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## Between Authority and Resistance: the Political Evolution of Gaza from 1948 to Hamas

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### Abstract

This paper examines the historic and political dynamics of administration in Gaza, focusing on the impact of Egyptian rule, Palestinian administration, and the rise of Hamas. The relevance of this topic lies in its implications for understanding the Palestinian struggle for self-determination. The aim is to analyze how the different government structures have shaped Palestinian identity and resistance. A qualitative approach was used, focusing on historical analysis and contextual examination of key events, based on a review of academic articles and books. The findings reveal that the Egyptian administration laid the foundations for political organisation, the Oslo Accords introduced complexities that fueled internal divisions, and the emergence of Hamas further transformed the socio-political landscape, intertwining the administration with armed resistance. This work contributes to a deeper understanding of the interaction between the administration and the resistance in Gaza.

### Keywords:

administration; Hamas; identity; Palestine; resistance.

### Article info

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Since the 20th century, the Gaza Strip has been one of the most unstable and disputed territories in the Middle East, marked by successive forms of domination and resistance. After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the British Mandate in Palestine, Gaza was administered by Egypt (1948-1967), before passing to Israeli control after the Six-Day War. More recently, it has undergone profound political transformations, including a brief control by the Palestinian Authority since 2007, governance by Hamas, in a context of international isolation and military blockade. The relevance of this study lies in the analysis of a key moment in this trajectory: the First Intifada (1987-1993), understood as a massive and organized expression of civil resistance to the Israeli occupation and as a turning point in the consolidation of Palestinian national identity.

The subject of administration in Gaza, particularly under Egyptian rule, Palestinian control, and the subsequent rise of Hamas, are of significant importance in understanding the complex socio-political landscape of the region. This article investigates the historic and contemporary dynamics of governments in Gaza, addressing the critical problem of how these different forms of control have shaped the lives of the Palestinian people and influenced the wider Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The importance of this research lies in its potential to illuminate the factors contributing to ongoing tensions and the quest for Palestinian self-determination.

The problem we aim to investigate centers on understanding the main socio-political factors that led to the outbreak of the First Intifada and the way this movement influenced the construction and affirmation of Palestinian collective identity. This question is crucial, as it allows an in-depth reading of the internal dynamics of Palestinian society under occupation, the resistance strategies adopted, and their symbolic and political effects, both locally and internationally. At the same time, it aims to analyze how the forms of governance - from Egyptian rule to the current Hamas administration - shaped the context that led to the Intifada and its subsequent developments.

This article adopts a qualitative and historical-analytical approach, based on a critical review of the literature and an analysis of secondary sources. This method is particularly suitable as it allows for a comprehensive understanding of the historical processes and political structures that influence governance and resistance in Gaza.

The article is organized chronologically, starting with the period of Egyptian rule (1948-1967), passing through Israeli control and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in the 1990s, and culminating with the rise of Hamas and the current governance in Gaza. It will also analyze the context and causes of the First Intifada and discuss its impact on the construction of Palestinian identity. The main aim of the research is to analyze how the different forms of administration in Gaza – including Egyptian rule, Palestinian governance, and Hamas control – have shaped the socio-

political landscape of the region and influenced the Palestinian people's struggle for self-determination. The research question guiding this study is: "How have Egyptian rule, Palestinian control, and Hamas governance shaped the socio-political landscape of Gaza and influenced the Palestinian struggle for self-determination?"

## **Egyptian domination**

In the 1960s, the Gaza Strip was under Egyptian administration, and the rest of Palestinian territory was divided. In June 1967, the Six-Day War took place between Israel and a coalition of Arab states led by Egypt, including Syria and Jordan, with Iraq and Lebanon playing minor roles. In the Arab world, the war is known as the June War or al-Naksa, which means setback or calamity. The period between 1949 and June 1967 was characterized by a series of military confrontations between Israel and these countries that preceded the Six-Day War ([Haun 2023](#)).

The Suez Crisis of 1956 was an important milestone in the escalation of tensions that would lead to the Six-Day War in 1967. During the crisis, Israel temporarily occupied Sinai, claiming self-defense against Fedayeen attacks from the Gaza Strip, then under Egyptian control, and aiming to reopen the Straits of Tiran, blocked to Israeli shipping. Under international pressure, especially from the US, Israel withdrew, and the UN established an emergency force (UNEF) in Sinai. In May 1967, Egypt demanded the withdrawal of UNEF, blocked the Straits of Tiran again, and mobilized its troops in Sinai, measures considered by Israel to be acts of war. The defence treaty between Egypt and Jordan and statements by Arab leaders increased the sense of existential threat in Israel, leading to the outbreak of the Six-Day War ([Sabel 2022](#), 47).

As early as May 1967, the Soviet Union passed on fabricated information to Syria and Egypt about an alleged mobilization of Israeli forces on the Syrian border. In response to this information, Egypt mobilized troops in Sinai on 14 May, requested the withdrawal of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) on 16 May and declared the closure of the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping on 22 May, which was marked as the immediate cause of the war ([Goldstein 2018](#)).

On 5 June 1967, Israel launched Operation Moked ("focus" in Hebrew), a pre-emptive air strike that destroyed a large part of the Egyptian air force on the ground, gaining air supremacy. Later that day, the Israeli Air Force (IAF) turned its attention to the Syrian and Jordanian air forces, quickly gaining air superiority over the West Bank and the Golan Heights. Without the threat of enemy air strikes, the Israeli army began a three-pronged offensive in Sinai, which resulted in the collapse of the Egyptian army the following morning. In the course of a week, Israel secured its borders and doubled its territory, conquering the Sinai, the Old City of Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights. A UN Security Council ceasefire was observed

on 10 June 1967 (Haun 2023).

Although it was a decisive victory for Israel, the Six-Day War did not result in a peace agreement. In turn, a series of cross-border air and artillery attacks began a low-intensity war of attrition, which continued for the next three years (Haun 2023). Some consider this war to be a direct continuation of the 1948 War (Martinelli 2022, 154).

This war had consequences such as a new wave of Palestinian refugees, estimated at around 200,000 people, who joined those already displaced by the 1948 war, led to the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights, and is seen as a significant defeat for Arab nationalism. In November 1967, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 242, which called for an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and a just solution to the refugee problem (Martinelli 2022, 136-138, 153-155, 162-166, 238). Some argue that the war was the result of a miscalculation by the Egyptian leadership. Others suggest that there was subtle coordination, but not a military conspiracy, between Israel and the United States, while the Soviet Union and Syria may have incited Egyptian involvement in the crisis (Yossef 2006).

The war had a significant impact on Palestinian national identity and the rise of armed resistance, with the decline of pan-Arabism and the rise of political Islam within the Palestinian movement. Following Egypt's defeat, Israel occupied Gaza, which until then had been under Egyptian administration. The occupation marked the beginning of a new period of Israeli military control over the territory, drastically altering the political, social, and economic life of the region. Thousands of Palestinians were displaced, and there was a significant increase in repression and tensions between the local population and the occupying forces. Israel's continued presence in Gaza fueled Palestinian resentment and resistance, contributing to the emergence of movements like Hamas in the following decades and consolidating Gaza as one of the central focuses of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Martinelli 2022, 153).

## **Israeli Occupation**

Between the Six Day War (1967) and the First Intifada (1987), the Gaza Strip experienced two decades under Israeli military occupation, marked by repression, demographic growth, and growing Palestinian frustration. During this period, Israel built settlements in the region and imposed strict control measures, while the Palestinian population faced mobility restrictions, economic hardship, and a lack of civil rights (Sprague 2013). Egypt, despite having lost direct control over Gaza, continued to have symbolic influence, and the Palestinian cause remained alive throughout the Arab world. The lack of a political solution and worsening living conditions led to a build-up of tensions that would eventually explode in 1987 with the outbreak of the First Intifada, a popular uprising against the Israeli occupation that began in Gaza before spreading to the West Bank (Martinelli 2022, 154).

The First Intifada was then a period of widespread Palestinian civil unrest and resistance against Israeli occupation and policies that took place between 1987 and 1993, motivated by decades of frustration with military occupation, settlement expansion, and political stagnation. What many cite as the trigger for the First Intifada was an accident in Gaza that killed four Palestinians. After this accident, the movement quickly spread, taking the form of a widespread uprising with protests, strikes, boycotts, and clashes - symbolized by the “sons of stones” facing tanks with stones ([Sotirović 2024](#)). The resistance combined non-violent and violent actions, organized by a local leadership, the LNUL, which later aligned itself with the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation) ([Farraj 2017](#)). The Israeli response was marked by strong repression, with thousands of arrests and deaths. The Intifada strengthened Palestinian national identity, attracted international attention to the conflict, and prepared the ground for the Palestinian Declaration of Independence (1988) and the start of the Oslo Accords peace process ([Naser-Najjab 2020](#)).

The Gaza Strip was one of the main centers of the First Intifada and was the scene of intense clashes between Palestinians and Israeli forces. Popular resistance in Gaza was marked by protests, strikes, boycotts, and, above all, violent clashes, with young people throwing stones at Israeli forces. The Israeli military response was severe, including mass arrests, reprisals, and the use of excessive force, resulting in a large number of Palestinian deaths and injuries, especially among young people ([Bjur 2014](#)). In addition to physical repression, the Intifada had a major social and economic impact on Gaza. The blockade and restrictions increased, exacerbating economic difficulties, while violence and social instability further weakened community life. However, the Intifada also strengthened Palestinian identity in Gaza, consolidating the sense of resistance and the quest for an independent state ([Junka 2006](#)).

## **Palestinian control**

In order for there to be peace between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), the two parties agreed in 1993 to sign a series of agreements called the Oslo Accords. Signed by Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin in September 1993, the Oslo Accords, whose official name was the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, or Declaration of Principles (DOP), provided for the establishment of a Palestinian National Authority in parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian population centers ([Bjur 2014](#)). However, although the Accords were greeted with much acclaim by many, this was not well received by others, as settlement construction continued apace ([Feldman 2008](#), 237).

After the Oslo Accords, the West Bank and Gaza were divided into three areas: Area A (approximately 65 per cent of Gaza and 3 per cent of the West Bank), where the

Palestinians had both security and civilian control; Area B (about 23 per cent of the West Bank), where the Palestinians controlled the civilian part and the Israelis maintained military control; and Area C, where Israel had total control. In the following years, a power station was built in Gaza, but it was destroyed by Israeli forces in the summer of 2006 ([Feldman 2008](#), 294).

The Oslo process, which began in December 1992 and culminated with the signing ceremonies of 13 September 1993 on the White House lawn, was made up of a series of agreements designed to address a series of increasingly complex issues in an incremental way. The 1993 Declaration of Principles was followed in 1995 by the Taba or Oslo II Agreement, the 1998 Wye River Memorandum, and the 1999 Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum. The PLO, for its part, concentrated on bringing the agreement into line internally with UN resolutions 242 and 338. Internationally, it appealed for assistance from the US and other members of the international community to ensure the implementation of the Accords. Unlike other peace processes, there was no significant external force capable of defining the terms of the debate or credibly guaranteeing that all parties would comply with the Oslo agreement. The gradual nature of the Oslo Accords also made them more susceptible to implementation failures, increasing the risk of internal opponents hindering their realization. Despite initial hopes that the Oslo Accords could lead to an end to the conflict, the Second Intifada began just over seven years later, plunging the region back into violence and dashing hopes for peace, which raised many questions about the failure of the Oslo process ([Hancock and Weiss 2011](#)).

These Accords resulted from the PLO's new approach to negotiating with the Israeli occupation, leading to Israeli recognition of the PLO as the representative of its people and the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). However, these agreements were subsequently highly criticized and eroded the legitimacy of the PLO in many sectors of Palestinian society. The Oslo Accords were intended, among other things, not to suffer another intifada, which eventually happened, and for the PNA to be a complementary control police for its more revolutionary population ([Martinelli 2022](#), 194).

The expansion of settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, the construction of the Separation Wall, the isolation of Gaza, the split between Fatah and Hamas, and Arab representation within Israel all contributed to discrediting the peace process. These factors created significant obstacles to the implementation of the Oslo Accords and increased mistrust between the parties involved in the peace process. After the Second Intifada, some Palestinians advocated a single state as a solution ([Martinelli 2022](#), 299).

In the context of the Oslo I Accords, Palestinian political alliances were formed, such as the alliance between Fatah and the PPP, known as Jerusalem and State, and the alliance between Islamists and the PFLP-DFLP, called Jerusalem First, which rejected



Oslo I's "Gaza and Jericho first" plan. After Oslo I, the first Palestinian National Security Forces (PNSF) were mobilized in Jericho and Gaza. The borders of Area A, defined by Oslo II in 1995, were demarcated with concrete blocks, with numerous Israeli and Palestinian checkpoints (Farraj 2019).

The Oslo Accords do not refer to the possibility of creating a Palestinian state and leave open the question of the final status of the West Bank and Gaza. According to the Oslo Accords, the Palestinian Authority received 'all civil powers and responsibilities' in the areas of the West Bank with an Arab population. However, the interim agreement stipulated that the Palestinian Authority would have no powers in foreign affairs (Sabel 2022, 270, 392) .

After the Oslo Accords, there was also the Peace Treaty between Israel and Jordan, signed in 1994, which had some impact on the Gaza Strip. Although the treaty was not directly involved, it represented a significant change in the regional context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. By normalizing relations with Israel, Jordan weakened the United Arab Front against Israel and left the Palestinians, including those in Gaza, more politically isolated (Sabel 2022, 236, 300) .

For many Palestinians, especially in Gaza, the treaty was viewed with suspicion and even as a betrayal of the Palestinian cause, as it was signed before the creation of a Palestinian state. It also symbolized the growing alignment of some Arab countries with Israel without the Palestinian question being resolved. In return, the treaty strengthened Israel's security on its eastern borders, allowing Tel Aviv to concentrate more resources on managing and repressing the occupied territories, including Gaza (Martinelli 2022, 111, 113, 125) .

In 1994, Israel withdrew from parts of the Gaza Strip, and Yasser Arafat came to govern the region on behalf of the PNA. The continued construction of Israeli settlements, restrictions on mobility, economic blockades, and the perception that Israel was not fully honoring its commitments undermined the confidence of the Palestinian population. In Gaza, the economic situation deteriorated with high levels of unemployment and poverty, aggravating popular frustration (Bjur 2014).

Discontent grew further with perceived corruption in the PNA leadership and internal repression. During this period, Islamist groups such as Hamas gained strength in Gaza, criticizing the Oslo Accords and rejecting coexistence with Israel. Rising tensions, coupled with the stagnation of the peace process and sporadic clashes with Israeli forces, culminated in the outbreak of the Second Intifada in September 2000, following Ariel Sharon's provocative visit to the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem (Naser-Najjab 2020).

The Camp David negotiations, held in July 2000, were an attempt to reach a final agreement between Israel and Palestine, mediated by the United States and led

by President Bill Clinton, with the participation of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. The negotiations addressed key issues such as borders, security, the status of Jerusalem, Israeli settlements, and the right of return of Palestinian refugees. These complex and sensitive issues were central to the negotiations, reflecting the main points of contention between the parties involved. Despite progress on some points, the negotiations broke down mainly due to disagreements over Jerusalem and the refugees ([Freas 2017](#)). Israel proposed concessions that included part of East Jerusalem, but Arafat considered the offer insufficient and feared losing legitimacy with his people. The failure of the negotiations contributed to rising tensions that culminated in the outbreak of the Second Intifada a few months later ([Salihu 2024](#)).

The Second Intifada, also known as the Al-Aqsa Intifada, was a remarkable period of violence in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which took place from September 2000 to January 2005. This period was characterized by intense clashes, suicide attacks, and military operations, resulting in a great loss of life and further aggravating tensions between Israelis and Palestinians. Unlike the First Intifada, which was predominantly non-violent, the Second Intifada was characterized by intense violence ([Asali, Abu-Qarn and Beenstock 2024](#)).

Some authors suggest that Yasser Arafat premeditated the Intifada after his return from the Camp David Accords ([Naser-Najjab 2020](#)). Palestinian frustration with the stalled peace process and the failure to resolve the final status issues of refugees, settlements, and Jerusalem also contributed to the climate of tension ([Abu-Nimer 2002](#)).

The Second Intifada was marked by armed attacks and suicide bombings perpetrated by Palestinian militants. In response, the Israeli army reoccupied Palestinian towns and refugee camps and engaged in clashes with Palestinian militants and security forces. The level of violence from both was high, resulting in the deaths of 3243 Palestinians and 957 Israelis, as well as thousands of injuries ([Asali, Abu-Qarn and Beenstock 2024](#)).

Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, played a central role in the Second Intifada, being the main advocate of suicide bombers. Other Palestinian factions also took part in the violence, including the Fatah-affiliated Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades and Islamic Jihad ([Rojas and Matta 2016](#)). Hamas abandoned suicide attacks around 2005, which coincided with an increase in the internal Palestinian conflict and preparations for the 2006 legislative elections.

The Second Intifada led to increased polarization and a further deterioration in relations. There was a rise in Islamist militancy and a crisis in the Palestinian national movement ([Junka 2006](#)). After the Second Intifada, some Palestinians began to advocate a one-state solution. Interestingly, the co-operation between Israelis and Palestinians that took place during this period had a pacifying effect, suggesting that the Intifada could have been



even more violent and prolonged without it (Asali, Abu-Qarn and Beenstock 2024). The Second Intifada represented a significant increase in violence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with serious consequences for both sides and the prospects of peace (Abu-Nimer 2002).

Gaza became one of the main stages of the conflict, suffering from intense Israeli military operations, blockades, and the increasing militarization of Palestinian factions, especially Hamas (Abu-Amr 1993). The generalized violence, which included suicide attacks, bombings, invasions, and demolitions, caused thousands of deaths and injuries, largely civilians (Robinson 2004).

Gaza's economy collapsed due to the siege, the destruction of infrastructure, and the closure of borders, exacerbating (Hroub 2006) poverty and unemployment. The atmosphere of war and repression reinforced popular support for armed groups and Hamas, which strengthened politically during the conflict and ended up winning the 2006 legislative elections. The Second Intifada also contributed to the weakening of the Palestinian Authority in Gaza, culminating in Israel's unilateral withdrawal from the Strip in 2005 and, later, the political split between Fatah (West Bank) and Hamas (Gaza). This division hinders a unified Palestinian front, weakening diplomatic efforts for an independent Palestinian state (Abu-Amr 1993).

## **The rise of Hamas**

The Gaza Strip came under Hamas control in 2007 after clashes with Fatah. Hamas (Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya), which means "zeal" in Arabic and is the acronym for the Islamic Resistance Movement, emerged during the First Intifada, marking a period of political revitalization for Islamic forces in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in the face of Israeli occupation and secular forces led by the PLO. Hamas was born from within the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine, with the aim of actively participating in the resistance against the Israeli occupation. Its creation was partly a response to the initial attitude of the Muslim Brotherhood, which had distanced itself from active resistance (Abu-Amr 1993).

The charter of 18 August 1988 defines Hamas' philosophy, logic, and positions. In this charter, Hamas considers all of Palestine to be Muslim land ('waqf') that cannot be ceded. The stated aim of the charter is the destruction of the State of Israel and the creation of an Islamic state throughout the territory. The charter rejects peace negotiations and international initiatives that involve ceding any part of Palestine, considering them contrary to the movement's doctrine and religious faith. Jihad is seen as the only solution to the Palestinian problem. Despite its initial stance, later documents reveal an evolution in Hamas' thinking, with a greater emphasis on state-building and some nuance towards resistance and a two-state solution. Although theoretically separate from the Muslim Brotherhood, in practice, Hamas became

increasingly intertwined with the parent organisation. Hamas' initial leadership consisted of Shaykh Ahmad Yasin and six other founding members. Later, wings and committees were set up to deal with political issues, security, military operations, and the media. Overall leadership is vested in a *majlis shura* (advisory council), made up of members from both inside and outside the occupied territories. Hamas has built a vast institutional network that provides social services, including mosques (through al-Mujamma"), medical and educational institutions (such as the Islamic University of Gaza) and political institutions (such as university student parties) ([Hroub 2006](#)).

Hamas has gained credibility because of its active role in the Intifada and its relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood. Hamas' institutional network allows it to publicize its ideas, gather supporters, and provide social services. Sectoral elections in professional associations, trade unions, and student councils indicate the growing popularity of the movement. After the failure of the Oslo process and the start of the second Intifada in 2000, some polls suggested that support for Hamas had equaled that of Fatah ([Robinson 2004](#)).

On an international level, Hamas has historically been interlinked with the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, which has provided it with doctrinal, political, moral, and material support. The movement has also received support from Islamic movements in several Arab countries and in Islamic communities in Europe and the United States. Relations with Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states deteriorated after the Gulf War, while relations with Iran improved. Iran came to be singled out as a supplier of military training and financial support to Hamas. Hamas' sources of funding include local contributions, donations from individuals and Islamic movements abroad, as well as support from certain governments ([Abu-Amr 1993](#)).

After the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, Hamas won the majority in the legislative elections in January 2006. In 2007, after clashes with Fatah, Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip. Since then, Hamas has ruled the region. This Hamas takeover in 2007 solidified the political and administrative division of Palestine ([Atiya 2024](#)).

With the handover of control of Gaza to Hamas in 2007, Israel imposed a tight and comprehensive blockade on the Gaza Strip, significantly limiting the movement of people and goods. The Gaza Strip, where Hamas exercises power, is a densely populated area with a large proportion of Palestinian refugees. Living conditions in the Gaza Strip under Hamas rule are difficult, with high unemployment rates and a shortage of resources, exacerbated by the blockade. Infrastructure, including wastewater treatment plants, has suffered damage due to the conflicts ([Bjur 2014](#)).

Hamas is considered by some to be an Islamic fundamentalist jihadist terrorist organisation whose main goal is the destruction of Israel. Hamas has been involved in repeated confrontations with Israel, including the launching of rockets into Israel

and military confrontations that have resulted in various Israeli operations against Gaza, such as the 2008-2009 war and other conflicts. Some authors suggest that the Israeli policy of containment may have inadvertently allowed Hamas to develop its military capacity ([Finn Ostendorff 2016](#)).

Despite the blockade and conflicts, Hamas also engages in political activities, such as sponsoring forums and events, and is seen by some Palestinians as a legitimate resistance force against the occupation. Hamas differentiates between the idea of the movement and its organisation. Hamas' goal is the liberation of Palestine and the foundation of an Islamic state. In 2005, Hamas accepted the terms of agreement based on the 1967 borders, the right of return for refugees, East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine, and the release of prisoners, while also reaffirming the right to build military capacity ([Rojas and Matta 2016](#)).

The Hamas takeover of Gaza in 2007 followed a period of growing tension with Fatah, culminating in a confrontation that solidified the administrative and political division of the Palestinian territories. Hamas considers armed resistance to be a legitimate means of liberating Palestine. Hamas has managed to draw global attention to the Palestinian cause through its actions in Gaza. However, the elimination of Hamas as a goal for the future of Gaza is considered impractical by some, given that its ideology is deeply rooted in the Palestinian population. The future of the Gaza Strip, however, will have to be determined by the Palestinians themselves ([Milton 2024](#)).

## Conclusion

This study sought to understand how Egyptian rule, Palestinian control, and Hamas governance have shaped the socio-political landscape of the Gaza Strip and influenced the Palestinian struggle for self-determination. The analysis showed that each of these phases of governance had significant impacts, not only on administration and living conditions, but also on the consolidation of a national identity centered on resistance.

Egyptian rule (1948-1967) was a phase of indirect administration, during which Gaza remained on the margins of a real process of institutional development, but which laid the foundations for incipient forms of political organisation. With the subsequent Israeli occupation and the challenges posed by repression and the economic blockade, a collective feeling of resistance emerged. This culminated in the First Intifada, the founding moment of modern Palestinian national consciousness.

The establishment of the Palestinian Authority, resulting from the Oslo Accords, represented an attempt at self-government which, although symbolic, failed to guarantee effective sovereignty or institutional stability. Its limitations were exacerbated by factors such as corruption, political fragmentation, and the

continued Israeli occupation. In this context, the rise of Hamas from 2006 onwards represented not only a change of power but also a transformation of the very concept of governance in Gaza, merging civil administration with armed resistance. This duality had contradictory effects: it galvanized part of Palestinian society, while polarizing the territory and hampering efforts at internal reconciliation and international negotiations.

By revisiting the central question – how did these different phases of governance shape Gaza? – the results indicate that they all contributed, to varying degrees, to the construction of a collective identity centered on resistance and the quest for self-determination. The historical context provided by Egyptian rule, the expectations (and disappointments) of Palestinian governance, and the polarizing impact of Hamas reveal a trajectory where resistance is not only a reaction to external oppression but also a response to the crisis of internal legitimacy.

Furthermore, the effects of these phases on the socio-economic dimension have been profound. Poverty, unemployment, and dependence on international aid increased as a result of fragmented governance and the continuing Israeli blockade, particularly after 2007. These factors aggravated the vulnerability of the population and strengthened the link between material deprivation and political mobilization, especially among young people.

The applications of this research are diverse. By shedding light on how the different regimes have influenced the political structure and identity in Gaza, the study offers analytical tools for policymakers and international actors who want to intervene more effectively in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. An informed understanding of the historical and social roots of the resistance can lead to more sensitive approaches, centered on the real aspirations of the Palestinian people.

However, the study has limitations. The emphasis on historical governance structures may have overlooked the current role of grassroots movements and civil society, which continue to shape the political space in Gaza. Furthermore, the analysis is predominantly based on secondary sources and the historic dimension, and does not fully reflect contemporary dynamics and the perceptions of the current population.

For future research, it is proposed to explore the role of community organisations and youth movements in building alternative forms of resistance and governance. Studies on the influence of international aid and external pressures, as well as comparative analyses with other regions under occupation or in a situation of prolonged blockade, could offer additional insights and generate innovative strategies for promoting peace.

In short, this study has revealed the intricate relationship between governance and resistance in the Gaza Strip, emphasizing how the legacies of different administrations

have shaped not only local institutions but also the collective identity of the Palestinian people. Understanding this trajectory is essential to addressing current challenges and charting paths towards a more just and peaceful future.

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#### **DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT**

The data supporting this study are derived from publicly available sources and referenced within the article. No additional datasets were generated or analyzed specifically for this research.

#### **DECLARATION on AI use**

The author confirms that AI tools, including language models such as ChatGPT, Notebooklm and DeepL, were used solely to enhance the writing process, improve readability, and assist with grammar and formatting. All intellectual content, analysis, and critical arguments are the result of the author's original work. The AI tools were not used to generate research findings or substitute independent scholarly work.