

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PADOVA

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, LAW, AND
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Master's degree in
Human Rights and Multi-level Governance



A History of Educational Control: *Scholasticide* in Palestine

Supervisor: Dr. Francesco Saverio Leopardi

Candidate: Ana Beatriz Constantino Sangaletti

Matriculation No. 2108498

A.Y. 2024/2025

“Some will regard my position vis-a-vis the problem of human liberation as purely idealistic, or may even consider discussion of ontological vocation, love, dialogue, hope, humility, and sympathy as so much reactionary "blah." Others will not (or will not wish to) accept my denunciation of a state of oppression that gratifies the oppressors. Accordingly, this admittedly tentative work is for radicals.

[...]

The radical, committed to human liberation, does not become the prisoner of a ‘circle of certainty’ within which reality is also imprisoned. On the contrary, the more radical the person is, the more fully he or she enters into reality so that, knowing it better, he or she can better transform it. This individual is not afraid to confront, to listen, to see the world unveiled. This person is not afraid to meet the people or to enter into dialogue with them. This person does not consider himself or herself the proprietor of history or of all people, or the liberator of the oppressed; but he or she does commit himself or herself, within history, to fight at their side.

[...]

From these pages I hope at least the following will endure: my trust in the people, and my faith in men and women, and in the creation of a world in which it will be easier to love.

[...]

Because love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is commitment to others.”

Paulo Freire
Pedagogy of the oppressed

Table of Contents

Abbreviations	3
Abstract	4
Introduction	5
Chapter I – A Historical Overview of Israeli Control Over Palestinian Education	9
1.1 Period from 1948 to 1967: Fragmentation and Exclusion.....	10
1.2 Post-1967: Militarization and Curricular Control.....	13
1.2.3 First Intifada.....	19
1.3 Post-Oslo and the Palestinian Authority (1993 - Present).....	21
1.3.1 Occupied Palestinian Territories.....	25
I) West Bank.....	25
II) Gaza.....	28
1.3.1.1 - Reconstruction and Educational Recovery in Gaza.....	31
1.4 Conclusion.....	33
Chapter II – Education as Colonial Infrastructure: Pedagogy, Erasure, and Resistance	34
2.1 Education as colonial infrastructure.....	34
2.2 Education as a mechanism of control: a Freirean reading of domination over Palestinians.....	42
2.3 Pedagogical Resistance and the Role of Palestinian Educators.....	47
2.4 Conclusion.....	51
Chapter III – Legal Implications: The Right to Education and the Concept of <i>Scholasticide</i>	53
3.1 Education As A Fundamental Right And International Human Rights Law.....	53
3.2 International Humanitarian Law And The Right To Education.....	59
3.3 <i>Scholasticide</i> : Towards a Legal Recognition of Educational Erasure.....	63
3.4 Conclusion.....	68
Final Remarks	72
Bibliography	76

ABBREVIATIONS

CMIP	Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
IDF	Israel Defense Forces
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IMPACT-se	Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education
MOE	Ministry of Education (Palestinian Authority)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territories
PA	Palestinian Authority
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
Tawjihi	Palestinian Secondary School Matriculation Examination
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

ABSTRACT

This thesis critically examines the systematic control exercised by the Israeli regime over Palestinian education, situating it within the broader framework of settler colonialism. Drawing on historical, legal, and theoretical sources, the study demonstrates that education has been weaponized by Israel not merely as a site of governance, but as a tool of erasure, fragmentation, and suppression of Palestinian national identity. From the imposition of censored curricula and bureaucratic restrictions to the physical destruction of schools and universities, particularly in Gaza, the Israeli policies amount to a sustained assault on the Palestinian capacity to learn, teach, and remember. Through engagement with theorists such as Patrick Wolfe, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, and Paulo Freire, the thesis highlights the epistemic dimension of this violence and the forms of resistance cultivated within Palestinian educational spaces. The study introduces and applies the concept of *scholasticide* to describe the intentional destruction of education as a form of colonial warfare. It concludes by arguing for the legal recognition of *scholasticide* as a crime and an essential step toward justice. Education, in the Palestinian context, is not merely a right, it is a terrain of resistance, memory, and political survival.

Key-words: Palestine; right to education; scholasticide.

INTRODUCTION

The trajectory of Palestinian education is deeply intertwined with a long history of colonial domination, marked by successive layers of external control over Palestinian bodies, territories, and institutions. From the Ottoman Empire to the British Mandate, and culminating in the Israeli occupation, the Palestinian population has been systematically deprived of autonomy over its own educational systems, curricula, and pedagogical structures. Within this context, the imposition of educational models alien to the Palestinian national project has not only restricted access to knowledge but has actively contributed to the fragmentation of social cohesion, the erasure of collective memory, and the suppression of political and cultural identities.

The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 consolidated this process by turning Palestinian education into one of the primary targets of control policies. As demonstrated by the historical analysis in Chapter 1, the educational apparatus was integrated into a broader system of repression and surveillance, in which content censorship, physical and symbolic segregation between Palestinian and Israeli schools, and the systematic removal of historical and geographic references to Palestine became recurring practices. This repressive structure is not limited to military occupation but extends into epistemological and pedagogical domains, where knowledge production and student subject formation are shaped by a logic of substitution and denial.

In this scenario, the present research is grounded in the premise that education in Palestine cannot be understood as a merely technical-administrative field or as a deficient public policy. On the contrary, it constitutes a strategic instrument of domination, driven by a colonial rationality that aims to obstruct the development of a critical national consciousness and to foreclose the right to self-determination. Israeli educational policy functions not only through the physical suppression of institutions or the restriction of access, but more fundamentally through the imposition of a narrative and institutional regime that marginalizes Palestinian historicity and naturalizes the presence of the colonizer.

It is of utmost importance to emphasize that this study refers to Palestinians currently residing in the West Bank and Gaza—that is, the Occupied Palestinian Territories—as well as those living in East Jerusalem and Palestinian citizens of Israel. In other words, the research encompasses Palestinians who, despite the distinct political and

territorial circumstances they face, share a collective identity and historical narrative that spans the entirety of historical Palestine.

The guiding question of this thesis is, therefore: in what ways has education been instrumentalized by the State of Israel as a mechanism for controlling the Palestinian population? In posing this question, the research does not adopt a neutral stance but embraces a critical approach grounded in authors who conceive of education as a site of ideological and political struggle. To this end, the study engages with settler colonial theory as formulated by Patrick Wolfe, which identifies the logic of native elimination and settler replacement as central to Israeli domination; Edward Said's analysis of Orientalism and the production of colonial epistemologies; Frantz Fanon's critique of the erasure of national memory and the instrumentalization of schooling as a space of dehumanization; and Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which denounces the "banking model" of education as a mechanism for reproducing oppression and calls for the construction of emancipatory pedagogical practices.

Based on this theoretical foundation, the general objective of the thesis is to analyze the role of education as an instrument of colonial control over the Palestinian population, with particular attention to the historical, pedagogical, and legal implications of this process. The specific objectives are: (i) to critically reconstruct the historical evolution of Israeli educational policies since 1948, focusing on curricular censorship, institutional segregation, and the systematic destruction of educational infrastructure; (ii) to examine the symbolic and epistemological dimensions of educational domination, through a critical reading of the aforementioned theoretical contributions; and (iii) to assess, in light of International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law, the legal implications of systematic violations of the right to education, with special focus on the concept of *scholasticide*, understood as the deliberate destruction of institutions, knowledge, and educational actors as a form of cultural erasure.

The methodology adopted is qualitative and theoretical, based on critical literature review and document analysis. This approach was chosen in light of the nature of the research object, which requires the articulation of historical processes, legal categories, and critical theories that transcend conventional empirical measurement. At the same time, the limitations of access to primary sources on the everyday realities of education in the occupied territories are acknowledged. For this reason, the research relies primarily on official documents, international reports, and specialized literature, duly referenced. It is important to emphasize that the entire literature review was constructed based on texts that

maintain a direct connection with the theme of education. For this reason, the temporal gaps present in the historical analysis of Chapter 1 are hereby clarified, as the available scholarly production on the subject does not generally follow a strictly linear or continuous chronology. The analytical structure, therefore, prioritized the conceptual and critical relevance of the selected works over a rigorously chronological organization.

The analysis involved a cross-reading of the selected sources, aiming to identify historical patterns of repression, epistemological erasure, violations of legal norms, and strategies of educational resistance. The materials were examined through interpretive procedures and critical discourse analysis, with particular attention to the narrative structures embedded in censored curricula, international reports, and legal resolutions. However, this research acknowledges the limitations imposed by the inability to conduct fieldwork or in-person interviews, as well as restricted access to internal documents from the State of Israel. Consequently, the triangulation of critical literature, technical data, and legal frameworks became essential to ensure analytical robustness. Finally, the research adopts a situated and non-neutral epistemological stance, in line with the theoretical premises of Paulo Freire and Frantz Fanon, who understand knowledge production as a political and ethical act in the face of structures of domination. This perspective informs the analysis of international law not as a neutral tool, but as a contested arena shaped by silences, asymmetries, and potentialities for resistance.

The dissertation is structured into three chapters. The first chapter presents a historical analysis of Israel's control over Palestinian education since 1948, focusing on the territorial fragmentation imposed by the Nakba, the institutionalization of curricular censorship, and policies of exclusion and racial segregation. Drawing on authors such as Abu-Saad, Golan-Agnon, and Rashid Khalidi, the chapter shows how Israeli educational policy has been designed to deny Palestinian identity, suppress historical memory, and consolidate a hierarchical system of citizenship based on ethnicity. It also analyzes the effects of military control over schools, the exclusion of Palestinian teachers from decision-making processes, and the construction of a parallel educational system for Palestinian citizens of Israel.

The second chapter deepens the critical reading of education as infrastructure of settler colonialism, as argued by Patrick Wolfe and Ilan Pappé. This framework is complemented by Edward Said, who denounces the epistemic erasure of Palestine under Zionist civilizing discourse. Frantz Fanon provides the basis to understand the colonial school as a tool of domestication, repression, and alienation of the colonized subject, while

Paulo Freire introduces a pedagogical perspective of resistance, emphasizing the possibility of transforming education into a practice of liberation in opposition to the “banking model” and the cultural invasion enacted by the oppressor. Thus, this chapter articulates critical theory and Palestinian realities to demonstrate how the educational apparatus is mobilized both to maintain domination and to suppress symbolic resistance.

The third chapter offers a legal analysis of the systematic violations of the right to education faced by Palestinians, based on key human rights treaties and international humanitarian norms. The investigation centers on instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education, and the Fourth Geneva Convention. Furthermore, the concept of *scholasticide* is introduced as an emergent form of structural and cultural violence aimed at eliminating systems of knowledge and Palestinian cultural continuity. Drawing on documentation from international bodies such as the UN and UNESCO, the chapter shows that Israeli practices, including school demolitions, systematic censorship, the militarization of educational spaces, and territorial blockades, violate multiple legal obligations and demand new frameworks of accountability.

Across all chapters, the thesis argues that the systematic destruction of Palestinian education, through censorship, segregation, institutional violence, and symbolic delegitimization, is not a series of isolated incidents but a structural feature of the Israeli colonial project. In this sense, the struggle for education in Palestine is not merely a struggle for access to schools, but a struggle for memory, culture, self-determination, and ultimately, for existence itself.

CHAPTER 1 - A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF ISRAELI CONTROL OVER PALESTINIAN EDUCATION

Understanding the dilemmas faced by education in Palestine requires a historical lens attentive to the successive forms of domination imposed on the Palestinian population. From the British Mandate (1917–1948) to the ongoing Israeli occupation, Palestinians have been consistently denied autonomy over their educational structures and curricular content, reflecting a long-standing pattern of external control over their right to education¹. Throughout these periods, schooling has been repeatedly instrumentalized to fragment social cohesion, suppress collective identity, and reinforce political domination.

Despite these enduring constraints, the Palestinian educational system has demonstrated remarkable resilience. According to data from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Palestine has one of the highest literacy rates in the Arab world, a result made even more significant when considered within the context of the political and material restrictions imposed by successive colonial regimes². In this context, education performs a dual function: while employed by repressive regimes as a mechanism of control, it has also served as a crucial space of resistance and cultural preservation for the Palestinian population³. As Ali Jarbawi observes, education has consistently reflected the interests of ruling powers—from the British use of schooling to produce local elites, to the censorship and rewriting of history under Israeli occupation, where historical references have been systematically altered or erased⁴.

This chapter aims to critically reconstruct the main mechanisms of control exercised by the State of Israel over Palestinian education since 1948, with particular emphasis on the post-Nakba period. It considers Palestinians, from the river to the sea, living under direct Israeli control, whether in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, or as citizens of Israel, all of whom experience distinct but overlapping forms of educational repression. The chapter adopts a specific use of the term Palestinians referring exclusively to

¹ Abu-Saad, Ismael, and Duane Champagne. “Introduction: A Historical Context of Palestinian Arab Education.” *American Behavioral Scientist* 49, no. 8 (April 2006): 1035–51. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764205284717>, 135-136.

² Gerner e Schrodt, 1999 *apud* Juman Quneis and Tina Jaber Rafidi, “Education under Occupation in Palestine: Resilience and Resistance,” *Education as Change* 27 (October 16, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.25159/1947-9417/14851>, 1.

³ Al Zaroo and Hunt *apud*: Nicolai, Susan. *Fragmented Foundations: Education and Chronic Crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*. Paris: UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning, 2007, 28..

⁴ Ali Jarbawi *apud*: Nicolai, “*Fragmented Foundations*”, 28.

those under Israeli authority, while explicitly distinguishing among subgroups when necessary.

It is also necessary to acknowledge the plural composition of Palestinian identity. While the majority of Palestinians identify as Arab, they include Christians, Muslims, and Druze—some of whom, such as segments of the Druze community, contest their Arab identity⁵. This analysis focuses on education as a manifestation of a collective national project that Israel seeks to undermine through the imposition of curricula that silence Palestinian narratives, physical segregation between schools, destruction of educational infrastructure, and the persecution of educators and students.

In this way, Palestinian schooling has become a strategic arena for the suppression of national identity, collective memory, and the right to self-determination. Israel's control over the content, infrastructure, and accessibility of education directly impacts the intellectual and political formation of Palestinian youth. The following sections will demonstrate how these practices are not merely administrative or security-oriented but are part of a deliberate strategy of colonial governance and cultural repression, with far-reaching consequences for the human development and historical continuity of the Palestinian people .

1.1 PERIOD FROM 1948 TO 1967: FRAGMENTATION AND EXCLUSION

The partition of Palestine was formally determined by the adoption of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 on November 29, 1947. This resolution recommended the division of the territory into separate Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem under international administration. However, the implementation of this plan triggered one of the most significant tragedies in modern Palestinian history: the *Nakba*, or catastrophe.

Before May 15, 1948—the official date marking the end of the British Mandate and the declaration of the State of Israel—the first phase of the *Nakba* had already unfolded. During this period, approximately 300,000 Palestinians⁶ were either forcibly expelled or fled in panic due to violence and fear. Several major urban centers were systematically emptied

⁵ Halleli Pinson, “The New Civics Curriculum for High Schools in Israel: The Discursive Construction of Palestinian Identity and Narratives,” *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice* 15, no. 1 (March 2020): 22–34, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1746197919840811>, 7.

⁶ Rashid Khalidi, “Palestina: um século de guerra e resistência (1917-2017)”, 1.ed., São Paulo: Todavia, 2024, 102-104.

in the early weeks of May. Jaffa, home to 60,000 Palestinians, was evacuated almost entirely. Likewise, other cities, towns, and villages experienced similar fates between April and early May: Haifa (60,000 inhabitants), West Jerusalem (30,000), Safad (12,000), Beisan (6,000), and Tiberias (5,500) all saw their Palestinian populations displaced⁷. Between May 1948 and January 1949, inside the boundaries of the new Jewish state, an unsettling and disturbing reality that eradicated 370 Palestinian villages that promoted a near-total erasure of rural Palestine.⁸

The second phase of the *Nakba* witnessed the displacement of an additional 400,000 Palestinians who were either expelled from or fled their homes. None of them were permitted to return, and the vast majority of their homes and villages were systematically destroyed to prevent repopulation. A portion of these displaced Palestinians relocated to the remaining 22% of Palestinian territory⁹ not under Israeli control, namely the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Out of a total population of 1.3 million Palestinians living in Mandate Palestine at least 720,000 became refugees. Following the events of the *Nakba* Israel controlled 78% of the territory previously defined under the British Mandate and only 160,000 Palestinians remained within these borders—representing a mere one-fifth of the pre-catastrophe population¹⁰.

The aftermath of the *Nakba* introduced Palestinians to a new, grim reality marked by profound social dislocation regardless of whether they remained in Palestine or were scattered beyond its borders. This rupture led to widespread misery and hardship for the majority of the displaced population¹¹. Families and communities were torn apart and lives were overturned, creating long-lasting socio-economic and psychological consequences. Despite their differing circumstances the *Nakba* has served as a foundational moment in the construction of a shared Palestinian identity, one that transcends geographic and political divides¹². As a collective trauma it is a lived or inherited experience shared by Palestinians across generations—whether personally endured or transmitted through parents and grandparents the *Nakba* represents both a historical rupture and a unifying symbol of identity and memory¹³. It created a new reference point for national consciousness while

⁷ Khalidi, “Palestina”, 102-104.

⁸ Ilan Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 133.

⁹ Khalidi, “Palestina”, 104-105.

¹⁰ Khalidi, “Palestina”, 83

¹¹ Khalidi, “Palestina”, 113.

¹² Khalidi, “Palestina”, 114-116.

¹³ Khalidi, “Palestina”, 114-116.

simultaneously dismantling the familial and communal structures that once held Palestinian society together.

Those who remained within historic Palestine after 1948 found themselves subjected to different political regimes depending on their location. The Gaza Strip came under Egyptian administration; the West Bank and East Jerusalem fell under Jordanian control; and the newly declared State of Israel assumed sovereignty over the remainder. Those 160,000 Palestinians who managed to avoid expulsion and remained within Israel's new borders were granted Israeli citizenship. However, they quickly became a marginalized minority living under a military regime that subjected them to systematic control and exclusion. Far from being recognized as full citizens they were governed by a Jewish state that was never defined as a state for all its citizens. The military rule imposed on them granted Israeli authorities nearly absolute power over the most basic aspects of their daily lives¹⁴.

Following the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the foundations of its educational system were consolidated under the authority of the Ministry of Education, officially established in 1953. This ministry held the exclusive power to approve or reject school textbooks ensuring they aligned with curricula developed internally¹⁵. These materials served not only pedagogical purposes but also broader social, ideological, and national objectives defined by the state. Through this system, education became a key mechanism for shaping national identity and promoting the ideological foundations of the new Israeli state. Correspondingly, between 1948 and 1967 a significant educational divide emerged among the Palestinian territories. The West Bank, under Jordanian annexation adopted the Jordanian educational system, which followed a British-style model. Meanwhile, the Gaza Strip, administered by Egypt, implemented the Egyptian curriculum and textbooks. This division, while reflective of the differing political authorities in each region, also marked the beginning of a fragmented educational reality for Palestinians—one shaped and constrained by external geopolitical interests rather than local agency.

Also in the wake of the 1948 war the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) assumed a central role in providing education to displaced Palestinians. It established schools across refugee camps in the West

¹⁴Khalidi, "Palestina", 114-116.

¹⁵Hatim Mahamid, "History Education for Arab Palestinian Schools in Israel," *Journal of Education and Development* 1, no. 1 (November 16, 2017): 37, <https://doi.org/10.20849/jed.v1i1.249>, 37.

Bank, Gaza Strip, and other countries' camps¹⁶. Although its role was vital in guaranteeing access to basic education, UNRWA's mandate was limited, and its efforts could not substitute for a sovereign Palestinian educational system. Nevertheless, it helped lay the groundwork for a continued emphasis on education within Palestinian communities, even under conditions of exile and occupation.

This already fragmented situation grew more complex after the Six-Day War in 1967, when Israel occupied the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza. The Israeli Civil Administration took over the management of education in these territories, placing the system under military control¹⁷. Although the pre-existing Jordanian and Egyptian curricula continued to be used in the West Bank and Gaza respectively, Israel maintained ultimate authority, including the power to censor textbooks, approve school construction, and regulate the employment of teachers. This period institutionalized education as a domain of political control rather than developmental autonomy. Furthermore, Israeli authorities consistently neglected efforts to modernize Palestinian educational content. As a result, the curricula became outdated, disconnected from global trends, and unable to meet the evolving needs of Palestinian society¹⁸.

The persistent fragmentation and external control of Palestinian education reflect broader colonial dynamics. The imposition of divergent curricula, the political instrumentalization of educational content, and the administrative constraints on system development have undermined Palestinians' ability to establish a unified and autonomous national education framework—one that reflects their history, culture, and aspirations.

1.2 POST-1967: MILITARIZATION AND CURRICULAR CONTROL

Following the Six-Day War in June 1967, Israel occupied the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. In the aftermath of this territorial expansion, the Israeli government imposed a series of military orders that profoundly altered the landscape of Palestinian education. The entire educational system in the newly occupied territories was placed under the direct control of the Israeli military government. This control extended to

¹⁶Said Assaf, "Educational Disruption and Recovery in Palestine," in *Final Report and Case Studies of the Workshop on Educational Destruction and Reconstruction in Disrupted Societies, Geneva, Switzerland, 15–16 May 1997*, ed. Sobhi Tawil (Geneva: International Bureau of Education and University of Geneva, 1998), 51–60.

¹⁷Mahshi and Bush, "The Palestinian Uprising and Education for the Future.", 472.

¹⁸Broco & Trad, 2011 *apud* Quneis and Rafidi, "Education under Occupation in Palestine.", 1.

the censorship of teaching materials, the banning of books, and the modification of maps to depict the occupied territories as part of Israel¹⁹. As a result, progress in school development was severely hindered, teacher training programs were neglected, and educators with perceived political affiliations deemed undesirable were either dismissed or reassigned to remote areas.

The Israeli educational system remains segregated between Jewish and Palestinian citizens, with marked disparities in both quality and access to resources. Since the beginning of the occupation in 1967 the Palestinian education system—though officially permitted to retain the Egyptian and Jordanian curricula—has been subjected to intense scrutiny and censorship by the Israeli military authorities. Any content perceived as fostering Palestinian national identity or collective memory was systematically removed. This included maps, symbols, and even the use of the term “Palestine”²⁰. Such policies reflected an effort to restrict the expression of Palestinian national identity within the educational sphere. School infrastructure remained underdeveloped, and teaching staff operated under heavy surveillance, often facing sanctions or removal for non-compliance²¹.

An especially contested aspect of this strategy was the prohibition of any mention of the *Nakba* or the atrocities perpetrated by Zionist militias. Discussions of these historical events were often framed by authorities as “incitement against Israel” or “anti-Semitic rhetoric” thus placing strict limits on what could be taught in Palestinian schools²². Despite these efforts, education has continued to serve as a significant instrument for the transmission of historical consciousness and cultural identity among Palestinians, which further explains the persistent control over curricula.

The Israeli regime’s censorship of Palestinian curricula has remained one of the most persistent and influential methods of repression. Although the Jordanian and Egyptian educational frameworks were culturally closer to Palestinian society, they were not necessarily aligned with Palestinian national aspirations. Israeli censorship policies prohibited any instructional content that contributed to the formation or reinforcement of Palestinian collective identity. Military Order 101 stipulated that all educational materials had to receive prior approval from Israeli military review. This mandate led to the

¹⁹Nicolai, *Fragmented Foundations*, 32.

²⁰Abu-Saad and Champagne, “Introduction.”, 1043.

²¹Abu-Saad and Champagne, “Introduction.”, 1043.

²²EU Reporter, 2022 *apud* Quneis and Rafidi, “Education under Occupation in Palestine.”, 2.

systematic removal of references to Palestine or Palestinian political claims not only in history and geography but also in Arabic language and religious studies²³.

Only two months after the 1967 occupation began, the Israeli government issued Military Orders 91 and 107 on August 9 of that year. Military Order 91 formally transferred jurisdiction from Jordanian to Israeli authority, while Military Order 107 banned 55 books across various disciplines, including Arabic literature, history, geography, philosophy, and sociology²⁴. By November 1967, new Israeli-approved curricula were introduced in West Bank schools. This was followed by further legal measures, including Military Law 345 in 1969, which granted Israeli authorities comprehensive control over Palestinian schools. This law was later complemented by Military Order 845, extending such authority to colleges and universities²⁵. These orders empowered Israeli officials to shut down academic institutions as a response to collective expressions of Palestinian resistance or political mobilization.

It is important to note that the Six-Day War of 1967 also marked a shift in how Arabs were represented in Israeli educational materials. While the war brought a certain degree of visibility to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and undisguised delegitimization of the Palestinians decreased slightly, negative stereotypes and biased portrayals of Arabs remained prevalent in Israeli textbooks²⁶.

By the early 1970s, the Israeli Ministry of Education began to reevaluate its policies toward Palestinian students. The alienation felt by Palestinian pupils during and after the 1967 war highlighted the systemic inequalities and cultural dissonance embedded in the education system²⁷. In February 1972, an advisory committee was formed to study the issue and recommend new guidelines for a more inclusive educational policy²⁸. However, the committee's proposals lacked binding authority and were ultimately not implemented. Despite the rhetorical commitment to reform, the structural foundations of the discriminatory system remained intact.

In sum, the post-1967 period marked a dramatic reconfiguration of Palestinian education under Israeli occupation. Through military orders, censorship laws, and

²³Said Assaf, "Educational Disruption and Recovery in Palestine," 51–60.

²⁴Nadia Naser-Najjab, "Palestinian Education and the 'Logic of Elimination,'" *Settler Colonial Studies* 10, no. 3 (July 2, 2020): 311–30, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2020.1760433>, 316-317.

²⁵Naser-Najjab, "Palestinian Education and the 'Logic of Elimination,'" 316-317

²⁶Hatim Mahamid, "History Education for Arab Palestinian Schools in Israel," *Journal of Education and Development* 1, no. 1 (November 16, 2017): 37, <https://doi.org/10.20849/jed.v1i1.249>, 40.

²⁷Khalid Arar, "Israeli Education Policy since 1948 and the State of Arab Education in Israel", *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education*, 1, 2012, 129.

²⁸Arar, "Israeli Education Policy since 1948 and the State of Arab Education in Israel.", 129.

administrative restructuring, Israel established an apparatus of control aimed at neutralizing the potential of education to serve as a site for national consciousness and political empowerment. This control was not limited to the content of textbooks but extended to all dimensions of academic life, from school infrastructure and teacher employment to the very existence of educational institutions themselves. For Palestinians education has remained not only a contested terrain but also a vital instrument in the struggle for identity, memory, and self-determination.

Professor Daphna Golan-Agnon, in her article *Separate but Not Equal: Discrimination Against Palestinian Arab Students in Israel*, explains that the structural discrimination inherent in Israel's education system is most clearly manifested in the absolute disparities between Jewish and Arab schools. As poignantly stated, "How much money is invested in Arab children in Israel as opposed to Jewish education? The data are hard to comprehend—the information is hard to find and the discrimination it reveals is tough to explain"²⁹. These disparities raise deeply troubling questions. "Why are classrooms more crowded in Arab schools? Why are fewer instructional hours funded for Arab students? Do they somehow require less education?"³⁰. She makes clear that at numerous Ministry of Education board meetings such concerns were raised by her: "When we talk about our children, do we not include the Arab children? The Bedouin children? Are they not also our children? Then why are some of our children studying in such poor conditions? Why do we invest less in them?"³¹.

This lack of investment is not merely an economic issue, as clarified by the professor, it reflects a deeper systemic exclusion of Arab-Palestinian citizens from Israel's educational and political structures. And Arabs-Palestinians are not involved in the decision-making processes within the Ministry of Education, they play no role in policy formulation, curriculum development, or strategic planning. "There is no Arab district manager, no Arab administration head, and no Arab representation in the Ministry's management. Of the thousands of people who work in the Ministry's administrative headquarters, not even ten are Arab, and most of them work in the cafeteria"³². The very institution tasked with educating future generations on democracy, human rights, and civic responsibility fails to embody these principles within its own structure, as she analyzes.

²⁹Daphna Golan-Agnon, "Separate but Not Equal: Discrimination Against Palestinian Arab Students in Israel," *American Behavioral Scientist* 49, no. 8 (April 2006): 1075–84, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764205284719>, 1078.

³⁰Golan-Agnon, "Separate but Not Equal," 1078–1079.

³¹Golan-Agnon, "Separate but Not Equal," 1078–1079

³²Golan-Agnon, "Separate but Not Equal," 1079.

Democracy, equality, and inclusion remain aspirations rather than realities in a system that consistently excludes part of its citizens.

This institutional exclusion has become normalized, revealing the wider issue of Arab-Palestinian invisibility in public life. The absence of Arabs in the Ministry of Education mirrors their general “absent presence” in the lives of most Jewish citizens in Israel, especially among those in positions of power, as demonstrated by her. The result is an education system designed and implemented almost exclusively by Jewish officials, for Jewish students, with minimal regard for the unique cultural, linguistic, and historical context of Arab-Palestinian students. The inequity in budgeting, the lack of curriculum materials that reflect Arab-Palestinian culture, and the systematic neglect of Arab-Palestinian identity are not only the problems of Arab-Palestinian citizens, but of Israeli society as a whole. As the text affirms, “There can be no education without empowerment, and this situation in which Jews make decisions, plan, and develop curricula is one that represses not only the Arab minority but also the Jewish majority”³³.

The exclusion of Arab-Palestinian voices extends beyond structural absence to an active suppression of intellectual engagement. Professor Daphna Golan-Agnon recounts: “I invited to that meeting a number of Palestinian-Israeli intellectuals, and one of the senior participants from the Ministry told me: I have been working here for 25 years, and I have never met such Arabs; people who are intellectuals and not appointed as yes-men or collaborators with the security services”³⁴. As follows, she describes that the Arab head of the Arab education department, despite holding the title, has “no authority or budget” and reportedly “never even says anything at the meetings.” Among colleagues, he is ironically referred to as “the plant,” with his deputy—a Jewish official appointed by the General Security Service—exercising actual authority over the department³⁵. This dynamic underscores the performative nature of representation in Arab-Palestinian education within Israel, where roles may exist in name, but decision-making power remains elsewhere.

Such symbolic representation without substantive authority reveals a broader ideological project within the education system. The curriculum emphasizes Jewish-Zionist values while systematically erasing Palestinian national identity. This approach has deepened the alienation of Arab-Palestinian students, who find their histories, languages, and experiences absent or misrepresented in school materials. “The emphasis on

³³Golan-Agnon, “Separate but Not Equal,” 1080.

³⁴Golan-Agnon, “Separate but Not Equal,” 1080.

³⁵Golan-Agnon, “Separate but Not Equal,” 1080.

Jewish-Zionist values, with no respect for Palestinian national identity, has increased the sense of alienation between the two nationalities and the Arab minority's sense of being disregarded in Israel"³⁶. The fear that permeates Arab-Palestinian schools is not accidental, it is institutionalized. It is a fear of acknowledging historical truths, of strengthening cultural identity, and of engaging with the political present. Teachers in Arab schools fear touching upon current affairs or referencing the *Nakba*, due to potential accusations of incitement or anti-Semitism. This self-censorship, driven by structural intimidation, impairs not only the quality of education but also its core function as a space for critical thinking and identity formation.

Crucially, this discriminatory educational policy does not solely impact Arab-Palestinian schools, as the denial of Palestinian history, culture, and identity is also evident in Jewish educational materials, indicating that the erasure of the Palestinian narrative is a society-wide phenomenon. The educational system, which should be a vehicle for inclusivity, understanding, and democratic development, becomes instead a tool of national homogenization and ideological control. As the professor concludes, "If we wanted to effect change, we had to work in the education system"³⁷.

This recognition of that change must come from within offers both a challenge and a possibility. For meaningful transformation to occur, Arab educators, intellectuals, and communities must be granted real authority within the educational system, not simply symbolic roles. Curricula must reflect the historical and cultural realities of all citizens, and decision-making structures must embody the democratic values the system aspires to teach. Without such structural reforms education in Israel will continue to reproduce the inequalities it claims to challenge.

The Arab-Palestinian education system in Israel remains a space of marginalization, exclusion, and cultural erasure. The lack of Arab-Palestinian representation in policy-making, the underfunding of Arab-Palestinian schools, the suppression of Palestinian identity, and the ideological bias of curricula collectively serve to perpetuate a system of inequality. These conditions reflect broader societal dynamics in Israel where the Arab minority remains politically and culturally neglected. Until the education system genuinely embraces inclusion and equity it will continue to undermine both the Arab-Palestinian community and the democratic aspirations of the broader Israeli society.

³⁶Golan-Agnon, "Separate but Not Equal.", 1082.

³⁷Golan-Agnon, "Separate but Not Equal.", 1082.

During this period, repression significantly intensified all along the First Intifada which erupted in December 1987. Schools were frequently shut down, teachers and students were arrested, and educational activities were heavily disrupted. The Israeli military viewed educational gatherings as potential spaces of resistance, thereby justifying their closure under the pretext of security concerns³⁸.

1.2.3 First Intifada

The First Intifada, comprising the period from 1987 to 1993, marked a significant escalation in Israeli repression of the Palestinian educational system. During these years Israeli control over education became increasingly obstructive and punitive, with severe restrictions imposed on students, teachers, and institutions. Educational spaces were not only marginalized but were also transformed as zones of political resistance and, consequently, as targets for military and administrative retaliation.

The repression reached unprecedented levels, with educational institutions across the West Bank and Gaza being closed between January 10, 1988, and April 29, 1992—over four years³⁹—effectively weaponizing education through its denial⁴⁰. In 1988 and 1989, every school in the West Bank was closed for extended periods, affecting hundreds of thousands of students⁴¹. In 1988 alone, approximately 1,194 schools in the West Bank were ordered closed for nine consecutive months⁴². The cancellation of the secondary school matriculation exams in 1988–1989 served as a direct attack on students’ academic futures.⁴³ Universities were subjected to systematic harassment, and numerous arrests occurred just days before the *Tawjihi*—Palestine’s high school matriculation exams⁴⁴. This created a generation of students whose academic development was profoundly disrupted.

The occupation forces viewed Palestinian schools as spaces of nationalist activism. Consequently, they were treated not as neutral educational institutions but as centers of political mobilization. Teachers were forced into early retirement, arbitrarily transferred, or had their salaries drastically reduced, while students faced frequent arrests or expulsions⁴⁵.

³⁸Said Assaf, “Educational Disruption and Recovery in Palestine,” 51-60.

³⁹Quneis and Rafidi, “Education under Occupation in Palestine.”

⁴⁰Quneis and Rafidi, “Education under Occupation in Palestine.”

⁴¹Abu-Saad and Champagne, “Introduction.”, 1044.

⁴²Nadia Naser-Najjab, “Palestinian Education and the ‘Logic of Elimination,’” 318-319.

⁴³Mahshi and Bush, “The Palestinian Uprising and Education for the Future.”, 474.

⁴⁴Naser-Najjab, “Palestinian Education and the ‘Logic of Elimination.’”, 318-319.

⁴⁵Nicolai, *Fragmented Foundations*, 33-34.

Israel justified these measures by claiming that educational institutions were being used to promote Palestinian nationalism⁴⁶.

This closure served as a form of collective punishment that had devastating effects on Palestinian society. It not only denied access to formal education but also interrupted the pedagogical continuity for an entire generation of students, educators, and researchers. In addition to overt repression, Israel employed psychological and administrative tactics designed to destabilize education. One such method involved the temporary reopening of schools, only to close them again shortly thereafter—causing widespread confusion and demoralization among students and teachers⁴⁷. These tactics contributed to the erosion of a coherent educational structure and perpetuated a colonial legacy wherein Palestinian education became disconnected from its cultural roots and dependent on external control⁴⁸.

These closures were not isolated events but part of a systematic strategy aimed at dismantling Palestinian education. In April 1988, the Israeli Civil Administration warned teachers in Ramallah that any attempt to engage in teaching would be considered illegal and could lead to their dismissal⁴⁹. Even private schools were not exempt, efforts to distribute home-learning materials were prohibited, and school principals were summoned and ordered to halt such practices⁵⁰.

In response to these oppressive measures the Palestinian community organized "popular education" systems, reflecting both resilience and resistance. These classes, often held in private homes, religious institutions, and community spaces, sought to preserve educational access in the face of closure. However, Israeli authorities labeled these grassroots initiatives illegal⁵¹. Military incursions were launched to dismantle such operations, leading to the arrests of both teachers and students. Individuals involved in these informal systems faced prison sentences of up to ten years and fines reaching \$5,000⁵². In May 1988, the popular committees, responsible for organizing such activities, were officially banned, and their members became subjects of targeted persecution⁵³.

While Palestinian universities enjoyed comparatively more autonomy than primary and secondary schools, they too were subjected to intense scrutiny and repression. Universities faced continual harassment, direct military raids, restrictions on campus

⁴⁶Abu-Saad and Champagne, "Introduction.", 1045.

⁴⁷Mahshi and Bush, "The Palestinian Uprising and Education for the Future.", 478.

⁴⁸Mahshi and Bush, "The Palestinian Uprising and Education for the Future.", 482.

⁴⁹Mahshi and Bush, "The Palestinian Uprising and Education for the Future.", 475.

⁵⁰Mahshi and Bush, "The Palestinian Uprising and Education for the Future.", 476.

⁵¹Said Assaf, "Educational Disruption and Recovery in Palestine," 51-60.

⁵²Nicolai, *Fragmented Foundations*, 34.

⁵³Mahshi and Bush, "The Palestinian Uprising and Education for the Future.", 477.

expansion, and administrative blockages in acquiring academic books and external funding⁵⁴. Military Order 854⁵⁵, for example, mandated that universities obtain annual permission to operate. Another policy enacted in 1982 required foreign faculty to secure work permits and sign agreements that explicitly limited their political and academic activities.

On the other hand, this sustained repression also sparked a process of educational and political awakening. Within Palestinian society there emerged a widespread recognition of the need for an educational system that would reflect Palestinian cultural values and address the aspirations of a future sovereign state⁵⁶. Palestinian universities, despite being heavily surveilled, assumed a crucial role in fostering intellectual resistance and political mobilization becoming incubators for national identity and academic development⁵⁷.

The First Intifada exemplifies how education in Palestine transcended its conventional academic function to become a critical domain of political struggle and national resilience. The systematic repression of education by Israeli authorities—from school closures and arrests to censorship and administrative harassment—was aimed at weakening the Palestinian social structure. Yet, it also catalyzed alternative forms of learning, galvanized collective resistance, and laid the groundwork for a national educational vision embedded in autonomy and cultural integrity. Education thus became not only a site of oppression but also a powerful instrument for resistance and self-determination.

1.3 POST-OSLO AND THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY (1993 - PRESENT)

The signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993 marked a pivotal turning point for Palestinian education. One of the first responsibilities transferred to the newly formed Palestinian Authority was the administration of the education sector. By this period, the Palestinian educational system had developed into three primary categories: public schools operated by the Palestinian Authority, institutions run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and private schools.

⁵⁴Said Assaf, “Educational Disruption and Recovery in Palestine,” 51-60; *and* Mahshi and Bush, “The Palestinian Uprising and Education for the Future.”, 477

⁵⁵Said Assaf, “Educational Disruption and Recovery in Palestine,” 51-60.

⁵⁶Mahshi and Bush, “The Palestinian Uprising and Education for the Future.”, 482.

⁵⁷Abu-Saad and Champagne, “Introduction.”, 1044.

In August 1994, the Palestinian Ministry of Education was formally established⁵⁸. Nonetheless, the ministry faced enormous challenges from the beginning, including a lack of reliable data on schools and teachers and the ongoing scrutiny of Israeli military forces over its decisions⁵⁹. Despite these obstacles, developing and implementing a Palestinian national curriculum became a priority. With assistance from UNESCO a curriculum development center was launched in 1995 to replace the Jordanian and Egyptian curricula that had been used until then. In 1996, public schools served approximately 67.6% of students, UNRWA catered to 26.3%, and private institutions accounted for 6.1% of the student population⁶⁰.

The new curriculum aimed to emphasize national values, Islamic teachings, and Palestinian cultural heritage. However, due to political pressures, it deliberately avoided addressing highly sensitive issues such as the status of Jerusalem, the precise borders of a future Palestinian state, and the right of return for refugees⁶¹—issues that remained unresolved within the broader framework of the peace process. Furthermore, the curriculum drew international scrutiny and criticism with several foreign actors accusing it of promoting hostility toward Israel. Many of these allegations were based on distorted translations and politically motivated interpretations⁶²significantly impacted international funding for Palestinian education.

Until 1994, Palestinian textbooks were subject to strict censorship by the Israeli occupation authorities.⁶³ Terms such as “Palestine” were systematically eliminated, maps were either removed or altered, and any content perceived as nationalist was excised by Israeli censors. In addition to this censorship, the Palestinian Authority assumed responsibility for an education system that had experienced long-term infrastructural underinvestment under Israeli administration.. Since the outbreak of Israeli occupation in 1967 there had been no significant investment in educational infrastructure, leading to a substantial deterioration in the quality of education and a notable limitation in access to essential educational resources⁶⁴.

It is important to emphasize that for decades key terms used to describe major Palestinian historical events were systematically excluded by Israelis from textbooks. It was

⁵⁸Said Assaf, “Educational Disruption and Recovery in Palestine,” 51-60

⁵⁹Nicolai, *Fragmented Foundations*, 37-38.

⁶⁰Said Assaf, “Educational Disruption and Recovery in Palestine,” 51-60.

⁶¹Nicolai, *Fragmented Foundations*, 87.

⁶²Nicolai, *Fragmented Foundations*, 87-88.

⁶³Fouad Moughrabi, “The Politics of Palestinian Textbooks,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 31, no. 1 (October 1, 2001): 5–19, <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2001.31.1.5>, 6.

⁶⁴Moughrabi, “The Politics of Palestinian Textbooks.”, 6.

only between 1970 and 1990 that some educational materials began to cautiously incorporate references to Palestinian nationalism and portray Arab citizens of Israel in a more positive light. However, even these materials continued to overlook or erase Palestinian identity, and the textbooks that included such content were designated as optional within the curriculum and eventually fell into disuse⁶⁵. Notably, it was not until 1976 that the term *Palestine* was permitted in elementary and middle school curricula as an alternative to *The Land of Israel*⁶⁶—a change that occurred only after significant delay. Even more telling is that the 1948 Palestinian catastrophe was first referred to as the *Nakba* in textbooks as late as 2007. This acknowledgement, however, was momentary. The term was soon removed from the curriculum after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu denounced its inclusion as anti-Israel propaganda.

The Palestinian Authority's dependence on international aid also restricted its autonomy in designing educational policies⁶⁷. The development of a unified national curriculum was further complicated by debates over the historical narrative that should be presented to students. Balancing the political necessity for pragmatism with a commitment to historical accuracy and national identity proved to be an ongoing challenge⁶⁸. It was not until 2000 that the first Palestinian textbook was introduced in the school system⁶⁹.

The profound analyses constructed by professor Fouad Moughrabi in his article *The politics of Palestinian textbooks* shed light on the reports of evaluation made by the Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace (CMIP), a non governmental organization nowadays called IMPACT-se⁷⁰. On the eve of the al-Aqsa Intifada (Second Intifada, 2000–2005), CMIP released a publication named *The New Palestinian Authority School Textbooks* as an evaluation of Palestinian new school textbooks:

Ever since the PA [Palestinian Authority] became responsible for education in 1994, Palestinian children have been learning from their schoolbooks to identify Israel as the evil colonialist enemy who stole their land. . . . The new PA schoolbooks fail to teach their children to see Israel as a neighbor with whom peaceful relations are expected. They do not teach acceptance of Israel's existence on the national level, nor do they impart tolerance of individual Jews on the personal level.⁷¹

⁶⁵Abu-Saad, Ismael. "State Educational Policy and Curriculum: The Case of Palestinian Arabs in Israel," 713.

⁶⁶Hatim Mahamid, "History Education for Arab Palestinian Schools in Israel," *Journal of Education and Development* 1, no. 1 (November 16, 2017): 37, <https://doi.org/10.20849/jed.v1i1.249>, 41.

⁶⁷Abu-Saad and Champagne, "Introduction.," 1045.

⁶⁸Abu-Saad and Champagne, "Introduction.," 1046.

⁶⁹Nicolai, *Fragmented Foundations*, 79.

⁷⁰IMPACT-se <https://www.impact-se.org/reports-2/palestinian-territories/>

⁷¹Moughrabi, "The Politics of Palestinian Textbooks.," 8.

Professor Moughrabi categorizes the CMIP charges in two main allegations: “ (1) the texts “delegitimize” Israel; and (2) they rely on old “anti-Semitic” books.”⁷². He explains that the CMIP had claimed that Palestinian Authority textbooks promoted a narrative that fundamentally delegitimizes the State of Israel. According to the report, Israel is portrayed exclusively in negative contexts, particularly in association with the expulsion and alleged massacres of Palestinians. Furthermore, CMIP criticizes the textbooks for drawing parallels between Israel and historical colonial powers, especially by equating Israel with Britain as a foreign occupier of Palestine in the twentieth century⁷³. As he demonstrates, the report goes on to argue that the language used in reference to Israeli “settlements” and “occupation” extends beyond the post-1967 occupied territories to challenge Israel’s existence as a state since 1948⁷⁴. CMIP interprets this framing as a rejection of Israel's fundamental legitimacy.

In response to growing international scrutiny over the content of Palestinian textbooks, the Palestinian Authority’s Ministry of Education issued a formal statement addressing the criticisms. The Ministry acknowledged referring to Israel in certain textbooks as an "occupying power," affirming that this designation reflects the reality of Israel’s presence on Palestinian land. The Ministry further emphasized that such terminology is consistent with the language used in United Nations resolutions. It concluded by expressing hope that the occupation would come to an end, stating that once Israel ceases its occupation the term would no longer be used in educational materials⁷⁵.

CMIP’s allegation of anti-Semitism in the Palestinian Authority’s curriculum centers on a section from a sixth-grade Arabic-language textbook. It is an autobiographical passage considering the scenery of the *Nakba* that details the author’s experience of displacement, his subsequent emotional trauma, and his determination to reconstruct his life’s work in exile as a means of preserving national memory⁷⁶. The narrative emphasizes cultural resilience and historical continuity rather than political incitement, as clarified by the professor. He follows his explanation that contrary to CMIP’s claims there is no mention of contemporary violence, or anti-Semitic rhetoric in the content presented to students⁷⁷. The report arguably conflates references to historical resistance movements with claims of present-day political endorsement, which may lead to interpretive ambiguities, overlooking the educational and memorial purpose of the excerpt within the Palestinian curriculum.

⁷²Moughrabi, “The Politics of Palestinian Textbooks.”, 10.

⁷³Moughrabi, “The Politics of Palestinian Textbooks.”, 11.

⁷⁴Moughrabi, “The Politics of Palestinian Textbooks.”, 12.

⁷⁵Moughrabi, “The Politics of Palestinian Textbooks.”, 14.

⁷⁶Moughrabi, “The Politics of Palestinian Textbooks.”, 12-14.

⁷⁷Moughrabi, “The Politics of Palestinian Textbooks.”, 12-14

Despite the establishment of a Palestinian-led Ministry of Education, repression of the Palestinian educational system persisted. During the Al-Aqsa Intifada, numerous schools and universities were closed or severely damaged by Israeli military actions. Teachers and students were subjected to arbitrary detention, and the widespread presence of military checkpoints impeded regular access to schools. Palestinian children often had to wait for hours under humiliating conditions to reach their classrooms⁷⁸.

The geographic and political fragmentation introduced by the Oslo framework, further exacerbated by Israeli policies, severely disrupted the cohesion of the Palestinian education system. The division of the West Bank into administratively distinct zones hindered the centralized management of educational affairs. Moreover, the construction of the Israeli separation barrier physically divided Palestinian communities, deepening the logistical and infrastructural challenges associated with educational access⁷⁹.

The obstacles faced by Palestinian students extended beyond damaged schools or underfunded curricula. The physical routes to schools themselves became sites of danger. Many students were forced to navigate paths littered with mines and unexploded ordnance left behind by Israeli military training exercises, posing a constant and life-threatening hazard⁸⁰. The dangers were not merely environmental. Israeli military forces routinely raided educational institutions, interrupting classes, detaining students and teachers, and instilling an atmosphere of fear and instability within the academic environment.

1.3.1 Occupied Palestinian Territories

I) West Bank

Understanding the Oslo Accords of the 1990s from an educational and curricular perspective requires an initial examination of the territorial reconfiguration of the West Bank. The Accords divided the region into three administrative areas: Area A, under full Palestinian Authority (PA) control; Area B, under joint PA and Israeli administration; and Area C, which remained under exclusive Israeli control. In Area C and East Jerusalem, the

⁷⁸Nicolai, *Fragmented Foundations*, 56-57.

⁷⁹Nicolai, *Fragmented Foundations*, 43.

⁸⁰Quneis and Rafidi, "Education under Occupation in Palestine.", 5.

presence of Israeli military forces intensified and control persisted in areas such as textbook approval and broader oversight mechanisms.

Control over the Palestinian curriculum has long been a central strategy employed by the Israeli government to consolidate its influence over Palestinian education and, by extension, to shape the narrative accessible to Palestinian students. Nowhere is this control more visible than in Jerusalem where schools that adopt the official Palestinian curriculum are frequently targeted and often face closure under allegations of incitement against the State of Israel⁸¹. In 2018, in an effort to institutionalize this policy of curriculum control, the Israeli government allocated 445 million shekels to advance the “Israelization”⁸² of the educational sector. This initiative aimed to increase the proportion of Palestinian students in Jerusalem following the Israeli curriculum to 90%. The Israeli curriculum intentionally excludes terms such as “Palestine” and omits references to “prisoners and martyrs,”⁸³ effectively erasing key components of the Palestinian historical and national narrative. Any content considered to constitute incitement against Israel is removed, aligning the curriculum with the political objectives of the occupying power.

In addition to curricular imposition, Palestinian students face numerous physical, administrative, and legal barriers in accessing education. Educational segregation⁸⁴ is structurally enforced through movement restrictions: for instance, Palestinians who hold identity cards from the Gaza Strip are prohibited from enrolling in universities located in the West Bank, and vice versa. These restrictions fragment the Palestinian academic landscape and inhibit student mobility, further contributing to the isolation of communities. Moreover, educational institutions are regularly subjected to attacks by Israeli forces and settlers, who accuse them of fomenting resistance against the occupation⁸⁵. In Jerusalem, the enforcement of Israeli educational standards has gone so far as to include the revocation of licenses from Palestinian schools. On July 28, 2022, several schools lost their licenses as part of a broader campaign to impose the Israeli curriculum exclusively⁸⁶.

The destruction of educational infrastructure is also a recurring phenomenon, particularly in Area C, which remains under full Israeli control according to the territorial divisions established by the Oslo Accords. In 2021 alone, Israeli authorities issued

⁸¹Abu Hilal, 2023 *apud* Quneis and Rafidi, “Education under Occupation in Palestine.”, 2.

⁸²Quneis and Rafidi, “Education under Occupation in Palestine.”, 3.

⁸³Quneis and Rafidi, “Education under Occupation in Palestine.”, 3.

⁸⁴Quneis and Rafidi, “Education under Occupation in Palestine.”, 3.

⁸⁵Quneis and Rafidi, “Education under Occupation in Palestine.”, 4.

⁸⁶Quneis and Rafidi, “Education under Occupation in Palestine.”, 4.

demolition orders for ten schools in these areas⁸⁷. The demolition and closure of schools not only undermine students' right to education but also serve as a broader mechanism of repression and control, aimed at dismantling the social and cultural structure of Palestinian communities.

Military incursions into educational institutions further exemplify the repressive tactics used by Israeli forces. In 2021, schools in the West Bank were invaded 155 times⁸⁸ by the Israeli army, resulting in arbitrary arrests and physical assaults on students and teachers. These violent interventions disrupt learning and create an atmosphere of constant fear and instability within the academic environment. The impact of Israel's Separation Wall, constructed around and through parts of the West Bank and Jerusalem, compounds these challenges. Approximately 48 schools⁸⁹ have been directly affected by the Wall, with both students and educators experiencing repeated physical assaults, detentions, and invasive inspections at the checkpoints that mark the route. These movement restrictions not only delay access to educational facilities but also create an extensive sense of insecurity that has long-term effects on student performance, mental health, and social development⁹⁰.

The repression of Palestinian education expands beyond primary and secondary institutions and is exceptionally visible in the higher education sector. Between 2021 and March 2022, 452 students and 99 faculty members were detained at military checkpoints. Moreover, 8,495 students and 1,064 teachers reported experiencing significant delays in accessing their educational institutions due to these obstructions⁹¹. University students who must pass through Israeli checkpoints regularly endure long waits, invasive security checks, and the inspection of personal and academic belongings. These conditions deter academic engagement and reinforce a broader climate of control and subjugation⁹²

Restrictions imposed by the Israeli government also impact international academic collaboration. The entry of foreign academics who wish to teach or conduct research at Palestinian universities is strictly controlled by the Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories, an Israeli security body that enforces stringent visa criteria. Annually, only

⁸⁷Palestinian Ministry of Education, 2021 apud Quneis and Rafidi, "Education under Occupation in Palestine.", 4.

⁸⁸Palestinian Ministry of Education, 2021 apud Quneis and Rafidi, "Education under Occupation in Palestine.", 5.

⁸⁹Palestinian Ministry of Education, 2021 apud Quneis and Rafidi, "Education under Occupation in Palestine.", 5.

⁹⁰Quneis and Rafidi, "Education under Occupation in Palestine.", 7.

⁹¹Palestinian Ministry of Education, 2021 apud Quneis and Rafidi, "Education under Occupation in Palestine.", 7.

⁹²Quneis and Rafidi, "Education under Occupation in Palestine.", 7.

150 foreign academics are permitted to work in Palestinian institutions, a number that does not meet the demands of higher education in the region. Even academics of Palestinian origin face substantial difficulties obtaining authorization to enter and work in the West Bank⁹³. These limitations severely restrict the ability of Palestinian universities to engage in global academic discourse, depriving students and faculty of vital international networks and impeding the development of research and scholarship.

Together, these restrictions form a comprehensive system of educational repression that operates at every level of the Palestinian academic experience—from primary schools to universities, from classroom content to the movement of scholars and students. This system is not merely a collection of isolated policies but a coordinated strategy that seeks to undermine Palestinian identity, obstruct intellectual growth, and establish political control through educational means.

The result is a deeply fragmented and structurally unequal educational landscape, where Palestinian students are systematically denied the same opportunities available to others in the region. Educational accomplishments, already under threat from decades of occupation and blockade, are now further imperiled by daily threats of violence, legal discrimination, and political suppression. In this context, education becomes not only a right under siege but also a site of resistance, a means by which Palestinians continue to assert their identity, preserve their culture, and struggle for their freedom.

II) Gaza

The tradition of education has long been regarded as a pillar of pride and a foundational value among Palestinian families. Even under the enduring blockade imposed on Gaza since 2007 Palestinians demonstrated remarkable educational resilience. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, prior to the current war, the enrollment rate in compulsory basic education (grades 1 through 10) in Gaza stood at 95.2%, closely aligning with the national average of 96% across Palestinian schools⁹⁴. This resilience reflects the importance placed on education despite the chronic instability, poverty, and restrictions

⁹³Hass, 2022; HRW, 2023 apud Quneis and Rafidi, “Education under Occupation in Palestine.”, 8.

⁹⁴Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2024, apud Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, Centre for Lebanese Studies, and UNRWA, *Palestinian Education Under Attack in Gaza: Restoration, Recovery, Rights and Responsibilities in and through Education* (Cambridge: Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.56615/9781914521065>, 10.

resulting from decades of conflict and deprivation. Still, the progress achieved under such adverse conditions has been gravely undermined by the current war in Gaza.

Since October 2023, the Israeli military campaign has led to unprecedented levels of destruction, particularly targeting civilian infrastructure, including schools and universities. The deliberate scale and intensity of this assault have distinguished the present conflict from previous episodes of violence. According to the Occupied Palestinian Territory Education Cluster, between October 2023 and July 2024, nearly all school buildings in Gaza were either partially or fully destroyed⁹⁵. As of early 2024, approximately 625,000 students and 22,564 teachers were directly impacted⁹⁶.

The human cost of this devastation has been astonishing. By August 2024, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), citing data from the Palestinian Ministry of Health, reported that 10,627 children and 411 teachers had been killed, with an additional 15,394 students and 2,411 teachers injured⁹⁷. These figures underscore not only the immediate loss of life but also the long-term implications for Palestinian education and society at large. The destruction of educational spaces and the loss of human capital, particularly educators who serve as cultural transmitters, is not only a material loss but a symbolic one, disrupting the intergenerational transmission of knowledge and identity.

In July 2024, the Occupied Palestinian Territory Education Cluster released a satellite-based damage assessment, which revealed that 92.9% of educational facilities in Gaza had sustained damage, and 84.6% required either total reconstruction or substantial repair⁹⁸. This analysis, based on proximity to destruction zones identified by the UN Satellite Center, also indicated that many schools operated by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) were severely damaged. Nevertheless, ongoing hostilities and mobility restrictions continue to limit access to assess the full extent of damage. The loss of these educational facilities undermines not only schooling but the broader foundation of Palestinian civil society, which relies heavily on schools as community hubs, sources of stability, and platforms for cultural preservation.

⁹⁵Faculty of Education et al., *Palestinian Education Under Attack in Gaza*, 2024, 5-10.

⁹⁶Faculty of Education et al., *Palestinian Education Under Attack in Gaza*, 2024, 5-10.

⁹⁷Faculty of Education et al., *Palestinian Education Under Attack in Gaza*, 2024, 19.

⁹⁸Occupied Palestinian Territory Education Cluster, 2024b, *apud* Faculty of Education et al., *Palestinian Education Under Attack in Gaza*, 2024, 5.

Independent United Nations experts have issued urgent warnings regarding the implications of such destruction⁹⁹. They emphasize that the obliteration of Gaza’s educational infrastructure compromises not only immediate learning opportunities but also the long-term preservation of Palestinian knowledge, culture, and national identity. Education, in this view, is not merely a social right, it is a vital element of resilience, dignity, and collective memory. Yet, in the current humanitarian context, education is increasingly being deprioritized. This marginalization is particularly alarming considering that education is one of the few remaining sources of empowerment for Palestinians living under conditions of occupation and blockade.

Since 2003, OCHA has consistently included education in its annual humanitarian response plans for the Occupied Palestinian Territory. However, the prioritization of education within these frameworks has declined considerably. In 2023, UNRWA received 55% of the requested funding allocated to education under the Humanitarian Response Plan. By 2024, this figure dropped to just 42%¹⁰⁰. This reduction reveals a structural issue within emergency aid systems, where education is often treated as a secondary concern—despite its proven role in providing psychological stability, protecting children, and laying the foundation for post-conflict recovery. The declining support also reflects broader political dynamics, including donor weakening, shifting global priorities, and the politicization of aid.

The underfunding of Gaza’s education sector is not simply a matter of financial shortage. Structural conditions—including frequent military offensives, displacement of communities, and the destruction of data collection systems—have significantly restricted the ability of education sector actors to submit accurate and comprehensive funding requests. Many fear that high-budget requests will be dismissed or disregarded, creating a cycle in which the severity of educational needs is underreported and, consequently, not reached. Moreover, the wrecking of governance structures and the fragmentation of the education system, exacerbated by Israel’s restrictions on the movement of educational staff and materials, have further complicated efforts to coordinate a coherent response.

While the Oslo framework laid the groundwork for limited Palestinian educational autonomy, the subsequent trajectory was shaped by profound limitations. Gains achieved under the Accords were quickly constrained by Israeli policies, military presence, and a

⁹⁹United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “UN Experts Deeply Concerned over ‘Scholasticide’ in Gaza,” April 5, 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/04/un-experts-deeply-concerned-over-scholasticide-gaza>.

¹⁰⁰Faculty of Education et al., *Palestinian Education Under Attack in Gaza*, 2024, 37.

shifting international landscape that often prioritized political expediency over human rights. The fundamental challenges of curriculum development, institutional coherence, and equitable access to education remain deeply entangled with broader issues of occupation, contested national narratives, and diplomatic dilemmas. In this regard, education in Palestine has functioned not merely as a tool for instruction, but as a contested site of national assertion and resistance.

A key dimension of this struggle is reflected in the politics of school textbooks. The issue is deeply encapsulated in the ideological and political tensions between conflicting historical narratives. It is therefore unsurprising that the content of textbooks used by Palestinian students has become a focal point of contention within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In contexts where efforts toward peace and reconciliation are being negotiated, it is both appropriate and necessary to examine whether educational content promotes the values of peace, coexistence, and mutual recognition. This critical lens must, still, be applied equally. Evaluating whether Israeli curricula foster these same values is vital, as both sides' portrayals of the "Other" serve as mirrors of the conflict's deeper dynamics and help shape possible pathways to its resolution¹⁰¹.

Given this scenario, the imposition of external curricula that erase or distort Palestinian history, the repeated physical destruction of educational infrastructure, military incursions into learning spaces, and the suppression of academic freedoms all operate in concert to erode the right to education as protected under international law. These systematic violations undermine not only the educational development of Palestinian children and youth, but also their broader rights to identity, dignity, and self-determination.

1.3.1.1 - Reconstruction and Educational Recovery in Gaza

Rebuilding Gaza's educational system, therefore, requires much more than the physical reconstruction of schools. It demands an approach that recognizes the cumulative effects of Israel's prolonged occupation, the 17-year blockade, and the broader context of systemic repression within the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has already affirmed the illegality of Israel's occupation¹⁰², underscoring the

¹⁰¹Moughrabi, "The Politics of Palestinian Textbooks.", 15-17.

¹⁰²International Court of Justice (ICJ), *Summary of the Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024 on the Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*, Summary 2024/8, <https://www.icj-cij.org/node/204176>.

urgent need for a rights-based framework to restore and protect the right to education. As the ICJ emphasized, equitable, inclusive, and quality education for Palestinians in Gaza cannot be further delayed¹⁰³.

The broader international consensus increasingly recognizes that the restoration of Gaza's education system must begin with the establishment of a permanent and sustainable ceasefire. Yet, ending hostilities alone will not suffice. The structural barriers to education—namely, the blockade, the military occupation, the restrictions on movement, and the mass displacement of Palestinians—must also be dismantled. Education must be understood not only as access to classrooms and curricula, but as a broader struggle for dignity, justice, and the ability to build a future. The bombing of schools during military offensives, which resulted in the death of students and the systematic demolition of educational infrastructure, represents a grave violation of this right¹⁰⁴.

The destruction of Gaza's educational infrastructure and the loss of thousands of students and educators constitute not only a humanitarian catastrophe but also a profound assault on the cultural and intellectual foundations of Palestinian society. A meaningful recovery must be guided by an absolute commitment to Palestinian own history and culture. Palestinian educators, students, and communities must be at the front line of restoring their education system, one that not only reflects their resilience but reaffirms their rights, history, and aspirations. Additionally, international actors must move beyond short-term humanitarian frameworks and invest in long-term educational development rooted in justice, equity, and local control.

Rebuilding education in Gaza, therefore, must be conceived not solely as an exercise in physical reconstruction, but as a profound process of social and cultural restoration. It is about reviving hope, reclaiming narrative agency, and affirming the right to learn as a universal human right. The success of this process depends on the political will of the international community, the enforcement of accountability on the part of occupying powers. Only through a holistic, rights-based, and inclusive approach can the foundations for a just and sustainable peace be genuinely established.

This imperative of localized and culturally rooted recovery must also be understood within the broader context of structural repression and control that has continued to define the Palestinian educational landscape, even after the formal establishment of Palestinian

¹⁰³International Court of Justice, 2024 *apud* Faculty of Education et al., *Palestinian Education Under Attack in Gaza*, 2024, 7.

¹⁰⁴Msdr News, 2023 *apud* Quneis and Rafidi, "Education under Occupation in Palestine.", 4.

governance structures. Although the Oslo Accords initially promised a degree of self-governance and institutional development, the lived reality was marked by the enduring presence of external restrictions. The efforts to build a cohesive, culturally relevant, and nationally grounded education system have been continuously undermined by external interference, administrative restrictions, and material insecurity.

1.4 CONCLUSION

The historical trajectory of Israeli control over Palestinian education reveals a persistent and deliberate strategy of domination that extends beyond military occupation into the symbolic and cultural sphere. From the censorship of textbooks and erasure of national narratives to the physical destruction of schools and the administrative exclusion of Palestinian educators, education has become one of the most targeted and contested arenas in the broader colonial structure imposed on Palestine. Whether through legal instruments such as military orders, territorial fragmentation, or curricular imposition, the Israeli policies have persistently constrained the development of an autonomous and cohesive Palestinian educational system, as evidenced by curricular censorship, infrastructure limitations, and administrative controls.

Even with these repressive mechanisms, the resilience of Palestinian communities in defending their right to education underscores its central role in the struggle for identity and national continuity. Initiatives such as popular education during the First Intifada, the creation of a Palestinian national curriculum after Oslo, and the faithful pursuit of schooling under siege in Gaza all reflect a refusal to surrender this fundamental domain of self-determination. As demonstrated throughout this chapter, education in Palestine is not only a means of intellectual development, but also a site of collective resistance against erasure, fragmentation, and subjugation. Understanding this dynamic is essential to recognizing the broader colonial logic at work and the enduring importance of education as a space of political and cultural survival.

CHAPTER II - EDUCATION AS COLONIAL INFRASTRUCTURE: PEDAGOGY, ERASURE, AND RESISTANCE IN PALESTINE

The colonization of Palestine, as outlined in this chapter, constitutes a systemic process rooted in multiple layers of oppression that go beyond military control and territorial occupation. This process not only enforces undisguised strategies of control over bodies and spaces but also operates more tactfully, yet no less violently, on educational systems, institutions, and, above all, collective memory. Within this context, education is not merely a site of ideological contestation, it is a central instrument of the colonial project, deployed both to dismantle Palestinian national identity and to impose a hegemonic narrative crafted by the colonizer.

The previous chapter demonstrated how the educational system functions as a primary apparatus of domination, exercising surveillance and control over Palestinians, both those living in the Occupied Territories and Palestinian citizens of Israel. This second chapter deepens the critical analysis of colonial structures through a pedagogical lens, highlighting the interaction between repression and resistance, and between oppression and cultural affirmation.

2.1 EDUCATION AS COLONIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The colonization of Palestine must be understood not merely as a territorial occupation but as the realization of a nationalist-colonial project that merges modern nationalist discourse with the historical logic of colonialism. The Palestinian case reveals a unique convergence between the narrative of Jewish emancipation and the systematic practice of dispossession and elimination of the native population, in alignment with what Patrick Wolfe defines as the essence of settler colonialism. Such a structure is neither episodic nor exclusively military; rather, it is continuous, structural, and driven by a logic of replacement, with education representing one of its most strategically mobilized domains¹⁰⁵.

Drawing on Ilan Pappé's analysis of Zionism as a settler colonial project, the Israeli educational regime imposed on Palestinians must be situated within a broader structure

¹⁰⁵Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (December 2006): 387–409, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240>, 388.

oriented not toward integration or exploitation, but toward elimination¹⁰⁶. This logic, as Pappé outlines, has unfolded in three overlapping phases: the erasure of Palestinian presence through the foundational myth of “a land without a people”; the demographic and spatial replacement enabled by waves of Jewish settlement; and the continual militarization of this substitution through policies of surveillance, confinement, and violence¹⁰⁷. Education, in this configuration, becomes a core technology of settler power, a domain where Palestinian narratives are systematically disqualified, native temporality is disrupted, and Zionist epistemologies are naturalized. The curriculum functions not only to omit the *Nakba* and silence collective memory but to habituate the colonized to a spatial and political order that negates their historical and territorial claims¹⁰⁸.

Maya Mikdashi deepens this analysis by framing settler colonialism not as an event, but as a structure premised on the substitution of one society by another¹⁰⁹. Unlike classical colonialism, which is predicated on the extraction of labor and resources, settler colonialism seeks permanence through the physical and symbolic elimination of the native. This dynamic is sustained through a performative denial of its own coloniality, the settler state rejects its status as an occupying force and recasts itself as the rightful sovereign, thus forestalling critique and legitimizing its continued presence¹¹⁰. This denial is especially powerful in the field of education, where the past is selectively curated to support the settler’s self-narrative while eradicating native histories and knowledge systems. In the Palestinian context, this manifests in a pedagogical regime that dehistoricizes the land, erases Palestinian political subjectivity, and re-inscribes Zionist claims as timeless and non-contingent.

The Zionist proposal, as articulated in the foundational writings of Theodor Herzl¹¹¹, incorporates the classical assumptions of the colonizer’s civilizational superiority. Jewish immigration to Palestine is presented as beneficial to the local population, justified by the notion that Jews would bring progress through their “intelligence, financial wisdom, and entrepreneurial skill”¹¹². This discourse, deeply rooted in European colonial rhetoric, rests

¹⁰⁶Ilan Pappé, “Revisiting 1967: The False Paradigm of Peace, Partition and Parity,” in *The Settler Complex: Recuperating Binarism in Colonial Studies*, ed. Patrick Wolfe (Los Angeles: UCLA American Indian Studies Center, 2016), 213–226.

¹⁰⁷Pappé, “Revisiting 1967,” 213–226.

¹⁰⁸Pappé, “Revisiting 1967,” 213–226.

¹⁰⁹Maya Mikdashi, “What Is Settler Colonialism? (For Leo Delano Ames Jr.),” in *The Settler Complex: Recuperating Binarism in Colonial Studies*, ed. Patrick Wolfe (Los Angeles: UCLA American Indian Studies Center, 2016), 221–230.

¹¹⁰Mikdashi, “What Is Settler Colonialism?”, 221–230.

¹¹¹Khalidi, “Palestina”, 16-17.

¹¹²Khalidi, “Palestina”, 17.

on the presumption that the imposition of the colonizer's presence is inherently developmental for the colonized—even as it entails their political, economic, and symbolic subjugation.

However, such benevolent rhetoric quickly reveals itself as an instrument of a colonial project whose objective is not coexistence, but substitution. Zionism, while presenting itself as a movement of national liberation, deliberately conceals its colonial dimension and avoids acknowledging that its implementation necessarily depends on the systematic elimination of the native population. As Khalid underscores, the establishment of Israel as a state was only possible through the support of Western powers, which illustrates its embeddedness within the global imperialist order¹¹³. This support was not merely diplomatic or financial; it also entailed discursive and political legitimization, transforming the expulsion of Palestinians into a requisite stage of Israeli national consolidation.

This fusion of nationalism and colonialism is particularly evident in the position of Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the leading theorist of revisionist Zionism, who openly admitted that the creation of a "Land of Israel" required the confrontation of native resistance. For Jabotinsky, the transformation of Palestine into an exclusively Jewish space did not imply coexistence, but the imposition of Jewish presence against the will of the indigenous population¹¹⁴. The clarity of his position leaves no room for conciliatory interpretations, it is an exclusionary project whose realization demands ongoing violence and repression.

The persistent refusal to recognize Zionism as a colonial enterprise, as Khalid notes, continues despite the evident manifestations of its colonial character: support from imperial powers, territorial expansion, and cultural repression¹¹⁵. The invocation of a biblical narrative as the foundation for territorial claims is not an exotic exception but a central element of an ideological strategy of legitimation. It functions to erase the history of the other and reinscribe the colonial presence as a civilizational destiny.

While Wolfe exposes the structural mechanics of elimination, Edward Said's analysis shifts the lens to the symbolic and epistemic dimensions of colonial rule. Said defines Orientalism as a "corporate institution" that produces knowledge about the Orient in order to authorize and rule over it¹¹⁶. This discursive construction of the Orient as an object of knowledge, administration, and civilizing intervention is fundamental to the legitimization of colonial violence. In the Palestinian case, this logic materializes in how the

¹¹³Khalidi, "Palestina", 20-21.

¹¹⁴Khalidi, "Palestina", 25.

¹¹⁵Khalidi, "Palestina", 27.

¹¹⁶Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 1st Vintage Books ed (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 27-28.

dominant narrative shapes both external and internal perceptions of the Palestinian people, erasing their agency and historicity.

Said identifies Zionist colonization in Palestine as a continuation of the European colonial project, characterized by the occupation and replacement of the native population¹¹⁷. By situating Zionism within this tradition, he dismantles the notion of Israeli exceptionalism, placing the founding of the State of Israel within the broader continuum of Western imperialism¹¹⁸. The rhetoric of the “empty land”—the idea that Palestine lacked any meaningful cultural or political presence—constitutes one of the symbolic pillars of this endeavor¹¹⁹, delegitimizing the millennia-old Palestinian presence and naturalizing their expulsion.

The construction of the Arab as an “inferior other,” marked by allegedly immutable traits of irrationality and violence, serves to justify policies of repression and occupation¹²⁰. This essentialist representation legitimizes the persistence of colonial control under the pretext of security and modernization. The dehumanization of the Palestinian subject, as Said notes, is nourished by academic, political, and media discourses that, far from reflecting local realities, reproduce colonial interests¹²¹.

This epistemic violence is particularly evident in the educational sphere, where curricular content excludes the Palestinian national narrative and imposes the language and values of the colonizer. As Said points out, “there is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism”¹²², suggesting that so-called civilizing educational processes frequently conceal practices of cultural and political domination. The imposition of the Israeli curriculum in Palestinian schools, especially in East Jerusalem, constitutes a systematic effort of de-Palestinization, fully consistent with the logic of settler colonialism.

Said also underscores the continuity of imperialism under new guises¹²³, observing that structures of domination are reconfigured through discourses of modernization, security, and development. The Israeli occupation, far from being an anachronism, represents an updated form of traditional colonial practices, bolstered by international alliances and upheld by institutions that perpetuate the exclusion of Palestinian self-determination. In this

¹¹⁷Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 1st Vintage Books ed (New York: Vintage Books, 1994) 36.

¹¹⁸Said, *Orientalism*, 60-63.

¹¹⁹Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 245-246.

¹²⁰Said, *Orientalism*, 276-277; Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 260.

¹²¹Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 296-298.

¹²²Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 309.

¹²³Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 264.

light, Palestine must be understood as a paradigmatic instance of the persistence of colonialism in the present.

In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon characterizes colonialism as a total structure of oppression that surpasses economic exploitation and encompasses the psychic, affective, and ontological dimensions of the colonized's existence¹²⁴. In contemporary Palestine, this analysis takes on concrete form. The asymmetrical coexistence between well-provisioned and protected Israeli settlements and besieged Palestinian villages devoid of basic rights mirrors the dichotomy between the "world of the settler" and the "world of the native." Physical violence is accompanied by symbolic and epistemological violence, exemplified in the imposition of school curricula that negate the Palestinian national narrative while glorifying the symbols of the colonial state.

According to Fanon, the erasure of national memory constitutes a central axis of the colonial project. The colonizer is not satisfied with dominating the present and future but seeks also to distort, disfigure, or destroy the past¹²⁵. This assault on the history of the colonized aims not merely at dehumanization but at transforming the subject into one permanently subjugated. In this context, the recovery of national culture and history is not a nostalgic gesture but an active form of resistance. Fanon insists that to fight for national culture is, above all, to fight for national liberation¹²⁶.

For Fanon, culture is not an ahistorical essence, but rather a collective and dynamic process forged in struggle. Under colonial rule, national culture is marginalized, driven underground, and persecuted¹²⁷, yet it persists as a form of resistance. This condition is acutely visible in Palestine, where the educator is potentially capable of transforming the educational sphere into a site of emancipation. By engaging with collective memory and denouncing policies of erasure, the Palestinian educator embodies the role delineated by Fanon: the intellectual who writes for their people, who transforms the past into a bridge toward the future, and who commits fully to the national liberation struggle¹²⁸.

This analysis is further developed by Kai Mora (2024)¹²⁹, who revisits Fanon to interpret the ongoing war as a paradigmatic colonial war, whose origins lie in the Palestinian dispossession of 1948. Mora underscores that the colonial structure is not exhausted in

¹²⁴Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2005), 3-4,23.

¹²⁵Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 148-149.

¹²⁶Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 168.

¹²⁷Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 171.

¹²⁸Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 167.

¹²⁹Kai Mora, "A Fanonian Perspective on Israel and Palestine," July 4, 2024, <https://rpublic.com/june-july-2024-2/a-fanonian-perspective-on-israel-and-palestine/>

military occupation alone but is continuously renewed through mechanisms such as advanced military technologies, siege, starvation, and cultural destruction, practices that reenact the modes of repression characteristic of twentieth-century colonial wars. The exercise of violence, far from being exceptional, constitutes the official language of domination. Drawing on Fanon, Mora notes that the colonizer does not conceal its violence; on the contrary, it enacts it with full awareness of its political function¹³⁰.

Education, in this regard, is not a neutral field. It is a contested terrain, a site of confrontation between the pedagogy of domination and the pedagogy of resistance. The educational system imposed on Palestinians, whether in the Occupied Territories or among Palestinian citizens of Israel, is structured by mechanisms of surveillance, control, and exclusion. The curricula promoted by the Israeli state in East Jerusalem schools, which are controlled by Israeli government, and the curricula control and regulation over OPTs erase Palestinian history, silences the experience of the *Nakba*, and imposes the language and values of the colonizer. This constitutes a form of symbolic violence aimed, as Fanon asserts, at dehumanizing the colonized subject through cultural alienation¹³¹.

Such alienation is manifested in the denial of the capacity to produce knowledge grounded in one's own experience. The attempt to supplant Palestinian historical, cultural, and linguistic frameworks with a colonizing epistemology represents, as Wolfe explains, one of the most effective strategies of elimination. The logic of settler colonialism, he argues, is centered on the elimination of the native, a process that involves not only physical violence but also legal, administrative, and symbolic mechanisms¹³². Elimination in this context is not limited to extermination; it encompasses the replacement of the native society with another structure organized around the settler's imperatives.

The imposition of Israeli curricula on Palestinian schools in East Jerusalem constitutes a clear manifestation of this eliminatory process. The replacement of textbooks, the censorship of materials deemed "inciting," and the glorification of Israeli state symbols form the basis of a pedagogy of elimination whose objective is to obstruct the development of a critical Palestinian consciousness. According to Wolfe, settler colonialism does not primarily aim to exploit the native economically, but to replace them with a new political body that is homogeneous and aligned with the settler's narrative¹³³.

¹³⁰Mora, "A Fanonian Perspective on Israel and Palestine,"

¹³¹Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 170.

¹³²Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native.", 388.

¹³³Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native.", 389.

This logic also extends to educational infrastructure. The systematic denial of building permits for Palestinian schools, the chronic shortage of resources, and the persistent threats of demolition constitute a deliberate policy of strangulation. These practices are not accidental nor the result of bureaucratic negligence; rather, they are integral components of a strategy designed to render Palestinian life unreproducible on its own terms. As Wolfe notes, the erasure of the native is simultaneously the fabrication of a new narrative in which the settler presents themselves as indigenous and legitimate¹³⁴. In the Palestinian context, this dynamic materializes in the effort to portray Israeli presence as historical and unquestionable, while depicting Palestinian existence as intrusive or illegitimate.

This symbolic struggle is particularly acute within schools that have been subjected to the adoption of the Israeli curriculum and consequently transformed into instruments of alienation. The content taught systematically omits Palestinian history and naturalizes the occupation. The official Israeli curriculum purposely avoids using terms like “Palestine” and excludes mentions of “prisoners” and “martyrs,”¹³⁵ thereby silencing essential aspects of the Palestinian historical and national experience, also content judged to incite opposition to Israel is eliminated.

This is not a matter of competing interpretations, but rather the imposition of a singular narrative aimed at severing the bonds between new Palestinian generations and their historical memory. Wolfe’s critique of the tendency to analyze colonialism solely through the lens of economic exploitation is especially salient here. The objective in this context is not the extraction of labor, but the elimination of a collective identity and its replacement by another, thereby reconfiguring the physical, political, and symbolic landscape¹³⁶.

In this context, education becomes a central battlefield. The struggle for the right to teach and learn from one’s own history and culture is simultaneously a struggle for existence. The pedagogy of resistance is grounded in the understanding of Fanon that “poverty, national oppression, and cultural repression are one and the same”¹³⁷. The decolonization of education, therefore, is not merely a pedagogical concern but a strategic imperative of anti-colonial struggle. It is not simply a matter of altering content, but of restoring the capacity to generate knowledge from national experience.

¹³⁴Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native.”, 390.

¹³⁵Quneis and Rafidi, “Education under Occupation in Palestine.”, 3.

¹³⁶Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native.”, 389-390.

¹³⁷Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 172.

Even under intense repression, signs of resistance persist. Fanon notes that although colonial regimes seek to paralyze the cultural dynamism of subjugated peoples, there are always efforts to revitalize national consciousness¹³⁸. In Palestine, such resistance materializes in both everyday acts and more structured pedagogical initiatives. Through the preservation of Arab culture, the remembrance of Palestinian history, and the creation of alternative educational spaces, intellectuals and educators directly challenge the colonial narrative¹³⁹.

Alongside Wolfe's critique of the logic of replacement, Said's analysis underscores the symbolic and discursive dimensions of the colonial project. Domination operates not only over bodies and territories but also through language, memory, and subjectivity. Resistance, in this sense, extends beyond armed or political struggle; it necessarily entails the contestation of imposed representations and the reconstruction of self-determined narratives. Education, within this frame, is both an instrument of domination and a vehicle of emancipation. The analysis of the educational practices imposed on the Palestinian people exposes the totalizing nature of Israeli settler colonialism. It is a project that exceeds mere military occupation or economic expropriation; it is oriented toward the complete replacement of the native society. Within this framework, education is not a neutral domain but one of the main arenas through which the logic of elimination is enacted¹⁴⁰.

The Palestinian case illustrates a paradigmatic conflict between a settler-colonial project supported by international powers and a population striving to preserve its identity, history, and cultural autonomy. The denunciation of violations against the right to education is not merely a legal or political demand, it constitutes a radical affirmation of Palestinian humanity. Ultimately, in the Palestinian context, the defense of the right to education is intricately linked to broader claims of cultural continuity, territorial rootedness, and the capacity to envision a self-determined future.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 171.

¹³⁹Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 151.

¹⁴⁰Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native.", 388-390.

¹⁴¹Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 171; Said, *Orientalism*, 263; Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native.", 390.

2.2 EDUCATION AS A MECHANISM OF CONTROL: A FREIREAN READING OF DOMINATION OVER PALESTINIANS

In contexts marked by systemic oppression, education ceases to be a neutral space and becomes a pivotal tool for control. Paulo Freire's conceptualization of education as either a vehicle for liberation or a mechanism for domination is especially relevant for understanding the reality of Palestinian education under Israeli control. Through an in-depth analysis of Freire's critical pedagogy, this section explores how the Israeli state apparatus employs education to perpetuate colonial dominance and suppress Palestinian subjectivity, aligning these practices with Freire's pedagogical critique, employing the concept of the "banking model" of education and cultural invasion.

Freire identifies the core contradiction of oppressive education as the treatment of students as passive recipients rather than active participants in the construction of knowledge. In his seminal work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, he writes, "In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing."¹⁴² This system mirrors the broader structures of social control, where the ruling class deposits ideology in the oppressed to secure their obedience. Applied to the Palestinian context, such pedagogy aligns with the ways in which Israeli educational policies erase Palestinian history and enforce state-sanctioned narratives, thereby domesticating the Palestinian student body into passive recipients of distorted truths.

This "banking" model, according to Freire, reinforces a world "as something static" and encourages adaptation rather than transformation.¹⁴³ In the case of Palestinian education under Israeli occupation, curriculum decisions, textbook content, and language policies are not neutral acts of pedagogy but mechanisms of ideological control. As Freire articulates, this kind of education seeks to "change the consciousness of the oppressed, not the situation which oppresses them,"¹⁴⁴ ultimately reinforcing their domination by adapting them to unjust realities.

Besides, Freire's notion of cultural invasion is essential for understanding the colonial dynamics at play. Cultural invasion, he explains, is when the oppressor imposes their values, worldview, and language onto the oppressed, thereby alienating them from

¹⁴²Paulo Freire and Donaldo P. Macedo, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos, 30th anniversary edition (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), 72.

¹⁴³Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 73.

¹⁴⁴Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 74.

their own cultural roots.⁴ The Israeli imposition of educational curricula that undermine Palestinian historical narratives, prohibit the use of the term *Nakba*, for example, and frame national identity through a Zionist lens constitutes a typical case of cultural invasion. Freire warns that “in their passion to dominate, to mold others to their patterns and their way of life, the invaders desire to know how those they have invaded apprehend reality, but only so they can dominate the latter more effectively.”¹⁴⁵

This manipulation of education is not only ideological but structural. Israeli policies have imposed strict regulations on what Palestinian students can learn and who can teach them. Schools are subjected to surveillance, movement restrictions prevent students and teachers from accessing classrooms, and educational facilities are frequently targeted in military operations. These actions reflect what Freire calls the “dehumanization” inherent in all systems of oppression: “Dehumanization, which marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also those who have stolen it, is a distortion of the vocation of becoming more fully human.”¹⁴⁶

Freire’s understanding of the pedagogical relationship as one of dialogical encounter rather than hierarchical imposition challenges the very foundation of the Israeli educational regime imposed on Palestinians. He proposes a “problem-posing education” in which “people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves.”¹⁴⁷ Such a model, based on mutual humanization and historical consciousness, is diametrically opposed to the current educational reality in Palestine, where learning is stripped of political context and depoliticized in service of the occupier’s narrative.

He further elaborates on how educational institutions serve to reproduce dominant ideology, particularly when they are shaped by capitalist or colonial systems. He asserts “The dominant authorities do not leave [education] alone. They supervise it. [...] The main task for systematic education is to reproduce the dominant ideology.”¹⁴⁸ Within the Palestinian context, this is observed in the deliberate marginalization of Palestinian identity in textbooks, the censoring of historical events, and the criminalization of Palestinian national identity in classroom discussions. Israeli control over Palestinian curricula within East Jerusalem, for instance, enforces a version of history that erases native claims. For instance, the term “Palestine” was deliberately suppressed, with maps either erased or

¹⁴⁵Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 153.

¹⁴⁶Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 44.

¹⁴⁷Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 83.

¹⁴⁸Paulo Freire and Ira Shor, *A Pedagogy for Liberation* (London: Macmillan Education UK, 1987), 116.

significantly altered, and any material viewed as promoting nationalism systematically censored by Israeli authorities¹⁴⁹.

These policies exemplify Freire's affirmation that cultural invasion "leads to the cultural inauthenticity of those who are invaded; they begin to respond to the values, the standards, and the goals of the invaders."¹⁵⁰ Palestinian students, when forced to learn within frameworks that deny their heritage, are systematically alienated from their own identity. As a result, education becomes a tool not of liberation, but of colonization. Even more treacherous, this colonized education is often presented under the guise of humanitarian aid or "normalization." He warns that oppressors often engage in what he calls "false generosity,"¹⁵¹ acts that appear benevolent but serve to maintain the structure of domination. "In order to have the continued opportunity to express their 'generosity,' the oppressors must perpetuate injustice as well."¹⁵² The Israeli state's investment in Palestinian education often operates within this logic, maintaining an appearance of civic concern while ensuring that control remains in the hands of the occupier.

Freire also cautions against the internalization of oppression, wherein the oppressed begin to accept the oppressor's worldview. This internalization is a direct consequence of cultural invasion and authoritarian pedagogy. He writes, "the oppressed almost always express this contradictory consciousness: they want at the same time to be themselves and to be like the oppressor."¹⁵³ In Palestine, the prohibition or stigmatization of Palestinian history and cultural symbols in school may lead students to view their identity as inferior or problematic, reinforcing the very domination they suffer under. To resist this dehumanizing educational apparatus, he argues that education must become an act of liberation. It must enable the oppressed to reclaim their voice and critically engage with their reality. In *Pedagogy of the Heart*, Freire reaffirms the transformative potential of education rooted in hope, asserting that "education in the service of domination cannot cause critical and dialectic thinking; rather it stimulates naive thinking about the world."¹⁵⁴ Liberation, in this view, is not a gift, but a conquest, achieved through conscious struggle and historical engagement.

In *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World*, Freire reiterates that literacy is never neutral. It must enable the learner to connect their reading of words to their understanding of

¹⁴⁹Mahamid, *History Education*, 41.

¹⁵⁰Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 154.

¹⁵¹Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 45.

¹⁵²Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 54.

¹⁵³Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 48. .

¹⁵⁴Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Heart* (New York: Continuum, 1998), 20.

the world.¹⁵⁵ For Palestinian students, whose world is defined by military checkpoints, occupation, and cultural erasure, an imposed curriculum that excludes their lived realities becomes an additional layer of violence. The denial of their sociopolitical context in educational content not only alienates but also renders them powerless in the face of oppression.

Freire emphasizes that cultural invasion, when operationalized through the education system, erodes the ability of the oppressed to interpret and resist their circumstances.¹⁵⁶ In Palestine, this is realized through the elimination of narratives that speak of resistance, loss, and identity. Education is transformed into a mechanism of silencing. Yet, despite these constraints, Freire insists on the necessity of hope—a hope rooted in the struggle for justice. This hope, he argues in *Pedagogy of Solidarity*, must be expressed through authentic solidarity, where support for the oppressed does not replicate patterns of control but fosters autonomy and dignity.¹⁵⁷ In light of these principles, Freire criticizes international interventions that claim to aid education while maintaining top-down models that marginalize local voices. He insists that true solidarity is dialogical, participatory, and grounded in the recognition of the oppressed as agents of their own liberation.¹⁵⁸ Educational initiatives must therefore center Palestinian experiences and leadership, moving away from paternalistic schemes that reproduce colonial hierarchies.

The practical dimension of Freire's theory becomes even clearer when we consider how Palestinian educators themselves attempt to reclaim the educational space. Even under conditions of surveillance, restriction, and occupation, many teachers and local organizations are actively developing alternative pedagogical models that reassert Palestinian culture, language, and historical memory. These popular efforts exemplify what Freire identifies as the “praxis” of liberation, the unity of reflection and action aimed at transforming oppressive reality¹⁵⁹. Such as the “popular education” initiatives during the First Intifada and initiatives at UNRWA schools in Gaza since 2007.

Freire argues that liberatory educational practice necessitates what he terms “dialogical action”—a pedagogical approach in which educators and learners engage collectively in the co-construction of knowledge, grounded in the historical and cultural

¹⁵⁵Paulo Freire and Donaldo P. Macedo, *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2005), 29.

¹⁵⁶Paulo Freire, *The Politics of Education: Culture, Power, and Liberation*, 1. publ (South Hadley, Mass: Bergin & Garvey, 1985), 132.

¹⁵⁷Paulo Freire, Ana Maria Araújo Freire, e Walter de Oliveira, *Pedagogy of Solidarity* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2014), 59.

¹⁵⁸Freire, *Pedagogy of the Heart*, 91.

¹⁵⁹Freire, *The Politics of Education*, 43.

realities of the oppressed¹⁶⁰. In the Palestinian context, this dialogical action materializes in the refusal to adopt externally imposed curricula and in the creation of pedagogical materials that reflect life under occupation. By fostering this form of authentic dialogue, Palestinian educators do not merely transmit knowledge; they construct it collaboratively, rooted in an ethics of solidarity and participatory engagement¹⁶¹. In settings where the imposition of colonizing curricula is unavoidable, educators have found ways to subvert the intended message. For example, through critical questioning, supplementary texts, and discussions that reframe imposed content, they create cognitive dissonance in students. Freire emphasizes that such dissonance is not to be avoided but embraced: it is the beginning of critical consciousness. Without conflict, there can be no true learning, only memorization and reproduction.

This dissonance, far from being construed as a failure of the educational process, is understood by Freire as the origin of epistemological curiosity—an essential condition for the development of critical thinking¹⁶². When Palestinian students are confronted with curricular content that contradicts their lived experiences, this tension can be transformed into critical reflection, provided that the educator actively fosters problematization and inquiry. Freire cautions that the absence of such curiosity results in passive adaptation, whereas its cultivation stimulates the drive for transformation¹⁶³.

In addition, Freire's work encourages us to examine not only the student but the teacher. A liberatory pedagogy requires educators who do not see themselves as holders of absolute truth but as learners among learners. In Palestine, where teachers are often products of the same colonial educational structures, this represents a dual challenge and opportunity. The process of decolonizing education must involve the political education of teachers themselves so they can facilitate dialogue rather than impose ideology¹⁶⁴.

The focus on dialogue and conscientização¹⁶⁵ (critical consciousness) highlights the necessity of context-based pedagogy. Freire reminds us that teaching divorced from the local sociopolitical context becomes abstract and ineffective. For Palestinian students, education that fails to engage with the occupation, the loss of land, the restrictions on movement, and the threat to cultural survival is not only irrelevant but alienating. On the

¹⁶⁰Freire, *The Politics of Education*, 87.

¹⁶¹Freire, *The Politics of Education*, 87.

¹⁶²Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*, trans. Patrick Clarke (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998), 37.

¹⁶³Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom*, 37.

¹⁶⁴Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom*, 89.

¹⁶⁵“The term conscientização refers to learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality.” - Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 35.

other hand, education that names these realities, and invites students to analyze and challenge them, becomes a process of reclaiming agency¹⁶⁶.

2.3 PEDAGOGICAL RESISTANCE AND THE ROLE OF PALESTINIAN EDUCATORS

Despite the suffocating constraints imposed by occupation, colonization, and structural violence, many Palestinian educators have not resigned themselves to the passive role of implementers of an externally imposed curriculum. Instead, they have engaged in what Paulo Freire would call acts of *conscientização* through everyday pedagogical practices that challenge the hegemonic narratives embedded in Israeli educational plans¹⁶⁷.

These educators, operating within schools that often lack basic infrastructure and face threats of closure, exemplify Freire's vision of *praxis*: the inseparable unity between reflection and action in the struggle for liberation¹⁶⁸. In their classrooms, Palestinian teachers have developed counter-narratives through localized teaching strategies that center historical memory, cultural identity, and collective resistance. This effort materializes in informal discussions, community-driven projects, and supplementary materials that defy official mandates. Such acts, although seemingly small, constitute powerful forms of epistemological disobedience. Freire argues that "to speak a true word is to transform the world," and Palestinian educators, in reclaiming the right to speak their history and identity, participate in this transformative endeavor¹⁶⁹.

Moreover, the use of cultural forms such as poetry, oral history, and local storytelling traditions becomes a pedagogical tool to counter the erasure imposed by the dominant narrative. These practices align with Freire's emphasis on dialogical education, where knowledge is built collectively and grounded in the lived experience of the oppressed¹⁷⁰. The classroom becomes a space not of indoctrination, but of rehumanization—a locus of encounter in which teacher and student co-create meaning in defiance of colonial silencing. Freire's critique of educational systems that serve to domesticate rather than liberate finds particular resonance in the case of East Jerusalem. Here, Palestinian schools face coercive pressures to adopt the Israeli curriculum. Resistance to this imposition often involves both

¹⁶⁶Freire et al., *Pedagogy of Solidarity*, 32.

¹⁶⁷Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 66.

¹⁶⁸Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 87.

¹⁶⁹Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 77.

¹⁷⁰Freire, *Pedagogy of the Heart*, 35.

organized mobilizations by teachers and parents, and everyday forms of subversion, such as inserting Palestinian content in subjects where it is not formally allowed¹⁷¹. Freire insists that the oppressed must become subjects of their own history, and through these acts of pedagogical resilience, Palestinian educators affirm their agency as creators of knowledge and guardians of cultural survival.

This dynamic of resistance is intricately connected to Freire's broader notion of indignation as a pedagogical impulse. In *Pedagogy of Indignation*, Freire asserts that anger at injustice is not only legitimate but necessary as a motor for pedagogical action¹⁷². Palestinian educators channel this indignation into structured educational practices that expose the contradictions of the colonial regime and foster a critical consciousness that resists normalization. The classroom thus becomes a site of political formation, rooted in ethical revolt against dehumanization.

Also, community educational initiatives, such as community schools and alternative learning centers, have emerged as vital responses to the limitations of formal education under colonial control. These institutions, often sustained by local efforts and minimal resources, prioritize culturally relevant pedagogy, democratic participation, and critical engagement with the political realities of occupation. In doing so, they operationalize Freire's idea that education should be an act of freedom, not adaptation¹⁷³.

Henry Giroux reinforces this pedagogical stance by highlighting the necessity of a resistance that confronts manufactured ignorance and the pedagogical force of authoritarianism. He observes that in spaces where authoritarianism shapes education, critical pedagogy becomes a mode of survival and struggle¹⁷⁴. Palestinian educators engaged in counter-hegemonic practices demonstrate what Giroux calls a "pedagogical insurrection," rejecting the normalization of injustice and affirming education as a terrain for reclaiming historical memory and democratic possibility.

Educators in these spaces often emphasize the historical and cultural continuities between past struggles and current challenges, thereby reinforcing a collective identity rooted in resistance. The use of Palestinian symbols, language, and historical narratives is not a nostalgic return to a glorified past, but a conscious act of reclaiming the present and envisioning a liberated future. Freire reminds us that "hope is rooted in men's incompleteness,

¹⁷¹Freire, *A Pedagogy for Liberation*, 116.

¹⁷²Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Indignation* (London: Routledge, 2016), 68.

¹⁷³Freire and Macedo, *Literacy*, 29.

¹⁷⁴Henry A. Giroux, *Pedagogy of Resistance: Against Manufactured Ignorance* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 195.

from which they move out in constant search, a search which can be carried out only in communion with others"¹⁷⁵. In Palestinian classrooms of resistance, hope is not abstract; it is material, dialogical, and insurgent.

This commitment to hopeful resistance becomes especially critical when viewed through Henry Giroux's reflections on the politics of education. In *Pedagogy of Resistance*, Giroux emphasizes that oppressive regimes thrive by purging critical thought from public education, replacing it with authoritarian ideologies and anti-intellectualism¹⁷⁶. Palestinian educators who resist normalization and ideological domestication enact a pedagogy that challenges such repression, affirming their role as engaged intellectuals committed to justice.

Likewise, Giroux identifies authoritarianism as a pedagogical force, noting that it cultivates passivity and ideological conformity through modes of education that discourage critical engagement¹⁷⁷. Palestinian resistance pedagogy directly counters this, fostering collective agency and political awareness even under conditions of extreme constraint. These practices echo Freire's call for education that cultivates the courage to name injustice and imagine alternative futures¹⁷⁸.

These acts of pedagogical resistance also resonate with Freire's concept of utopia not as naive idealism but as a critical, historically grounded hope. In *Pedagogy of Indignation*, Freire maintains that to educate is to affirm that the future is open and that alternatives to oppression are both thinkable and achievable¹⁷⁹. Within the Palestinian context, this means constructing pedagogies that not only denounce colonial violence but also announce the possibility of self-determined futures.

The creation and sustainability of these counter-hegemonic educational spaces often rest upon horizontal networks of solidarity among teachers, families, and community organizers. These actors challenge the isolating effects of colonial violence by emphasizing cooperation and relational pedagogy, consistent with Freire's dialogical method that rejects vertical transmission of knowledge¹⁸⁰. In many instances, teaching extends beyond the classroom into public spaces, refugee camps, and homes, reinforcing the notion that every context holds pedagogical potential when it fosters awareness and agency.

¹⁷⁵Freire, *Pedagogy of the Heart*, 91.

¹⁷⁶Giroux, *Pedagogy of Resistance*, 3.

¹⁷⁷Giroux, *Pedagogy of Resistance*, 5.

¹⁷⁸Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom*, 72.

¹⁷⁹Freire, *Pedagogy of Indignation*, 102.

¹⁸⁰Freire et al., *Pedagogy of Solidarity*, 83.

Additionally, Palestinian educators often resist through language. The defense of Arabic against the forced imposition of Hebrew within curricula is a form of linguistic affirmation that recalls Freire's assertion that naming the world in one's own terms is a fundamental act of humanization¹⁸¹. Language, in this case, is not merely a medium of instruction but a site of political and cultural contestation.

Giroux similarly emphasizes that critical pedagogy must be rooted in ethical responsibility and solidarity. He argues that education can no longer be neutral in contexts marked by systemic violence, as neutrality serves to reproduce oppression¹⁸². Palestinian educators, by actively confronting the colonial order and reconstructing education from the ground up, enact this principle of radical responsibility and remind us that pedagogy is always a political act.

Building upon Freire's conception that education is always a form of intervention in the world¹⁸³, it becomes evident that the function of the curriculum transcends the mere transmission of information; it is fundamentally a process of shaping political subjects. For Palestinian educators, this entails crafting pedagogical strategies that not only address the lived realities of colonization but also incite students to perceive these conditions as historically contingent and therefore transformable. The curriculum, in this structure, is a site of both political and symbolic struggle, one that must be reclaimed by those embedded within it.

In conclusion, Paulo Freire's work provides an analytical structure for understanding education as a mechanism of colonial control, particularly in the context of Palestine. His insights into cultural invasion, ideological reproduction, and the transformative power of hope and dialogue offer indispensable tools for confronting and dismantling the structures of domination imposed through educational systems. By reclaiming education as a means to name and transform reality, Palestinian educators and students uphold the emancipatory promise of Freirean pedagogy.

Yet, Freirean pedagogy articulates an ethical stance vital for educational practice under conditions of occupation. Freire contends that teaching demands civic courage and an unwavering commitment to human dignity¹⁸⁴. In Palestine, where the national identity is under perpetual threat, the educator's refusal to be complicit in silencing becomes a political act of resistance. This commitment, intertwined with democratic ideals of participation and

¹⁸¹Freire and Macedo, *Literacy*, 34.

¹⁸²Giroux, *Pedagogy of Resistance*, 198.

¹⁸³Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom*, 99.

¹⁸⁴Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom*, 18.

justice, sustains pedagogical hope even in the most adverse conditions, affirming that education remains a powerful space for struggle, survival, and liberation.

A “Freirean hope” must be understood not as a vague ethical sentiment, but as a deliberate political strategy that sustains collective struggle in the face of structural dehumanization. In Palestine, the refusal to surrender education to the colonizer is not only a defense of cultural identity but an affirmation of futurity, a refusal to allow the colonial project to foreclose political imagination. This struggle, rooted in praxis and nurtured by indignation, demonstrates the power of education to generate insurgent knowledge and reclaim agency. Furthermore, the Palestinian case underscores the broader relevance of Freire’s pedagogy in contexts of settler colonialism and systemic domination worldwide. It challenges scholars and educators engaged in anti-colonial pedagogy globally to confront how education functions as both a weapon of oppression and a tool of liberation, and to commit to pedagogical practices that center justice, memory, and collective transformation.

2.4 CONCLUSION

The analysis developed throughout this chapter demonstrates that the Israeli educational regime imposed on Palestinians operates not as a neutral administrative framework but as a deliberate extension of the settler-colonial project. Education is mobilized to reproduce the logic of elimination, erase historical memory, and instill a colonial order that negates Palestinian subjectivity. Drawing on the works of Wolfe, Said, and Fanon, the chapter has shown how the pedagogical field is strategically employed to dismantle national consciousness and reinforce the legitimacy of the occupying power through epistemic violence and cultural substitution. The Zionist curriculum functions not simply as a set of contents, but as a colonial infrastructure designed to disconnect Palestinians from their historical, linguistic, and territorial coordinates.

Yet, within this structure of domination, education also becomes a space of counter-narrative and refusal. Palestinian educators, as explored through the lens of Freirean pedagogy, have actively engaged in practices of resistance that reassert cultural identity, preserve memory, and foster critical consciousness. Whether through alternative curricula, community-driven initiatives, or subtle disruptions of imposed narratives, these educators transform the classroom into a site of struggle. As Freire affirms, the role of the teacher under oppression is not to transmit sanctioned knowledge but to cultivate the conditions for

the oppressed to name the world in their own terms. In the Palestinian context, this dialogical and insurgent pedagogy represents both a refusal to surrender and a commitment to collective futurity.

Ultimately, this chapter has underscored that education under colonial conditions is never peripheral to the broader political project, it is one of its central battlegrounds. In Palestine, the struggle over schools, curricula, language, and memory reflects the deeper conflict over who has the right to narrate, to belong, and to imagine the future. Against a regime that seeks to normalize erasure, Palestinian pedagogical resistance insists on the radical potential of education to preserve life, sustain identity, and advance the project of liberation. In this sense, the classroom is not merely a space of learning, but a terrain of political imagination, one where survival and hope converge in the refusal to forget and in the struggle to remain.

CHAPTER III - LEGAL IMPLICATIONS: THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION AND THE CONCEPT OF *SCHOLASTICIDE*

Building upon the evidence presented in the previous chapter regarding Israeli colonization and its entanglement with the strategic domination of the Palestinian educational sector, the present section advances a legal analysis that is essential for fully grasping the scope and gravity of such systematic violations. The historical overview offered in Chapter One reveals a deliberate and ongoing pattern of curricula control and targeting educational structures as part of a broader colonial architecture. In this context, a juridical framework is indispensable, not only to normatively classify these acts, but also to lay the groundwork for mechanisms of accountability.

Accordingly, this chapter examines the applicability of international legal instruments as a means of codifying and, by extension, seeking reparation for these violations. Within this normative structure, particular attention is devoted to the emerging concept of *scholasticide*, which will be presented and defined as part of the effort to expand the interpretive reach of international law in capturing forms of violence aimed at the destruction of collective knowledge systems and cultural continuity.

In this way, the third chapter concludes the investigation into education as a tool of control employed by Israeli authorities. It demonstrates that the acts committed from 1948 to the present day are not isolated incidents but integral components of a broader and long-standing project aimed at the erasure of the Palestinian people. Therefore, the pursuit of legal accountability in international fora must extend beyond existing frameworks, calling for substantive revisions and structural reforms. These are necessary not only to eliminate the possibility of impunity, but to ensure that justice is no longer deferred or denied under the pretext of legal ambiguity.

3.1 EDUCATION AS A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT AND INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW

Education is a vital element of any modern society, deeply shaped by the dominant ideological, political, social, and cultural conditions of its time. It is widely recognized that education, in its broadest sense enables individuals to comprehend the world and affirm

their identity with dignity¹⁸⁵. Scholars have identified multiple and interrelated roles that education plays in the development of individuals and societies. From some scholars' perspective, education is regarded as a foundational element for societal stability, as the sustainability of democratic institutions and values relies on an informed and critically engaged society. Beyond this collective dimension, education is also vital for personal growth, allowing individuals to develop intellectually, emotionally, and ethically¹⁸⁶.

Education is also universally recognized as a fundamental human right, indispensable for the realization of all other rights¹⁸⁷. However, as demonstrated in the first chapter of this study, this right has been subject to systematic and sustained violations by the State of Israel since 1948. Over the decades, there has been little to no substantial improvement in the educational conditions for Palestinians holding Israeli citizenship, those residing in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, and, most gravely, for those confined to the Gaza Strip.

The prolonged Israeli occupation has imposed both tangible and symbolic constraints on the full exercise of the right to education by the Palestinian population. Attending school has become an act fraught with danger for students and teachers alike. Military checkpoints, restrictions on freedom of movement, recurring violence, and daily humiliations transform the journey to school into a constant threat to both physical safety and psychological well-being. Remaining at home, on the other hand, offers no genuine refuge from the instability and insecurity that define everyday life under occupation. In such conditions, the transformative potential traditionally attributed to education is drastically diminished. As a result, for countless Palestinian youth the school loses its function as a space for social development and future-oriented hope, rendering its purpose increasingly fragile and uncertain¹⁸⁸. This utter reality stands in contrast to internationally recognized standards that define education as a fundamental human right, standards that, despite their aspirational nature, establish important normative benchmarks for states and the international community.

¹⁸⁵Jost Delbruck, "The Right to Education as an International Human Right," *German Yearbook of International Law* 35 (1992), 94-95.

¹⁸⁶Beiter, Klaus Dieter, "The protection of the right to education by international law", *International studies in human rights*; v. 82 (2005), 26-27.

¹⁸⁷Dalal Iriqat et al., "Educide amid Conflict: The Struggle of the Palestinian Education System," *Quality Education for All* 2, no. 1 (January 6, 2025): 81–99, <https://doi.org/10.1108/OEA-10-2024-0120>, 82.

¹⁸⁸Susan Nicolai, *Fragmented Foundations: Education and Chronic Crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory* (Paris: UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning, 2007), 121.

Although the Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹⁸⁹ does not possess binding legal force, it remains a foundational instrument for the articulation and interpretation of fundamental rights. Article 26 of the Declaration outlines the essential principles concerning the right to education, offering a normative criterion that continues to inform international legal standards and state obligations with regard to educational access and equity. By explicitly detailing the scope and aims of education, Article 26 not only affirms education as a universal right but also emphasizes its role in fostering individual development, social cohesion, and global peace.

Article 26

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

[...]

The concept of education as a fundamental human right is grounded in these multidimensional justifications. Yet, beyond these practical and social principles, scholars frequently emphasize that the deepest and most profound foundation for the right to education lies in the recognition of human dignity. As such, dignity is not merely a philosophical abstraction but the normative premise upon which all human rights rest. Without access to education, the capacity to live with dignity is significantly undermined. Therefore, recognizing education as a human right is not simply a matter of policy, it is a legal and moral imperative aimed at ensuring the full realization of human dignity¹⁹⁰. This normative imperative is concretely reflected and reinforced through various international legal instruments, which translate these principles into binding commitments. Among the most significant is the Convention on the Rights of the Child¹⁹¹, which explicitly articulates the purposes and responsibilities tied to the right to education.

Article 29.

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

¹⁸⁹United Nations, “Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” United Nations (United Nations), <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>.

¹⁹⁰Beiter, “The protection”, 26-27.

¹⁹¹Convention on the Rights of the Child, OHCHR, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>.

- (a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
- (b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;
- (c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;
- (d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;
- (e) The development of respect for the natural environment.

This provision highlights the multidimensional role of education, emphasizing its fundamental importance not only for individual growth but also for fostering social cohesion and respect for diversity. Despite what is stated in the above mentioned Convention, in 1967 Israeli Military Order 101 stipulated that all educational materials had to receive prior approval from its military review. This decree led to the systematic removal of references to Palestine or Palestinian political claims not only in history and geography but also in Arabic language and religious studies¹⁹², openly against all items contained in Article 29.

A parallel recognition of education's central role can be found in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights¹⁹³, which similarly frames education as a key instrument for promoting human dignity, participation, and peaceful coexistence.

Article 13.

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Important to recall that it was not until 1976 that the term *Palestine* was permitted in OPT elementary and middle school curricula as an alternative to *The Land of Israel*¹⁹⁴. Even more telling is that the 1948 Palestinian catastrophe was first referred to as the *Nakba* in textbooks as late as 2007. Regardless of it, the term was soon removed from the curricula

¹⁹²Assaf, "Educational Disruption and Recovery in Palestine," 51–60.

¹⁹³"International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights," OHCHR, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights>.

¹⁹⁴Mahamid, "History Education for Arab Palestinian Schools in Israel," 41.

after Prime Minister Netanyahu denounced its inclusion as anti-Israel propaganda. Once again, no regard to the Covenant that explicitly declares “[...] further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups”.

Building on this international legal framework, UNESCO offers an even more expansive and operational perspective on the right to education. In its report *Protecting Education from Attack: A State of the Art Review*¹⁹⁵ UNESCO emphasizes education not only as a fundamental right in itself but also as an enabling right, one that establishes the enjoyment of other rights and supports individual and collective well-being. The document affirms: “Education is a fundamental right—both an end in itself and an enabling right; access to quality education enables people to secure and enjoy other rights.”

Additionally, the legal recognition of the right to education is reiterated in several international human rights instruments that aim to combat discrimination based on race, sex, or religion. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination¹⁹⁶ obligates States Parties to

Article 5

In compliance with the fundamental obligations laid down in article 2 of this Convention, States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of the following rights:

[...]

(e) Economic, social and cultural rights, in particular:

[...]

(v) The right to education and training;

This commitment is further reinforced by complementary legal instruments that broaden and deepen the protection against educational discrimination in various forms. The UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education¹⁹⁷ defines discrimination as any distinction, exclusion, limitation, or preference that impairs equality in educational access, quality, or conditions. Article 1 explicitly includes deprivation of access, imposition of

¹⁹⁵Protecting Education from Attack: A State-of-the-Art Review - UNESCO Digital Library, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000186732>.

¹⁹⁶International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, OHCHR, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-convention-elimination-all-forms-racial>.

¹⁹⁷Convention against Discrimination in Education, OHCHR, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-against-discrimination-education>.

inferior standards, segregationist practices, and conditions incompatible with human dignity as forms of educational discrimination.

Article 1.

1. For the purpose of this Convention, the term "discrimination" includes any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education and in particular:

- a. Of depriving any person or group of persons of access to education of any type or at any level;
- b. Of limiting any person or group of persons to education of an inferior standard;
- c. Subject to the provisions of article 2 of this Convention, of establishing or maintaining separate educational systems or institutions for persons or groups of persons; or
- d. Of inflicting on any person or group of persons conditions which are incompatible with the dignity of man.

2. For the purposes of this Convention, the term "education" refers to all types and levels of education, and includes access to education, the standard and quality of education, and the conditions under which it is given.

Deprivation of access couldn't be more definite as the military incursions into educational institutions that in 2021, schools in the West Bank were invaded 155 times¹⁹⁸ by the Israeli army, resulting in arbitrary arrests and physical assaults on students and teachers. Further, the impact of Israel's Separation Wall, constructed around and through parts of the West Bank and Jerusalem, compounds these challenges. Approximately 48 schools¹⁹⁹ have been directly affected by the Wall, with both students and educators experiencing repeated physical assaults, detentions, and invasive inspections at the checkpoints that mark the route. Once again, there is no evidence of any consideration being given to either of the Conventions mentioned above.

Of greater significance, however, the State of Israel has ratified all of the above instruments: the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1991, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1979, and the UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education in 1961. These legal commitments underscore Israel's obligation to protect and fulfill the right to education for all persons under its jurisdiction or

¹⁹⁸Palestinian Ministry of Education, 2021 apud Quneis and Rafidi, "Education under Occupation in Palestine.", 5.

¹⁹⁹Palestinian Ministry of Education, 2021 apud Quneis and Rafidi, "Education under Occupation in Palestine.", 5.

effective control—which has been repeatedly demonstrated to be absent. And this, in itself, should be more than sufficient to compel the Israeli government to comply with its legal obligations—or, belatedly, to be held accountable for its violation of a fundamental right. However, as has been thoroughly demonstrated and will continue to be addressed as follows, neither the gravity of the violations nor the existing legal framework has proven adequate to enable the effective accountability of the State of Israel.

Following the analysis of international instruments, it is essential to examine those grounded in International Humanitarian Law, that is to say, the legal foundation that governs armed conflict and imposes limits on actions against civilians. This shift is necessary given that, up to this point, the discussion has been situated within the normative scope of International Human Rights Law.

3.2 INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW AND THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

In contexts marked by enduring occupation and armed conflict, such as the one experienced in Palestine, the framework of International Humanitarian Law becomes particularly relevant, especially with regard to the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure, including schools and universities. In this regard, the right to education must also be considered through the lens of humanitarian obligations during warfare.

The report *Protecting Education from Attack: A State of the Art Review*²⁰⁰ published by UNESCO, underscores this intersection. It affirms that “Targeted attacks on learners, educators and infrastructure undermine the likelihood of delivering the life-saving and life-sustaining supports that education can afford.” The report makes explicit that the destruction or obstruction of educational access compounds other threats to individual and collective well-being, particularly in contexts marked by conflict and systemic violence.

At the international level, the *Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949*²⁰¹, commonly referred to as the IV Geneva Convention, contains, in Part III concerning the *Status and Treatment of Protected*

²⁰⁰Protecting Education from Attack: A State-of-the-Art Review - UNESCO Digital Library.

²⁰¹Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention), August 12, 1949, 75 UNTS 287, reprinted in “Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide: Atrocity Crimes Prevention”, https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocity-crimes/Doc.33_GC-IV-EN.pdf.

Persons, a Section III dedicated to *Occupied Territories*. Within this section, Article 50 specifically addresses the situation of children, stating the following:

ART. 50.

The Occupying Power shall, with the co-operation of the national and local authorities, facilitate the proper working of all institutions devoted to the care and education of children. The Occupying Power shall take all necessary steps to facilitate the identification of children and the registration of their parentage. It may not, in any case, change their personal status, nor enlist them in formations or organizations subordinate to it. Should the local institutions be inadequate for the purpose, the Occupying Power shall make arrangements for the maintenance and education, if possible by persons of their own nationality, language and religion, of children who are orphaned or separated from their parents as a result of the war and who cannot be adequately cared for by a near relative or friend. [...]

(emphasis added)

The destruction of educational infrastructure has been a recurring phenomenon, particularly in Area C, which, according to the territorial divisions established by the Oslo Accords, remains under full Israeli control. In 2021, Israeli authorities issued demolition orders for ten schools in these areas²⁰². And concerning the Occupied Territory of Gaza, the deliberate scale and intensity of the assaults since 2023 have distinguished the present conflict from previous episodes of violence. According to the Occupied Palestinian Territory Education Cluster, between October 2023 and July 2024, nearly all school buildings in Gaza were either partially or fully destroyed²⁰³. In this regard, it is evident that the Occupying Power has failed to comply with the provisions of the Convention and continues to disregard the rights of the Palestinian population residing in Area C, just to provide some contextual illustration.

The deliberate targeting of Palestinian academic institutions by Israel is not a recent development. As noted in an interview by *Middle East Eye*, such actions have consistently formed part of Israel's broader strategy. For Palestinians, education operates as a vital form of resilience, "a survival mechanism" through which they confront and resist the conditions of colonization by pursuing higher levels of knowledge. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Gaza Strip, where, since 2007, a blockade by land, sea, and air has been in place, severely restricting the movement of people and resources into and out of the territory²⁰⁴. This protracted siege has hamstrung the functioning of Gaza's universities, undermining

²⁰²Palestinian Ministry of Education, 2021 apud Quneis and Rafidi, "Education under Occupation in Palestine.", 4.

²⁰³Faculty of Education et al., *Palestinian Education Under Attack in Gaza*, 2024, 5-10.

²⁰⁴Iriqat et al., "Educide amid Conflict", 83.

academic continuity and institutional stability. The impact of the blockade has been further compounded by repeated military offensives, most notably the 2023–2024 assault, described as the most destructive to date, which has inflicted catastrophic damage on an already fragile educational infrastructure²⁰⁵.

It is important to note that, although the *Geneva Convention and its Additional Protocols* address the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure, there is no explicit or direct mention of schools within their provisions. Nevertheless, schools must be regarded *prima facie* as civilian objects and, as such, fall under the protective scope of IHL²⁰⁶.

IHL provides schools with general protection from being directly targeted, any intentional attack on a school contravenes the principle of distinction and represents a violation of IHL. Also, according to customary international law, civilian objects may not be targeted. The only circumstance under which a school may temporarily lose its protected status is if it becomes a military objective, that is, when its infrastructure is used for military purposes. It is precisely within this exception that the State of Israel has situated the justifications for its attacks.

However, such a claim proves difficult to sustain, particularly in light of the current conflict, where the destruction of schools in Gaza occurs indiscriminately. For instance, *Scholars against the war on Palestine* shows that in only 100 days of the current war in Gaza the Israelis have systematically undermined Palestinian centres of education: every University in Gaza has been bombed; 239 educators killed; 5,213 students killed and 8,691 students injured; 386 schools have been damaged or destroyed; 94 academics targeted and killed.²⁰⁷ The data collected speaks for itself in illustrating the reality.

In line with the provisions of IHL, the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council, generally regarded as binding²⁰⁸ as enacted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, pursuant to Article 25, constitute major decisions with compulsory effect for Member States. It is therefore of critical importance to highlight the resolutions that explicitly address the protection of children and education in the context of armed conflicts, given that, as a Member State of the UN, Israel is expected to comply with such decisions.

²⁰⁵Iriqat et al., “Educide amid Conflict,” 83,87.

²⁰⁶The Protection of Schools under International Humanitarian Law - Militair Rechtelijk Tijdschrift, https://puc.overheid.nl/mrt/doc/PUC_286172_11/.

²⁰⁷“Scholars Against the War on Palestine,” <https://scholarsagainstawar.org/>.

²⁰⁸United Nations Security Council, “Handout: UNSC Resolutions on Children and Armed Conflict”, UNRCCA, https://unrcca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/6-unrcca_handout_unsc_resolutions_eng_2020_1_2.pdf.

Resolution 1998 (2011)²⁰⁹

“4. Urges parties to armed conflict to refrain from actions that impede children’s access to education and to health services and requests the Secretary General to continue to monitor and report, inter alia, on the military use of schools and hospitals in contravention of international humanitarian law, as well as on attacks against, and/or kidnapping of teachers and medical personnel;”

Resolution 2143 (2014)²¹⁰

16. Recalls the importance of ensuring that children continue to have access to basic services during the conflict and post-conflict periods, including, inter alia, education and health care;

17. Reiterates its deep concern about attacks as well as threats of attacks in contravention of applicable international law against schools and/or hospitals, and protected persons in relation to them as well as the closure of schools and hospitals in situations of armed conflict as a result of attacks and threats of attacks and urges all parties to armed conflict to refrain from actions that impede children’s access to education and to health services;

Resolution 2601 (2021)²¹¹

Reaffirming [...] and all relevant Statements of its President, which contribute to a comprehensive framework for addressing the protection of children affected by armed conflict and facilitating the continuation and the protection of education in armed conflict,

Reiterating its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and, in this connection, its commitment to address the widespread impact of armed conflict, including the disruption of access to education, and the long-term consequences this has for durable peace, security and development, Recognizing the need for States to foster an enabling and secure environment to ensure safe access to education; and recalling the international humanitarian law obligations involving the protection of schools and educational facilities in situations of armed conflict,

It is evident, based on the numerous examples discussed throughout this chapter and, more comprehensively, the historical narrative of occupation with particular emphasis on the targeting of the Palestinian educational sector presented in the first chapter, that Israel remains in clear violation of the international legal framework concerning the protection and

²⁰⁹United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1998 (2011) on Children and Armed Conflict, S/RES/1998 (2011), <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/CAC%20S%20RES%201998.pdf>

²¹⁰United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2143 (2014), S/RES/2143, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2143.pdf

²¹¹United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2601 (2021), S/RES/2601, [https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2601\(2021\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2601(2021))

promotion of the right to education in the OPT, East Jerusalem or to Palestinian citizens of Israel. The scale and visibility of the violations are striking, as are the repeated breaches of both International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law. Regardless of the extensive legal corpus that enshrines education as a fundamental right, evidence points to sustained and systematic infringements against the Palestinian people's right to education, from the river to the sea. These violations persist over time, and the persistent inability—or unwillingness—of the international community to hold the State of Israel accountable reveals a structural limitation of international law itself. In light of this impasse, international law is faced with a stark dilemma: either it must confront its own failure to enforce existing norms, or it must be reconfigured in a way that allows for the meaningful implementation of its principles.

It is precisely in response to the persistent inability—or unwillingness—to enforce international legal norms that new concepts and approaches have begun to emerge within academic debates. Driven by the hope of holding actors accountable in specific cases such as the one analyzed in this work, and by the need to prompt the international community to reconsider how legal norms are interpreted, scholars have proposed new definitions aimed at rethinking international law for the twenty-first century. Within this context, the notion of *scholasticide* has gained traction, particularly as it resonates with the unfolding realities of the current war in Gaza.

3.3 SCHOLASTICIDE: TOWARDS A LEGAL RECOGNITION OF EDUCATIONAL ERASURE

Derived from the Latin *schola* (school) and *-cide* (killing), the term captures more than material destruction, it names a deliberate strategy to dismantle a deeply rooted intellectual tradition. Professor Karma Nabulsi, a Palestinian scholar of the laws of war at the University of Oxford, introduced the concept *scholasticide* to describe Israel's systematic destruction of Palestinian education. Although she articulated the term during the 2009 assault on Gaza, Nabulsi situated it within a longer colonial continuum of targeting Palestinian scholars, students, and educational institutions, tracing back to the Nakba in 1948, and intensifying after the 1967 occupation. She emphasized the foundational role of education in Palestinian society, especially under conditions of occupation, where learning becomes a means of imagining freedom and resisting erasure. In her view, this emancipatory potential, what she calls the capacity of education to “posit possibilities, open horizons”,

stands in stark opposition to the constraining mechanisms of Israeli colonial rule, embodied in separation walls, military checkpoints, and prisons. Because of the centrality of education to both Palestinian cultural continuity and political resistance, Nabulsi argues, it has become a target that Israeli colonial policy seeks not merely to suppress but to destroy²¹².

Scholasticide is increasingly being invoked to describe the deliberate and systematic destruction of the right to education in conflict and colonial contexts, particularly in Palestine. As mentioned, the term encapsulates not only the targeting of infrastructure, but also the sustained assault on the institutional, human, and epistemic components of education. So far, for all growing attention to this phenomenon, international law has yet to formally codify *scholasticide* as a distinct legal category. To strengthen its analytical and legal precision, *scholasticide* may be defined through a series of acts that, taken collectively or individually, constitute the systematic destruction, whether in whole or in part, of the educational life of a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group. These acts include²¹³:

1. Killings and assassinations of university and school teachers, students, staff, and administrators.
2. Causing bodily or mental harm to educational personnel and students.
3. Arbitrary arrests and incarceration of educational actors.
4. Systematic harassment and intimidation of the academic community.
5. Bombing and demolishing of educational institutions.
6. Destruction or looting of educational and research resources (libraries, labs, etc.).
7. Obstruction of material imports essential for reconstruction.
8. Prevention of the establishment of new educational structures.
9. Militarization of educational facilities.
10. Closure and disruption of institutional operations.
11. Raids and invasions of schools and universities.
12. Restriction of access to institutions for students and faculty.
13. Denial of educational access to political prisoners, including children.
14. Disruption of internet, electricity, and flow of academic materials.
15. Blocking hiring or mobility of academic staff through visa restrictions.
16. Revocation of residency rights for students and faculty studying abroad.
17. Obstruction of scholarly exchange.

²¹²“Scholars Against the War on Palestine.”

²¹³“Scholars Against the War on Palestine.”

18. Disruption of international and domestic funding for education.

These practices, individually grave and collectively devastating, constitute a targeted assault on the institutional and symbolic foundations of education. As such, they must be understood not merely as violations of international norms, but as mechanisms of epistemic erasure that demand legal recognition under a distinct category of crime.

The October 2023 offensive brought the term *scholasticide* back to the forefront of both public and academic discourse. Among the targeted institutions were all universities in Gaza: the Islamic University of Gaza, Al-Azhar University, Al-Quds Open University, University College of Applied Sciences, University of Palestine, Israa University, Gaza University, Al-Aqsa University, Palestine Technical College, Palestine College of Nursing, and the Arab College of Applied Sciences²¹⁴. The destruction of these facilities directly affected approximately 90,000 university students and 625,000 primary and secondary school pupils, now facing a second consecutive academic year without access to formal education²¹⁵. Nonetheless, the scope of the destruction extended beyond formal education, engulfing the broader cultural and intellectual infrastructure of Palestinian society. Between October 2023 and January 2024, more than 22 archives, libraries, and museums were either destroyed, damaged, or looted, including sites of significant symbolic value such as the Samir Mansour Bookshop and the Diana Tamari Sabbagh Library²¹⁶.

This widespread cultural and documentary destruction, as Doménguez argues, draws *scholasticide* closer to the concept of cultural genocide as originally formulated by Raphaël Lemkin, whose definition of genocide encompassed cultural, moral, and educational dimensions, including the destruction of libraries, museums, and centers of knowledge. The exclusion of these dimensions from the final version of the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* reflects the influence of states that, at the time, pursued internal colonial policies. In this context, *scholasticide* may be interpreted as a contemporary form of cultural genocide. Doménguez, drawing on Lawrence Davidson, defines it as “the deliberate destructive targeting of the cultures of outsider groups, so as to eliminate or weaken them in the process of political domination.”²¹⁷. The destruction of

²¹⁴César Doménguez, “Scholasticide: Educational Lawfare as a Marker of the End of Civianness,” *Diacritics* 52, no. 1 (2024): 120–38, <https://doi.org/10.1353/dia.2024.a955191>, 124.

²¹⁵Iriqat et al., “Educide amid Conflict,” 84; Doménguez, “Scholasticide,” 124.

²¹⁶Doménguez, “Scholasticide,” 124.

²¹⁷Doménguez, “Scholasticide,” 125-127.

schools, universities, archives, and memory centers is not collateral damage but rather a calculated strategy of cultural and political disintegration.

Still, this strategy does not operate solely through material destruction, it is sustained and legitimized by legal and rhetorical infrastructures that normalize and rationalize the targeting of Palestinian educational institutions. Relying on Perugini and Gordon, Doménguez identifies the use of *lawfare* as a mechanism for legitimizing violence, whereby the State of Israel attempts to justify attacks on educational institutions by invoking alleged military use of civilian infrastructure. He introduces the concept of *academic lawfare* to describe this legal manipulation aimed at shifting the blame for destruction onto Palestinians themselves²¹⁸. This tactic is accompanied by dehumanizing rhetoric that strips the population of Gaza of their civilian status, as illustrated by official statements referring to the region as a “city of terror” or its inhabitants as “animals”, thus establishing a necropolitical grammar that normalizes extermination²¹⁹. These legal and rhetorical strategies do not operate in isolation, but rather reinforce—and are reinforced by—a broader colonial apparatus aimed at dismantling Palestinian educational structures over time.

The systematic destruction of education in Gaza thus reveals a colonial policy of cultural and epistemic erasure whose effects are deeply structural. Even before the current escalation, data from the 2022/2023 academic year already pointed to conditions of extreme precariousness: 796 schools served 608,000 students with a teaching staff of 22,000; in higher education, 17 institutions accommodated 87,000 students and employed 5,000 staff members²²⁰. The devastation of this infrastructure, combined with the targeted killing of intellectuals such as Refaat Alareer and Sufian Al-Tayeh, signifies not only the annihilation of an academic generation but also the disruption of Palestinian intellectual continuity²²¹. In this context, the consequences extend far beyond the loss of physical infrastructure or individual lives, they affect the very foundations of future collective development.

This offensive severely undermines scientific production, the international mobility of researchers, the training of technical professionals, and the development of strategic projects in fields such as health, engineering, and education. The destruction of human capital and knowledge institutions obstructs the emergence of an autonomous and democratic society, entrenching structural dependency and deepening social vulnerability²²².

²¹⁸Doménguez, “Scholasticide.”, 129.

²¹⁹Doménguez, “Scholasticide.”, 130.

²²⁰Iriqat et al., “Educide amid Conflict.”, 86.

²²¹Iriqat et al., “Educide amid Conflict.”, 89-91.

²²²Iriqat et al., “Educide amid Conflict.”, 90-91.

Such long-term and multifaceted impacts sharply contrast with the international legal framework designed to protect educational institutions and safeguard the right to education in armed conflicts.

Although international resolutions, as demonstrated above in this chapter, demand the protection of education in conflict zones or occupied territory, the deliberate destruction of Palestinian schools and universities continues in flagrant violation of International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law. Thus far, regardless of these normative safeguards, international legal frameworks remain insufficient to adequately capture and prosecute the systematic nature of such attacks.

In international legal terms, the recognition of *scholasticide* as a distinct crime remains uncertain. *The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* requires proof of *dolus specialis*, the specific intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group²²³. Although this requirement is not explicitly stated in the Convention, it has been consistently applied as an implicit standard in international jurisprudence, making it particularly difficult to classify acts targeting education as genocidal²²⁴. Given these constraints, legal scholars and human rights advocates have increasingly looked to alternative legal frameworks to capture the gravity of educational destruction.

By contrast, the *Rome Statute* allows for the prosecution of crimes against humanity based on widespread or systematic attacks directed against civilians, provided the perpetrator is aware of the nature of the attack. Within this framework, *scholasticide* could potentially be characterized as a crime against humanity, insofar as it constitutes a direct assault on the cultural and social continuity of a people²²⁵.

International jurisprudence has consistently affirmed that attacks on educational institutions can constitute grave breaches of international law. For instance, in *Prosecutor v. Kordić & Čerkez*, the *International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia* held that the destruction of religious or educational institutions, when driven by discriminatory intent, amounts to persecution as a crime against humanity. The Court concluded: “This act, when perpetrated with the requisite discriminatory intent, amounts to an attack on the very

²²³Regent College London, UK and Rula Alousi, “Educide: The Genocide of Education A Case Study on the Impact of Invasion, and Conflict on Education,” *The Business and Management Review* 13, no. 02 (August 10, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.24052/BMR/V13NU02/ART-28>, 334.

²²⁴Regent College London, UK and Alousi, “Educide.”, 331-340.

²²⁵Regent College London, UK and Alousi, “Educide.”, 335.

religious identity of a people. [...] The destruction and wilful damage of institutions dedicated to Muslim religion or education [...] may amount to an act of persecution”²²⁶.

A similar reasoning was employed by the *International Criminal Court* in *Prosecutor v. Al Hassan Ag Abdoul Aziz Ag Mohamed Ag Mahmoud*²²⁷. The Court emphasized that not every human rights violation qualifies as persecution; only those involving a “serious denial” of fundamental rights, including the right to education, and carried out in violation of international law, fall within this category. The ruling affirmed that persecution may encompass both tangible and intangible rights, among them the right to life, the right not to be subjected to arbitrary detention, and, crucially, access to education.

Concerning the term *scholasticide*, as Doménguez argues, the primary obstacle remains the lack of adequate legal language. Legally naming and framing the systematic destruction of Palestinian education requires not only empirical evidence but also a political and epistemological struggle for the recognition of colonial and ‘epistemicidal’ violence²²⁸. As long as international law continues to operate within a state-centric and colonial model, populations under prolonged occupation will remain without effective instruments of protection and redress.

As noted by Abdullah Abdelmonem, former Deputy Minister of Education in Gaza, any sustainable educational progress depends on the achievement of a comprehensive political resolution and the establishment of a sovereign state capable of guaranteeing the fundamental rights of its population²²⁹. In the current context, marked by the intensification of settler colonialism and the devastation of civilian infrastructure, the destruction of Palestinian education functions as a central mechanism within a long-term project of domination.

3.4 CONCLUSION

The analysis developed throughout this chapter has demonstrated that the right to education, although enshrined in multiple International Human Rights and Humanitarian

²²⁶Kordić & Čerkez (IT-95-14/2) | International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, https://www.icty.org/en/case/kordic_cerkez, paragraph 207.

²²⁷Rectificatif à La Décision Relative à La Confirmation Des Charges Portées Contre Al Hassan Ag Abdoul Aziz Ag Mohamed Ag Mahmoud | International Criminal Court, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/court-record/icc-01/12-01/18-461-corr-red>, paragraph 664.

²²⁸Doménguez, “Scholasticide.”, 130.

²²⁹Abdullah Abdelmonem *apud Nicolai, Fragmented Foundations*, 125.

Law instruments, is systematically violated by Israeli colonial policy. The destruction of schools, universities, and Palestinian cultural centers, alongside the ideological control of curricula and restrictions on the mobility of students and teachers, constitutes a sustained pattern that transcends isolated incidents. It is an orchestrated, long-term project aimed at dismantling the structures of knowledge transmission, identity formation, and collective resistance among the Palestinian people.

By examining the relevant international legal frameworks, it becomes clear that Israel, despite being a signatory to core treaties, persistently disregards the obligations these instruments impose. The ratification of such treaties has not translated into effective guarantees for the Palestinian population, revealing a profound dissonance between formal international commitments and the practices sustained under occupation.

The legal discussion further revealed the structural limitations of international law in effectively holding states accountable for systematic violations committed against populations under prolonged occupation. While important precedents have been established by international tribunals such as the ICTY and the ICC, the existing legal mechanisms remain insufficient to recognize and prosecute structural and cultural forms of violence, such as the destruction of education. Further, the requirement of *dolus specialis* for the classification of genocide, for example, severely limits the applicability of that legal category to the Palestinian situation.

In this context, the emerging concept of *scholasticide* seeks to fill a normative and epistemological gap by naming a specific mode of violence targeting the systematic destruction of educational institutions, collective memory, and the cultural continuity of a people. While existing legal instruments address isolated violations of the right to education, they remain ill-equipped to confront this deliberate and coordinated dismantling of Palestinian educational life. *Scholasticide*, as developed in this study, offers a coherent framework through which education may be protected not only as an institution, but as a vital infrastructure of political resistance, cultural reproduction, and epistemic sovereignty.

Moreover, *scholasticide* intersects with multiple legal regimes: it involves violations of international humanitarian protections for civilians and educational infrastructure; it embodies elements of cultural genocide, as defined by Davidson and referenced by Doménguez; and it constitutes a form of persecution targeting specific groups through their educational institutions. Its formal recognition would allow for the consolidation of these dispersed violations into a coherent legal category, making possible more precise documentation, legal mobilization, and, most important, accountability.

As displayed in this chapter, the impact of such devastation extends beyond the educational sector, affecting public health, technological innovation, and the cognitive sovereignty of the population. In other words, the attack on education undermines the very foundations of a politically autonomous society. The case of Gaza offers an urgent and compelling illustration. The near-total obliteration of its educational infrastructure, the mass killing of students and teachers, and the systematic obstruction of rebuilding efforts constitute not merely a humanitarian tragedy, but a paradigm of educational erasure. Despite the clear gravity of these acts, international law has thus far lacked the terminology and legal mechanisms to properly define, condemn, and prevent their recurrence. *Scholasticide* provides the conceptual and legal clarity necessary to name the crime.

Beyond material destruction, this chapter has also exposed the instrumentalization of law as a strategy to legitimize violence. Israel's official rhetoric, invoking the alleged military use of civilian infrastructure, enacts a reversal of responsibility that criminalizes the very victims of violence. This legal maneuvering is accompanied by dehumanizing discourse that denies the civilian status of Palestinians and constructs the symbolic and juridical grounds for their targeted extermination.

As demonstrated, the destruction of Palestinian education aligns with the legal definitions of persecution and crimes against humanity, as set out in Article 7(h) of the Rome Statute. Yet these frameworks remain insufficient to grasp the full scope of epistemic erasure perpetrated under settler colonial regimes, reinforcing the urgency of recognizing *scholasticide* as a distinct and autonomous category within international criminal law.

Impertavely, the recognition of *scholasticide* as a distinct legal norm is not a symbolic gesture, it is a condition for the activation of international accountability mechanisms. Without a legal name, these practices risk being normalized or invisibilized under broader rubrics of conflict. Naming the crime is the first step toward justice, and it affirms the political, cultural, and human significance of education in contexts of colonial domination.

Given its direct affront to fundamental principles such as dignity, cultural integrity, and the right to education, *scholasticide* exhibits the normative features of an emerging peremptory norm (*jus cogens*). As a practice that aims at the destruction of the very conditions for the reproduction of a people's cultural and intellectual existence, it challenges the foundations of international law itself. Its recognition is therefore not only warranted but urgent.

Any sustainable reconstruction of the Palestinian educational system is contingent upon the attainment of political sovereignty and self-determination. As long as the colonial structures of occupation and apartheid persist, education will remain a central target of Israeli violence. The systematic destruction of Palestinian education is not a byproduct of conflict, it is a core mechanism of domination whose recognition and confrontation are urgent prerequisites for the realization of meaningful international justice.

FINAL REMARKS

This research has critically examined how the Israeli regime has systematically instrumentalized education as a tool of colonial domination over the Palestinian people. Drawing on historical, theoretical, and legal analyses, the study has argued that the destruction, control, and erasure of Palestinian education, what this research conceptualizes as *scholasticide*, does not represent a series of incidental violations, but rather a structural and sustained component of the Israeli settler-colonial project.

From the Nakba in 1948 to the present, education has been both a target and a battleground in the broader colonial enterprise. Israeli control over Palestinian education has evolved in phases: from the fragmentation of curricula and the censorship of historical narratives, to the militarization of schools and the persecution of teachers and students. What emerges is a deliberate project of epistemic violence aimed at tearing Palestinians from their land, their memory, and their capacity for political imagination.

This thesis has demonstrated that Israeli educational policies are not incidental security measures, but function within a broader settler-colonial logic that, as Patrick Wolfe articulates, is premised on the elimination of the native rather than their integration. Education, in this paradigm, becomes an infrastructure of domination, one designed to dissociate Palestinians from their right to narrate themselves. The suppression of the term “Nakba,” the manipulation of geographic and historical content, and the institutionalized fragmentation of educational authority expose the Israeli regime’s intent to dehistoricize Palestinian subjectivity and dismantle collective identity. Chapter II explored how this process is not limited to material destruction or administrative repression. Exploiting theorists such as Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, and Paulo Freire, the study framed education as a symbolic terrain, one that sustains political consciousness, national memory, and epistemic sovereignty. The Israeli assault on Palestinian education is, therefore, not only about restricting access or demolishing infrastructure, it is about reshaping subjectivities, silencing narratives, and replacing natives knowledge with colonial epistemologies.

The repression of Palestinian education reached a critical point during the First Intifada, when nearly all schools in the West Bank were closed for extended periods, and informal education was criminalized. Even after the Oslo Accords and the nominal transfer of educational authority to the Palestinian Authority, Israel retained and intensified its control over borders, curricula, funding, and movement. Through censorship, surveillance,

and the strategic deployment of donor pressure, the Israeli regime continued to delegitimize Palestinian educational sovereignty.

The situation in Gaza exemplifies the culmination of these violent practices. Since 2007, Gaza has endured an airtight blockade punctuated by massive military assaults. The destruction of nearly 93% of the Strip's educational infrastructure between October 2023 and July 2024, alongside the killing of over 10,000 children and 400 educators, constitutes not only a humanitarian emergency but a calculated obliteration of educational futurity. These losses are not the collateral effects of war, they are the intentional targeting of a people's intellectual and cultural continuity.

International law, as it currently stands, has not evolved sufficiently to address crimes that unfold over extended durations and through complex colonial structures. The dominant legal frameworks, whether based on armed conflict or individual criminal responsibility, are oriented toward intense, time-bound violations rather than the slow, cumulative violence exercised through settler-colonial regimes. In the Palestinian case, the occupation is not an exceptional condition but a protracted system of governance. As such, legal mechanisms that require clear battlefield distinctions or isolated criminal events remain structurally inadequate. The destruction of Palestinian education cannot be framed merely within the rubric of wartime violations, it demands a paradigm shift that accounts for the colonial temporality of violence.

As demonstrated in Chapter III, international legal frameworks, including the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, and the *Geneva Conventions*, do formally protect the right to education and civilian infrastructure. However, these instruments have proven incapable of naming, prosecuting, or preventing the systematic violence directed at Palestinian education. The requirement of *dolus specialis* for the crime of genocide, for example, renders existing categories insufficient to capture the broader assault on epistemic survival.

In response to this legal and conceptual gap, this thesis has introduced the notion of *scholasticide* as a distinct legal and normative category. Drawing on the work of Karma Nabulsi, UN reports, and critical legal theory, *scholasticide* denotes the systematic destruction of educational infrastructure, personnel, and epistemic possibility as an intentional mode of warfare and repression. It encompasses not only the bombing of schools and the killing of teachers, but also the criminalization of curricula, the censorship of memory, and the transformation of education into an apparatus of elimination. This violence exceeds the physical, it is a form of epistemic genocide.

The assault on Palestinian education is not confined to the physical demolition of schools and universities, it strikes at the heart of epistemic sovereignty. As Edward Said has shown, knowledge is a site of power and domination. In the context of Palestine, the obliteration of archives, the censorship of historical narratives, the silencing of native voices, and the targeting of scholars form part of a strategy to erase Palestinian modes of knowing and being. The epistemological dimension of *scholasticide* must be recognized as equally damaging as its physical manifestations. Without the ability to produce, transmit, and preserve knowledge, a people is rendered vulnerable not only to military defeat, but to ontological erasure.

To speak of reconstruction is to engage with more than infrastructure, it is to envision the reconstitution of pedagogical autonomy, institutional sovereignty, and cultural continuity. A meaningful educational recovery requires addressing the structural conditions, including occupation and blockade, that have systematically impeded educational sovereignty. Such transformation must be grounded in international legal obligations and in the principle of self-determination. Any sustainable reconstruction effort must be Palestinian-led, grounded in the right to self-determination, and free from donor conditionalities that reproduce dependency and fragmentation. As long as the siege persists, and as long as Israeli control defines the material and symbolic conditions of Palestinian life, reconstruction will remain constrained by the very forces that necessitated it.

Recognizing *scholasticide* as a crime is not merely a legal imperative, it is an ethical and political necessity. Naming the crime allows for the recognition that these are not isolated violations but structural acts of domination. It creates the conditions for legal accountability and symbolic justice, affirming that the erasure of a people's educational infrastructure is the erasure of their future. Without this recognition, the destruction of Palestinian education will continue to be mischaracterized as collateral damage rather than what it is: a central pillar of colonial warfare.

Naming *scholasticide* is not only a juridical operation, it is a political and moral act. In an international order that often privileges the language of neutrality and decontextualized violence, introducing a term that links education to colonization, repression, and elimination unsettles dominant narratives. *Scholasticide* repositions education as a battlefield and asserts that the erasure of cultural and intellectual life constitutes a crime against peoples. It demands a rupture with frameworks that reduce education to access or service delivery and insists on education as a site of historical

memory, resistance, and futurity. In doing so, it challenges international institutions to confront the colonial legacies embedded in their own operations and legal standards.

Freire's vision of education as a practice of freedom, Fanon's analysis of colonial violence as an assault on the psyche, and Said's critique of Orientalist epistemologies converge in the Palestinian struggle for educational sovereignty. Palestinian teachers and students are not merely surviving within a system designed to erase them, they are trying to rebuild spaces of learning as acts of dignity and defiance. Education in Palestine is not only a domain of repression, it is a terrain of liberation.

At last, this thesis contends that there can be no decolonization of Palestine without the decolonization of education. Reclaiming educational sovereignty means reclaiming the right to memory, to narrative, to self-definition. It is not only about classrooms or textbooks, it is about existence itself. Education is not a supplement to freedom, it is its very condition.

The struggle for Palestinian education is therefore inseparable from the broader struggle for liberation. *Scholasticide* names the crime. Decolonized education names the horizon.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abu-Saad, Ismael. 2006. "State Educational Policy and Curriculum: The Case of Palestinian Arabs in Israel.", *International Education Journal*, 2006, 7(5), 709-720.
- Abu-Saad, Professor Ismael. 2008. "Present Absentees: The Arab School Curriculum In Israel As A Tool For De-Educating Indigenous Palestinians." *Holy Land Studies* 7 (1): 17–43. <https://doi.org/10.3366/E147494750800005X>.
- Abu-Saad, Ismael, and Duane Champagne. 2006. "Introduction: A Historical Context of Palestinian Arab Education." *American Behavioral Scientist* 49 (8): 1035–51. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764205284717>.
- Adwan, Sami, Daniel Bar-Tal, and Bruce E. Wexler. 2016. "Portrayal of the Other in Palestinian and Israeli Schoolbooks: A Comparative Study." *Political Psychology* 37 (2): 201–17. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12227>.
- Alayan, Samira. 2018. "Zionism as the Other in Curricula and Textbooks of the Palestinian National Authority." In *Multiple Alterities*, edited by Elie Podeh and Samira Alayan, 77–97. Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62244-6_4.
- Alayan, Samira, and Celia Riley. 2024. "The New Palestinian Textbooks: A Strategy for National Identity and Self-determination." *Nations and Nationalism* 30 (2): 235–61. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12976>.
- Alzaroo, Salah, and Gillian Lewando Hunt. 2003. "Education in the Context of Conflict and Instability: The Palestinian Case." *Social Policy & Administration* 37 (2): 165–80. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9515.00332>.
- Arar, Khalid. 2012. "Israeli Education Policy since 1948 and the State of Arab Education in Israel.", *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education*, 1.
- Assaf, Said. 1998. "Educational Disruption and Recovery in Palestine." In *Final Report and Case Studies of the Workshop on Educational Destruction and Reconstruction in Disrupted Societies, Geneva, Switzerland, 15–16 May 1997*, edited by Sobhi Tawil, 51–60. Geneva: UNESCO International Bureau of Education.
- Beiter, Klaus Dieter. 2005. *The Protection of the Right to Education by International Law*. Vol. 82 of *International Studies in Human Rights*. Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- BPLvideos, dir. 2021. *Settler Colonialism and Palestine: A Conversation*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJVybInwI6k>.
- Brown, Nathan J. n.d. "Democracy, History, and the Contest Over The Palestinian Curriculum."
- Convention against Discrimination in Education., OHCHR. Accessed June 01, 2025. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-against-discrimination-education>.

- Convention on the Rights of the Child., OHCHR. Accessed June 01, 2025. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>.
- Customary IHL | ICRC.” 2014. July 28, 2014. <https://www.icrc.org/en/law-and-policy/customary-ihl>.
- Delbrück, Jost. 1992. “The Right to Education as an International Human Right.” *German Yearbook of International Law* 35: 77–104.
- Desai, Chandni. 2024. “The war in Gaza is wiping out Palestine’s education and knowledge systems.” *The Conversation*. February 8, 2024. <http://theconversation.com/the-war-in-gaza-is-wiping-out-palestines-education-and-knowledge-systems-222055>.
- Doménguez, César. 2024. “Scholasticide: Educational Lawfare as a Marker of the End of Civianness.” *Diacritics* 52 (1): 120–38. <https://doi.org/10.1353/dia.2024.a955191>.
- Education Undermined by Deteriorating Humanitarian Situation in Gaza.” 2018a. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - Occupied Palestinian Territory. May 10, 2018. <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/education-undermined-deteriorating-humanitarian-situation-gaza>.
- “———.” 2018b. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - Occupied Palestinian Territory. May 10, 2018. <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/education-undermined-deteriorating-humanitarian-situation-gaza>.
- Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, Centre for Lebanese Studies, and UNRWA. 2024. *Palestinian Education Under Attack in Gaza: Restoration, Recovery, Rights and Responsibilities in and through Education*. Cambridge: Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge. <https://doi.org/10.56502/Cambridge.9781914521065>
- Fanon, Frantz. 2005. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press.
- Farsakh, Leila. n.d. “Rethinking Statehood in Palestine.”
- Freire, Paulo, and Donaldo Macedo. 2005. *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Freire, Paulo. 1985. *The Politics of Education: Culture, Power, and Liberation*. 1. publ. South Hadley, Mass: Bergin & Garvey.
- . 2016. *Pedagogy of Indignation*. Series in Critical Narrative. London New York: Routledge.
- Freire, Paulo, Ana Maria Araújo Freire, Walter de Oliveira, Johnny Saldaña, Tami Spry, Marcelo Diversi, and Cláudio Moreira. 2014. “*Pedagogy of Solidarity*.” Routledge.
- Freire, Paulo. 1998. *Pedagogy of the Heart*. New York: Continuum.

- . 1998. *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*. Translated by Patrick Clarke. Foreword by Donaldo Macedo. Introduction by Stanley Aronowitz. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- . 2014. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition*. Translated by Myra Bergman Ramos. 30th anniversary edition. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Freire, Paulo, and Ira Shor. 1987. *A Pedagogy for Liberation*. London: Macmillan Education UK.
- Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention), August 12, 1949, 75 UNTS 287, reprinted in “Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide: Atrocity Crimes Prevention”
https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocity-crimes/Doc.33_GC-IV-EN.pdf.
- Giroux, Henry A. 2013. *On Critical Pedagogy*. Reprinted. Critical Pedagogy Today Series. New York London Oxford New Delhi Sydney: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Giroux, Henry A. 2022. *Pedagogy of Resistance: Against Manufactured Ignorance*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Golan-Agnon, Daphna. 2006. “Separate but Not Equal: Discrimination Against Palestinian Arab Students in Israel.” *American Behavioral Scientist* 49 (8): 1075–84.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764205284719>.
- Hilal, Jamil. 2015. “Rethinking Palestine: Settler-Colonialism, Neo-Liberalism and Individualism in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.” *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 8 (3): 351–62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17550912.2015.1052226>.
- How the Israeli Military’s Destruction of Gaza’s Schools and Universities Is Creating a Lost Generation. *Arab News Japan* (blog). Accessed May 29, 2025.
https://www.arabnews.jp/en/middle-east/article_114721/.
- International Criminal Court (ICC), *Rectificatif à La Décision Relative à La Confirmation Des Charges Portées Contre Al Hassan Ag Abdoul Aziz Ag Mohamed Ag Mahmoud*.
<https://www.icc-cpi.int/court-record/icc-01/12-01/18-461-corr-red>.
- International Court of Justice (ICJ), *Summary of the Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024 on the Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*, Summary 2024/8,
<https://www.icj-cij.org/node/204176>.
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, OHCHR. Accessed June 03, 2025.
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-convention-elimination-all-forms-racial>.
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights., OHCHR. Accessed June 03, 2025.
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights>.

- Iriqat, Dalal, Rula Alousi, Tahani Z. Aldahdouh, Alaa AlDahdouh, Iman Dankar, Dima Alburai, Mohamed Buheji, and Abdo Hassoun. 2025. "Educide amid Conflict: The Struggle of the Palestinian Education System." *Quality Education for All* 2 (1): 81–99. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QEA-10-2024-0120>.
- Khalidi, Rashid. 2024. *Palestina: um século de guerra e resistência (1917–2017)*. 1. ed. São Paulo: Todavia.
- Killing of Gaza's Academics Amounts to 'Educide,' Say Campaigners.", Middle East Eye. Accessed May 29, 2025. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/war-gaza-israel-killing-academics-educide-campaigners-say>.
- Kordić & Čerkez (IT-95-14/2) | International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Accessed June 10, 2025. https://www.icty.org/en/case/kordic_cerkez.
- Mahamid, Hatim. 2017. "History Education for Arab Palestinian Schools in Israel." *Journal of Education and Development* 1 (1): 37. <https://doi.org/10.20849/jed.v1i1.249>.
- Mahshi, Khalil, and Kim Bush. 1989. "The Palestinian Uprising and Education for the Future." *Harvard Educational Review* 59 (4): 470–84. <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.59.4.156766w31t075600>.
- Mansour, Sylvie. 1996. "The Intifada Generation in the Schoolroom." *Prospects* 26 (2):293–310. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02195507>.
- Mikdashi, Maya. 2016. "What Is Settler Colonialism? (For Leo Delano Ames Jr.)" In *The Settler Complex: Recuperating Binarism in Colonial Studies*, edited by Patrick Wolfe, 221–230. Los Angeles: UCLA American Indian Studies Center.
- Militair Rechtelijk Tijdschrift. *The Protection of Schools under International Humanitarian Law*. Accessed June 10, 2025. https://puc.overheid.nl/mrt/doc/PUC_286172_11/.
- Mora, Kai. 2024. "A Fanonian Perspective on Israel and Palestine." *The Republic* (blog). July 4, 2024. <https://republic.com.ng/june-july-2024-2/a-fanonian-perspective-on-israel-and-palestine/>.
- Moughrabi, Fouad. 2001. "The Politics of Palestinian Textbooks." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 31 (1): 5–19. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2001.31.1.5>.
- Mueller, Chelsi. 2012. "The Educational Philosophy and Curriculum of the Palestinian Nationalist Movement: From Arab Palestine to Arab-Islamic Palestine." *Middle Eastern Studies* 48 (3): 345–62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00263206.2012.661721>.
- Naser-Najjab, Nadia. 2020. "Palestinian Education and the 'Logic of Elimination.'" *Settler Colonial Studies* 10 (3): 311–30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2020.1760433>.
- Nicolai, Susan. 2007. *Fragmented Foundations: Education and Chronic Crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*. Paris: UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning.
- "Palestinian Territories:" *IMPACT-Se* (blog). Accessed May 15, 2025. <https://www.impact-se.org/reports-2-2/palestinian-territories/>.

- Pappé, Ilan. 2004. *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pappé, Ilan. 2016. “Revisiting 1967: The False Paradigm of Peace, Partition and Parity.” In *The Settler Complex: Recuperating Binarism in Colonial Studies*, edited by Patrick Wolfe, 213–226. Los Angeles: UCLA American Indian Studies Center.
- Pinson, Halleli. 2020. “The New Civics Curriculum for High Schools in Israel: The Discursive Construction of Palestinian Identity and Narratives.” *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice* 15 (1): 22–34. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1746197919840811>.
- Protecting Education from Attack: A State-of-the-Art Review - UNESCO Digital Library. Accessed June 09, 2025. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000186732>.
- Quneis, Juman, and Tina Jaber Rafidi. 2023. “Education under Occupation in Palestine: Resilience and Resistance.” *Education as Change* 27 (October). <https://doi.org/10.25159/1947-9417/14851>.
- Regent College London, UK, and Rula Alousi. 2022. “Eduicide: The Genocide of Education A Case Study on the Impact of Invasion, and Conflict on Education.” *The Business and Management Review* 13 (02). <https://doi.org/10.24052/BMR/V13NU02/ART-28>.
- Resolution 1244 (1999). Adopted by the Security Council at Its 4011th Meeting, on 10 June 1999. 2000. *The International Journal of Human Rights* 4 (3–4): 369–75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642980008406917>.
- Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court | International Criminal Court.” n.d. Accessed June 10, 2025. <https://www.icc-cpi.int/publications/core-legal-texts/rome-statute-international-criminal-court>
- Said, Edward W. 1979. *Orientalism*. 1st Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books.
- . 1994. *Culture and Imperialism*. 1st Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books.
- “‘Scholasticide’: How Israel Is Systematically Destroying Palestinian Education in Gaza.” n.d. Accessed May 29, 2025. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/education/-scholasticide-how-israel-is-systematically-destroying-palestinian-education-in-gaza/3135127>.
- Shehadeh, Lana. 2020. “Review: *Education in East Jerusalem: Occupation, Political Power, and Struggle*, by Samira Alayan.” *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 13 (2): 138–40. <https://doi.org/10.1525/caa.2020.13.2.138>.
- Students, Teachers and Schools Should Always Be Protected in Armed Conflict | ICRC. 2023. September 11, 2023. <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/students-teachers-and-schools-should-always-be-protected-armed-conflict>.
- University of Cambridge, Centre for Lebanese Studies, and United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). 2024. *Palestinian Education Under Attack in Gaza: Restoration, Recovery, Rights and Responsibilities in and through Education*. September 25, 2024. Available at:

- <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/palestinian-education-under-attack-unrwa-25sep24/>. Accessed February 20, 2025.
- United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “UN Experts Deeply Concerned over ‘Scholasticide’ in Gaza,” April 5, 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/04/un-experts-deeply-concerned-over-scholasticide-gaza>.
- United Nations. 1966. *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. General Assembly Resolution 2200A (XXI), December 16, 1966. Accessed February 19, 2025. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights>.
- United Nations Security Council. *Handout: UNSC Resolutions on Children and Armed Conflict*. UNRCCA. https://unrcca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/6-unrcca_handout_unsc_resolutions_eng_2020_1_2.pdf.
- United Nations Security Council. 2011. *Resolution 1998 (2011) on Children and Armed Conflict*. S/RES/1998 (2011). <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/CAC%20S%20RES%201998.pdf>.
- United Nations Security Council. 2014. *Resolution 2143 (2014)*. S/RES/2143. https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2143.pdf.
- United Nations Security Council. 2021. *Resolution 2601 (2021)*. S/RES/2601. [https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2601\(2021\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2601(2021)).
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). 2025. *Humanitarian Situation Update #266: West Bank*. February 25, 2025. Accessed February 25, 2025. Available at: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-266-west-bank>.
- United Nations. 1948. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. General Assembly Resolution 217 A (III), December 10, 1948. Accessed February 17, 2025. Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>.
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - Occupied Palestinian Territory.” n.d.
- United Nations, “Universal Declaration of Human Rights.” United Nations. United Nations. Accessed June 09, 2025. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>.
- Wolfe, Patrick. 2006. “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native.” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8 (4): 387–409. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240>.
- , ed. 2016. *The Settler Complex: Recuperating Binarism in Colonial Studies*. Los Angeles, California: UCLA American Indian Studies Center.