
Borders And Boundaries: Land As Act Of Warfare

The Zionist Project in Israel and the Apartheid Regime in South Africa are both extensions of settler-colonialism and rose to power on the foundation of ethnic cleansing and forced displacement of their respective indigenous populations.

The concept of territorial separation is key to understanding the similarities and differences between Apartheid South Africa and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.

Following the 1948 Israeli War of Independence or the Palestinian Nakbha, the 160,000 or so Palestinians who were not forced into exile became displaced amongst Israel's domestic borders (Erakat, 2019) and were deemed a threat to Israel's survival. In the period of 1948-1949, Israel sought to negate the non-Jewish population living in Palestine and destroyed 450 Arab villages, expelled two thirds of native Palestinians from their land and placed the remaining population under military rule (Farsakh, 2005). With UN intervention, an armistice was agreed upon between Israel and Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon in what was believed to serve as a temporary arrangement until permanent peace deals were to be established. Israel's territory according to the 1949 Armistice Demarcation Line comprised roughly 78% of Mandate area while Jordan occupied the West Bank and Egypt presided over Gaza. The Armistice Lines between Israel and its Arab neighbours are known popularly as The Green Line. (White, 2009)

The 1967 War dramatically altered the demographic of Israel when it captured the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and West Bank and assumed responsibility for the remaining one million Palestinians who accounted for a third of Israel's population at the time (Farsakh, 2005). The land grab drew unanimous condemnation from the international community, resulting in UNSC Resolution 242 containing the key phrase: "Withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict". This nuance in language has been the cornerstone of Arab-Israeli negotiations with Israel interpreting the resolution as withdrawing from some territories while Arab nations assert it must be from all the territories. Israel contends that the status of the Palestinian territories is equivocal due to no internationally recognized government presiding over the territories preceding the 1967 war and regards them as 'disputed' rather than 'occupied', and therefore, Israel was allowed to exercise its authority there "without either preserving the sovereign rights of its inhabitants or absorbing them under [Israel's] civil jurisdiction" (Erakat, 2019). This is in flagrant disregard of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which states: "The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies." It also prohibits the "individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory" (Amnesty International, 2016).

The system Israel used to handle the Palestinians at the time drew a notable comparison to the South African Apartheid, as central to asserting its control was the building of 145 settlements and transferring 196,000 settlers from 1970 – 1993 (White, 2009) which undermined the territorial claim of WBGS. An emphasis on the intricate composition of the settlements is crucial if one is to grasp the extent the structures have had on the political landscape of the occupied territories. Ethnic and religious exclusivity are written into Israeli Laws, and expressed every time a bulldozer blade cuts into a Palestinian home (Ben White, 2009). Security measures

including checkpoints, roadblocks which have affected the freedom of movement for Palestinians as well as the network of roads that connect the settlements to Israel proper. Israel's policies of urban planning signify powerful geostrategic tools in its quest for a Jewish-majority balance by encouraging Jewish expansion and suppressing Palestinian construction, while expropriating Palestine's most vital resources: land and water. South Africa sought to subjugate its black population by segregating territories and preventing poverty from spilling into white areas. In contrast, Israel tried to suppress the natives through building around and between Palestinian areas. The ramifications of Israel establishing territorial integration with societal separation laid the foundation of an Apartheid system by default (Farsakh, 2005) and applying two separate legal systems to people living in the same place. Initially Israel attempted to rule over the population in nonviolent ways in what Neve Gordon refers to as the Colonization Principle, undertaking the administration of major civil institutions such as education, healthcare, welfare, financial and legal systems (Gordon, 2008) and incorporated Palestinians into the workforce which provided cheap labour for the Israeli market by satisfying economic needs and in turn had a significant impact on the living standards of Palestinian populations. However, Gordon notes that there is a substantial difference between growth and development and despite Palestinians experiencing a rise in their living standards, any chance of developing their local economy or establishing industries was repressed. Palestinians were subject to "the deliberate, systematic destruction of an indigenous economy by a dominant power" (Roy, 2006). These policies crushed the Palestinian economy while ensuring its dependency on Israel. There was never an intention of integrating Palestinians into the Israeli citizenry but rather to make them non-national subjects. From 1967-1990 border were kept open and a quarter of the Israeli GDP was dependent on Palestinian workers which added up to about a third of the Palestinian population (Farsakh, 2005). Following the onslaught of violence in the late 1980s brought by the first intifada (Arabic for 'uprisings'), Israel clamped down on population movement with restrictions without giving Palestinians viable prospects for economic independence.

The Oslo Peace Process bought the apartheid and conflict comparisons together by institutionalizing societal separation and territorial integration and paving the way of Bantustanization of the WBGS through pass permits and security control. Bantustanization is the Israeli military response to transfer of control from Israel to Palestine according to the "Land For Peace" formula the USA promoted in the Oslo Accords (Black, 1992) whereby Israel would return lands and withdraw its military troops in exchange for a ceasefire. Oslo envisioned that Palestinians would assume control of their civil and security affairs in areas under their control, but they still had to coordinate with Israeli authorities via joint Israeli-Palestinian committees. The Oslo Process also did not assert the authority of international law over Israeli law that has been governing OPT since 1967. There was no mention of UNGAR181, which declares legitimacy for an Arab state in historic Palestine. Israel in turn has been allowed to redistribute and reorganize its power when it sees fit, exemplified in its withdrawal from Gaza but settlement expansion in the West Bank.

The Iron Wall doctrine by rightist leader Vladimir Jabotinsky conceived what would become the most notable separation infrastructure in the conflict, but it was cemented by labour leaders Yitzhak Rabin. The wall was proclaimed to be non-political and solely a means to deter suicide bombers but has further undermined the Palestinians by acquiring more of their land, restricting freedom of movement and dividing families who reside on different sides. Its route through occupied West Bank territory means that the Wall infringes directly on the rights and lives of 210,000 Palestinians residing in 67 villages, towns and cities. Their freedom of movement has

been seriously affected by the bypass roads linking the settlements to Israel and the numerous Israeli checkpoints and roadblocks, all set up with the aim of cutting the geographical contiguity amongst Palestinian areas while erasing the social and commercial life in East Jerusalem. Israel formalised its annexation of the eastern half of the city in 1980 when it passed the Jerusalem Law, claiming that “Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel”, in violation of international law, which declares the city be administered by the UN for its importance to the three Abrahamic religions. Israel has confiscated 35% of the Palestinian lands in East Jerusalem and allocated them to Jewish colonization (Erakat, 2019). Israel has also used zoning policies to declare 22% of Palestinian land as “green areas” on which Palestinians were not allowed to build. Currently, only 13% of the total area of East Jerusalem is zoned for Palestinian construction, and most of it is already built and inhabited (White, 2009). Israel considers any construction without a permit “illegal” and frequently demolishes such constructions, causing forced displacement of the inhabitants. In 2017, US President Donald Trump announced a shift in decades of US policy by recognising Jerusalem as Israel's capital and moving its embassy there.

The seizing of land by an occupying power, in this case Israel's intention of settling a permanent colonial community, can relate to the indigenous population residing there in two possible scenarios. Their exploitation as a subordinated labour force, as happened in much of Latin America, Algeria and South Africa, or their more or less rapid extermination, as occurred in Australia, North America and the Caribbean (Wolfe, 2006). Israel exemplifies both relationships as it was initially dependent on Palestinian labour but with the influx of Mizrahi and Sephardi Jewish immigration integrating into the labour force, Palestinians were systematically outsourced and replaced. Neve Gordon shares a similar outlook when analysing the Israeli military occupation's transition from holding sovereignty over managing the Palestinians as subjects in the economic and social spheres to gradually working to remove them from the political and physical landscape, spelling the gradual ejection of a people whose persistent presence has been a perpetual obstacle to the completion of the Zionist project (Lloyd, 2012). Had Israel declared its borders along the 1949 armistice line, maintaining an 80 percent demographic balance may have been possible. Israel, however, has never declared any borders (Morris, 1995.) Rather than make provisions in Area C (62 percent of the West Bank under temporary Israeli civil and military jurisdiction, as stipulated in the Oslo Accords) for eventual Palestinian control, it has firmly established its settlement-colonial pursuits while Bantustanization as not bought Palestinians closer to a viable state but more comparable to the unsustainable Bantustans of SA's apartheid. Israel has created in the Occupied Territories a regime of separation based on discrimination, applying two separate systems of law in the same area and basing the rights of individuals on their nationality. This regime is singular in the modern world, and is reminiscent of the Apartheid regime in South Africa. If Zionism strived to acquire a land without a people, Apartheid South Africa's was to acquire a land while subjugating its people.

Hendrik Verwoerd, the architect of Apartheid, in an effort to deter international criticism embarked on a “separate development” approach (Finkelstein, 1995). The Apartheid regime incorporated the mechanisms of urban planning to segregate on a national-scale to push its white-nationalist agenda and fractionated South Africa. The strategy was to establish a demographic majority of white people in South Africa, similar to the occupation in the West Bank trying to solidify a Jewish majority faced with the rising numbers of Arab populations. Between 1951-1970 four major acts were legislated by the SA parliament: The Group Areas Act, 1950; the Population Registration Act, 1950; the Bantu Authorities Act, 1951 which had its origins the

Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 THAT created reserves for the native black population. Then in 1970 the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act made the native population legal citizens of their Bantustans, denying black South Africans political rights in white South Africa and transferred reserves into 10 homelands: Addressing the question of Black South African's right to self-determination and political representation in a way that excluded them from the democratic process which the whites wanted for their sole control (Farsakh, 2005).

From 1961 to 1983, some 3.5 million non-white South Africans were forcibly removed from their homes and forced into ten segregated enclaves, the infamous Bantustans. Under the veneer of democratic and self-autonomous, where black people could realize their political ambitions, Verwoerd rationalized that black people would be held responsible for the failure of their states. These lands were non-contiguous and away from landscape devoid of any resources where a viable economy and infrastructure could be established. This was a clear economic strategy that served two purposes in ensuring the convenient access of cheap black labour that still preserved an ethnically exclusive white state, while enhancing the financial legitimacy of Bantustans to the international community through subsidies and loans (Said, 1995). South Africa did not intend to nullify the indigenous population, as exemplified by Israel's approach to the Palestinians, but rather facilitate them into a supply of cheap labour for white areas. The international community condemned apartheid and refused Transkei, the first Bantustan state, admittance into the UN. A notable point of contention in the Israeli-Palestinian apartheid analogy is the two-state territorial partition as a solution to the conflict while the ANC refused the Afrikaners' Bantustan separatist approach and called for the creation of a democratic nation for all citizens. Townships were designed for control and exclusion and found their development in colonial town planning. Forcibly removing Africans from urban areas and relocating them into townships would create vacant spaces purged of any remnants of indigenous culture and customs while simultaneously creating black labour districts on the periphery of cities and towns, which still represent large portions of the contemporary South African citizenry. A quarter (24.35% or about 11.6 million) of South Africa's population of 47.8 million people live in the 76 largest townships in the country. All these areas are characterized by low levels of community facilities and commercial investment, high unemployment, low household incomes and poverty.

Apartheid ended, legally and politically, in 1994; yet the extensive effects of its policies, spatial as well as social and economic, have not been so simple to undo. Apartheid means, after all, separation, and many of its laws formalized and extended an already long-standing racial segregation (Low, 2017). Land reform in South Africa is a highly divisive and contentious political matter. Decades of colonial dispossession sanctioned through discriminatory Apartheid laws impeded possibilities of land ownership amongst the black majority and were intended to shape Africans into a passive and compliant underclass. What emerged was Native Housing beyond the gaze of the ruling white minority (Mills, 1989)

Upon the country's independence from white-minority rule in 1994, in order to ensure the approval of free elections by the National Party, the A.N.C renounced major land transfers from white to black ownership. The A.N.C's primary objective was inclusion into the existing system, they wanted themselves to be part of the capitalist economy (Mbeki, 2008) and began negotiating land reparations through a programme that allowed the government to buy land from willing white farmers, much to stagnant results with most of the farmland still falling under ownership of the white population. It is estimated that white South Africans, who form approximately nine percent of the country's population, own more than 70 percent of the commercial agricultural land. Property rights in black communities are not explicitly stated (von

Fintel, 2005) which is a by-product of colonialism, as well as the terms in conjunction with negotiations to end the Apartheid civil war. Property rights are protected by South Africa's constitution, but to propel the stalled land reform process, the government is now considering a constitutional change that would allow it to expropriate land from white farmers without paying for it. (Mutlokwa, 2019)

In Alexandra, a poor township that makes up part of Johannesburg and is situated in close proximity to the upper-class suburb of Sandton, the juxtaposition of wealth inequality prevalent in South Africa is perfectly exemplified. Alexandra's population is predominantly black South Africans who have been historically marginalized through displacement to the contained ghetto periphery of the country's political landscape. Andy Clarno contends this is a notable difference between the case of Palestinians as black South Africans are "never truly outside of capital" and are actively part of the continuous capital accumulation by dispossession. Clarno highlights the actions of securitization in the contemporary era of South Africa where private security systems have been developed to prevent possible robberies in wealthier white neighbourhoods perpetrated by black intruders. These networks are set up using security firms that use forms of racialized policing and guerrilla warfare and aid in supporting the unstable practices of neoliberal apartheid in both locations. Clarno then points to citizens of Bethlehem who make their livelihood through stone-cutting and are dealt the humiliating blow of maintaining the occupation's neoliberal attempts at containing the Palestinian populations via enclosed spaces by cutting down "some west Bank hills to build Israeli settlements on others" (Clarno, 1994) symbolizing a humiliating practice of neoliberal colonization. The incongruous roles that the low-paid security teams who come from the same areas the security practices position against, and the Palestinian workers who facilitate Israeli settlement expansion emphasizes the instable and volatile dynamics of settler colonial and racial capitalist endeavours. "Space is the construct that most effectively maintained apartheid's grand plan and continues to ensure the endurance of its legacy" (Low, 2017). Another prime example is Silwan, an Israeli settlement that borders the Old City where settlers have private security guards and around the clock escorts to offer protection from the surrounding Arab towns (Bartal, 2012).

The deep-rooted consequences of the Apartheid regime's forced removals help preserve and the discrimination of white minority tyranny and have produced a massive barrier for the economic inclusion and empowerment of its black citizens as well as the unification of South Africa as a whole.