directly with Israeli leaders and other key parties. Their views were critical to this study. They provided information based on their on-the-ground experience and their comprehension of Israeli and Palestinian perspectives. UN veterans' assessment of the effects on Palestinians is based on observation and adequate knowledge.

The Palestinian leaders were drawn from a variety of political backgrounds and affiliations. Their responses centred on the impact on Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip due to the Israeli treatment. They explained why the Palestinian resistance could not end Israeli settler colonialism and gave reasons for that. This group of informants' responses may be skewed because of the leaders' allegiance to their movement. However, their perspectives were significant since they shared their experience and expressed their movements' points of view.

The Palestinian official negotiator focused on political and legal aspects. The negotiation official provided data about the Israeli demands and considerations during the negotiation process. The official explained how various variables shape Israeli treatment of Palestinians. The negotiator also emphasized the Palestinians' challenges in ending Israeli settler colonialism.

Experts in Palestinian and Israeli affairs have contributed based on their extensive knowledge and direct proximity to reality. The experts emphasized the consequences for Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Furthermore, they discussed Palestinian incapacity to dismantle settler colonialism with less restraint than Palestinian leaders who could have taken a defensive stance on such issues.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research results and conclusions. It focuses on the internal and external factors influencing Israel's treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The chapter demonstrates the political and demographic consequences of the Israeli treatment of Palestinians. The discussion continues by examining the impediments to Palestinian decolonization. The chapter ends with a summary.

6.2 Influencing Factors on the Israeli Government's Treatment Towards the Palestinians

The first and second research questions address the factors influencing the Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The interviews and other data sources indicate that several factors have impacted the Israeli treatment of the Palestinians. These factors show the situation's complexity in Palestine as various and multiple internal and external elements are involved. As indicated in Chapter 4, the Israeli treatment of the Palestinians is derived from and affected by several internal factors: political structure, ideology, public opinion, demographic concerns, and the colonized people. Regarding the external factors, the regional (dis-) order and US-Israel alliance appeared to give momentum to Israel in this context. In recent years, most of these internal and external factors seemed to mobilize an Israeli eliminatory treatment of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

6.2.1 Internal Influencing Factors on Israel's Treatment of the Palestinians

The interviews confirmed that various factors, including the political structure, ideology, public opinion, and the colonized people influenced the Israeli treatment of the Palestinians.

6.2.1.1 Political Structure

Elkins and Pedersen (2005) focus on political structure in the context of settler colonialism. They observe that the division between the settler and indigene is frequently entrenched into the political system, economy, and law, with specific political privileges and economic activities exclusively given to the settlers. Elkins and Pedersen emphasize that institutionalized settler privileges characterize settler colonialism. They argue that the twentieth century has been marked by “state-oriented expansionism” compared to the nineteenth-century “settler-oriented semi-autonomy”.

For Coulthard (2014), settler colonialism is a structure of domination based on the dispossession of indigenous people's land and the termination of their political authority. Further, Veracini (2015) argues that settlers are founders of political orders where they conquer and move across spaces while holding sovereignty claims with them. As for the political system in Israel, Israel is a parliamentary democracy where the executive branch gains power from the Knesset (Israeli parliament) based on a majority vote (Peters & Pinfeld, 2018).

However, the diverse cultural, ideological, and political cleavages among Israelis have had an impact on Israel's political structure. Diskin (1999) explains that Israel adopts the proportional representation (PR) system in its parliamentary elections. Given the multiple cleavages in Israeli society and the PR system, the Israeli polity has been a multi-

party system with no single political party ever winning an absolute majority. The right-wing parties dominated the Knesset between 2009 and 2019.

The power structure in Israel has been guided by Basic Laws, as there has been no codified constitution to date. According to Peters and Pinfold (2018), the Israeli parliament (Knesset) has passed Basic Laws over the years, defining the political power structure, the authority of the government's branches, and their interaction.

The government has the supreme executive authority in Israel, where the prime minister and ministers are authorized to act in the state's name. The Israeli Basic Law of The Government 2001 states that *“the Government is authorized to perform in the name of the State and subject to any law, all actions which are not legally incumbent on another authority.”* The prime minister can exercise pivotal power in this context as each minister in the government is responsible before the prime minister for the assigned responsibility. The Basic Law of the Government 2001 rules: *“The Government is collectively responsible to the Knesset; each Minister is responsible to the Prime Minister for the field of responsibility with which the Minister has been charged.”*

In recent years, the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, was directly involved in his government's approach towards the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In this respect, a triangle of three prominent actors emerges: the prime minister, minister of defence, and military generals. In an interview, a high-ranking UN veteran said that some Israeli decisions concerning Palestinians were very confidential and involved only the Israeli prime minister, the minister of defence, and army generals. At the same time, nobody else knew about such decisions in the Israeli cabinet (IE1). Netanyahu has become pivotal in this context and was the one who often made the policy on the Palestinians, preceding even the minister of defence on some occasions (IE).

The interviews explain that Netanyahu's involvement in Palestinians' affairs is due to his position and can be linked to his wish to remain in office. For Netanyahu, more aggression against the Palestinians would eventually help him secure support from right-wing parties and religious Zionists. In an interview, a senior negotiation official involved in talks between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) suggested that Netanyahu believes that adopting a harsher approach towards Palestinians would garner greater support from the Israeli right (NT1). Therefore, such interaction has laid the ground for offensive military operations against the Palestinians, causing record-high casualties and destruction in recent years. For instance, the Israeli war on Gaza in 2014 has caused Palestine's highest civilian death toll in a single year since 1967 (OCHA, 2015).

Some interviews indicate that the various right Israeli governments, led by Netanyahu, have sought to change the status quo in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and challenged the political and demographic positions of the Palestinians. A former top UN official explained that since 2011, he began to warn the UN Security Council about the Israeli enforcement of one state reality, which became present almost everywhere in the West Bank. For instance, Israel erected many settlements in Palestinian territories outside of the Green Line (IE1).

Indeed, the settler political order premises on specific traits that require understanding in this context. Veracini (2010) argues that the notion of founding violence is fundamental in the context of settler colonialism, and the settler political order is premised on violent inception. The Israeli government has empowered its military to play a more prominent role and authorized offensive military operations toward the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip over the years. Gazit (2003) shows that the Israeli minister of defence, the General Staff of the Israeli Defence Forces, and the

security establishment were responsible for the Israeli policies in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Gazit, 2003).

In an interview, a veteran UN senior official recalled that the Israeli army and generals significantly influence the treatment of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as security has a superior priority in Israel (IE1). An expert in Israeli affairs concluded that Israel has notably considered the security determinant from 2009 to 2019, which invited significant involvement from the military and others in the security establishment (ET3). The military's prominent role may imply that violence is essential in Israel's treatment of Palestinians.

The role of the Israeli military has extended even to cover Palestinians' civilian affairs. A Palestinian political leader showed that at least since 2016, the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) became involved in liaising the movements of Palestinian people and goods through crossings and checkpoints and controlled the issuance of work permits to Palestinians (PL1).

Nonetheless, Elkins and Pedersen (2005) observe that the agreement and struggle between the metropole, local government, settler population, and indigenous people often characterize the settlers' governance structure. The relationships and interactions within the settler colony can influence the dynamics of the political structure. For instance, the Israeli government seemed to favour violence in addressing Palestinians. However, army generals tended to mitigate the dire living situation of Palestinians, particularly in the Gaza Strip, to avoid armed responses. A veteran top UN official revealed in one of the interviews that an Israeli general from the COGAT approached him after the war on Gaza in 2014 to mediate with Qatar to provide financial assistance to the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and avoid another armed combat with the Hamas movement (IE1).

The Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) is a unit under the Israeli military responsible for the security coordination of the Israeli government in the West Bank and towards the Gaza Strip and liaises Palestinians' civilian affairs (Government of Israel, 2020; IE1). The COGAT pursues its missions in coordination and collaboration with other Israeli military officials and ministries (Government of Israel, 2020). Ultimately, the Israeli military has its military power on the ground and is empowered by the authorization of the government to take charge of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In sum, Israel's multi-party system has produced coalition governments. The right-wing parties dominated the coalitions that took place from 2009 to 2019. These right-wing parties have commonly shown hawkishness towards the Palestinians. The head of the coalition is often the prime minister with the top position in Israel's executive branch. Benjamin Netanyahu has seized Israel's premier post in the studied years. He seemed to have played the Palestinians' card to remain in power. Netanyahu opted for aggressive treatment of Palestinians to appease the right-wing parties and the general Jewish Israeli public. On the other hand, the Israeli government has authorized the military to confront the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This authorization indicates that military and security considerations have a priority, and accordingly, Israel has dealt chiefly with the Palestinians through violence.

The overall hawkishness toward the Palestinians in Israel has served as a fixing point of the Israeli political system, as the agreement on violence toward the Palestinians offered a unifying ground in Israel. The many cleavages and differences among Israelis would typically maintain a state of division without a unifying factor. The absence of such common ground would leave the political sphere with major cleavages regarding politics, culture, ideology, and socio-economic conditions. Stable circumstances could

lead to a breakdown of Israel's political system, and Israeli authorities may prefer violent interactions with Palestinians accordingly.

6.2.1.2 Ideology

Wolfe (1999) maintained that ideology carries a greater systematic weight in settler-colonial formations. Veracini (2015) explains that settlers employ the ideology factor to make settler-colonial relationships devoid of human interventions. Veracini shows that the settler-colonial endeavour has significant ideological consequences, including legitimizing settler hegemony and its naturalization.

For McCloskey (1964), ideology is a system of belief that can be used to justify the exercise of power, explain historical events, and judge political events. Seliger (1976) considers ideology as a set of ideas used by men to posit, explain and justify ends and means of organized social action, particularly political action. Indeed, various interviews show that the ideological factor has become crucial in Israel in recent years. The traditional Israeli deliberation about the situation in Palestine has viewed some shifts from the concentration on topics such as security and Western values to more inclination towards the use of religion in colonial affairs. In a research interview, a former top UN official said that the conflict with the Palestinians was not religious from the Israeli perspective, but that has changed as the Israeli government became propelled by Zionists and religious settlers (IE1).

In recent years, religious parties have gained momentum in Israel's politics as they won many seats in the Knesset and became a significant part of the government. The interviews in Chapter 4 demonstrate that the entrance of religious parties into the Israeli government has resulted in a more religious agenda in Israel and towards the Palestinians. For instance, the West Bank is called Judea and Samaria in Israel due to biblical beliefs (PL1; ET1). The Israeli government has increasingly given detrimental treatment to

Palestinian cities that were claimed to have religious and historical values for the Jews. Hence, as indicated in some interviews, the Israeli government has tightened its treatment of Palestinians in Jerusalem, Hebron, and Salfit. Religion was used to justify the increase of Jewish settlements and shrink the Palestinians' presence in the West Bank, as can be viewed in the city of Salfit, where the number of Israeli settlers has exceeded the number of Palestinians in recent years (PL1).

Moreover, Elkins and Pedersen (2005) indicate that the significance of settler tyranny lay not simply in settlers' racist and ideological underpinnings but in the institutionalization of settler ideologies and dominance within the state system. Notably, the religious factor tends to become institutionalized in Israel. For instance, in 2018, the Knesset adopted a Basic Law that makes Israel officially a Jewish state. As explained in other chapters, the said Nation-State Law articulates that the Jewish people can exclusively practice self-determination in the "Land of Israel". In this context, religious ideology implies that the eradication of Palestinians is unavoidable from an Israeli perspective since Palestinian cities are considered Jewish, and Palestinians are not permitted to exercise self-determination in the 'land of Israel'.

Rynhold (2005) argues that the religious factor in Israel was associated with hawkishness towards the Palestinians. It seems that religious ideology has increasingly played a role in shaping the Israeli military treatment of the Palestinians. Peled and Peled (2018) indicate that the religious factor has deeply influenced the Israeli military. Peled and Peled (2018) cite Yagil Levy in demonstrating two relevant processes within the Israel Defence Forces (IDF): religionization and theocratization. Religionization implies increasing religious culture in the military or the endeavour to make spiritual meaning to military undertakings. Theocratization leads to the direct involvement of religious authorities in the military's operations beyond its professional autonomy.

More significantly, the prominence of religion has implicated viewing Israel's wars as holy wars. For instance, during an Israeli military operation in Gaza in 2014, the commanding officer of the Israeli Givati infantry brigade, Ofer Vinter, mobilized his troops to fight "the terrorists who defame the God of Israel" (Peled & Peled, 2018).

Shahak (2008) indicates that some rabbis have a particular influence on military officers. It demonstrates that rabbis can lecture soldiers about 'Torah principles' in confronting Palestinians (or even all Arabs). Shahak shows that these principles include 'thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth', which means they shall let nothing that breathes remain alive. Jewish rabbis also lecture Israeli officers on perceiving the Palestinians as inferior enemies (Shahak, 2008).

Besides the Israeli settler-colonial project's ideological underpinnings, it can be argued that Israel has used religious discourse to obscure any international demands to adopt democratic and secular values when addressing the Palestinians. Religion was used to justify the Israeli settler-colonial presence in Palestine and Israel's zero-sum treatment of the Palestinians. In recent years, the Israeli government may have increasingly exploited religion to legitimize colonial violence against Palestinians in the absence of sustained and direct security threats from the Palestinian side, which was used as a rationale for Israeli aggression on numerous occasions.

6.2.1.3 Public Opinion

Elkins and Pedersen (2005) identify four key groups that have driven settler colonialism in contemporary times: an imperial metropole where sovereignty formally exists, a local administration, a significant indigenous population, and a settler community. On the part of the settler community, this study argues that Israeli public opinion significantly shapes the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians. Public opinion in Israel was primarily considered by the government.

Israeli politicians and officials seemed concerned about their public legitimacy and political future. A top-ranking UN veteran who has worked with Israeli politicians for decades has acknowledged that they were mindful of their election and how the Israeli public perceives them (IE1). The responsiveness to public opinion has gained momentum in the literature, as shown in Chapter 2. Generally, Linde and Peters (2020) show that the public perceives a government that manages to act according to the preferences of the majority of citizens as worthy of support. The government accordingly enjoys a high degree of legitimacy.

In the context of settler colonialism, Veracini (2010) demonstrates that the repudiation of founding violence and indigenous presences systematically shapes settler perception. Several interviews in Chapter 4 show that Israeli public opinion appears to push for an eliminatory treatment of the Palestinians. After years of service in Israel, a veteran UN senior official has concluded that many Israelis rejected any possibility of granting the Palestinians self-determination right (IE1). The majority in Israel tend to deny the political right of Palestinians to establish an independent state (NT1). Wolfe (1999; 2006) explains that colonial settlers seek to replace the indigenous people and erect new societies. Various interviews in Chapter 4 show that the settlers' collective has entertained such tendencies in Israel.

Many studies have discussed the significance of public opinion in democracy (Dahl, 1956; Arrow, 1963; Mair, 2009; Trudel, 2016). While this discussion has some relevance to the case of Israel, Israel is not a typical case of democracy with its settler-colonial foundations. However, the role of public opinion under the settler colonial condition seems much more relevant. The demographic presence of settlers constitutes a central tenet of settler colonialism. Hence, the general opinion of settlers has considerable weight as the settler regime needs to respond to their preferences to help secure their settlement in the first place and win their support.

The public opinion of the Israeli Jews was inimical towards the Palestinians and Arabs generally. A veteran UN senior official explained in a research interview that while Israel is considered one of the strongest states in the Middle East, many Israelis still feel vulnerable to the Arab world, which is perceived as inimical (IE1). Another UN veteran indicated that Israelis constantly feel threatened (IE2).

The Israeli public view towards the Palestinians tends to promote violent treatment towards the Palestinians. A recent public opinion survey among Israelis has shown that 61% believe that Arabs only understand force (INSS, 2019). Some interviews suggest that the Israeli public opinion towards the Palestinians matched the zero-sum mentality in settler colonialism. An Israeli poll demonstrates that most Israelis oppose establishing an independent Palestinian state, with 48.7% opposed versus 43.8% who agreed (Arutz Sheva, 2019). The Israeli government and its military seem to realise these opinions as government elected officials seek to remain in power, and several military officers consider possible participation in future elections (IE1). Hence, it can be concluded that the Israeli settler-colonial regime may opt for violence and zero-sum treatment of Palestinians to appease settlers and gain more public support and legitimacy, among other reasons.

6.2.1.4 The Indigenous People's Response

Veracini (2015) defines the indigenous people as the original inhabitants of a particular place. Veracini emphasizes the prominent influence of the indigenous people in settler colonialism despite the emergence of exogenous polities after military and demographic expansions. Veracini explains that the permanence of indigenous peoples can crucially characterize urban, colonial, and settler-colonial contexts.

In this context, Veracini (2015) emphasizes the importance of political unity among the indigenous people in the face of settler-colonial regimes. Veracini shows that the political unity among indigenous peoples for preventing settler encroachment was, on various occasions, perceived by settlers as genuine existential threats. It is evident from the interviews that the Palestinian internal division between the Fatah and Hamas movements has provided Israel with a convenient condition to carry out its project toward the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The Palestinian internal divisions implied that the Palestinians have become preoccupied with in-house conflicts that distracted their struggle against Israel. At the same time, Israel became less concerned about the repercussions of its actions. A senior negotiation official between Israel and the Palestinians acknowledged that the schism between Fatah and Hamas has been highly detrimental to the Palestinian struggle. Israel has exploited it to continue its colonial policies (NT1). For instance, the Israeli wars against the Gaza Strip from 2009 to 2019 have not resulted in Palestinian uprisings or significant reactions against Israel from the West Bank. Such actions could have constrained Israel from launching more attacks against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. In an interview, a veteran UN senior official concluded that the Palestinian division negatively impacts them as Israel plays out a divide-and-rule in this context (IE1).

There is evidence from the interviews that Israel used the internal Palestinian division to ignore international pressure to take positive steps toward the Palestinians. A senior Palestinian leader revealed that the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, has responded to global demands to comply with peace agreements by arguing that Israel distances itself from negotiation with the Palestinian Authority as the latter does not represent all Palestinians (PL1).

Frantz Fanon suggested that anti-settler violence is a critical path in the self-affirmation of the colonized (Veracini, 2015). Evidence suggests the Palestinian anti-colonial resistance served as deterrence, pushing Israeli officials to restrain the colonial violence and avoid changing the status quo. A UN veteran explained that Israel was concerned about the armed reactions from the Gaza Strip and described the area as a dead-end for Israel; “they do not know what to do with Gaza” (IE1).

An expert in Israeli affairs suggested that the anti-colonial resistance has influenced the Israeli treatment of Palestinians and caused trouble for Israel in this context (ET4). It is evident from the interviews that Israeli officials may make compromises to avoid or reduce acts of resistance. A veteran UN high-ranking official revealed that Israeli generals have pushed to mitigate the poor situation in the Gaza Strip as they understood that failing to do so would trigger another war (IE1). The veteran UN senior official disclosed that:

“It was this general of COGAT who came to me after the war (On Gaza) asking me if I could actually rekindle my contacts with Qatar and make the very, very secret first shipment of money for Gaza, and he did that. He could not have done that without the knowledge of Netanyahu.” (IE1)

However, the evidence suggests that the potential of resistance, particularly armed resistance, was limited by the security coordination between the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Israel. Israel became less concerned about reactions from Palestinians in the West Bank, whereas the PA thwarted armed operations to target Israel in recent years (PL1).

In sum, the Palestinian resistance seems to deter Israel from committing more colonial violence and challenge Israeli attempts to change the status quo at the cost of Palestinians. While it is evident that the Palestinian internal divisions and security coordination with Israel seemed to facilitate the Israeli settler-colonial project, Israel

would continue its violence and zero-sum treatment of the Palestinians with few challenges under such circumstances.

Table 6.1: Summary of internal influencing factors affecting the Israeli treatment of Palestinians

Internal influencing factors	Dynamics
Political structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supreme power was dedicated to the prime minister. A prime minister adopted a violent approach toward indigenous people to appease settlers and gain their support. • The military was authorized to directly address indigenous people and launch offensive military operations toward them. • Cleavages among settler groups led to instability in the political system. A proportional representation system paved the way for a multi-party system. A violent approach toward indigenous people offered a unifying ground among settler groups. If a minority of settlers may seek to alter the violent treatment of indigenous people, the multi-party system would likely promote a hard-line approach.
Ideology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The entrance of religious and national political parties into governments promoted the use of ideology in addressing indigenous people. • Ideology was used to claim an exclusive right for settlers to control the colonized area and justify the subjugation of indigenous people. • Settler authorities institutionalized ideology as the parliament declared a religious identity of the settler state and exclusively granted the right to self-determination to a particular religious group.

Table 6.1 (continued): Summary of internal influencing factors affecting the Israeli treatment of Palestinians

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The religion was articulated in a certain way to justify a zero-sum treatment of indigenous people.
<p>Public opinion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settlers were generally hostile towards indigenous people. • Settlers appeared vulnerable and concerned about the presence and reactions of indigenous people. • Settler authorities frequently responded to settlers' preferences. • Politicians and officials sought to respond to public opinion to gain political support and win elections. • The ignorance of public preferences may lead settlers to flee the colonized area and move to their countries of origin.
<p>Indigenous people's response</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divisions among indigenous groups offered settler authorities a convenient condition to carry out violent treatment of indigenous people. • Divisions made indigenous groups preoccupied with internal affairs. • Settler authorities became less concerned about the repercussions of their actions when indigenous groups were involved in internal conflicts. • Anti-colonial resistance served as deterrence. • Resistance pushed settler authorities to restrain their violence and avoid changing the status quo. • Security cooperation between indigenous groups and settler authorities undermined the potential of anti-colonial resistance.

6.2.2 External Influencing Factors on Israel's Treatment of the Palestinians

The settler-colonial project is not only functioning within a local context. Evidence suggests that regional order and relationships between the settler-colonial regime and other powers empower or constrain the Israeli government. The interviews indicated that the state of regional (dis-) order in the Middle East in recent years and the alliance relationship between Israel and the United States have both empowered Israel, to a large extent, to carry on with its colonial violence towards Palestinians.

6.2.2.1 Regional (dis-)Order

The neighbouring regional dynamics influenced the Israeli government's approach toward Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Several studies have examined the Middle East's regional order and its implications on states and entities (Beck, 2016; Kausch, 2018; Bech & Richter, 2020; Amour, 2020; Yossef, 2020). The academic discussion over the Middle East regional order has gained traction as significant developments have occurred in recent years. Ulutaş and Duran (2018) show that a range of rivalries and conflicts ensued in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, accompanied by a new polarization between Iran, Israel, and Gulf states.

It is evident from the interviews that the wave of revolutions and counter-revolutions in Arab countries, which began in 2010, has resulted in an overall marginalization of the Palestinian issue while the Israeli colonial violence proceeded with minimal restrictions from regional forces. A veteran UN senior official indicated that the regional influence was primarily negative on the Palestinians in recent years as the regional instability "further marginalized the conflict" (IE1).

Wolfe (2006) argues that settler colonialization is a continuous structure rather than an event whereby the logic of elimination towards the indigenous people would

continue. Evidence suggests that Israel would continue seeking to eliminate the Palestinians unless fundamental changes or deterrence occur. In an interview, a Palestinian leader argued that Arab regional states are assumed to help fight against Israel, but no regional deterrent against Israel appeared in recent years (PL3).

In essence, some interviews suggest that the mutual Islamic and Arab identities between the Palestinians and other peoples in the surrounding region and a history of regional wars between Israel and several neighbouring countries have posed constant concerns to Israel. However, these concerns appear to have softened amid regional disorder, where Arab countries have become preoccupied with domestic conflicts in recent years. For instance, an expert in Israeli affairs explained that the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, has no longer talked about the two-state solution in recent years due to the absence of pressure to accept this proposal (ET3).

On the other hand, Salem (2016) concludes that domestic tensions under unstable regional order prompt external alignment and fuel regional proxy conflicts. Evidence suggests that the strain on Arab regimes confronted with domestic upheavals and regional competition appears to be driving them to seek legitimacy from international powers, most notably the United States. It seems this posture of Arab regimes has paved the way for the normalization of relations with Israel, as conditioned in some cases by the US (ET4).

Additionally, some interviews suggest that Israel sought to divert regional focus away from the Palestinian issue. It seems that Israel has overstated the question of Iran to gain a stronger position in the region, aided by a tense relationship between Arab regimes and Iran. A veteran UN senior official demonstrated that a corporation occurred between Israel and some Gulf states on the ground of the Sunni-Shia divide (IE1). Beck (2016) explains that the Israeli government has sought to legitimize and prolong its occupation

of Palestinian territories by securitizing Iran in the regional context. Ultimately, evidence from the interviews demonstrates that the regional developments that served Israel came mainly from authoritarian regimes that sought foreign legitimacy at any cost.

Nonetheless, several interviews revealed a unique circumstance when a democratic administration took power in Egypt following the revolution in 2011. According to veteran UN high-ranking official, Israeli authorities were particularly concerned about the election of Muslim Brotherhood presidential candidate Mohamed Morsi. They were eager to learn what would transpire following the events in Egypt (IE1). The veteran UN official demonstrated how Morsi's leadership aided in establishing a ceasefire between Israel and the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip in 2012, which was brokered by Egypt's president, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and the United Nations (IE1).

In sum, the state of disorder in the Middle East and domestic conflicts in recent years have implicated that neighbouring Arab and Muslim countries became preoccupied with internal upheavals, and Palestinians became marginalized under this condition. In turn, Israel has recently launched major military offensives against the Palestinians, which generated minimal reactions in most cases from the neighbouring region. Further, the chaotic regional situation resulted in a wave of rapprochement between Israel and some Arab regimes who sought to gain support and legitimacy from the United States through its close ally, Israel. Israel has further played into the hands of some Arab regimes by intensifying a hostile relationship with Iran, which has helped divert the attention from the situation in Palestine. Israel's settler-colonial government was concerned about its regional status as an alien entity in the middle of a homogeneous Arab region. In response, Israel involved in creating distractions and intensifying other conflicts in the region to divert possible engagement with and support to the Palestinians.

6.2.2.2 US-Israel Alliance

Elkins and Pedersen (2005) observe that at times countries worldwide have ambitions to expand their spheres of influence or acquire foreign possessions through settlement and economic integration with other territories. The settlement projects in different countries represent a vital part of imperial domination across various regions of the world (Elkins & Pedersen, 2005).

Evidence shows that the United States has provided Israel with various sorts of support, whether diplomatic, economic, or military. Several interviews suggest Israel has proceeded with its colonial violence toward the Palestinians with little concern about international consequences in recent years. The United States is seen as vital in this context as it offers Israel ample political and material support. The U.S. power and its aid to Israel appear to have offered Israel a shield against possible repercussions from foreign actors in response to its colonial violence. Evidence suggests that the strong relationship between Israel and the United States and other foreign actors has led Israel to commit brutal acts on the Palestinians and violate international law without fearing sanctions or real repercussions (ET4).

Several interviews suggest that a foreign invasion and the resulting massive casualties may lead to international sanctions and interventions against that invading power under typical situations. Nonetheless, an expert in Israeli affairs reflected that the Trump administration in the United States Israel has supported and helped authorize Israel's colonial treatment of Palestinians in recent years (ET3).

Further, the U.S. support seems to have enabled Israel's government, led by Benjamin Netanyahu, to pursue the annexation of vast swaths of the West Bank, jeopardizing the continued existence of Palestinians in these areas (PL1). It seems from the interviews that the US has tight ties with Israel and was biased in favour of Israel to

the point of closing the Palestinian diplomatic post in Washington in 2018 (NT1). A veteran UN senior official cited the United States's global power position, insisting that the US has a dominant position in the international sphere regarding the Israel-Palestinians issue: "it was always the Americans; it was also what the Israelis only wanted" (IE1).

It is evident from the interviews that the relationship between the United States and Israel amounts to an alliance relationship. Miglietta (2002) explains that the classical form of alliance used to be military, revolving around a formal agreement, while the modern state of the alliance could be formal or informal. The emphasis in this regard has become on crisis prevention and diplomatic influence. This study suggested that the United States has exceeded the traditional implications of an alliance relationship with its annual financial aid to Israel, used mainly for military assistance. In 2016, the U.S. signed a USD 38 billion military assistance agreement with Israel, giving the latter USD 3.8 billion yearly (Freedman, 2020).

The text of the military assistance agreement seems to have no clauses on restrictions over the use of funds against the Palestinians (see the White House, 2016), despite the documented civilian casualties and widespread destruction that Israel caused, as explained in Chapter 4. The former president of the United States, Donald Trump, said "we give Israel \$4.5 billion a year. And they are doing very well at defending themselves" (Wilner, 2018).

The relationship between the United States and Israel appears to have offered Israel protection and consent to proceed with its settler-colonial project and colonial violence towards Palestinians, probably considering that the U.S. has veto power in the United Nations Security Council and can exert influence on other countries worldwide. The neutralization of foreign involvement to deter the Israeli settler-colonial regime or

support the Palestinians seems to give Israel a space to proceed with its colonial violence. At the same time, evidence indicates that Israel continues to enjoy relationships with other countries in various fields, contributing to the survival and continuation of settler colonialism in Palestine.

Table 6.2: Summary of external influencing factors affecting the Israeli treatment of Palestinians

External influencing factors	Dynamics
Regional (dis-)order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settler authorities were little restrained from addressing indigenous people violently when the surrounding region was chaotic. • The settler regime’s concerns over reactions from regional forces due to violence against indigenous people have softened amidst domestic conflicts in regional countries. • A chaotic regional situation paved the way for rapprochement between the settler state and regional regimes seeking political support and legitimacy from the settler regime’s allies. • Settler authorities were involved in intensifying instability and conflicts in the surrounding region.
US-Israel alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settler authorities committed violence toward indigenous people when a hegemon power provided political and material support. • Annual financial support, mainly for military purposes, to the settler regime has strengthened its capabilities. • The support from hegemon power appeared to provide the settler regime protection and consent to proceed with its colonial violence. Sanctions and repercussions from other foreign authorities became improbable accordingly.

6.3 Effects of the Israeli Treatment of Palestinians

The third research question is on the demographic and political effects of the Israeli treatment of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip faced existential threats between 2009 and 2019. As mentioned in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6, Israel appears to have carried out a demographic purge of Palestinians, primarily by making the Palestinian territory uninhabitable or difficult to live in, hoping that Palestinians would flee. Also, evidence suggests that Israel aims to eradicate the Palestinians' political viability. Political elimination or politicide appears to take place in various ways to obstruct the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state and undermine Palestinian self-determination.

Veracini (2015) suggests that settlers structurally disavow or deny the indigenous sovereignty in various ways, such as asserting the terra nullius doctrine or signing treaties they avoid honouring (Veracini, 2015). Regarding population, settler-colonial projects seek to primarily erect a permanent homeland for settlers by displacing indigenous peoples (Cavanagh & Veracini, 2016). The scholarship observing settler colonialism explains that colonial settlers adopt the logic of eliminating the indigenous people to replace them and erect new societies. Wolfe (2006) defines settler colonialism as a logic of elimination that requires the replacement of indigenous people of territory by any means necessary. It indicates that settlers in this context fundamentally aim to destroy the existence of indigenous peoples.

6.3.1 Politicide

To date, few studies seem to examine the political effects of Israeli dominance on Palestinians within the context of settler colonialism. Palestine has been under Israeli settler colonialism for decades, and the settler state, Israel, has been internationally recognized as a member of the United Nations. Israeli sovereignty was applied over most of the Palestinian land in 1948, during which most Palestinians were forced to leave their

homes and towns by Zionist forces (Masalha, 1992; Pappé, 2006). In 1967, Israel colonized the remainder of Palestine, namely the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. However, most of the Palestinian population had remained in their places now, in contrast to the mass displacement in 1948.

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 6, the signing of the Oslo Accords between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel in 1993 resulted in the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, which was assumed to take control of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Earlier work showed that the prospect of a two-state option, Palestine-Israel, received momentum from the peace process. Some interviews explained that the proposed Palestinian state was assumed to be established on about 15-22% of historic Palestine. However, it is evident from the discussions that Israel undermined such limited prospects in recent years. Kimmerling (2006) explains that Israel was involved in a gradual but systematic attempt to destroy the Palestinian political and national viability through politicicide. Kimmerling defines politicicide as a process covering a wide range of social, political, and military activities whose goal is to destroy the political and national viability of a whole community of people.

However, some interviews suggest that Israel faces a dilemma regarding the West Bank and Gaza Strip in this respect. Evidence indicates that imposing Israeli sovereignty in the West Bank and Gaza Strip may not be preferred for Israel, given that Palestinians make up most of the population in these territories. If this is the case, the imposition of sovereignty may imply that Palestinians become Israeli citizens, creating future threats to Israel's dominance of Jewish settlers.

Indeed, it is evident from Chapter 2 that the settlers-turned-citizens currently constitute the majority of the population in most settler-colonial cases. They appear to be able to assert their sovereignty and dominate these areas, even in democratic contexts.

However, evidence suggests that the issue of Israel-Palestine differs in some ways. Israel was befuddled in its approach to the Palestinians. If Israel grants Israeli citizenship to millions of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Palestinians may win elections and establish a government. On the other hand, allowing the Palestinians to form their state would sustain their existence in the area and allow them to develop their capacities.

Amir (2017) suggests that Israel attempts to sabotage the transformation of Palestinians into a polity. Evidence suggests that Israel works deliberately to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian polity. The potential of establishing a Palestinian state within the framework of a two-state solution seems to have shrunk in recent years. Two themes emerged in this respect to further discuss the topic of politicicide: undermining the Palestinian state and self-determination and weakening the Palestinian Authority.

6.3.1.1 Undermining the Palestinian State and Self-Determination

The interviews suggest that the prospect of establishing a Palestinian state in portions of the West Bank and Gaza Strip has dwindled in recent years. Some interviews noted that Israel has cemented its presence and control over Palestinian lands, particularly in the West Bank, through the erection of military outposts in and around cities and new settlements. It is also evident from the interviews that Israel has divided the West Bank from the Gaza Strip. A Palestinian top political leader explained this situation in one of the interviews saying that Israel has worked to make a Palestinian state unviable by isolating the Palestinians in segregated cantons through checkpoints and barriers (PL4).

As indicated in Chapter 6, there is evidence to suggest that Israel fragmented Palestinian cities into enclaves and disintegrated them from one another. A former top UN official argued that the possibility of a Palestinian state has vanished and that the Palestinians may receive, at best, a Bantustan state (IE1).

The Israeli disregard for the Palestinian existence in their land, be it political or whatsoever, was evident since the early years of Israeli settler colonialism, as most Palestinians were expelled in 1948 (Masalha, 1992). However, the signing of the Oslo Accords created a discussion on the possibility of a Palestinian state that may coexist with Israel. As stated in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6, the Fatah movement and its Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) affiliates advocated the establishment of such a Palestinian state.

However, it is evident from the interviews that this proposal has divided Palestinians, as other Palestinian movements, such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Popular Front, opposed the Oslo Accords with Israel, which implied formally agreeing to ceding most of the Palestinian territory to Israel. Nonetheless, there is evidence to suggest that Israel is moving away from allowing the establishment of a Palestinian state in parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. As shown in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6, several interviews suggest that Israel has used the peace process to gain time while eroding the potential for forming a state.

A senior Palestinian official negotiator with Israel suggested that Israel has no intention of allowing the establishment of a Palestinian state: “I do not believe, judging over the last twenty years or so, that Israel had the intention to give total, full, complete sovereignty and establish a fully independent state next door to Israel” (NT1). According to a senior Fatah leader, Israel has exploited the peace process and undermined the potential of a Palestinian state (PL4). Israel appears unwilling to allow the Palestinians to have their state and has made this alternative unviable. The Israeli propensity is not uncommon in other settler-colonial contexts. Coulthard (2014) also notes that settler colonialism is a domination structure based on the dispossession of indigenous people’s land and the termination of their political authority.

As demonstrated in Chapter 6, the potential for Palestinian statehood has been harmed by Israel's disintegration and control of territory, among other factors. The former argument was also discussed in some studies published in the literature. According to Le More (2005), Israel's complex process of geographical, socioeconomic, and political fragmentation has harmed Palestinian prospects for self-determination and well-being. Turner (2012) argues that multiple Israeli practices, such as resource extraction, control, and settlement activities, have undermined Palestinians' self-determination. It is evident from the interviews that Israel has denied the Palestinians from controlling natural resources and restricted many economic activities that could otherwise support Palestinian independence from Israel. In one of the interviews, the head of an international organization stated that Israel challenged Palestinian economic independence to keep them dependent on Israel (IO1).

Le More (2005) notes that the two-state solution, which was the international community's diplomatic endgame for the Palestinian situation, has become increasingly improbable considering the developments in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Veracini (2010) explains that settler colonialism is based on the ongoing exogenous agency's dominance over an indigenous one.

6.3.1.2 Weakening the Palestinian Authority

There is evidence in Chapter 6 to suggest that Israel has weakened the Palestinian Authority in recent years. The Palestinian Authority is presumed to serve as the Palestinian public sector in parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It was established in 1993 as a result of the signing of the Oslo Accords between the leadership of the Palestinian National Liberation (PLO) and the Israeli government. A former top UN official referred to the Palestinian Authority's declining capacity to play roles, questioning its relevance (IE1).

The interviews show that original agreements with Israel to allow Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip appear no longer in effect. Evidence suggests Israel wishes to relegate the Palestinian Authority to the status of a municipal authority, relieving Israel of managing minor administrative responsibilities while retaining no political power (ET3).

As demonstrated in Chapter 6, Israel has sought to erase the Palestinian political viability. Israel agreed in the 1990s to establish the Palestinian Authority, but the context is critical. As demonstrated in other chapters, the Palestinians launched a mass uprising (1st Intifada) against Israel in 1987. The then-Israeli minister of defence, Yitzhak Rabin, initially ordered his soldiers to “break the bones” of the Palestinians to end the uprising. The use of force failed to end the first Palestinian uprising as the resistance continued. Ultimately, the Israeli military gave feedback to the Israeli government that the Palestinian issue was a political problem with no military solutions. Consequently, Yitzhak Rabin announced that they needed to address the Palestinians with military and political steps (Shlaim, 1994).

Further, Rabin, who appeared to realize the political dimension of the Palestinian struggle, became the prime minister of Israel in 1992 under the ticket of the left’s Labour party. Rabin’s government was involved in negotiations with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and eventually signed the Oslo Accords in 1993 (Shlaim, 1994). There is evidence to argue that Israel made a modest and temporary concession, granting Palestinians limited self-governance in response to the Palestinian first Intifada’s (uprising) pressure.

Nonetheless, as discussed in Chapters 4 and 6, the Palestinian Authority has collaborated with Israel on security matters, including intelligence sharing about the armed resistance. It is evident from the interviews that this collaborative effort has

alleviated Israel's security pressure that it faced during the first uprising and other occasions. There is evidence in Chapters 4 and 6 to argue that the security coordination has made the West Bank safer for Israel in recent years, as the Palestinian Authority thwarted many armed operations against Israeli targets.

It appears that the Palestinian Authority carries responsibility for its weakness. It remained powerless while witnessing the continuation of Israeli aggression towards Palestinians that has expanded to attacking the Palestinian Authority itself (PL1). The Palestinian Authority became vulnerable to Israel in different ways. For instance, as indicated in Chapter 6, Israel has seized Palestinian tax money multiple times, depriving the Palestinian Authority of its primary funding source. Evidence suggests that Israel has often seized Palestinian tax money to blackmail the Palestinian Authority and enforce terms on its expenditures, such as stopping the allowances to families of martyrs and prisoners in Israeli jails (PL5). Ultimately, inadequate financial resources could paralyze the authority and hinder its regular functions.

The Secretary-General of the Palestinian Liberation Organization and veteran negotiator with Israel, Saeb Erekat, explained the status of the Palestinian Authority by saying that the Israeli Coordinator of the Israeli Government Activities (COGAT) has become the actual president of the Palestinian people (Erekat, 2018). As shown in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6, the COGAT was primarily involved in Palestinian affairs, neutralizing the role of the Palestinian Authority as a governance authority for the Palestinians. The role of COGAT has expanded in recent years at the cost of the Palestinian Authority as COGAT opened direct communication channels with Palestinian individuals, offering them permits to move across the West Bank and work in Israel, withering away from the PA (PL1). Evidence suggests that Israel has surpassed the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, and the PA has become less effective, if not obsolete.

This study concludes that the Palestinian state in parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip was no longer viable. Israel solidified the fragmentation of Palestinian cities and villages in the West Bank and between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Israel also expanded its presence in the West Bank by establishing new settlements. A Palestinian state's viability was also found to be undermined by the Israeli control of the Palestinian economy and financial resources. The study shows that Israel has occasionally seized large amounts of Palestinian tax revenues, which is the primary source of income for the Palestinian Authority. Also, the Israeli military has further activated the role of the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), which reaches the Palestinian public directly and is involved in their civilian affairs, including works permits and business issues which the Palestinian Authority would otherwise handle. Evidence shows that the COGAT has engaged with international organizations to discuss their missions and projects in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as if it represents the Palestinians.

6.3.2 Demographic Removal

Wolfe (2006) shows that settler colonies were founded on eradicating native societies. Wolfe argues that the term "elimination" encompasses, though is not limited to, the systematic liquidation of indigenous peoples, involving both negative and positive dimensions. Negatively, eradicating indigenous peoples results in the destruction of native societies. On the other hand, the erasure of indigenous peoples resulted in the erection of new colonial societies on the expropriated land.

As discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6, Israel appears to have desired to force as many Palestinians as possible to leave the West Bank and Gaza Strip between 2009 and 2019. Evidence suggests that Israel views the Palestinian inhabitation in historic Palestine as a demographic problem and has used various methods to impose a Jewish majority in Palestine.

Numerous studies recount that during the early years of Israeli settler colonialism in Palestine, Israel forcibly displaced hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homes (See Abu-Lughod, 1971; Khalidi, Elmusa, & Khalidi, 1992; Pappé, 2006; Sa'di & Abu-Lughod, 2007). Evidence suggests that Israel had altered the majority-minority balance in most of historic Palestine following the mass expulsion of Palestinians in 1948. However, Israel appears to have taken the demographic issue more seriously starting in 1967. It dominated the remnants of historic Palestine, namely the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where the population has primarily remained in place. Evidence suggests that Israel's seeming inability to completely eradicate the Palestinian presence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip during the 1967-armed invasion was followed by continuous direct and indirect attempts to eradicate Palestinians.

For instance, it is evident from the interviews that Israel has tightened Palestinians' living conditions in the Gaza Strip in recent years. Contrary to some studies that argue Israel's violent actions against Palestinians are exclusively motivated by security concerns, there is evidence to suggest that the terrible situation in Gaza, for example, may encourage Palestinians to act against Israel in response. As demonstrated in Chapters 4 and 6, Israel's treatment of Palestinians is linked to an Israeli demographic effort to target the Palestinians' existence in Palestine. Israel attempted to make the Gaza Strip uninhabitable to eliminate Palestinians (ET1). Evidence suggests that thousands of Palestinian youngsters have recently departed the Gaza Strip for other countries (ET1; ET4). Several of those Palestinians were met in Turkey and stated that they had left their home country searching for work and a better life (ET1).

Data on the precise number of individuals who left Gaza in search of asylum is scarce. The scant data supplied seems to be illustrative rather than definitive. For example, an Israeli publication, *Haaretz*, quoted data collated by UN-affiliated assistance

agencies indicating that 60,907 Palestinians left the Gaza Strip via Egypt in 2018, and only 37,075 returned in the following years (Kubovich, 2019).

UN estimates from both 2012 and 2017 have warned that Gaza is teetering on the brink of becoming uninhabitable by 2020. (see UNSCO, 2012; UNSCO, 2017). A Palestinian National Council member mentioned these UN reports and discussed their contents: “Gaza will become unlivable. Because of the water problem, the problem of gobs, the overcrowding, the restrictions, the siege, and others. So, they have been saying (the United Nations) that Gaza is about to explode as this environment, the economy cannot support the population” (PL2).

Further, as demonstrated in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6, evidence suggests that poor living conditions contributed to a decline in the size of Palestinian families. In recent years, heads of families have faced difficulty obtaining a comfortable existence, prompting many of them to consider the size of their households (PL3). Additionally, deteriorating living conditions significantly influence the decision to marry or not to marry (PL3). Many young people were forced to postpone their marriage plans, while many who have already married are less interested in having large families (ET4).

Israeli military actions inside the Gaza Strip have resulted in the deaths of thousands of people in recent years. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Israel killed around 3,675 Palestinians between 2009 and 2019, most of whom lived in the Gaza Strip (OCHA, 2019). It should also be emphasized that Israeli military actions inside the Gaza Strip have resulted in Palestinian internal displacement due to damage to their homes. According to a United Nations dossier, Israel has recently destroyed or badly damaged at least 20,000 Palestinian dwelling units in the Gaza Strip, forcing an estimated 100,000 Palestinians to become internally displaced (OCHA, 2015). In summary, it is evident from the interviews

that Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have suffered demographic consequences in terms of death, internal displacement, family size, and migration to other countries due to deteriorating living conditions, particularly for young people.

For the West Bank, on the other hand, it is argued that the Palestinian Authority's security cooperation and the decrease of anti-colonial resistance in the West Bank in recent years have paved the way for a variety of Israeli initiatives to target the presence of Palestinians in the area. In the meantime, it appears that Israel has targeted the West Bank's three million Palestinians in recent years using a variety of measures, including killings, incarceration of thousands, and house demolitions (PL1). Notably, evidence suggests that the numerous Israeli checkpoints and settlements in the West Bank have exacerbated the misery of many Palestinians (IE2). Israel's position in the area was consolidated through military and settlement outposts.

There is evidence to argue that Israeli measures are making life miserable for Palestinians in the West Bank, prompting some to seek asylum elsewhere. In recent years, many youngsters and businessmen migrated from the West Bank to search for a better future overseas (ET1).

Furthermore, a member of the Palestinian Central Council shows that the Palestinian population in Area C of the West Bank has remained below 150,000 people due to Israel's restrictions on Palestinian residency (PL5). Area C encompasses 60% of the West Bank and is administered and controlled by Israel (PL5). As demonstrated in Chapter 6, Israel has demolished several houses and infrastructural facilities in Area C and other parts of the West Bank, forcing individuals impacted to seek suitable and safer options. Indeed, Israel has destroyed almost 48,000 Palestinian homes and housing structures since 1967 (AlJazeera, 2017).

Jerusalem stands apart for several reasons in this context. As indicated in Chapter 4, Israel refers to Palestinians in the city as foreign inhabitants and regulates their presence in strict terms that seem to undermine the area's livability and population growth. Some interviews show that Israel has restricted Palestinians in Jerusalem from interacting with people or engaging in activities outside the city; otherwise, they risk losing their residency status. A United Nations veteran provided an example of how Israel used a "centre of life" inspection to revoke the resident status of thousands of Palestinians in Jerusalem (IE2). The "centre of life" implies that Israel would begin revoking the residency status of Palestinian Jerusalemites if they spend extended periods in other parts of Palestine or abroad (Human Rights Watch, 2017; IE2).

Also, demographic pressure on Palestinians in Jerusalem was applied in various ways, including house demolition, a ban on construction activities, and the confiscation of ID cards (PL5). Between 1967 and 2020, the number of Palestinian Jerusalemites who lost their ID cards and their residency status surpassed 15,000, as detailed in Chapter 4.

It is argued that Israel tends to target every element of Palestinian life and engineered a slow displacement of Palestinians. In this context, the diversity and intensity of Israeli strategies appear to be related to the level of Israeli control in the targeted area and the Palestinian resistance capabilities. The more Israeli power remains unquestioned, the more it diversifies and intensifies its demographic drive. To summarize, the study explains that the demographic position of Palestinians becomes significantly threatened in areas where Israel is less challenged. Evidence suggests that without Palestinians' resistance and steadfastness, the impact on the Palestinian population could have been considerably worse.

Table 6.3: Summary of political and demographic effects of the Israeli treatment of Palestinians

Type of effects	List of effects
Politicide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settler authorities undermined the establishment of an indigenous state and indigenous people’s self-determination. • The governance body of indigenous people was deliberately weakened.
Demographic removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The settler state attempted to make indigenous people’s spaces uninhabitable. • Thousands of youngsters departed their land due to dire living conditions caused by settler authorities. • The size of families seemed to decline in response to the difficulty in living conditions. • Settler authorities revoked residency permits from thousands of natives. • Many of the indigenous people were killed by settler authorities.

6.3.3 Obstacles to Decolonization

The fourth research question examines why the Palestinian resistance is unable to end Israeli settler colonialism. It seems that the obstacles that hinder decolonization in Palestine were rarely studied directly. Veracini (2010; 2015) discussed indigenous peoples’ anti-colonial resistance and decolonization in the context of settler colonialism. Veracini (2010) argues that settlers remain in their colonies as long as the colonial and settler-colonial worlds continue to take place. According to Veracini (2010), decolonization in this context can eventually take three shapes: settler evacuation, promotion of indigenous reconciliation, and denial associated with an overt dismissal of the idea of changing the settler body politic. Veracini (2015) suggests anti-colonial resistance could offer an avenue to decolonise.

The interviews noted that Palestinian political movements have pursued two distinct paths in response to Israeli settler colonialism. Evidence indicates that the Fatah

movement has been primarily involved in recent decades in a peace process with Israel to establish a Palestinian state, with concessions to Israel to abandon most of the Palestinian territory, apart from the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip (ET4). However, the present study shows that the Fatah movement's fundamental compromise, which has mostly ruled the Palestinian Authority since 1994, has not resulted in the abolition of Israeli settler colonialism over even a small portion of historic Palestine.

Le More (2005) suggests that the two-state solution, the ultimate goal of the peace process, has slipped away in recent years. Nimni (2020) further emphasizes that the two-state solution has become untenable due to the West Bank's high density of Israeli settlers and Palestinians and Israel's refusal to dismantle settlements in the area. A senior Fatah politician and former minister admitted in an interview that Israel had exploited the process of peace to buy time rather than to achieve peace (PL4).

Evidence suggests that the failure of the peace process or reconciliation between Israeli settlers and Palestinians was inevitable, as settler colonialism is ultimately a zero-sum game where settlers aim to establish new societies and supplant indigenous people (see Wolfe, 1999; 2006). The zero-sum attitude prevalent in settler-colonial settings (Wolfe, 2006) can explain why Israel is unlikely to engage in a peaceful compromise with Palestinians to have a significant demographic existence and political viability in historic Palestine. This analysis concludes that decolonization appears unfeasible through the peace process, and the Palestinians appear to have squandered time and resources in this direction.

On the other hand, the study demonstrates that several Palestinian movements have adopted anti-colonial resistance to achieve decolonization. Veracini (2015) suggests that anti-colonial resistance may provide a means for achieving decolonization, citing

Frantz Fanon's articulation of anti-settler violence as a necessary path to colonized people's self-affirmation. Veracini (2015) observed that there are two ways to break from a settler-colonial way of being. One strategy is to undermine the settler's permanence by transforming him into a colonial sojourner who will eventually return home. Alternatively, the settler's sovereign charge may be reversed.

Veracini (2015) demonstrates that the colonial structure must be the primary target of anti-colonial resistance. However, Veracini's (2015) text appears to fall short of providing a more in-depth discussion of anti-colonial resistance and colonial structure destruction. Cabral (2016) may provide a complementary viewpoint, demonstrating that the anti-colonial struggle should prioritize colonial structure to achieve decolonization. Cabral views resistance as the process of eradicating all forms of colonial rule to build a new state. Additionally, Cabral affirms that resistance should not be reactionary but should be part of a broader process of decolonization.

Cabral (2016) describes the Square of Resistance, which has four corners: political resistance, economic resistance, cultural resistance, and armed resistance. Indeed, as evidenced by interviews conducted for this study, the Palestinian resistance has been less effective when confronted with political, economic, cultural, and armed barriers.

6.3.3.1 Political Obstacles

Cabral (2016) explains that political resistance revolves around recognizing and embracing national unity, gaining allies and political support, and isolating the enemy from its supporters and partners. In this context, political resistance has two dimensions: one is empowering the colonized through national unity and worldwide political backing, and the other is obstructing colonizer alliances and international support.

The interviews show that Palestinians face many political impediments to ending Israeli settler colonialism. The study demonstrates that Palestinians are divided into rival political movements that take divergent positions on Israel. The two major Palestinian movements, Hamas and Fatah, have different approaches to Israel, as Hamas has never recognized the state of Israel. In contrast, the Fatah movement has recognized Israel through the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) (NT1). As a result of the split between the two factions, the Palestinian political field has disintegrated, with Hamas ruling the Gaza Strip and Fatah governing the West Bank. At the same time, Palestinians living elsewhere lack a unified Palestinian leadership (PL2).

There is evidence to argue that Palestinian internal divisions have hindered their collective ability to fight against Israel. Their forces have frequently been used individually or wasted in internal conflicts. A veteran UN senior official described Israel's use of the divide between the West Bank and Gaza Strip as "it is a very simple divide and rule for Israelis" (IE1). The internal division between Palestinian political movements shows a lack of agreement on dealing with Israeli settler colonialism, as Palestinians are not engaged in a unified decolonization project. The present study argues that each political movement may try to impose its approach to Israel on the territory it governs, leading to clashes and further divisions among Palestinian movements.

For example, evidence shows that the Fatah movement's acceptance of the peace process with Israel has resulted in security coordination between the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Israel, resulting in the thwarting of armed resistance operations and the arrest of Palestinians from other political movements (PL1; ET4). These actions to impose a specific political agenda risk relegating the fight against Israel's settler colonialism to an internal Palestinian issue. Wolfe (1999) noted that one factor impeding indigenous peoples' resistance is the acts of indigenous police or troopers recruited and armed by the settler regime to suppress tribal adversaries.

Further, the present study suggests that Israel has attempted to exacerbate Palestinian internal division by threatening to suspend the Palestinian Authority's officials' freedom of movement if they sign a unity accord with Hamas (PL1; Sinico, 2011). Additionally, Israel has warned that it may suspend transfers of Palestinian taxes collected on behalf of the Palestinian Authority if a unity deal with Hamas is reached (Sinico, 2011).

Evidence suggests that the Palestinian internal divisions were institutionalized. For example, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), which was once viewed as a unified political platform for all Palestinians, appears to have been in a state of futility for years, lacking the representation of all Palestinian movements, such as the Hamas and Islamic Jihad and has not assumed the leadership (PL1; ET4). Some interviews indicate that the Palestinian Authority has purposefully taken the role of representing the Palestinian people while marginalizing the role of the PLO, which has now become a sort of department under the Palestinian Authority (PL2; ET4). It appears that the Palestinian Authority leadership, which has also led the PLO, has focused on the governance of the West Bank and Gaza Strip while rendering the PLO inactive by not holding periodic elections or allowing all Palestinian movements to be represented in PLO institutions.

On the other hand, Cabral (2016) explains that political resistance entails securing allies and political backing and separating the enemy from its partners and supporters. In this context, a senior Palestinian leader emphasized that Palestinians seek to establish relations with countries that support Palestinian rights, mainly Arab and Muslim countries (PL1). Several research interviews show that both the Palestinian Authority and Palestinian movements have engaged with foreign actors on various levels, including the state, international organizations, political parties, and the general public, to gain legitimacy and mobilize support for the Palestinian struggle. It is argued that one of the key achievements in this context occurred in 2012 when the United Nations General

Assembly granted Palestine non-member observer state status (PL5). There were also attempts to charge Israel for crimes against Palestinians by filing court cases in Western countries and submitting documents to international and human rights organizations (PL1).

However, there is evidence to argue that a significant portion of foreign support for the Palestinian cause is based more on moral grounds than on shared interests with other parties. The present study argues that most foreign support aid may be symbolic and not necessarily result in tangible benefits, particularly when other countries or entities have common interests with Israel, compelling them to prioritize those interests over morality and international law. The Palestinians have lacked the support of powerful global actors in recent years (ET4).

Additionally, the interviews suggest that Palestinians were incapable or unwilling to isolate Israel from its partners and supporters. Moreover, the analysis implies that interested foreign actors may have been perplexed by the Palestinian political performance. As demonstrated in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6, the Palestinian Authority has been participating in the peace process with Israel, and this approach encouraged other countries to build and strengthen ties with Israel, as Palestinians have set an example in this regard.

Also, those regional parties concerned about Israeli settler colonialism in the region may find it challenging to adopt a strategy with all Palestinian movements to cooperate in competing with Israel due to the cooperation between the Palestinian Authority and Israel and the internal divisions among Palestinian movements.

Additionally, this study indicates that the Palestinian Authority was complicit in denying Palestinians the ability to articulate common interests with other foreign governments. For example, an expert in Palestinian affairs noted that the most recent

Palestinian export and import transactions have occurred with Israel due to official agreements between Israel and Palestinians (ET4). Typically, trade serves as a springboard for significant partnerships with other countries.

Also, the regional (dis-)order condition may have weakened the Palestinian position, as evidenced by numerous interviews, by marginalizing the Palestinian issue and even resulting in some regional rapprochement with Israel.

6.3.3.2 Economic Obstacles

Cabral (2016) defines economic resistance as the abolition of colonialists' exploitative economic connections with the colonized people and the establishment of a new indigenous economy. The present study shows that Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have increasingly relied on the Israeli economy. The economic grounds of resistance appear to have waned recently. As indicated in Chapter 6, the prospect of economic resistance was limited by integrating the Palestinian economy with the Israeli economy, particularly the signing of the Protocol on Economic Relations (Paris Protocol) between the Palestinian Liberation Organization and Israel. Additionally, the analysis demonstrates that the actual Israeli colonial power on the ground made it difficult for local economies to thrive without Israeli interference.

Samhuri (2016) demonstrates that the Paris Protocol established a clearance revenue mechanism in which Israel collects import duties, value-added tax (VAT), labour income tax, and indirect taxes on behalf of the Palestinian Authority and transfers the funds monthly. Samhuri explains that Israel had halted the distribution of clearing revenue to exert political pressure on the Palestinians, as it did in 2011 when the Palestinian Authority concluded a unity agreement with Hamas. Israel also withheld Palestinian taxes in 2012 following the UN General Assembly's vote to recognize Palestine as a non-member observer state (Samhuri, 2016).

It is argued that the Paris Protocol and Israeli restrictions have significantly harmed Palestinian economic production and commerce. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Israel's one-sided customs union, codified in the Paris Protocol, and its barriers to trade and productive activity have compelled the Palestinian market to become a captive market for Israeli goods. Israel recently accounted for more than 70% of Palestinian imports and absorbed 85% of Palestinian exports (UNCTAD, 2016). A Palestinian leader highlighted that the Paris Protocol has increased Palestinian reliance on the Israeli economy and prevented Palestinians from developing their self-capabilities (PL5). Evidence suggests that the Paris Protocol has weakened the potential of Palestinian economic independence while simultaneously legitimizing Israeli exploitation of Palestinian capabilities.

Evidence indicates a paucity of Palestinian initiatives to establish and sustain their economy. For example, many Palestinians appear uninterested in entrepreneurial endeavours, and many young people choose positions in the public sector over productive ventures (PL5). Additionally, an expert in Palestinian affairs indicated that buyers in the West Bank would prefer to purchase Israeli items since they were more affordable and of higher quality than Palestinian products (ET4).

Moreover, a Palestinian leader noted in an interview that tens of thousands of Palestinians have worked in Israel recently (PL3). The apparent Israeli engineering of exploiting Palestinians' skills and hurting economic productivity seems to jeopardize the prospect of decolonization. It is argued that even if Palestinians perform well in other forms of anti-colonial resistance, Israel can still halt the movement of commodities and workers and blackmail Palestinians with a choice between livelihood and resistance.

The present study suggests that economic resistance may benefit Palestinians' demographic and political positions on the land by making them less subject to Israel's

economy and restrictions. On the other hand, it may contribute to settlers fleeing the land, as their livelihood would be jeopardized.

The analysis implies that Palestinians lack a strategy for economic resistance encompassing the destruction of exploitative economic relations with the colonizer and establishing a new indigenous economy. On the other hand, Israel appears to have exploited the economy to undermine the Palestinian national viability by making life miserable for Palestinians in order to force them out of the land. There is evidence to argue that Palestinian failure to develop resistance in a particular field may result in Israel being *carte blanche* to target Palestinians in the same area where it would face fewer constraints.

6.3.3.3 Cultural Obstacles

Cabral (2016) shows how the cultural dimension can contribute to the decolonization struggle. He highlights that cultural resistance includes eradicating colonial culture and harmful components of indigenous culture while establishing a culture based on indigenous traditions and openness to beneficial foreign contributions.

Evidence suggests that the cultural endeavour in this context has aimed to impact the Palestinians' consciousness to promote awareness of the colonizer, the land, identity, responsibility to resist, colonial histories, and universal norms (ET4). A Palestinian political leader explained that culture had become a soft power in the Palestinian struggle because it helps raise awareness among Palestinians about the dangers of Israel's settler colonialism and guides them on how to confront the Israeli regime effectively (PL1). The present study emphasises the importance of the use of artistic works to promote the Palestinian collective consciousness and mitigate the impact of Israeli claims and propaganda. The cultural factor seems significant in motivating Palestinians to remain

firm in their homeland and mobilizing the populace to continue their struggle for decolonization (PL1).

It is evident from the interviews that Palestinian movements attempted to promote ethical and moral behaviours among Palestinians. The study implies that corrupt people may prioritize their interests and avoid participation in resistance against the colonizer, as this may be perceived as costly in terms of personal safety and comfort. It is argued that in the lack of good behaviour and morality, corrupt people can be obedient to the settler-colonial rule in exchange for personal benefit.

Additionally, the study demonstrates that Palestinians place a high value on education. The West Bank and Gaza Strip appear to have some of the highest school enrolment and postgraduate degree holders in the Arab world (ET4). Moreover, evidence shows that Palestinian movements have initiated campaigns to influence Israeli settlers to discourage them from continuing settlement in Palestine and refute their claims (see PL1).

However, as indicated in Chapter 6, culture appears to be heavily influenced by internal politics in this setting since cultural manifestations in recent years have focused on topics such as the internal Palestinian split. A Palestinian leader highlighted how the Palestinian rift had distorted the Palestinian narrative recently (PL4). Additionally, there was a lack of practice and preservation of Palestinian traditions and arts, as demonstrated in Chapter 6. At the same time, Palestinians have become most engaged with serious concerns involving their liveability and political viability. Such concerns may have prompted people to prioritize them based on their perceived urgency, and they may have relatively underestimated the significance of culture in the face of existential dangers.

6.3.3.4 Obstacles to Armed Resistance

The interviews indicate that Palestinian armed resistance against Israeli settler-colonialism has waned recently. As shown in Chapter 6, armed resistance against Israel

was marginalized by some Palestinian movements that opted for a political settlement with Israel through international mediation and negotiation. The analysis demonstrates that the Fatah movement appears to have avoided armed resistance in recent years. A senior leader of the Fatah movement argued that Fatah had not deviated from the norm of national liberation movements by shifting from armed resistance to diplomacy as “all revolutions in the world end up on the negotiation table” (PL4). Also, evidence shows that the president of the Palestinian Authority and the Fatah movement, Mahmoud Abbas, has categorically rejected armed resistance, saying, “I am not ready to futilely launch a missile that will destroy my country; we are with peaceful, popular, political, and diplomatic resistance” (Aziz, 2013). However, armed resistance’s role appears irreplaceable in decolonization because it can uniquely confront the colonizer’s material force. According to Cabral (2016), armed resistance can be crucial for decolonization, as other kinds of resistance have failed to rearrange the material forces involved in the conflict.

There is evidence to argue that the exclusive use of a political process to deal with Israeli settler colonialism, even with significant land concessions, may worsen the indigenous people’s political viability and demographic presence rather than leading to peaceful coexistence, let alone decolonization. As indicated in Chapter 6, despite the Palestinian Authority’s concessions to Israel of more than three-fourths of Palestinian land and rejection of armed resistance, Israeli dominance, and violence have persisted. A senior Palestinian leader suggested Israel’s purpose in the negotiations was to “engage in a process rather than peace” (PL4).

Further, it appears as though the Palestinian internal division affected the armed resistance. Evidence shows that the armed resistance was mostly marginalized in the West Bank while gaining strength in the Gaza Strip. Before the intensification of Palestinian divisions in 2007, when the Palestinian Authority cracked down on resistance personnel

and capabilities belonging to Hamas and other movements, armed resistance was constantly developed in the West Bank (PL1). An expert in Palestinian affairs has linked the Palestinian Authority's strike against armed resistance to its commitment to Israel's security, which was facilitated by security coordination between the Israeli military and the Palestinian Authority (ET4).

In contrast, as demonstrated in Chapter 6, the armed resistance gained strength in the Gaza Strip in recent years. An expert in Palestinian affairs showed Palestinians in the Gaza Strip developed their arms in challenging circumstances, particularly in the aftermath of three major Israeli wars in 2008/2009, 2012, and 2014, which resulted in thousands of casualties and a severe humanitarian crisis (ET4). The development of arms can be seen in the possession of rockets capable of reaching any part of the colonized land (ET4). The evolution of armed resistance in the Gaza Strip, particularly in the aftermath of successive Israeli wars, implies that the aggressive and fatal Israeli wars pushed Palestinians to invest more in building their forces to counterbalance or deter Israel. In an interview, a Palestinian leader argued that armed resistance has become a tool of deterrence and is used to strengthen Hamas's rule in the Gaza Strip (PL5).

Cabral (2016) demonstrates that armed resistance movements' inability to retain and develop forces eventually leads to their loss, and they may disappear entirely. Evidence suggests that Israel has invested significantly in developing military power and conducted military exercises and drills, preparing for future wars. The lack of preparedness and material power for Palestinians can make it easier for Israel to continue its colonial endeavour and make decolonization unfeasible. Moreover, the analysis shows that Israel aims to learn from its confrontations with the Palestinian resistance and avoids shortcomings. Failing to develop capabilities could weaken the Palestinian position in the face of Israel and give Israel the leading position.

The present study suggests that armed resistance appears to have become less involved in the Palestinian struggle for decolonization in recent years since its relevance was questioned by Palestinian leaders and seems to have been rejected by the Palestinian Authority. Additionally, armed resistance was challenged in the regional sphere, as some regional regimes have monitored and repressed financial and logistical support to resistance forces (ET4). Also, armed resistance in the Gaza Strip appears to have become less proactive in recent years (see PL5), which may have reduced the potential impact of this type of resistance.

Table 6.4: Summary of obstacles to achieving decolonization

Type of obstacles	Influences
Political obstacles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous people were divided into rival political movements that adopted conflicting approaches toward the settler state. • The divisions undermined the collective ability to fight and end settler colonialism. • Divisions relegated the fight against settler colonialism to internal conflicts. • Lack of support from powerful international actors. • Incapability to isolate the settler state from its allies and supporters.
Economic obstacles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous people were reliant on the settler state's economy. • Agreements between indigenous groups and the settler state had integrated both sides' economies, making it difficult for indigenous economies to thrive. • Indigenous people strengthened the settler state's economy by purchasing products and working in the colony. • The settler state collected taxes that belonged to indigenous people and withheld their monies on various occasions.
Cultural obstacles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal divisions among indigenous groups were reflected in people's consciousness. • Lack of practice and preservation of traditions and arts.
Obstacles to armed resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous authorities rejected armed resistance and cracked down on resistance personnel and capabilities.

Table 6.4 (continued): Summary of obstacles to achieving decolonization

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indigenous groups became less operative in practising armed resistance.• State authorities monitored and repressed financial and logistical support to resistance forces.
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6.4 Summary

This chapter discusses the research results and conclusions. It demonstrates that internal and external factors have jointly affected the Israeli treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The internal factors include political structure, ideology, public opinion, and the indigenous people's response. The external elements include the regional (dis-)order and the US-Israel alliance. The analysis found that most internal and external factors have led to aggressive Israeli conduct towards Palestinians as the internal Israeli dynamics supported the execution of the settler colonial endeavour to eliminate the indigenous population under an insufficient deterrent power against Israel with a facilitating external environment. It was also shown that Israel had threatened Palestinian political and demographic existences in recent years. Many Palestinian cities were found to be fragmented and separated from each other, and the Palestinians were not allowed by Israel to rule their territory. Further, the liveability of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip was found to have declined, and many Palestinian youths were driven to leave for other countries in recent years.

Different aspects hampered the Palestinian struggle for decolonisation. Evidence suggests that various political, economic, cultural, and armed obstacles significantly influence the decolonization efforts in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. For instance, the internal divisions play a role in distracting Palestinians away from resisting Israel and leading them to involve in domestic conflicts. The evidence seems to suggest that the Palestinians were reliant on the Israeli economy and were even engaged in strengthening it by, for

instance, purchasing Israeli products and working for Israeli employers. The dependency on the Israeli economy made Palestinians less resilient and restrict their efforts to resist settler colonialism. Finally, cultural and armed issues are related to the lack of achieving decolonization. For instance, the lack of preservation of traditions and arts is connected to the endangerment of indigenous national identity. The armed resistance obstacles limit the Palestinians' ability to destroy the material forces of the Israeli settler colonial authority.

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CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations of the research. It starts with an overview of the whole study and continues with responding to the four key questions of the study. It summarizes the research's overall findings and conclusions. The next part of the chapter is a list of recommendations to the policymakers in Palestine and international organizations engaged. The chapter continues with certain research limitations and recommends specific subjects for future studies in this field. The chapter concludes with a summary.

7.2 Findings and Conclusion

The first and second research questions are about the factors influencing the Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The first identifies these factors, and the second examines how these factors have shaped the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians in recent years. The factors in this context are classified as internal and external. Internal elements include political structure, ideology, public opinion, and the indigenous people's response. On the other hand, external forces include regional (dis-) order and the US-Israel alliance.

The internal factors have primarily contributed to the violent Israeli treatment of Palestinians. Israel's political structure has been critical in this regard. Israel practices parliamentary democracy, with the prime minister and ministers holding the most powerful individual roles. The Israeli government is often composed of coalitions since the proportional representation system and cleavages have always resulted in no single party holding an absolute majority of seats in the Israeli parliament (Knesset). In recent

years, right-wing parties have obtained most of the Knesset seats and ruled governments that have been especially hostile toward Palestinians. Between 2009 and 2019, the premiership in Israel was held by the leader of the right-wing Likud party, Benjamin Netanyahu.

The analysis shows that Netanyahu has used his influence in the Israeli political system to enable more aggressive treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to maintain the support of right-wing parties and Jewish Israelis. Furthermore, the Israeli political system has empowered the military to directly address and engage with Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. These territories are militarized, and the Palestinian inhabitants have been vulnerable to military attacks. The present study demonstrates that Israeli military control maintains the power dynamics of settler colonialism in a territory where Palestinians continue to endure colonial violence and existential threats. Also, under such circumstances, it is argued that violent treatment of Palestinians will likely continue, as Israeli governments will often be established by coalitions of Israeli parties that frequently have anti-Palestinian sentiments. In this section, it can be concluded that Israel's violent treatment of Palestinians has served as a tether for the Israeli political structure, as it provides a unique common ground between political forces despite their differences in almost every aspect of politics, culture, ideology, and socioeconomic conditions.

Ideology has also fuelled Israeli colonial violence against Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Israeli government exploited biblical ideas to expand Jewish settlements and tighten restrictions on Palestinians in the West Bank. Additionally, the Knesset adopted a Basic Law declaring Israel a Jewish state. The Basic Law states that the right to self-determination is only granted to Jews in Israel. Furthermore, Israeli military personnel have been motivated to battle and kill Palestinians by instructing them on Torah principles that are said to be the source of these commands.

The Israeli government considered public opinion in its violent treatment of Palestinians. Israelis, by and large, have rejected granting Palestinians political rights and are opposed to establishing an independent Palestinian state. In recent years, most Israelis expressed their belief in a public opinion poll that Arabs comprehend only force. Israeli politicians and government officials frequently consider the public's preferences to earn their support and secure legitimacy. This aspect seems to have propelled Israel's violent and eliminatory treatment of Palestinians.

The factor of indigenous people's response has had a pivotal influence on the Israeli treatment of Palestinians. The internal divisions between the two major Palestinian movements, Fatah and Hamas, gave Israel a less difficult challenge for its violent treatment of Palestinians because Palestinian movements were significantly distracted by internal concerns. Israel has used a divide-and-rule strategy in this regard. Israel has exacerbated the Palestinian rift by threatening the Palestinian Authority, led by Fatah, that Israel may suspend Palestinian tax money and personal privileges of Palestinian officials in the event of a reconciliation with Hamas. Additionally, Israel has benefited from the Palestinian fragmentation by evading international pressure to adhere to earlier Israeli obligations in peace deals on the ground that there is no single representative of the Palestinian people to deal with in this context.

Conversely, the Palestinian resistance, particularly in the Gaza Strip, has exerted pressure on Israel to ameliorate the precarious living conditions endured by Palestinians in the region, driven by concerns regarding potential military reprisals. In recent years, Israel attempted to avoid military incursions into the Gaza Strip. In contrast, the Israeli military regularly conducts military raids inside the West Bank, owing to the Palestinian Authority's rejection of armed resistance and coordination with Israel in security matters.

Furthermore, external causes have largely re-energized Israeli violence against Palestinians. These are determinants of regional (dis-)order and the US-Israel alliance. The regional (dis-)order enabled Israel to treat the Palestinians violently with fewer concerns about regional actors' reactions since many Arab countries were preoccupied with domestic crises. Israel seems to have exacerbated an Arab rivalry with Iran by using the region's chaos to interpret this competition as a common ground with regional governments, thereby marginalizing the Palestinians since these regimes regarded Israel as a partner without public scrutiny. The rapprochement between Israel and regional countries was also linked to regimes' effort to gain international legitimacy, particularly from the United States, via Israel in the face of internal challenges to their positions. Israel became less constrained by the reactions of Arab and Muslim countries that had previously supported the Palestinians and fought wars with Israel.

The US-Israel partnership appears to have provided Israel with a shield against potential international interventions to end its colonial violence against Palestinians. The United States frequently exercises its veto power in the United Nations Security Council to reject resolutions that could be interpreted as anti-Israel. Furthermore, the United States has utilized its influence in the Middle East to pave the ground for regional rapprochement with Israel, implying less regional intervention in favour of Palestinians facing Israel. Also, Israel receives substantial material aid from the United States, with an annual USD 3.8 billion transferred to Israel in recent years.

The third research question was about the demographic and political effects of the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Israel has worked to eliminate the Palestinian people's demographic existence and political viability.

The political consequences include diminishing the potential of forming a Palestinian state even in a relatively tiny portion of historic Palestine, as in the West Bank and Gaza Strip case. Through checkpoints and walls, Israel has controlled, and fractured Palestinian communities and towns in the West Bank into enclaves and drastically separated the Gaza Strip from the West Bank and other countries. The Palestinian Authority has become weaker due to Israeli attempts to restrict its role as a polity to the Palestinians and reduce it to the status of a municipal authority providing security services to Israel. These Israeli attempts to destabilize the Palestinian Authority may be observed in the seizure of revenue from Palestinian taxes, which is the Palestinian Authority's primary source of finance. Israel has also assumed more authority over the West Bank, rendering the Palestinian Authority ineffective.

The demographic consequences of Israel's treatment of Palestinians can be seen in various ways, including the recent killing of thousands of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Also, the recent departure of thousands of individuals, particularly young people, to other countries was linked to Israeli measures that worsened Palestinians' living conditions. Furthermore, as living conditions have deteriorated, the size of families has tended to decrease.

Furthermore, Jerusalem is a peculiar case because Israel has revoked thousands of Palestinians' residency status and ID cards, making their presence in the city illegal. This revocation has impacted Palestinians' ability to live in the city. The fourth research question is regarding why the Palestinian resistance has been unable to end Israeli settler colonialism, or in other words, the barriers to decolonization in Palestine. In recent years, Palestinian movements have involved in two primary efforts to end the Israeli occupation and establish an independent Palestinian state: the peace process with Israel and anti-colonial resistance. The peace process produced no Palestinian state, and it appears Israel used it to buy time and carry out its settler-colonial project with little disturbance.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Authority remained committed to this choice and constituted no or negligible threat to Israel's settler colonialism continuation.

On the other side, adopting anti-colonial resistance appeared to pose challenges to Israel and discourage it on multiple occasions. However, resistance was not practised in its entirety. Politically, internal divisions harmed the Palestinian cause, and there was a lack of political backing from other countries. In terms of economy, the Palestinian struggle for decolonization was harmed by the integration of the Palestinian economy with the Israeli economy, Israeli control over Palestinian spaces, and a lack of Palestinian capacities and initiatives. The Israeli economy seems robust.

Culturally, the internal divisions have partially affected the Palestinian consciousness. The Palestinians' interest in national traditions and arts was limited. Additionally, the Palestinian Authority rejects armed resistance, which has had no influential role in the West Bank in recent years. The armed resistance experienced a significant increase in armed capabilities. In recent years, armed resistance has shifted to assume a more deterrent posture rather than an active operational role. Consequently, the failure to achieve decolonization may be attributed, in part, to the Palestinian movements' inability to reach a consensus and implement an encompassing resistance strategy encompassing political, economic, cultural, as well as armed dimensions.

7.3 Contribution of the Study

The study offers three main contributions. The first is a manifestation of the dynamics of settler-colonial violence; it is the outcome of an analysis of the factors impacting Israel's treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The second is about elucidating Israel's treatment of Palestinians as the elimination of indigenous people within the context of settler colonialism, which goes beyond the typical discussion on the

topic, which is frequently portrayed as a conflict between the state of Israel and Palestinians. The third is an analysis of decolonization in the context of settler colonialism, in which barriers to decolonization were studied from various angles that did not appear to be addressed comprehensively in the literature. In the framework of settler colonialism, the idea of decolonization appears to be frequently lacking. These contributions are summarized below.

7.3.1 Dynamics of Settler Colonialism

The analysis of the interview data in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 demonstrates that various internal and external variables have influenced the dynamics of settler-colonial violence. No single factor can independently determine the settler regime's violent relationship with indigenous people. Both internal and external factors contributed to the settler regime's violence toward indigenous people. Ideology was used to motivate and justify the violence against indigenous people. The settler regime institutionalized ideology when the legislature passed legislation granting a specific ethnoreligious group the exclusive right to self-determination. Additionally, the legislature endowed the settler state with an ethnoreligious identity.

The settler public opinion has pushed for a violent relationship with indigenous people. Many settlers felt vulnerable to indigenous people. The settler regime and its officials wanted to respond to public opinion to gain settlers' support, particularly during elections, and sustain the settlers' presence in the institutions of state. Moreover, the political structure fostered and enabled violent interactions with indigenous people. The settler state system was hybrid, as settlers were addressed as citizens while indigenous people faced constant violence. Special power arrangements were required to confront indigenous people. When indigenous people established a meaningful presence in the colonized territory, the military gained considerable authority to confront them.

Additionally, the fundamental cleavages between settler groups implied that the agreement to enforce settler colonialism was one of the few areas of agreement among settlers. When settler groups became part of governments, the violent relationship with indigenous people was one of the agreement points that kept the government intact. The numerous schisms among settlers in power also suggested that the underlying premises of settler colonialism would almost certainly be perpetuated, as a change in governments or shift by one group would most likely not compel other groups to agree.

Settlers acted violently towards indigenous people for a variety of reasons. Nonetheless, indigenous people's responses were significant in this context. If indigenous people abandon their territory or remain dormant, colonial violence and annihilation of indigenous people could continue unabated. Anti-colonial resistance has placed considerable constraints on the full implementation of settler colonialism. The indigenous people resisted the settlers' regime when they thought they had little to lose in the face of settler-colonial foundations of erasure and dispossession. Anti-colonial resistance developed and employed available means to deter the colonial regime and fight for survival. Anti-colonial resistance's influence has dwindled as the indigenous people tended to abandon resistance in favour of a relatively comfortable status quo under settler colonialism. If resistance is abandoned while the settler-colonial state retains its power, the indigenous people become even more vulnerable to violence and eradication. Additionally, indigenous people's internal divides harmed their resistance capability, as the advantage of fighting the colonizer collectively from all angles of the land was diminished, and indigenous people were distracted by internal problems.

Settlers and indigenous people have significantly impacted this context, given their direct confrontation. Both forces, however, do not interact in isolation from their external environment. The pursuit of power accumulation, particularly by great nations, was viewed in this light. A foreign power backed a settler rule to bolster its influence and

fight competitors. Supporting stances were particularly prevalent among countries with colonial or settler colonial backgrounds. On the other side, other countries may have viewed settlements as a threat to their position and interests and opted to support indigenous people. In this context, the settler-colonial regime has attempted to create instability in areas where stable conditions could lead governments or non-government actors to aid indigenous people.

Settler colonial violence is a complex dynamic involving various factors, with no single event or force controlling its outcome. It is about settlers' motives and internal and external power capabilities. As long as indigenous people take settler colonialism seriously and have internal unity and power capacities, they may exert influence over it. Lack of foreign support may considerably impact the situation of both settlers and indigenous people, making the external environment crucial.

This account of the dynamics of settler colonialism could be a valuable addition to the body of knowledge, as there appears to be a gap in this context. Settler colonial studies tend to focus on European settler-colonial societies, while the emphasis on overarching logic frequently overlooks place-based dynamics of territorial acquisition and settler-indigenous relations (Rowse, 2014; Busbridge, 2020).

7.3.2 Elucidation on the Elimination of Palestinians

The analysis of interviews in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6 concludes that Israel has sought to eradicate the Palestinians, both demographically and politically. The present study demonstrates that the Israeli government's treatment is not solely shaped by security concerns and is not merely the result of a territorial dispute that can be resolved by mutual compromises, as suggested in other studies. Many studies and debates in the academic and media circles focused on the situation as a conflict between Israel and Palestinians (Fargue, 2000; Lagerquist, 2004; Maoz & McCauley, 2008; Reuveny, 2003; Allegra &

Napolitano, 2011; Rebhun & Malach, 2012; Della Pergola, 2015; Anziska, 2017; Shlomo, 2017).

Indeed, the Palestinian Authority has made a significant concession by accepting Israeli sovereignty over more than three-quarters of the Palestinian territory. In contrast, Israel has continued to expand its settlement and launched military operations, resulting in significant loss of life and property damage for the Palestinians. Israel has also harmed the prospect of establishing a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip by disintegrating Palestinian cities and villages and weakening the Palestinian Authority. If the resolution in this context depends on compromise, the Palestinian Authority appears to have taken an extreme stance, while Israel has continued to intensify and expand its settler colonialism.

If Israel prioritizes security, the West Bank has posed little threat and has become a safe place for Israelis in recent years. Indeed, the Palestinian Authority has cracked down on armed resistance capabilities and personnel and has worked with Israel. Despite the overall calm and stable condition in the area, Israel has continued to kill Palestinians, arresting many and restricting the movement of people and goods across the West Bank. Israel has also expanded the settlement and was involved in undermining the Palestinian Authority, which has aided Israel's security. Indeed, the continuation of such Israeli actions may create security repercussions, as killing and attacking Palestinians may result in Palestinian responses, as observed on numerous occasions. Furthermore, despite Israel's relatively calm security situation in recent years, the Israeli siege on Gaza has continued.

Israel's colonial violence against Palestinians and land expropriation would most likely exacerbate the security situation in Palestinian territories. As a result, the security justification appears insufficient to explain Israel's treatment of Palestinians. Interviews

with veteran UN senior officials, experts in Palestinian and Israeli affairs, and Israeli records indicate that Israeli attempts to eliminate the Palestinians, either demographically or politically, or both.

7.3.3 Obstacles to Decolonization in the Context of Settler Colonialism

The interviews addressed the idea of decolonization and the obstacles that stand in its way in present times. Indigenous people have primarily participated in two ways to confront settler colonialism: the peace process and resistance. When indigenous people were in a vulnerable position, the peace process not only did not bring them closer to decolonization but also diverted their attention away from the struggle for national liberation. The prospect of a peace process was predicated on the possibility of indigenous people and settlers agreeing to coexist in the colonized territory. Indigenous people groups made enormous concessions in certain instances, agreeing to give up more than three-quarters of their land in exchange for establishing a small indigenous state. Still, the settler-colonial regime undermined this state's potential. It appears nearly impossible for a settler-colonial authority to allow or facilitate indigenous people's demographic growth and political viability in a peaceful manner.

Settler colonialism's premises are fundamentally opposed to indigenous people's existence. The peace process was used to thwart indigenous anti-colonial resistance, as their political agenda would likely shift from decolonization to peace and state-building. While settler authorities rejected the establishment of an indigenous state and expanded settlements, some indigenous groups adopted a peace process, and their resistance regressed.

On the other hand, Indigenous groups used anti-colonial resistance to achieve decolonization. However, the inadequate use of resistance undermined decolonization's triumph. Several impediments existed, including political, economic, cultural, and armed

obstacles. Internal divisions among indigenous groups weakened indigenous people's political position. The absence of a unified political program for confronting settlers' authorities among indigenous groups widened the schism. Furthermore, the struggle for power in some parts of colonized land implied that indigenous groups became less concerned with settler colonialism and more involved in internal competition.

In this context, the lack of international support for indigenous people was detrimental. To find common grounds with foreign parties, indigenous people groups needed to articulate their struggle in terms of interest. The articulation may also cause colonizer supporters to reconsider their involvement and acknowledge its impact on their interests. The support based on moral grounds was also feasible in some instances. Nonetheless, international support for decolonization appeared to be harmed by indigenous people's internal conflicts and lack of resistance. Internal power struggles perplexed foreign supporters, and some distanced themselves from indigenous groups to avoid becoming involved in internal conflicts.

Economic obstacles hampered the prospect of decolonization. The reliance on the settlers' economy exposed indigenous people to blackmail. Also, due to a lack of financial resources, some indigenous individuals left the colonized land, searching for a better life elsewhere. Furthermore, the indigenous people were weakened by integrating the indigenous economy with the settlers' economy. It denied indigenous people access to foreign markets and undermined articulating mutual interests with other countries.

Also, when the settlers' economy improved, it gave settlers another reason to stay in the colonized land. In comparison, a strong economy may strengthen indigenous people's demographic and political positions by reducing the possibility of leaving their homeland in search of other opportunities. Additionally, indigenous people would not be forced to submit to colonizer orders in exchange for economic services when they have

their capabilities. With a robust economy, resistance can be mobilized more broadly, with fewer concerns about potential negative consequences for indigenous people's livelihoods.

Furthermore, preserving national traditions and arts was significant because it can help define the people's identity. The indigenous people's religious and national backgrounds shaped their morals and identity. It was critical to prioritize indigenous people's education to develop their abilities to think clearly and work in various fields. Nonetheless, internal divisions hurt people's consciousness and partially shaped their attitudes.

The lack of armed resistance jeopardized the prospect of decolonization. The settler-colonial regime used force frequently to carry out the destruction of indigenous people and the expropriation of the colonized land. The armed resistance functioned to counterbalance or, at the very least, challenge the settler endeavour. When indigenous people cannot defend themselves, the settler-colonial regime may seek to impose its premises as soon as possible. With this form of protection, the indigenous people had another reason to remain firmly in their homeland when resistance movements had the force to challenge the colonizer. Furthermore, interested foreign parties became more willing to reach out and support resistance movements that had demonstrated their ability to confront the settler-colonial regime.

The settler-colonial regime attempted to ameliorate indigenous people's suffering and preserve the status quo in response to armed resistance. If the repercussions of resistance become unbearable for the settlers' population and the settler-colonial regime is impotent to avert the threats, the settlers may begin to consider the settlement's benefits and costs. They may eventually depart the territory in search of safety and life.

The discussion on decolonization in this study may add new perspectives to the literature on settler colonialism, which appears to be deficient in studies on the subject (see Veracini, 2007; Veracini, 2015; Busbridge, 2017). Decolonization tends to receive less attention in the context of Israel-Palestine (Busbridge, 2017; Todorova, 2020).

7.4 Recommendations

7.4.1 Palestinian Policy-Makers

Resistance appears to have influenced colonial powers to end their colonization worldwide (see Birmingham, 2008; Rothermund, 2006; Byrne, 2016). Israel withdrew its forces from previously colonized lands, including Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, Southern Lebanon, and the Gaza Strip, following years of anti-colonial struggles and wars in these places (see Norton, 200; El-Rewany, 2001; Kaye, 2002; Awawda, 2018). Palestinian national movements' leaders need to formalize a comprehensive and unified resistance strategy to end Israeli settler colonialism. It is necessary to analyse other countries' decolonization experiences to learn from them. It is vital to consider all forms of resistance, including political, economic, cultural, and armed forms. The draft of a resistance strategy requires collaboration between experts from each of these domains. The dynamics of settler colonialism and the factors that influence Israel must be thoroughly examined and incorporated into this strategy. The Palestinian political effort must place a premium on the unification of political forces in the pursuit of decolonization.

The Oslo Accords between Israel and the leadership of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was a critical dividing line between Palestinians. Nonetheless, the two-state solution, which was assumed to be the end game of the Oslo Accords, is no longer applicable because Israel refuses to comply with the agreement and has changed

the facts on the ground in the West Bank with settlement construction to the point where a viable Palestinian state is no longer possible. As a result, the primary source of division is obsolete, and Palestinian movements must seek and adopt a common political ground under a single platform that can be used to organize and coordinate their efforts in this regard.

Palestinian national movements, professional associations, student unions, and other groups of Palestinians require a unified institution representing all Palestinians, including those displaced worldwide. If the former groups fail to do so collectively, each group must have its representation.

There is also a requirement to engage in formal and public diplomatic activities actively. It is necessary to deliver and discuss the Palestinian narrative about Israeli settler colonialism with foreign governments, focusing on the implications of Israeli settler-colonialism towards regional peace and security and the need to end it. Palestinians need to reach out to the public and non-state actors in other countries to garner support, encourage governments to respond to Palestinian rights, and avoid complicity in Israeli colonial violence. These initiatives must include Palestinian refugees in other countries.

At the institutional level, the Palestinian Authority appears to have served many Israeli interests while diverting Palestinian attention from the struggle for decolonization on numerous occasions. It is necessary to establish national institutions capable of representing and leading the Palestinian people collectively instead of the Palestinian Authority, which is limited to the West Bank and Gaza Strip. On the other hand, the Palestinian Authority must be restructured or replaced in its existing capacity. The Palestinian Authority must not relieve Israel by targeting Palestinian resistance or becoming reliant on Israel's economy. Palestinians should not be preoccupied with

establishing a quasi-government in the West Bank and Gaza Strip while ignoring the effort to decolonize.

At the economic level, the Palestinians must pursue an economic approach that exhausts their material and human resources while avoiding relying on the Israeli economy. The Paris Protocol, which placed the West Bank and Gaza Strip under Israeli trade control, must be terminated. Regional and international trade agreements with countries that can exert pressure on Israel to allow goods movements, such as China, Turkey, Russia, Egypt, and Jordan, should be considered. Local self-reliance initiatives must be prioritized to avoid reliance on Israel and its blackmail attempts. Online work-from-home opportunities must be available and facilitated in collaboration with international employers. Culture can be promoted by establishing accessible cultural centres, organizing national festivals and awards for excellent cultural products, launching grant programs for outstanding artworks, and providing tax breaks to companies or individuals producing works related to Palestinian identity, anti-colonial resistance, patriotism, steadfastness, good behaviours, creativity, and critical thinking. A committee to oversee cultural resistance must be formed. Palestinian movements are compelled to espouse armed resistance as a strategic imperative as a means to counterbalance or mitigate the asymmetry of power vis-à-vis Israel. It must be built and activated within the context of a broader resistance movement to achieve the ultimate decolonisation goal. Facilitating the voluntary enlistment of youthful cohorts into the ranks of armed resistance forces is of paramount significance in this endeavour.

The education system must reflect the struggle for decolonization. The curricula must address critical issues such as settler colonialism and decolonization. It is necessary to focus on the current and historical successes and initiatives of oppressed and marginalized peoples. The process must also incorporate the experience of students and instructors so that they become agents of knowledge rather than mere observers. The

education system must also address the effects of settler colonialism on student morale, and there must be activities to foster morale and assist students in dealing with the consequences.

It is necessary to present the Palestinian side of the story and address public opinion in other parts of the world via every possible means, including media and social media platforms. The Media must be used to tell other people about the situation in Palestine, where the effects of Israeli settler colonialism must be demonstrated, and the struggle for national liberation must be explained. Traditional media outlets and social media provide platforms for increasing awareness and reaching audiences in various parts of the world. However, the effectiveness in this regard is primarily linked to the content, which must be compelling. Because many international media agencies appear to have provided biased coverage of the situation against Palestinians, Palestinian content must be delivered in various languages and regularly via social media and other available outlets.

7.4.2 United Nations and International Bodies

The United Nations (UN) should address the Palestinians as indigenous people with rights guaranteed by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The International Criminal Court (ICC), the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and other United Nations Organs must investigate Israel for “genocide” and “crimes against humanity”. The General Assembly should reconsider Israel’s admission to the UN because settler colonialism and military conquests in other countries should not be legitimized.

7.5 Limitation and Future Studies

This research did not examine Israel's treatment of the Palestinians living inside the Green Line and those scattered as refugees around the world. Separate in-depth studies are required to address how Israel has treated Palestinians who have been granted Israeli citizenship inside the Green Line. This research could be significant because it may reveal different layers of the Israeli polity when addressing "citizens". It may also study how the elimination of indigenous people could be reshaped under other conditions, and cultural assimilation may need to be closely examined in this context.

Another issue that can be studied in this context is Israel's approach to dealing with the Palestinians who live abroad. Such research could be relevant because it could reveal how the Israeli settler-colonial regime regards displaced indigenous people and how Israeli authorities deal with the sovereignty of other countries.

The research did not focus on Israel's policy toward the Palestinian land. More research may be required to study this issue through settler colonialism. This study also did not address the cultural aspects of Israel's treatment of Palestinians.

There should be comparative studies between Israeli attempts to exterminate Palestinians and other cases of settler colonialism. A comparative analysis of the battle for decolonization in the settler-colonial situations of Algeria and South Africa could provide substantial inputs in this context. Furthermore, more research may be required to compare the Palestinian effort for decolonization with other related cases.

7.6 Summary

This study shows that internal and external factors influence the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Internal elements include political structure, ideology, public opinion, and the indigenous people's response. The

external factors include the regional (dis-) order and the US-Israel alliance. This analysis found that most of these factors have fuelled Israel's violent treatment of Palestinians. The Palestinian resistance was found to compel Israel to lessen its violent treatment of Palestinians. This study has also documented Israeli tendencies to eliminate Palestinian political viability and demographic existence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In recent years, the likelihood of establishing a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has dwindled. Israeli settler colonialism was the primary cause of the deteriorating living conditions that drove many Palestinians, particularly youngsters, to leave Palestine.

Various political, economic, cultural, and armed obstacles have hampered the Palestinian struggle for decolonization. Palestinian political movements' internal divisions were a severe impediment to achieving decolonization. The creation of the Palestinian Authority has diverted attention away from the Palestinian struggle for national liberation in favour of governance and internal power competition.

Other economic, cultural, and armed impediments were also found detrimental. The Palestinian economy has been heavily reliant on the Israeli economy. The internal split was found to have a negative impact on Palestinian consciousness. Armed resistance was found to be lacking in recent years. The Palestinian Authority specifically targeted it, concomitant with a decrease in its proactive measures in the Gaza Strip. The Palestinians have not embarked upon a comprehensive, concerted endeavour in pursuit of decolonisation.

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