



**Arab American University
Faculty of Graduate Studies**

**Reclaiming Palestinian Native Culture through
Explorations in Women's Knowledge: A Study of the
Impact of Colonialism on the Relationship between
Palestinian Women and Nature**

By

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**This thesis was submitted in partial fulfilment of the
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Thesis Approval

Reclaiming Palestinian Native Culture through Explorations in Women's Knowledge: A Study of the Impact of Colonialism on the Relationship between Palestinian Women and Nature

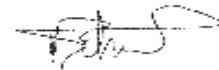
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Declaration

I, Sabreen Ahmad, declare that this thesis entitled “Reclaiming Palestinian Native Culture through Explorations in Women’s Knowledge: A Study of the Impact of Colonialism on the Relationship between Palestinian Women and Nature” is entirely my original work, except where I acknowledge the contributions of others. All sources consulted and referenced in this thesis are duly cited and acknowledged. I take full responsibility for the content and ethical conduct of this research.

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Dedication

Dedicated to the resilience of Indigenous women in Palestine, and around the globe.

Acknowledgment

I am deeply grateful to all who supported this research. Special thanks to Dr. Nahed Habiballah for her genuine support, constructive feedback, and guidance, and for the long walks and drives during which she listened to me. I am grateful for the inspiring circle of women around me, who listen, speak, and share life generously with others, whether they acknowledge it or not, their inspiration is beyond measure.

I extend my appreciation to the Indigenous women in Palestine, who generously narrate their stories and experiences, shaping the heart of this study. I am indebted to them for their generosity and openness.

Abstract

This research delves into the multifaceted impact of Israeli settler colonialism on Indigenous Palestinian women, focusing on their deep-rooted connection with their natural surroundings, particularly their connection with Indigenous land. This research studies the enduring consequences of colonial trauma and gendered colonial violence, including the colonial impact on the diverse indigenous systems of knowledge, and traditional and cultural practices. Nature and natural surroundings in this study stand for the ecosystems, biodiversity, human and non-human elements of the world.

This research addresses the following question: How does Israeli settler colonialism impact Indigenous Palestinian women's relationships with nature, and what are the implications on Indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage?

Through qualitative interviews and a Narrative inquiry approach, the study analyzes and explores the Narratives of Indigenous Palestinian women, uncovering the patterns of gendered oppression, restricted access to land, and the destruction of physical, cultural, and environmental heritage. This study highlights the intersectionality of women's experiences, emphasizing the interconnectedness of gender, colonialism, and environmental degradation. The findings underscore the resilience and resistance demonstrated by Indigenous women of Palestine in reclaiming their identities, Indigenous knowledge system, and cultural practices despite ongoing settler colonial violence. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding colonialism's impact on Indigenous women and the imperative of putting women's

Narratives in the center for a more holistic and decolonial discourse. While this study focuses specifically on the impact of ISC (Israeli settler colonialism) on Palestinians, it acknowledges the broader context of colonialism's effects on Indigenous communities globally and the necessity of a decolonial approach in Indigenous research and practice.

Keywords: Indigenous, Indigenous knowledge, native, colonialism, settler colonialism, feminism, anti-colonial, decolonization, settlers, Zionism, displacement, land, nature, Narrative.

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Introduction

Colonial powers throughout history have seen themselves on a civilizing mission, where the colonizer shapes and reshapes the land, population, knowledge culture, and identity. The main aim of settler-colonialism is to reshape the landscape and to eliminate and replace the natives with settler communities, taking over the resources, knowledge, and culture (Said, 1979). In Edward Said's *Orientalism*, Palestine, according to the Western orientalist, is not part of European modernity, or the industrial revolution, therefore, not "civilized" enough, which was their pretext to colonize the Palestinian land (Said, 1979).

This study focuses on the contemporary period of Israeli settler colonialism (ISC) in Palestine, particularly from the late 20th century to the present day, and it examines Palestinian women's experiences living under the ISC in different regions of occupied Palestine, including the West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem. During this period, the dynamics of establishing settlements in Palestine were reshaped due to the Oslo Accords, changing the Palestinian landscape, population distribution, and the interaction Palestinians have with their natural surroundings.

To provide first-hand accounts of Palestinian women's lived experiences and perspectives, women who were interviewed for this study are either currently living or have lived in Palestine for a period of their lives. These women were directly impacted by the Zionist project and its gendered colonial violence. Through studying and acknowledging the impact of the ISC on women's relationship with nature, this study aims to reclaim Palestinian culture and reclaim their right to practice their Indigenous knowledge. This paper centres its analysis on the impact of Israeli colonial policies and practices as narrated through women's

voices and stories. It aims to explore how these forces have shaped women's lives, Indigenous knowledge, and cultural identity. By acknowledging the colonial impact on Palestinians' lives, we can challenge the dominant power structures, re-frame our understanding of colonial authority, and envision a future of justice and liberation. Acknowledging the colonial impact and patterns on Palestinians' lives helps view the colonial power differently, deny the dominant power, imagine (and act for) justice and for a liberated future.

According to Patrick Wolfe, settler colonialism is differentiated from other forms of colonialism. This system of power is structural, Eurocentric, and uses different forms of oppression, sexism, racism, white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and capitalism. Wolfe argues that settler colonialism is a power structure that continues as a metaphysical process and as an epistemic project, it invades the mental universe of a people, destabilizing them from what they used to know, into knowing what is brought in by colonialism. It then commits "crimes" such as *epistemicide* (where you destroy or eliminate and displace pre-existing bits of knowledge) and *culturecide* (where you eradicate or replace the cultures of a people). These strategies are characteristics of settler colonialism, and some of these characteristics are more controversial in genocide studies than others (Wolfe, 2006).

Understanding Wolfe's take on settler colonialism and the coining of the term paves the way to important facts about how Indigenous peoples have been affected by settler colonialism. Indigenous peoples suffer from environmental injustice due to the development of settler nations through military invasion, land confiscation, capitalist exploitation of resources, and the anti-Indigenous policies of central and subnational governmental units. In the Palestinian case, this ongoing system of power is still committing genocide, epistemicide,

and culturecide. The genocide we are witnessing in Gaza at the time of writing, is a living example of the crimes ISC (Israeli settler colonialism) is committing.

This paper investigates how the Israeli land policies impact Palestinians. My focus is on women and their relationship with nature, and how their lives and practices change on a daily basis due to the policies the ISC forced on their everyday lives. For Indigenous communities, the land is central to the Indigenous knowledge and culture (Pierotti & Wildcat, 1997a, 1997b), changing the landscape of land by creating settlements and imposed restrictions of movement deprives Indigenous peoples of access to their lands and denies them the ability to engage in agricultural, traditional and cultural practices. For the Indigenous communities, those practices are tied to the land, and any change or deletion in its dynamics changes Indigenous people's cultural identity.

The terms 'native' and 'Indigenous' are used interchangeably in the colonial context of this study; both words represent the same concept and category. Indigenous knowledge, here, refers to the knowledge we gain by exploring, experimenting, learning, and living in a place for a long time. This knowledge is trans-generational, women (and men) play a big role in passing and creating these knowledge systems when they spend time in nature teaching and learning. The knowledge base of Indigenous peoples is not isolated from the rest of creation (Deloria, 1990, p. 17); it is localized in the web of relationships between humans and their surroundings, including non-humans and landforms. (Cajete 1994). This means that knowledge systems and traditional ways of knowing are highly linked with interacting with nature and land and that the land is the main source of knowledge for Indigenous people.

The essence of Indigenous philosophy is to be native and rooted in the place and nature you live in (Cajete 1994). To be Indigenous signifies a natural occurrence within a

particular area or environment, this suggests that the organism or culture evolved within a certain environment. This notion argues that the condition of this environment shapes the knowledge and culture of the communities who live in a specific area (Pierotti & Wildcat, 1997a, 1997b), in Palestine, this applies and only applies to Palestinians and Palestinians' knowledge, biodiversity and culture.

Wilson argues that the removal of First Nations people (referring to the Indigenous peoples of Canada) from their homeland is a direct consequence of colonial policy. Those policies have altered how they relate to the land and upended the social, economic, and spiritual fabric of communities. The European colonization resulted in the displacement of First Nation, consequently the change of their relationship with the land (Wilson, 2005). Both the First Nation peoples and Palestinians face similar experiences under settler colonialism, including dispossession of land, loss of sovereignty, and cultural oppression, the limited access to land and resources also means limited access to education, healthcare, and all kinds of opportunities, which led to the economic and social marginalization of Indigenous communities.

Israel's Settler-colonialism has shattered the Palestinian society and maintained control over the Palestinian existence and their connection and accessibility to the land for decades. The ongoing process of ethnic cleansing in Palestine and against the Palestinian people by the Zionist project has ruptured the relationship between Palestinians and nature. Due to the spatial segregation of the Palestinian natural environment and the stripping of Palestinians' lands and cultural practices, their accessibility to the land and their relationship with the natural surroundings are consistently changing as long as this colonial segregation persists.

Settlers frequently attempt to position themselves as the original occupants in recently settled areas, disregarding the native population, this destroys and disturbs the socioecological contexts necessary for Indigenous people to understand the world. Settler colonialism can be seen as a type of environmental injustice, the displacement of the Indigenous population and landscape undermines the well-being of Indigenous peoples and the ecosystems while privileging the interests of the colonizers (Wolfe, 2006). Wolfe argues that settler colonialism is a structure and does not simply supplant native society entirely. Instead, the process of substitution maintains the enduring influence of the native counter-claim (Wolfe, 2006). The process of substitution includes the replacement and displacement of native cultural practices and knowledge along with the people population, these efforts of substitutions and impositions of the colonizer's cultural and knowledge systems is faced by resistance from Indigenous cultural and existence, that contributes to an ongoing cultural preservation, reclamation and decolonization.

In this paper, I reclaim Palestinian knowledge and their right to exist on their land; this comes as part of Indigenous resistance. I do so by focusing on the experiences of Palestinian women to amplify marginalized narratives within the context of Israeli colonialism. The term "gendered" refers to policies of violence that are often specifically directed at individuals based on their gender.

Gendered Colonial Violence refers to the specific ways in which colonialism exacerbates violence against women, particularly in contexts where the oppressor uses gendered strategies to assert control. This violence takes many forms, from direct physical violence to more subtle forms of oppression, such as the disruption of women's roles in the household and the community. In Palestine, gendered colonial violence is reflected in the

ways that colonial practices specifically target women's connection to the land, often through displacement, restriction of movement, and the undermining of their roles as caretakers of the environment.

The strain the ISC had on the relationship between women and nature can be traced through listening to and analyzing their stories. Similarly to Amoah (1997), the word Narrative is capitalized to be interpreted as a method of highlighting the importance of women's stories being told, listened to, and documented (Amoah, 1997), this also applies to the word Indigenous. Storytelling as an act of narration played a crucial role in preserving cultural knowledge; Ruth Finnegan discusses the role of women in Narrative traditions and their active participation in oral storytelling in the domestic sphere throughout Africa. Women played a central role in transmitting and passing cultural values, cultural heritage, and knowledge to younger generations. This contribution vary widely depending on factors such as cultural practices, social structure and geographical location. Women shaped the oral Narrative traditions in Africa and challenged its stereotypes to raise the voices of the marginalized; this contribution preserved the rich and diverse cultural practices in Africa and their agency and contribution of Narratives within their communities (Finnegan, 1970). Butler examines the relationship between Narrative and gender by suggesting that Gender identities are both constructed and contested through storytelling and Narration (Butler, 1990)., following these two perspectives helps in understanding how women's holding agency in storytelling reflects and challenges the prevailing gender norms and riches the culture and knowledge in a community.

This study seeks to explore the multifaceted impact of colonialism on women's connection and relationship with nature as well as their native knowledge and cultural

practices. The research question guiding this investigation is: How does Israeli settler colonialism affect women's connections and relationships with nature, and what patterns emerge in terms of their knowledge and cultural practices as a result?

By exploring how settler colonial policies against the Palestinian population have distorted the historic attachment of Palestinians to their land and natural surroundings, we gain a deeper understanding of the violence they face, its patterns, and how it is gendered. Gaining this understanding can help analyze the systemic marginalization of Palestinians, uncover the root causes and mechanisms of oppression, develop more effective strategies for advocating for justice, and empower Palestinian voices and agency in challenging the structures of oppression. This is an act of decolonized solidarity with all Indigenous peoples. Decolonizing research, research methods, and practices is essential when working with Indigenous communities. Research and practices involving Indigenous peoples, without a focus on decolonization, have been described as exploitative, dehumanizing, and disempowering (Dudgeon & Walker, 2015). This research follows a decolonial path, this path is applied in the methodologies of collecting, viewing, and analyzing women's Narratives and experiences. The historical background gives a brief background of Israel as a colonial state and Palestinians as an Indigenous community. The fieldwork involved open interviews with Palestinian women, the methodology of collecting women's stories takes into consideration women's rights, emotions, experiences, and their own analysis of the themes and patterns of violence by the ISC. Several theoretical frameworks were used while conducting the ethnographic research, viewing and analysing of these Narratives and experiences had to be in a decolonial and anti-colonial feminist framework, these frameworks

play a significant role in analysing and understanding the reality of Palestinian women and their experience.

This chapter gives an introduction to the contemporary period of Israeli settler colonialism (ISC) in Palestine, focusing on the experiences of Palestinian women living under this system from the late 20th century to the present day. Colonial powers shapes lands, people, and cultures according to their own agendas. Within this Narrative, settler colonialism emerges as a particularly pernicious form, aiming not just to exploit resources but to erase and replace Indigenous populations. In the case of Palestine, and from the late 20th century to the present day, the dynamics of settler expansion, particularly following the Oslo Accords, have reshaped the Palestinian landscape and profoundly influenced the relationship between Palestinians, particularly women, and their natural environment.

Drawing on seminal works by Edward Said and Patrick Wolfe, this chapter illuminates the structural and epistemic dimensions of settler colonialism, emphasizing its perpetuation of genocide, epistemicide, and culturecide against the Palestinian people. Moreover, it underscores the gendered nature of colonial violence, with women bearing a disproportionate burden of marginalization and oppression.

Through the lens of Palestinian women's Narratives and experiences, this research aims to unveil the multifaceted impact of colonial policies on their connections with nature and their cultural practices. By centering their voices and Narratives, this study seeks to challenge dominant Narratives and advocate for justice within a decolonial framework.

In the pages that follow, we embark on a journey to understand how ISC has reshaped Palestinian women's relationship with their natural surroundings, particularly their ancestral land, to uncover and explore the patterns that emerge in terms of their knowledge and cultural

practices as a result. The liberation of Palestine is a radical task, a task that should not be just the reverse of settler-colonialism (that is the return of the Indigenous to their Indigenous land), but also an opportunity to decolonize and reclaim Palestinian's relationship with nature, decolonize and reclaim cultural practices and native knowledge from the colonial influences, that includes re-viewing power structures and re-viewing this relationship away from the Eurocentric concept of land propriety.

Chapter One: Historical Background

Palestine stands as a classical and contemporary case of settler colonialism, where Indigenous peoples face systematic displacement and cultural erasure under the Israeli colonial powers. Rooted in the theories of scholars like Patrick Wolfe, the concept of settler colonialism unveils a pattern of power that seeks to replace Indigenous communities, knowledge, and culture with settler populations that know so little about the land they colonized and have different values related to land and generational knowledge, this often through violent ways (Wolfe, 2006). In Palestine, this structure of violence is epitomized by the Zionist project, which has aimed at the systematic erasure of Palestinian culture and identity to establish the settler state of Israel.

This chapter delves into the historical background of Palestine to illuminate how Israeli settler colonialism (ISC) is reshaping Palestine and the Palestinian Indigenous communities. By exploring the origins of the Zionist settler-colonial project and its ongoing impact on Palestinian land, culture, and knowledge through the work of scholars like Nahla Abdo, Nur Masalha, and Ilan Pappé, I examine the concept of cultural genocide and its manifestation in the destruction of Palestinian heritage sites and agricultural knowledge, which takes a big part of the Indigenous knowledge and identity.

Central to our discussion is the notion of decolonization, which seeks to review, challenge, and resist colonial power structures. Through an exploration of women's Narratives and experiences, this study seeks to shed light on the intricate relationship between Palestinian women, nature, and land under the conditions of colonial occupation. By centering the voices of Indigenous Palestinian women and adopting an anti-colonial feminist

and decolonial research methodology in both conducting and analyzing the interviews, this chapter aims to reclaim the Indigenous knowledge and cultural practices that are threatened to be erased by Israeli settler colonialism.

Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Communities

According to Wolfe, settler colonialism is a specific form of colonialism characterized by the establishment and perpetuation of settler communities on Indigenous lands, which includes the repression of Indigenous peoples and cultures. This ongoing system of control is hegemonic in scope. By normalizing the continuous occupation, settler colonialism exploits lands, resources, and cultures to which Indigenous communities have genealogical relationships with (Wolfe, 2006). Moreover, settler colonialism extends beyond mere suppression and the elimination of the Palestinian population, encompassing the appropriation of Palestinian culture and knowledge.

The theory of the “logic of elimination” introduced by Wolfe, constitutes settler colonialism as an ongoing structure of power that systematically displaces Indigenous people from their lands and replaces them with settlers from around the world. The replacement is based on erasing the Indigenous peoples through genocide and assimilation. Wolfe argues that even when the settler colonial logic of elimination has manifested as genocidal and is inherently eliminatory, it should be distinguished from genocide, as it is a system and not an event. In settler colonialism the primary drive for elimination is access to territory, as it seeks to dissolve Indigenous societies, it also destroys to replace people, culture, and knowledge (Wolfe, 2006).

In the Palestinian case, the Zionist settler-colonial project engaged in the systematic erasure of the material culture of Palestine. Nahla Abdo believes that cultural resistance intersects with broader anti-colonial struggles. Palestinian cultural producers, past and present, disrupt and reconfigure Zionist toponymy (the study of the origin and evolution of place names) and national settler-colonial mythologies of land and belonging (Abdo, 2018). Palestinian cultural producers and academics, both historically and in contemporary times, have challenged the Zionist colonial project, one way was through disturbing and reconfiguring the Zionist toponymy. ISC aims to reshape the geographical space physically, emotionally, and culturally to fit the Zionist Narratives of land appropriation and belonging, this reshaping changes the collective memories and identity of Indigenous peoples. Palestinian cultural producers assert the historical and cultural presence of the land for Palestinians. We can also argue that challenging and subverting these imposed names and Narratives is a collective effort from all Palestinians, as all of them are cultural producers either in creating, passing, or practicing culture. Palestinian cultural production is a form of resisting the colonial project and serves as a tool for reclaiming agency, Indigenous knowledge, and identity from the ongoing attempts to erase the Palestinian culture and inappropriate it (Abdo, 2018).

In line with Abdo's analysis and the examination of the Palestinian case and the role of cultural production, Pappé states that Israel based its establishment on systematic efforts to replace the Indigenous population in Palestine with settler communities through ethnic cleansing. Pappé provides evidence of the massacres and oppression the ISC perpetrates on Palestinians to achieve this colonial goal (Pappé, 2006).

These acts of violence against Palestinians are viewed as integral to the settler colonial as they assert territorial control over Palestinian resources and culture, this is embodied in the forced removal of Indigenous Palestinians and replacement of them with settler communities. This colonial project –like all colonial projects- involves the exploitation of natural resources and land, the violence against the Indigenous population and Indigenous land not only entrenches the colonial power structure but also reshapes the relationship between indigenous communities and the natural surroundings, along with all the cultural practices and knowledge linked to it.

Masalha argues in the same key ideas of Abdo and Pappé, he examines the impact of the ISC on Indigenous rights, agency, and sovereignty by displacing the Indigenous people of Palestine. He explores the relationship between Palestinians and the land of Palestine by further examining the role land plays in creating and strengthening the Palestinian identity. This identity translates into their culture, traditions, and lifestyle. These traditions, represented by activities like agriculture, folklore, and crafts, are rooted in the land and the nature-related lifestyle. The land and the identity translations hold a significant place in the Palestinian community as the rightful owners of the land. (Masalha, 2018).

Mapping the above ideas paints a clear picture of the impact of the ISC on Palestinians and how the ISC is systematically replacing Palestinians by changing the way they interact with nature and the way they practice their own culture. This suppression of Indigenous culture, language, and identity reinforces the dominance of the settler ideology and Narratives, this tactic legitimizes the settler colonial project and justifies its presence. The systematic acts of violence perpetrated by ISC against Indigenous Palestinians are deeply embedded within the settler colonial framework to serve the maintenance and expansion of

settler control and exploitation of land, resources, population, and culture of Palestine. Cultural genocide aims to eliminate the wider institutions of a group or communities, which manifests when cultural activities are restricted along with any artistic and literary materials (Neressian, 2005).

Cultural resistance by Palestinians plays an important role in preserving Palestinian culture and identity (Abdo, 2018). The cultural genocide Palestinians go through is a violent way to erase the Palestinian identity, through cultural resilience and activism, Palestinians assert their existence and agency to reclaim their Narrative. I'll examine how cultural genocide entrenches Zionist settler colonial dominance through mechanisms of erasure and appropriation.

The Systematic Cultural Genocide

We can trace the roots of the Zionist settler colonial project back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries when Zionist settlers began arriving in Palestine with the aim of settling in their “homeland”. The Zionist movement has been focused on making a way for new Jewish settlers by what they termed “cleansing” the land of Palestine. In 1948, In the Nakba (Arabic for catastrophe), Palestinians were forcibly expelled from their lands, this was a colonial strategy to ethnically clean Palestine of its Indigenous people, one example of the ethnic cleansing is what happened in the village of Deir Yassin near Jerusalem, various sources, including survivor testimonies and military records, to reconstruct the events of the massacre. The systematic nature of the violence perpetrated against Palestinians during the

Nakba was part of a broader strategy of ethnic cleansing aimed at making a way for Zionist settlers by clearing Palestine of Palestinians (Pappé, 2006).

While Indigenous Palestinians were forcibly expelled from their homes and lands, Palestinian villages and landscapes were demolished, erasing not only the physical connection to the land but also the cultural and emotional connection (Pappé, 2006). While the destruction of land, homes, and material culture reinforced this erasure on the physical aspect, renaming landmarks with colonial names was a tactic employed to deny the Palestinian Narrative and delegitimize Palestinians from reclaiming their history as well as 'indigenizing the settler'.

Moving forward to the present, we can examine the situation in Gaza and the continuity of the colonial violence toward Indigenous Palestinians, the isolation and deprivation -even before the attack on the 7th of October- serve to further marginalize Gazans. The blockade and isolation from the rest of the Indigenous land and people of Palestine undermines their ability to access their Indigenous land and their ability to practice and maintain their cultural identity and knowledge.

The cultural genocide in Palestine is manifesting in the current situation in Gaza. The Librarians for Palestine organization (2024), in their preliminary report, "LAP Gaza Report 2024", show the current situation in Gaza before the last, and ongoing, invasion. The report highlights the loss of knowledge and knowledge sites from the destruction of the Central Archives of Gaza City, libraries, museums, buildings, and all forms of cultural heritage sites (Librarians for Palestine, 2024). Fundamental to the Zionist project has been not only destroying such sites, but also appropriating the material and cultural heritage of Palestine.

The destruction of cultural heritage in Gaza is not just a matter of physical damage; it represents an attack on the collective identity of Palestinians.

During the Nakba, Israel took over many cultural and knowledge sites in Palestine, including libraries, books, and historical documents, along with buildings like mosques, prisons, and railways, all of which are considered part of the cultural and historical life of Palestine (Khalidi, 1992). One of the major cultural theft and destruction of Palestinian knowledge is what happened in Nakba in 1948 when 30.000 books were looted from Palestinian houses (Mermelstein, 2011). These crimes are repeated throughout the history of Palestine, and currently in Gaza. The loss of knowledge sites and material in Gaza follows a pattern the ISC policies adopt to erase the history and knowledge of the Indigenous Palestinians. The theft and appropriation of Palestinian culture and knowledge by the colonial forces strip Indigenous Palestinians of their agency, history, and right to narrate.

Another recent survey conducted by Heritage for Peace, an international group of heritage preservation specialists, reports that since October 7, more than 100 heritage landmarks have been destroyed in the Gaza Strip. These include archaeological sites, historical and religious monuments, and cultural buildings (Al-Barsh, 2023). The destruction of cultural heritage in Gaza is a war crime as it deprives the collective identity of the Palestinians permanently denying their history and infringing upon their sovereignty and agency (Powderly, 2022). The destruction of cultural heritage and knowledge in Gaza is part of the ongoing systematic colonial process of erasure in Palestine, the isolation of Palestinians from their land and from each other along with the destruction of landscapes and landmarks denies Palestinians their history, identity, and agency, serving the larger goal of ethnically cleansing Palestine from its Indigenous people.

While the cultural, historical, and religious heritage is affected by the ongoing occupation policies in Palestine, agricultural knowledge is also in danger. Understanding the struggle and challenges around agriculture and food sovereignty in Palestine provides a lens through which we can examine the profound impact of ISC on the Indigenous way of living and dealing with land and culture. Agricultural practices are rooted in and tied to the land (Masalha, 2018).

Cultural practices in rural regions are mostly present in the land and the natural surroundings, often in agricultural practices, the challenges Indigenous Palestinians grow through to maintain their agricultural practices are worth examining. Understanding the colonial policies on agriculture as part of the broader goal to ethnically cleanse Palestine highlights the importance of the relationship between Palestinians and their natural surroundings.

Settler colonialism strives for the dissolution of native societies. The ISC is systematically adapting policies of epistemicide and culturecide by isolating and disconnecting Palestinians from their lands. The culturecides and epistemicides are ongoing practices the ISC has been using since the beginning of the Zionist project in Palestine (Wolfe, 2006). These practices not only sustain communities and give them agency over foods, but also shaping their cultural identity. Traditional agricultural practices shape the identity of Palestinians by shaping their relationship with the land and natural surroundings. Colonial agricultural violence is embodied in seizing control over agricultural resources, imposing policies that favoured settlers' interests and settlers' luxury over Indigenous Palestinians and their rights by preventing Palestinians from moving around, accessing their lands, and confiscating land under various pretexts. These colonial policies aimed to rupture

the traditional practices and systems of agriculture in Palestine, depriving Palestinians of their physical and cultural connection with the land. Forcibly changing the Indigenous Palestinian traditional way of living means influencing their cultural practices and knowledge.

In line with this idea, Wolfe proposes that agriculture, as a life creator, is deeply linked to the land and is a symbolic necessity for settler colonial societies. Settler communities create a paradox that justifies the occupation of land and erasing the Indigenous communities as indigeneity challenges the legitimacy of settler claims to the land and denies the notion of an empty desert or a “virgin” land that waits for a settlement to be established (Masalha, 2018). This paradox is rooted in the symbolic and ideological necessity of agriculture within settler colonial societies and serves to justify the occupation of land by settler communities. Agriculture is viewed as the life creator, and farming is an act where you bring life to barren territories or to the “desert”. The notion that the land of Palestine is a desert that is empty or “virgin” and in need of being cultivated by outsiders along with the colonial Narratives around agriculture and land creates a paradox when viewed in a colonial framework. The legitimization of settler policies and claims challenges the Indigenous communities in Palestine and the identities of those communities that are deeply intertwined with the land through traditional agricultural practices.

This Narrative of Zionist settler communities justifies their occupation and exploitation of the land and population while these communities erase the Indigenous connection to the land and deny the historical presence of Indigenous Palestine. The blockade imposed by ISC on Gaza, for example, restricts access to agricultural land and resources for farmers and makes the sustaining of livelihood difficult. The destruction of agricultural

infrastructure including farmland and irrigation systems not only influences their means of sustenance, economy, and food sovereignty, holding Palestinians from their right to self-determination, but also erases agricultural heritage, knowledge, and culture.

The Zionist project in Palestine severed the connection between Indigenous Palestinians and Indigenous land, one way the colonial power follows to do that is by the disrupting of traditional agricultural practices and knowledge, this underscores the importance of agriculture in shaping Indigenous culture and identity.

Five months into the attack on Gaza, field reports of the Union of Agricultural Work Committees stated that Israel destroyed more than 75% of the agricultural sector in Gaza. Destroying those sectors will destroy the native knowledge systems Palestinians used to practice there (Union of Agricultural Work Committees, n.d.).

In their annual report for 2023, the Colonization & Wall Resistance Commission reports that the occupation authorities confiscated more than 50.524 acres under different pretenses. These include, but are not limited to the declaration of natural reserves, expropriation orders, and sequestration orders, these numbers of land being confiscated are more than in the year 2015, which was a major peak in the confiscation of Palestinian lands since the beginning of the occupation. The reports also detail how the occupation authorities confiscated the lands and extended their control over them under the pretext of converting them into nature reserves. They issued four military orders ruling to amend the boundaries of the natural reserves. These orders targeted 48,595 acres of citizens' lands in Jerusalem, Jericho, and Jenin (Resistance and Wall Committee, 2024).

We can further understand how settler colonialism operates by examining the link between Indigenous land confiscation and the greenwashing strategies of the Israeli state,

while Israel presents itself as environmentally conscious through imitative like green cities and natural reserves, its continued erasure of Indigenous Palestinian communities and their lands. This strategy is also linked to the paradox mentioned earlier, the colonial project legitimizes the violence inherent in its establishment while spreading its historical Narrative of “making the desert bloom”.

This act gives rise to the notion of ‘greenwashing’. Greenwashing, directly linked to colonial power, is the selective disclosure of positive information, especially regarding nature and the environment, without full disclosure of colonial negative practices. The aim is to create an overly positive image of the entity using it (Lyon & Maxwell, 2011). In this case, a positive image of an environmentally conscious ‘country’. The Israeli state is selling itself as a ‘green country’, with the capital of the vegan community in the world, Tel Aviv, at its heart. The contradiction here is that Tel Aviv is a city that was built on the destruction of the Palestinian village, Al-Shaykh Muwannis, and the displacement of its original Palestinian residents. The ISC built ‘green cities’ over the villages of the natives and their houses, labeling itself as environmentally conscious while demolishing the nature and cultural heritage of *fallahi* (farmer) communities. Many displaced villages were turned into natural reserves where no native trees are planted, and where the Persian fallow deer prances around in a land that is not of its own (Saltz et al., 2011).

To fully grasp the depth of these systematic colonial acts and their impact, it is crucial to centre the voices and knowledge of Indigenous communities, particularly women. Women often hold deep ancestral knowledge and wisdom about the land and the cultural practice as they usually use storytelling to pass knowledge across generations (Finnegan, 1970).

By reclaiming and amplifying the local knowledge of Palestine, we begin the process of decolonization. Decolonization is implemented in reclaiming Narratives and cultural practices that have been marginalized by colonial powers through acts of remembering and creating Indigenous knowledge ties with the Indigenous land (Amoah, 1997).

Indigenous knowledge systems and cultural practices are deeply rooted in the sustainable relationship with the Indigenous land; reclaiming these systems back to their original state and away from the colonial influence and hegemonic Narratives of domination structure. By centering decolonization and foregrounding Indigenous knowledge, we challenge the colonial Narratives and underpin land confiscation and environmental exploitation, this serves as a powerful tool for resistance and resilience for Indigenous research, practices, and population. Reclaiming agency and inherent sovereignty over land for Indigenous communities shapes their future and their connection with their natural surroundings, which plays a big part in livelihood for Indigenous and rural communities.

In other words, the process of decolonization is linked to the reclamation of Indigenous knowledge, land, and culture. This process counters the greenwashing tactics of ISC powers and reclaims the Narrative of land from the grips of settler colonialism. Reclaiming the right to practice cultural knowledge as part of the decolonial process is vital to the reconciliation with land and its original caretakers.

Decolonization, as a multifaceted process, goes beyond political independence, demanding a radical rethinking of power, knowledge, and culture. Fanon (1961) articulates decolonization as an inherently violent and psychological act, one that requires the colonized to reclaim their identity from the imposed structures of the colonizer. Fanon argues that the colonized must break free from the mental shackles of colonialism, which continuously

dehumanizes them, and this psychological liberation is as crucial as political autonomy (Fanon, 1961).

Mignolo offers another dimension of decolonization through his concept of "epistemic disobedience," which challenges Western ways of knowing that have been imposed globally. He proposes that decolonization involves not just the rejection of colonial political control but also a disruption of the Eurocentric epistemological frameworks that continue to dominate knowledge production (Mignolo, 2009); urging a shift from Western-centric to diverse, indigenous epistemologies. linking Mignolo's epistemic disobedience to Wolfe's analysis of settler colonialism, I argue that both scholars call for a broader, more inclusive understanding of decolonization—one that encompasses not just political independence but a fundamental shift in the ways we think, know, and produce knowledge (Wolfe, 2006). Both highlight the importance of dismantling the Eurocentric epistemological frameworks that continue to dominate global knowledge production and suppress Indigenous ways of knowing.

Mignolo emphasizes the restoration of epistemic justice, which involves recovering and revalorizing knowledge systems that have been silenced and replaced by colonial powers (Mignolo, 2009). Wolfe, similarly, examines how settler colonialism has systematically erased, replaced, or subordinated Indigenous knowledge systems, creating a rupture in the knowledge system. Wolfe's work demonstrates how settler colonialism goes beyond physical displacement—it also involves the epistemic violence of forcing Indigenous peoples to conform to Western knowledge systems, leading to a loss in knowledge, culture, and identity (Wolfe, 2006). Shiva (2005) advocates for the reclamation of Indigenous knowledge systems that view the Earth as interconnected with human beings, emphasizing that decolonization

must involve the restoration of these knowledge systems, which have long been marginalized by Western epistemologies (Shiva, 2005).

Taking into consideration the historical background of Palestine and the colonial context, the study adopts a multi-faceted methodology drawing from feminist, decolonial, and Indigenous research methodologies to examine the intricate relationship between Indigenous Palestinian women and their natural surroundings under the conditions of the settler colonialism of Palestine. To address these issues that span both social and environmental disciplines, a more radical approach in conduction and analysing must be adopted.

This qualitative research examines the gendered colonial influence of Israeli settler colonialism on Palestinian women's relationship with nature. Participants, who are 10 women, were selected from diverse regions of Palestine, including Jenin, Jerusalem, northern 1948 areas, Bethlehem, Gaza, Ramallah, and Nablus. The women ranged in age from 26 to 60, ensuring a generational diversity that reflects varied experiences with colonialism and its impact on their relationship with the land. The selection criteria focused on women who had lived in Palestine for a significant period, enabling them to witness and reflect on the ongoing colonial influence.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted, with key questions prepared in advance to guide the conversations. The interviews took place face-to-face or via Zoom, depending on participant accessibility, and each lasted approximately one hour. I used my personal network to recruit participants, ensuring a diverse sample. All interviews were transcribed manually, and key themes were derived from the concepts and experiences shared by the women during the discussions.

This research follows an ethnographic approach, as it is qualitative research that studies people in their natural environment to explore how people interact to gain an objective outcome. Connelly and Clandinin suggest that qualitative inquiry relies more on apparency, verisimilitude, and transferability (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). The ethnographic approach used in the qualitative research was adapted from the field of anthropology (psychology, sociology) as a way of describing human behavior, and social life, and is centered on the study of different cultural practices and norms of the group of people in their natural settings while using the historical, holistic, and comparative designs. In their views of ethnographic strategy,

These methodological research practices are forms of feminism activism that prioritizes building relationships with grassroots women (shepherdesses, farmers, factory workers, janitors). While women manifest their feminism by narrating their experiences, this approach echoes the call to shed light on settler colonialism and other forms of oppression. Grassroots women's Narratives 'are home-grown Narratives that do not intend to re-write or re-imagine coloniality nor to 'post' the Narrative and discursive tools of coloniality' (Alkhadra, 2023, p73).

Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring patterns and themes, with a particular focus on displacement, gendered violence, cultural preservation, and environmental activism. Ethical considerations were carefully addressed: informed consent was obtained from all participants, and their confidentiality was ensured by anonymizing their identities in the research. This approach allowed for a nuanced understanding of the intersection of gender, colonialism, and nature, grounded in the lived experiences of Palestinian women.

The adoption of a multi-faceted methodology drawing from feminist, decolonial, and Indigenous research methodologies is crucial for examining the intricate relationship between Indigenous Palestinian women and their natural surroundings within the context of settler colonialism in Palestine. I found that Narratives address this gap in research conducted on Palestinians, particularly studies focusing on women. This multi-faceted approach allows for a deeper understanding of the intersectional power systems of patriarchy, gendered dynamics, and colonialism, which impact women's relationships with land and their ability to practice Indigenous knowledge and culture. By focusing on women's Narratives, this research uncovers Indigenous experiences and ways of viewing the colonial impact and helps address women's strategies of resistance, resilience, and their strategies of preserving cultural heritage and passing knowledge across generations.

By centering the voices of Indigenous women and acknowledging their role as carriers of cultural norms, traditional practices, and local knowledge, this paper examines the ways the relationship between Indigenous Palestinian women and land is shaped and changed by the ongoing gendered colonial violence, the tactics the ISC uses to rupture this connection, and the patterns of violence and rupture that appears in women's lived experiences.

This research reclaims the right of Palestinian women (and men) to practice their Indigenous knowledge; this can only happen by reclaiming their ability to access their ancestral lands and their natural surroundings in Palestine. Palestinian views of colonialism can pave the way for cultural and heritage reclamation by challenging these dominant powers and their Narratives. This paper calls for the liberation of the Palestinians from the effects of colonialism by chasing and reclaiming Indigenous knowledge and land wisdom. These processes of decolonization and reclamation can confront obstacles when the right to access

Indigenous land is denied. Restrictions of land accessibility mean the restriction of passing and practicing Indigenous knowledge systems and changing the cultural identity of the Palestinian Indigenous community.

This research aims to reclaim the right to practice Indigenous knowledge that Palestinians carry and form their cultural identity, another goal is to document their ethnographic practices in nature, land, and deep in the soil, this desire comes from the fear of losing Palestinian practices and identity. In tracing the colonial historical context of Palestine and Palestinians' relationship with the land under settler colonialism, it becomes clear how the ISC is affecting Palestinian lives, culture, and knowledge.

To point out these impacts and patterns of gendered violence imposed on Palestinian women, Indigenous, anti-colonial feminist, and decolonial methods are adapted to centralize women's Narratives and experiences. Centering marginalized voices is the first step to decolonizing the ways we view dominant power and reclaiming Indigenous rights. Re-imagining Palestinian reality in a time a place where settler-colonialism and other power structures are non-existent marks the beginning of the de-colonial era in Palestine, a reality in a time where Palestinians can reclaim, practice, and pass their cultural knowledge in their ancestral land. Adopting a decolonial approach in Indigenous research leads to the reclamation, healing, and acknowledgment of history, heritage, and cultural identity.

In conclusion, the historical background of Palestine shows the ongoing impact of ISC physical and cultural violence on Indigenous people. The systematic erasure of the physical and cultural heritage, the confiscation of ancestral land, and the accessibility of land, resources, and knowledge influenced Palestinians and their relationship with their natural surroundings and the land, both serving as a cultural and social hub for indigenous

Palestinians. The struggles Indigenous Palestinians face underscore the urgency of a collective action that is feminist, decolonial, and anticolonial, this action calls for the liberation of the Palestinian community and land.

Chapter Two: Stories Rather than Surveys: Methodological Reflections on Women's Narratives

This study comes from a desire to know women, actively listen to them and map their emotions and experiences by conducting research based on women's Narratives. This research framed and collected the Narratives examined through interviews and ethnographic practices to create a de-colonial method of reclaiming Palestinian Narratives, experiences, and ways of understanding them. This methodology seeks to reclaim and document Indigenous women's emotions, experiences, culture, and knowledge, these aspects are rooted in the land and form women's (and men's) identity. This reclamation challenges the colonial dominant Narrative that exploits Indigenous land and people.

Narrative inquiry, with its focus on storytelling, emotions, and lived experiences, aligns with the objective of highlighting Indigenous communities' Narratives and needs in the colonial context of Palestine. Engaging in in-depth interviews deepens the understanding of the colonial impact from Indigenous women's point of view, uncovering their untold stories and marginalized Narratives, these Narratives are often overlooked in traditional research methodologies.

The aim of using this methodology is to develop decolonial practices and tools that facilitate the reclamation of Palestinians' right to have agency in upholding and passing their Indigenous knowledge and culture.

This study acknowledges and centralizes the role of Narrative in preserving and transmitting Indigenous Palestinian knowledge and culture. Palestinian women's Narratives

and testimonies provide a deep understanding of the lived experiences and struggles Palestinians endure within the context of settler colonialism.

This research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding on Indigenous women in Palestine relating to their views and relationship to the natural surroundings and landscape. Furthermore, it highlights the ongoing backdrop of settler colonialism, and how women view the settler colonial impact on their relationship with the land of Palestine, Indigenous knowledge, and physical and cultural and emotional ties to the land.

When conducting interviews with Indigenous Palestinian women, several recurring patterns were revealed between women in the same interview and different interviews or different individuals. These patterns and insights show women's perspectives and emotions about colonial violence policies that caused the loss of land, mobility, and Indigenous knowledge. These themes provide a rich tapestry of Indigenous Narratives and testimonies for understanding Indigenous experiences through an in-depth, feminist and decolonial lens.

The examination and analysis for this study are largely based on raw oral material (voice records) of Palestinian women from a variety of places in Palestine, different backgrounds, and different age ranges. In addition to anti-colonial feminism and decolonial theories. When conducting the interviews Indigenous methods were applied to understand women's experiences in the colonial context. That seeks to foreground the voices and agency of Indigenous Palestinian women.

As a Palestinian indigenous woman, my personal experiences deeply inform this research on the gendered colonial influence of Israel on women's relationships with nature. Growing up in a community directly impacted by the Israeli settler-colonialism, I have witnessed firsthand the ongoing displacement and marginalization of Palestinian women. My

relationship with the land, culture, and environment has been shaped by both resistance to colonial forces and the colonial forces itself. As a woman in a colonized space, I have felt the dual pressure of gendered and colonial violence that restricts not only our bodies but also our relationship with the environment.

Understanding of the psychological effects of colonization, I recognize that the trauma of displacement and environmental destruction affects not just the collective Palestinian identity but also individual experiences, particularly for women. My research is thus deeply personal, as it reflects my own struggle to reclaim both my identity and my connection to the land.

Acknowledging my positionality allows me to engage with this research not just as an academic but as a participant in the decolonial struggle, ensuring that my analysis remains grounded in lived experiences and the complexities of gendered colonial oppression.

My experience in relation to the natural surroundings in Palestine is as complicated as everyone else in Palestine. I have lived my whole life in boxes, eating out of metal cans and plastic bags, buying house plants in fancy pots, and planting tomato seeds in boxes by the windows, where the shadow of the high buildings blocks the sun from nourishing the plants and nourishing my body.

I have never picked my father's olive trees or eaten from the wild plants of Jenin, where I was born. I never knew what native trees and plants meant as a young woman. Things changed in 2020, covid19 lockdown was officially a thing in the west bank, where I built strong feet walking around and discovering nature in my small town in Jenin. On the 30 of March, land day in Palestine, four years ago, I was walking on an early hike when I saw a

wild Orchid plant that shifted my view of life, I got curious about the knowledge I was missing by not connecting in nature, with the wildlife, and in the land of Palestine.

A year later, I moved to Ramallah to study for my graduate degree, a city that is two hours away by car from Jenin on the good days, and on some days it takes up to six hours of driving around hills and villages, up to 5 military checkpoints to pass, and several settlements to go by. The change in the overall landscape of Palestinian villages, cities, and Israeli settlements kept my mind full of questions about what our native landscape looks like, how it is changing, and in what ways the ISC is engaged in the systematic destruction of landscape and culture in Palestine.

While the decolonial framework inherently involves political and subjective elements, it is essential to maintain critical distance and acknowledge potential biases throughout the research process. As a Palestinian indigenous woman studying the gendered colonial influence of Israel on women's relationship with nature, my personal experiences and identity inevitably shape my perspective. This dual connection to both the research topic and the Palestinian struggle for justice means that I must be mindful of my positionality and the potential for biases.

Recognizing these biases is the first step in ensuring that the research remains transparent and objective. My close identification with the subject matter may lead to an emotional investment in the outcomes of the research, which could influence my interpretation of the data, recognizing my emotions and other women's emotions itself is decolonial. I do this while I self-reflect and strive to separate personal beliefs from scholarly analysis. I recognize that the decolonial framework itself is not a neutral methodology, but so does a colonial one. I remain aware that the application of such a framework could

inadvertently reproduce certain biases, especially in terms of the Narratives I choose to highlight, using Narratives in a decolonial framework critic the power and colonial system while offering an invaluable lens for understanding the experiences of Palestinian women. I adopt a reflexive approach, constantly revisiting the data and ensuring that it is presented in a way that acknowledges the complexity and multiplicity of perspectives within the colonial experience.

Through this research, I found out that woman's experiences and stories are just like mine, they are not often addressed or talked about, and that is why it was important for me to let interviewees begin and end whenever they wanted to. Even though I aimed for women to open up about their experiences, I respected their timing and made sure they fully understood their right to end the interview or parts of it when they felt the need to. Some women started from their childhood, others wanted to highlight a specific story or a timeline that they believed was worth telling, and I trusted their choices.

I want to highlight that these interviews were not an investigation or a report; it is a process of women sharing their experiences and emotions on their terms, words, and perspectives with me serving as an attentive listener. It was important for me not to let the open-ended Narrative interviews turn into structured close informational interviews. In this Narrative performance work, I looked for the segments that gave me a deeper understanding of women's lives and struggles in the colonial environment those women live in to create a site of hope, liberation, decolonization, and criticizing dominant power structures, in this case, colonialism and its intersectionality with patriarchy. The act of narrating also provides forms of remembering and knowledge creation, the full interviews will be attached as a method of reclaiming women's right to narrate their stories (Abdo, 2018).

To gain this understanding of the colonial influence on Indigenous Palestinians, open interviews with semi-structured questions were conducted with ten different women in six settings, each of these women welcomed me into their homes or everyday lives. Some women were not easy to follow or be around due to the situation on the roads between Palestinian cities and villages, and the checkpoints inside and outside the Green Line (the Borders where Palestine is divided between the West Bank and Israel, most Palestinians are not allowed to cross the checkpoints of the border) interviews online were the only solution. My inability to access all areas in Palestine due to movement restrictions speaks volumes about the impact of ISC on Palestinians.

Colonialism shaped my research landscape; there was a necessity to move between cities in Palestine to conduct the interviews. Settlers' random attacks on the roads and the increasing number of checkpoints, particularly the attack on Gaza in October 2023 delayed the interviews and made it hard to access women's Narratives. Two of the interviews were conducted online, the first interview was with a woman from Majd Al-Kurum in the north of Palestine, and the other one was with a woman from Gaza, who left Gaza for Cairo-Egypt forcibly after seven months after the Israeli attack on Gaza.

The journey of interviewing women deepened my understanding of the gendered colonial violence Indigenous women in Palestine go through, including both their and my personal experiences and emotions of pride, loss, sorrow, and anger. By considering the colonial historical context of Palestine, centering women's Narrative, and adapting anti-colonial feminist methodology, this research fosters empathy for women's emotions and Narratives.

To understand the role of storytelling and narration as a tool for passing knowledge and culture across generations, it is important to examine the significance of Narrative in human interpretation. Storytelling serves as a fundamental tool by which people make sense of their experiences, Narratives not only convey information but also construct identities and shape the cultural and historical consciousness of communities (Ricoeur, 1984-1988).

In this research, I choose to listen to women's stories from a variety of places in Palestine. I attempt to strip Palestine from the borders that the ISC created. The geographical distinctiveness of Palestine plays a crucial role in shaping people's culture, history, and lived experiences in the colonial context. This geographical distinctiveness of Palestine makes the Palestinian knowledge and culture diversified and rich, and cannot be confined to any borders, nature-made or manufactured. This research goes beyond borders, names, age ranges, and the lines men drew on Earth. This research aims to listen to Indigenous women's Narratives and to document them as a novel attempt to learn, reserve, and reclaim Palestinian knowledge and culture.

In this study, key concepts such as empathy, resilience, and agency are central to understanding the experiences of Palestinian women and their responses to colonial and environmental oppression. These terms will be clearly defined to ensure clarity and rigor in the analysis.

Empathy is understood as the capacity to recognize, understand, and share the feelings or perspectives of others, particularly those facing injustice or marginalization. In this study, empathy will be operationalized through interviews, where participants demonstrate understanding and solidarity with the struggles of others. This will allow for the

analysis of how empathy fosters connections between groups involved in decolonial and environmental justice movements.

Resilience refers to the ability of individuals or communities to withstand and recover from adversity, particularly in the context of colonial and environmental exploitation. It will be measured by examining how women adapt to or resist the ongoing impacts of colonialism and environmental degradation. This concept will guide the analysis of how marginalized communities demonstrate strength and endurance in their struggle for justice.

Agency is defined as the capacity of individuals or groups to act independently, make decisions, and influence outcomes a challenging colonial restriction. In this study, agency will be operationalized through the analysis of concrete examples of resistance, where Indigenous Palestinian women assert their rights, challenge colonial authority and reclaim control over their lands and knowledge systems. Agency will be used to examine how marginalized groups actively resist and shape their own destinies in the face of oppressive forces (Spivak, 1988).

Overall, this research represents a novel effort to honour and preserve Palestinian culture and knowledge while also challenging the colonial impact that reshapes Palestinian's connection to their natural surroundings.

The ongoing, intergenerational effects of the ISC policies and practices continue to intervene with the everyday life of Palestinians, as individuals and as a collective. I conducted some interviews where women had their daughters, friends, or mothers in the same setting. This engagement happened spontaneously. They shared their emotions with me and with each other, agreed on some ideas and perspectives, and disagreed on others. Telling stories and re-telling them highlights the women's collective resistance to the ongoing displacement

of Indigenous population and knowledge, and their desire to share their experiences, and practices, and take agency over other's understanding of all mentioned.

To explore the stories through Narrative inquiry, I wanted to spend actual time with the women in their environment, so the interviews took a place and time where women were in their homes or a place where they chose and felt comfortable and safe in. This was important in developing an understanding of the context and relationship building. The difficulty of accessing women and spending time with them during the period this research was conducted was more challenging and dangerous than all the times before due to the ongoing attacks on Gaza and the subsequent acts of violence committed by the Israeli settler community and the Israeli state on a daily basis around Palestine.

A selection of interviewees encompasses a diverse range of relationships and connections, besides the two singular women from Gaza and Majd Al-Kurum who I interviewed online, I interviewed a Bedouin Mother-daughter duo from Taybeh near Ramallah, another mother-daughter duo from Jerusalem, two sisters from Jenin, two roommates who live in Ramallah but grew up in Nablus and Bethlehem.

Interviewing women in a collective setting had a noticeable impact on the Narratives collected, the shared experiences, and the interpersonal dynamics between different groups creating a shared context that can provide patterns and contrasts of the struggle women go through in Palestine. The two singular women in the interviews provided individual standpoints on the experiences of Palestinian women and their self-advocacy.

Collectively sharing stories and Narratives creates a network strengthened by being aware that the Narrative's basis is the human experience, and that serves as a reliable foundation for the theoretical framework of understanding reality. This network can be in

one community or even between communities (Amoah, 1997). The shared experiences between marginalized communities, races, and individuals are the reason scholars use feminist and race theories to study and understand marginalized societies.

The intersectionality of women's experiences also intersects with gender to shape women's ability to unwind. Those shared experiences gave trust and empowerment among interviewees. That highlights the significance of Indigenous methods and scholarship, and the importance of centralizing the colonial background of a community. Those methods and frameworks aim to achieve liberation for oppressed peoples by using their Narratives and experiences as tools to reclaim the Indigenous community's rights. The collective role women play in advancing their rights and challenging the colonial structure is a core principal feminists adopt of solidarity and collective actions of liberation.

As an Indigenous Palestinian woman, I have the positionality to be able to conduct this research ethically within anti-colonial feminist and de-colonial frameworks. This Indigenous presence will counteract the physical presence of the White gaze, leading to the removal of the oppressive colonial framework and centralizing Palestinian voices and Narratives while reclaiming Palestinian women's agency over cultural practices, Indigenous knowledge, land, and self-determination.

Narration is used to reclaim the voices of traditionally marginalized and disempowered groups, such as women and people of colour. By telling their own story, one asserts ownership over personal Narrative. In this research and the conducted interviews, Palestinian women were able to create their sphere of theorized existence and gain agency over their Narratives and experiences in the colonial context. This happens by removing themselves from the oppressed position that was put upon them by the dominant society, and

by creating their reality and rethinking the power structure they live in and deal with (Amoah, 1997).

In an article written by Jewel Amoah, *Narrative as the Road to Black Feminist Theory*, she gives an overview of the importance of Narrative and storytelling in research and practice. Feminist, Indigenous, and critical race theorists construct their theoretical frameworks to address the deficiencies overlooked by mainstream (i.e., white male patriarchal) theory (Amoah, 1997). Amoah believes that the theory should be infused with the group's experiences, which means when working with a particular group like Indigenous communities and women, any theoretical framework and understanding should be enriched by the actual lived experiences of Indigenous peoples and women. This ensures that our understanding of the experience is more reflective of the reality and needs of the groups in question, therefore effectively addresses their concerns.

Following this approach, using theoretical frameworks that speak to Indigenous women in Palestine, and methods in conducting and understanding the Palestinian context, is the de-colonial approach of this research. Holding Narrative research with Indigenous communities is the practice in which we involve the Indigenous communities with academic decolonization, and where we help the communities to address their perspectives and raise their voices. This whole process creates a form of remembering, knowledge-creating, and reclaiming Indigenous rights (Amoah, 1997).

Looking at the Narrative as it heralds the truth, we can consider it as a constructive method that builds a new environment in which people can live by hearing and learning from the Indigenous stories and experiences. Therefore, when women share their experiences, a new empowered collective existence is created based on the knowledge derived from sharing

those stories. Even though storytelling exists to transfer information and wisdom to communities, it can be used to confront and deny the myths and Narratives of the dominant mainstream and look at the power structure in a different way (Amoah, 1997). This can form not only a method to resist and view the dominant power structure but also a tool for decolonization and cultural reclamation.

Storytelling, Amoah argues, fills a void no other method can fill. Storytelling helps scholars re-establish a connection with one's past and ancestors while asserting one's voice in the present. That is driven by an inner longing to claim one's past (Amoah, 1997).

Wafa Alkhadra's work offers an example of employing Narrative and personal experiences to challenge dominant Narratives and understand reality. Similar to the ideas discussed above by Amoah, Alkhadra utilizes methodological tools she constructed with the concept of 'barefoot nisswiyya' (barefoot feminism). By connecting her personal experiences as an academic activist, along with an in-field experience in rural areas in Jordan through using two methodical tools, “Bawh”, (an Arabic word that means spontaneous intimate articulation and disclosure), and “Ishrah”, a word that describes a relationship that is built with time, in this context it refers to the companionship, cohabitation, and interaction (Alkhadra, 2023, P. 6&7). These stories of women are usually not listened to, but they create everyday life history, where healing, building, and knowledge creation take place (Ursula K. Le Guin, 1986).

The writer Ursula K. Le Guin in her article *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction* talks about the stories told, who narrates them, the power structure behind it, and how Narratives and perspectives inform history and move the world forward. In her opinion, which I agree with, an abundance of historical material is stories told through the male gaze lens. Where it

is more exciting to tell stories that often prioritize conquest and violence, such as men who kill and men who slay the mammoths over quitter and everyday life stories of women and communities, like gathering food, collecting seeds and grains, building shelters, creating knowledge and culture. She believes that those actions from the stories told in a heretic lens narrated from a male gaze are rather masculine and violent than actually true.

Comparing the two Narratives of storytelling, the masculine way, which took the power to create history, and the “feminine” way, where stories are not considered good stories but are willing to be told. The carrying of food and babies, healing, and building communities are considered only “feminine” stories as they are normal acts, Normal acts are what shaped storytelling, history, and what is considered important and what is considered not (Ursula K. Le Guin, 1986). In Palestine, women do tell their stories for those who listen, learn, analyse, and follow, they do not tell stories to impress, to amaze, or to prove their power. Stories are told and passed on to heal and build communities. Building on Guin’s theory on the power of narration, this study explores how the world views women's stories, history, and emotions, highlighting the importance of critically resisting the colonial and patriarchal lens in conducting Indigenous research. In the anti-colonial feminist lens that we will go deep into, women's stories and Narratives are centralized for the same core reason and goal, which is to gain an understanding of women's experiences in anti-colonial and decolonial approaches.

In claiming the past, there is an act to create present empowerment, offering a lens to review power structures in the colonial context. This research delves into Palestinian experiences and presents a framework for decolonization using Narrative and storytelling. To rethink and review settler colonial powers serves as a tool for liberation, which is rooted

in Narrative, memory, emotions, and culture, the conduction and analysis of the interviews tap into the importance of Indigenous knowledge and the local knowledge based on the contemporary lived experiences of Palestinian women contributing to a deeper understanding of Palestinian identity and agency. Through this act of decolonization, Palestinians' voices are elevated to call for resistance against settler colonialism.

Narrative Inquiry serves as both a method of research and an active reclamation of Indigenous rights through a process of decolonization. Tuck and Yang, in *Decolonization is not a Metaphor*, believe that decolonization simply means the repatriation of land to Indigenous people away from the settlers' hands. By extending innocence to the settler and entertaining a settler future, decolonization as a metaphor "re-enters" whiteness and resettles philosophy. Tuck and Yang also raise concerns about the nature of decolonization and emphasize the significance of centralizing Indigenous people over settlers in theory, practice, and in popular culture (Tuck & Yang, 2012), the call of Tuck and Yang centres Indigenous voices in academia and activism.

Central to the calls for decolonizing research is the imperative to centre Indigenous knowledge and experience, this is done by problematizing dominant modes of knowledge production and expanding the dialogue of voices and the ecology of knowledge (Santos, 2014). This research aims to tell the stories of Palestinian women in their voices and to use this Narrative to reclaim their right to practice their native knowledge and culture under the sun of their land, Palestine.

One practice to decolonize the methodology for this research is by creating collective settings for storytelling, facilitating the construction and archiving of women's identities in the present. During the setup of the research interviews, there were two or more individuals

present in most interviews, to encourage women to open up and share their stories in a setting where other women had similar experiences.

This methodology is central to learning and understanding colonial histories and legacies (Smith, 1999). Settings in which the interviews were conducted varied in meaning and in the ways, people gathered, spontaneously in all. I planned many settings with women that I could not get done due to the Israeli blockage between cities, general strikes or simply grieving.

The ongoing, cross-generational impact of the ISC policies and practices continues to intervene with the everyday life of Palestinians as individuals and as a collective. Some interviews were conducted where women had their daughters, friends, or mothers in the same setting. This engagement happened spontaneously. They shared their feelings with me and with each other, agreed on some ideas and feelings, and disagreed on others. Telling stories and re-telling them highlights the women's collective resistance to the ongoing displacement of people and knowledge and women's desire to share their experiences, practices, and feelings of loss and anger.

Gathering women in one setting turned out to be central to my methodology, the relationship between these women varied between mothers and daughters, friends, and roommates. Besides the part I took as the interviewer in this research and using the interviews to understand Palestinian women's experiences and realities, the interviews allowed me to analyse, reclaim, and map my feelings and thoughts on my relationship with the Palestinian nature and helped me rethink my lens when looking at the Palestinian land in the shade of the ISC. It is a process of self-reflexive awareness that women undergo when they narrate their stories and hear them out loud. The process of forming and creating a collective

Narrative offers women the chance to interpret their experiences, shape a meaningful identity, and maintain the resilience and cohesion of a community or people (Kirmayer, 2011).

This leads us to storytelling and Narrative inquiry as a de-colonial approach to research (and practice), conducting Indigenous research should centralize the Indigenous voices and their Narratives, knowledge creation, and feelings. Narrative is capitalized as it functions to assert the voice of the oppressed and is a documentation tool that depicts the ongoing effects of colonization and coloniality; while also showing the various ways people resist and survive oppression. A deeper understanding of women's experiences covers the gender dynamics in academia and paves the way for decolonial and more inclusive research methods and practices.

Franz Boas perspective aligns with the importance of centering the voices and perspectives of Indigenous communities themselves. Studying Indigenous communities cannot be divorced from understanding the colonial and post-colonial environments in which the Indigenous communities reside. The ethical imperative of cultural preservation for Indigenous rights is core to the decolonial process, by facilitating Indigenous voices to be heard and not speaking on their behalf crucial for understanding Indigenous communities on their own terms.

Boas delves into the role of anthropologists in documenting cultural practices, advocating for a collaborative approach where anthropologists deeply engage with the communities they investigate and immerse themselves in. Respecting Indigenous peoples perspectives and involving them in the research process is essential to ensure ethical and culturally sensitive practices. Stressing that each community should be understood on its

terms, he emphasizes the necessity of an ethical stance that prioritizes cultural preservation for Indigenous rights. Through a critical examination of the Western paradigm, Boas explores the impacts of colonialism on Indigenous communities and their cultural heritage (Boas, 1928).

By adopting those methodologies while conducting the interviews and examination of this study, we can understand the culture of Palestine, viewed and narrated by Indigenous Palestinian individuals. Asking open questions and focusing on the women's Narratives on colonialism offers a counter-representation of the engagement of colonialism and its impacts on Palestinian lives.

Chapter Three: Conversations and Inquiries: Exploring Perspectives and Emotions through Interviews

The interviewees were given complete freedom in their responses and in remembering and constructing the story that they felt best responds to the questions. I started by asking them a simple question about the colonial impact on their ability to access their natural surroundings and changing some words and terms depending on their background. The language used to communicate with older women for example is different from the one used with younger women, and the terms used with the Bedouins are different from the terms I used with women from the north. This method was adapted to communicate with respect to women's background, ages, and cultural context. If needed, questions were asked to expand on the last event "Do you remember anything else about this?", or simply help them to move on by asking something like: "And what happened after that?" or a question that makes women want to elaborate more, Narrative follow-up questions in this sub-session remain strictly Narrative. Questions asked focus on women's experiences linked to Indigenous land, cultural practices tied to their natural surroundings, Indigenous and local knowledge, and knowledge passing cross-generation.

The Water Spring: Where Women Gather to Socialize and Pass Knowledge

Through the lens of anti-colonial feminism, this chapter amplifies the Narrative of Indigenous Palestinian women and reclaims their right to practice their Indigenous knowledge and culture rooted in their ancestral land. By centering women's Narratives, emotions, and experiences, this chapter examines the interactive relationship between

Palestinian women and their natural surroundings, and the impact of settler colonial policies of physical and cultural violence on women's lives and practiced knowledge

Growing up in Palestine, I grew around women's stories on water springs, their shared activities, rituals, and social support. Women around me used to gather around water springs to get water, do laundry, and clean, but the importance of water springs goes beyond this, women used to go there to socialize, pray, and share their knowledge. Water as it disclosed a space for social and cultural interactions, played a public space for cultural and social engagements for Indigenous women in Palestine (Naguib, 2009).

I interviewed Palestinian women and got to know them in intimate sessions where they shared their local stories and knowledge. Most of these women interviewed I already met before or were familiar faces from a distance, and only one mother-daughter duo I met for the first time was the Bedouins. These sessions made me understand the women I already knew before on a deeper level, and see the possibilities of understanding and relating to people whom I only met once.

This chapter focuses on the challenges Palestinian women are facing due to the ISC (Israeli Settler Colonialism). In this chapter, I explore the agency and resistance they present against such challenges, these challenges include land dispossession and displacement, movement restrictions, and psychological trauma, Colonial Trauma is the long-lasting psychological and social impact of colonization on indigenous peoples, particularly the trauma caused by displacement, violence, and the systematic erasure of cultural identity. For Palestinian women, colonial trauma manifests in the loss of land, forced migration, and the breakdown of traditional community structures. This trauma is passed down through generations, affecting not only individual well-being but also collective identity and cultural

practices. Women's testimonies uncover the vital role they play in culturally resisting the colonizers, passing, and creating the cultural identity of Palestinians, it shows how the ISC affects their everyday lives by pointing out the challenges they face. Yet, Palestinian women show resilience, agency, and a deep understanding and connection to the land and knowledge rooted in it.

Unveiling Colonial Patterns: Thematic Analysis

Scholarly research is, and must be, part of a broader political project that can form a mode of Indigenous resistance in Palestine. To examine and analyze the interviews and experiences of Indigenous women in Palestine, we must contextualize settler colonialism within an Indigenous framework, which is decolonial in nature. An Indigenous framework centers Indigenous perspectives, emotions, and knowledge while challenging colonial norms and prioritizing Indigenous sovereignty. Analysis and understanding of settler colonialism should be embedded within an Indigenous framework especially when writing on Palestinian Narratives (Barakat, 2018). This allows for a more holistic and empathic understanding of the struggle Palestinians face.

Understanding women's Narratives and experiences in Palestine comes along with understanding women's colonial history, the gendered violence they face, and the knowledge they carry and cherish.

We can understand the act of narrating and its definition as "Somebody telling somebody else on some occasion and for some purpose(s) that something happened" (Phelan 2005b, p18), narration can also be a collective act, bringing shared authorship to light (Ochs and Capps 2001). Women's Narratives reflect their perspectives, lived struggles, and

experiences, within colonial, societal, and cultural contexts; women pass on experiences and knowledge cross-generation (Finnegan, 1970). Narration can extend to create collective acts of shared authorship; this collective storytelling fosters solidarity, empathy, and empowerment within communities.

Narrative analysis and studies are rapidly changing, structuralized models of analysis are swiped for methods that centralize the actual practice of storytelling allowing a deeper understanding of how actions and stories are linked within social and cultural expectations. The key to making that happen is to embrace the interdisciplinary nature of studying stories (Georgakopoulou, 2006). This border notion of Narrative also invites a closer examination of "narrativity" as a theme (Ochs and Capps 2001). That means that Narrative analysis serves the creation of collective identities and power dynamics, and the actions linked to it, especially in collective settings and shared experience.

Through reviewing the interviews in depth, many themes and patterns of gendered colonial violence appeared. Although all women in any colonial context are impacted by colonialism, women's backgrounds and experiences are different, they agreed on one thing, Israeli settler colonialism is negatively impacting their sense of identity and belonging, changing their cultural practices, and changing their connection to land and nature. Those impacts come in the forms of preventing women from easily accessing Palestinian lands and preventing them from moving freely, whether between cities in the West Bank, in the villages and mountains, or traveling outside Palestine or back to it as the case in Gaza and the Gazan women. Depriving women of moving freely in and out of Palestine means fewer opportunities for education, healthcare, and work and above all, depriving women of accessing the Palestinian land that is the main source of knowledge for the Indigenous

community (Pierotti & Wildcat, 1997a, 1997b). Israeli settler colonialism is not an event, rather, it is an ongoing structure that systemically oppresses Palestinians to erase them along with their identity to replace both, one aspect of this oppression is the deprivation of Palestinian women (and men) of access to their lands and resources, as highlighted by Wolfe (2006). The connection with land shapes the Palestinian identity, by forcing the Indigenous population to limit and change their connection with the land; they are forced to change their cultural practices and identity.

In one interview with a woman from Jerusalem and her daughter, the mother talked about all the recipes for traditional dishes her mother taught her to make from scratch when she was young, and how she taught her daughter the same recipes, emphasizing the importance of passing down these recipes to her daughter. Similarly, the daughter enthusiastically expressed her passion for preparing these same recipes, reflecting the intergenerational continuity and shared love for preserving Palestinian cultural heritage through cooking. The daughter reflected on her experiences, stating:

“I like cooking traditional foods using my picks from the mountains. I remember when we used to go out and pick pine and Thyme. All the land was agricultural, filled with edible plants that we could use and eat. If we were going to pick thyme now, for example, we would gather it in small quantities and discreetly, as the police might fine us.”

(Daughter B)

She compared her memories to her contemporary reality, this contrast between past abundance and present colonial restrictions, and the reshaping of landscape and accessibility to land challenges women to maintain their cultural and traditional practices, by challenging

women's maintenance of cultural practice, ISC challenges their agency, identity, and cultural sovereignty.

This act of recapping memories and comparing them with reality repeated itself with all women, which means that they are conscious of their realities and the impact of the Israeli colonial power. Women knew what they lost, needed, and knew what agencies they wanted to reclaim.

In another interview, a woman in her early 30s from Bethlehem recounted her childhood memories with water springs, and how this relationship changed amidst ongoing landscape restructuring and land confiscation. She described the special bond a particular water spring, a place she escaped to whenever she felt upset or sad to provide her comfort. The restrictions imposed by ISC prevented her from accessing it as she got older, changing the landscape around her and the places she sought comfort in.

“I had a special bond with a water spring there. I used to go there whenever I was mad or sad, I feel at ease when I hear the sound of water, yet the ISC prevents me from being there.”

(Roommate B)

This individual experience with the water spring as a physical and emotional sphere extends beyond personal emotions and experiences to encompass broader communal gathering and social interaction with the land and within the Palestinian community. we can argue that interacting with the natural surroundings, portrayed in the water spring in this case, is a form of ritual where social and cultural norms are solidified among individuals and communities. The restrictions the ISC imposes on accessibility to nature and land lead to the absence of social spaces, these spaces create a collective hub for socializing, cultural

exchange, and collective identity formation. the loss of these communal spaces leads to the erosion of identity.

Indigenous Narratives

Adapting Indigenous and decolonial methods is an ethical research practice, which centralizes marginalized voices, and challenges the colonial power structures inherent in traditional research methodologies. Using the same perspective to examine Indigenous Narratives resist colonial impositions and colonial Narratives while calling for justice and liberation from the colonial power.

Indigenous communities' culture and identity are rooted in the land (Masalha, 2018), any forced change to the landscape and mobility can be traumatizing and can change what is normal and natural for Indigenous individuals and communities. In an interview with a woman from Gaza, who initially had zero interaction with the Palestinian landscape outside Gaza until later in life, she explained the dilemma she goes through as part of the collective identity of Gazans and her individuality and desire to live a safe life. She contends that the land plays an important role in shaping one's identity and sense of belonging, her perspective and sense of space and land were transformed by the actions of ISC.

“I do not know if I am connected to the land or not. We are hurt by the situation that was put upon the land and not the land itself. The pain during times of hopelessness, pressure, and despair often places you in a dilemma between two experiences: one communal, where you are part of society, and the other is personal, driven by your desires. I feel as though I am being tugged between these two experiences involuntarily. The homeland or “place” is a

part of you whether you wish it or not. It shapes your aspirations through your geographical presence, along with the social and psychological dimensions that come with it.”

(Woman from Gaza)

Although she expresses her desire to seek safety elsewhere and leave Gaza, she acknowledges her deep connection to the land and recognizes how it shapes her identity.

“What I am trying to say is that even when you decide to distance yourself from this place, it will always be part of your identity and existence. I am not trying to display patriotism but this is the reality.”

This statement illustrates the bond between colonized Indigenous populations and their homeland, emphasizing how land is tied to their identity regardless of their status to this land, whether in exile or home. It speaks to the complexity of the connection Indigenous feel towards their homes in the colonial context and their desire to belong to the land and reclaim it.

In the broader context of Indigenous identity and belonging, discussions about women's roles, agency, and rights take on added significance. A woman from Jenin reflects on her experience taking place in this study and being interviewed by an Indigenous woman, her experience underscores the intersectionality of gender-based oppression within the Indigenous community, and women's desire to be listened to.

Sister A, who is in her late 30s and works in the maps department at the Anti-Wall and Settlement Resistance Authority, shared her thoughts on Indigenous women interviewing Indigenous women and the sense of safety and empowerment she gained by just being interviewed by another Indigenous woman while she stated the barriers women face in

expressing themselves. This highlights the pervasive nature of gender-based oppression, even when given the chance to express it, the presence of uncomfortable individuals in an interview (particularly men) silences women.

“I love when women care about those issues, I feel like women's rights are denied, and even if they are allowed to express themselves, they can still be silenced. Sometimes she might be sitting with someone she is not comfortable around so she would not say what is on her mind, or maybe this someone is a man so she will not unwind. Women definitely play a significant role in achieving the liberation we seek.”

(Sister A)

Her perspective on the challenges faced by Indigenous women in Palestine in asserting their voices and advocating for their rights within their own communities underscores the importance of creating safe spaces for women to narrate their experiences, and express their needs freely and to actively participate in decision-making processes. Her perspective critically examines women's role in advancing the collective struggle of Palestinian women for liberation and justice within their own communities and resonates with the discussion on gendered violence and colonialism.

This connection reinforces the broader discourse on ecofeminism and the need for a feminist revolution to address the root causes of environmental problems for Indigenous communities. The link between the oppression of women and the exploitation of the earth by colonial power is highly linked, a feminist anti-colonial approach addresses both the environmental and the feminist issues.

Gendered Violence: the Intersectionality of Colonialism and Patriarchy Gender

Violence

Gender roles (*not biology*) influence the relationship someone has with their overall environment. In other words, the environment is a gendered issue. Sex is not a factor that determines someone's relationship with the land or any other environmental sphere, physical or cultural, gender is an arbitrary concept that is relational (Butler, 1988). This means that gender gains meaning through its interactions with its surroundings, in the Palestinian context this means that even though women's relationship with land may differ dramatically from men's relationship with the land. That is only because gender roles and expected behaviours from women in their environment are shaped by the social, colonial, and political context, women's connection with the land and the cultural practices and rituals change along.

Gender roles significantly influence the connection individuals have with their natural surroundings, this implies that Indigenous women's distinct connection with the land is intricately shaped by gender norms and expectations, which are deeply entwined with the socio-political landscape. For example, in the Palestinian case, men increasingly entered the workforce after the Nakba in 1948, land confiscations and agricultural resources and practices restrictions forced Palestinian men to move away from agricultural connection with the Indigenous land. Many Palestinian men lost their traditional livelihoods that had been based on farming and pastoralism, transitioned from agricultural labour to wage labour in sectors in urban centres, such as industry and construction. This displacement, land confiscations, and change in economic structure influenced the role men played in the land,

along with their relationship with it. This change relegated women to domestic spheres and agricultural labor, contributing to household economies and preserving cultural traditions tied to the land through activities like harvesting. These activities were held to improve their economic circumstances and served as a cultural avenue for socialization, knowledge pass, and community engagement (Sayigh, 2007). The colonial policies and restrictions undermine women's economic opportunities and their cultural practices and rituals intimately tied to the land.

Both men and women held a communal relationship with the land that predates colonial intervention (Sayigh, 2007). However, colonialism disrupted this relationship, forcing a change in gender roles and labour structure. The vast majority of Palestinians until 1948 were peasants, producing and reproducing themselves on the land. Men and women equally took part in working in land and other forms of food production, the labour division was more sex-based than gender-based. Land for Indigenous people goes beyond a piece of property, it serves as the source of life, pride, honour, and integrity, which is related to their connection to land and their labour, the loss of land, physically and culturally means the loss of all means of life and identity for Indigenous Palestinians. It is important to note that feminist theorization of Indigeness needs the historical and colonial context of women involved in the research. Feminist theorization of indigeneity focused on the dynamics between women (and men) and the colonial power should ground for a theory that is holistic and that refers to the nation or group instead of the individuals (Abdo, 2018). That means that the violence that goes on a woman is systematic violence that goes on all women, and all Indigenous as a collective. A feminism that fails to acknowledge all this loss and what it does to the existence of a group with all the social and cultural fabric also fails to disclose

the actual Narratives and experiences of Indigenous communities, including Palestinians. The feminist and anti-colonial feminist contextualization of Indignity, settler colonialism, and the power dynamics in between broaden the scope of feminism research methods, notably Narrative and oral history, and push the feminist analysis to move beyond academia to acknowledge Indigenous experiences to become an active force for social change. This allowed the exploration of identity-related questions along with cantering questions that reflect how women view and recount their experiences of land dispossession and cultural loss. The feminist analysis advocated for the right of return for Palestinians to reclaim the history of indigeneity itself and centralize the experience of both women and men, by calling for recognition of the colonial impact on Indigenous peoples and challenging the colonial power (Abdo, 2018).

With nationalist movements, including Palestine, the project of gendering starts with the national movement establishment (Massad, 1995). Anti-colonial nationalists define gender roles and relate them to the nationalist cause to decontaminate those relations and their relation to the nationalist cause from any “colonial influence” (Parker et al., 1992).

Before the Nakba, Palestinians were those who lived in Palestine, but that changed in 1964, articles 4 and 5 of the Palestinian National Charter define what it means to be Palestinian and it relies on being born to a Palestinian father who lived in Palestine before the Nakba and the displacement of the Palestinian people. This definition prioritized men in the national reproduction and rights and women are viewed as holding a secondary role in nationalism. This discourse of land's disqualification as a mother in national reproduction does not deny its ability to produce children, but since the displacement, reliance on it is questioned. That was also part of gendering people in Palestine and deciding what roles

women should play in the nationalist cause, and that was to give birth to “men” who would liberate, in other words, the territory was replaced by paternity (Massad, 1995). We can argue that this is also a colonial impact, as there would not be anti-colonial definitions of what men and women do, nor a definition of their roles and rights if there wasn't a colonial force to anti-colonize a nation.

Ecofeminist theory, as articulated by Mies, in 1986, urges that environmental justice cannot be achieved without addressing the gendered nature of colonialism. Women's labour in agriculture and resource management, historically disregarded under colonial and capitalist systems, remains central to contemporary struggles for ecological justice (Mies, 1986). The integration of ecofeminism into decolonial frameworks reveals the deep interconnectedness between environmental and gender justice. Environmental struggles must address the specific ways in which gendered oppression is tied to environmental degradation (Shiva, 2005).

Mies (1986) and Shiva (1988) both argue that colonialism is not merely a political or territorial phenomenon but a gendered and ecological one, where the appropriation of land was always coupled with the appropriation of women's labour and knowledge, both of which continue to be exploited in the capitalist, postcolonial world" (Mies, 1986; Shiva, 1988).

The eco-feminism, the radical eco-feminist d'Eaubonne claims that the environmental destruction that is accruing is the element destruction of the earth; this destruction is the result of the hegemonic male system that was built on appropriating women's productivity. This system led to an overpopulation and an endless destruction of natural resources, meaning that the patriarchal system is responsible for both environmental

destruction and women's appropriation and that both violence are highly linked (Hottell, 2022).

Patriarchal Oppression refers to the systemic structures and practices that subordinate women within society, reinforcing male dominance across various social, political, and economic domains. In the context of this research, it highlights the intersection of gender and colonialism, where Palestinian women face both patriarchal and colonial forms of violence. Patriarchal oppression in Palestine is further compounded by the occupation, restricting women's rights and access to resources, including land and the environment.

By identifying the link between the oppression of women and the oppression of the earth, as the root cause of the environmental crisis, a feminist revolution is necessary to change the patriarchal system that causes climate change, this also includes women acting simultaneously to save themselves and the earth as they are intimately linked. The call for revelation is to establish a theoretical base for ecofeminism, healing the breach between theory and practice (Hottell, 2022). Patriarchal systems, environmental issues, and colonialism are deeply intertwined and it's crucial to understanding the broader context of the anti-colonial feminist movement, the dominant mind-set of the patriarchal system and colonialism leads to the exploitation and degradation of the environment for profit and power. Indigenous women are often marginalized within both the patriarchal societies and the colonial context, both colonialism and patriarchy historically involved the exploitation of land and resources, and this exploitation led to the destruction of ecosystems, deforestation, and the displacement of Indigenous communities from their ancestral lands.

By recognizing the interconnected nature of the oppression of power systems, the anti-colonial feminist approach acknowledges that struggles against patriarchy, environmental degradation, and colonialism are intertwined. This anti-colonial approach challenges Eurocentric Narratives and reviews the intersectionality of power structures. It is essential to emphasize the need for integrating intersectional and decolonial perspectives within ecofeminism. This integration allows for a comprehensive understanding of how race, class, gender, and colonial histories intersect with environmental issues. Furthermore, Indigenous ecofeminism can provide valuable insights into these intersections, highlighting the diverse experiences and struggles faced by colonized communities. Shiva (1988) contends that the colonial exploitation of nature and women was integral to the development of Western capitalist economies, which continue to perpetuate a model of development that devalues both ecological sustainability and gender equity (Shiva, 1988).

“I think colonialism affects all Palestinians. In our societies, women's rights are generally seized. Imagine a more powerful force seizing everyone's rights. We certainly feel more affected. For example, I have a car, and I should move freely, but I cannot do so because of the checkpoints of the occupation. Even if I were to extract my freedom from the man (the patriarchal system), for example, another force affects us (colonialism). If we free ourselves from men, we will find colonialism and borders standing in our way. That is why I believe colonialism has a greater impact on women in Palestine.”

(Sister A)

Woman's testimony recognizes the intersectional impact of patriarchy and colonialism and acknowledges colonialism's gendered violence while holding agency for

their liberation from all power structures. It became apparent while listening to Indigenous women speak about the land and during the subsequent analysis of the interview texts that gender and gender-based policies are perceived to play a role in the colonial impact upon Palestinians. They openly acknowledged the shared work between women and men on land and in the liberation project.

The classical white eco-feminism approach suggests a solution to Eurocentrism and political change that claims the end of climate change in the whole world. Besides the universal and monolithic path asks for, d'Eaubonne believes in a linear conception of progress where all women in different contexts have the privilege and can gather and follow the white women on their path. This white feminist conception of political change will not save the world; this universal approach is not holistic and marginalizes women who are marginalized by other power systems, like colonialism, it does not see that the struggles in every place are different. Although this approach highlights the male system that is linked to other power dynamics like colonialism, it does not identify the notable gap in white eco-feminist discourse, particularly in the gap of reviewing colonialism as a power structure and its impact on the Indigenous lands and Indigenous women.

This approach of eco-feminist dresses the patriarchal system as the main reason for the operation of nature and all women, as I do partly agree that, this approach ignores the problems that women of race and colour go through. This lens gave an iconic analysis of problems that women in Europe, especially in France go through, like rape and abortion laws, capitalism and industrialism, but doesn't mention an anti-colonial or a de-colonial approach that is a must for a holistic feminist revaluation that can save all women and nature (Hottell, 2022).

A critical examination of white and Eurocentric ecofeminism is necessary, particularly in the colonial context. It is essential to understand the colonial legacies and their impact on Indigenous land and Indigenous women, while also addressing the needs of all women and the environment in this context. A holistic feminist revolution requires acknowledging these complexities to effectively address environmental and social justice.

Ecofeminism as a theory and practice encompasses various branches, each with its own perspectives. The spiritual branch suggests a biological closeness of women to nature compared to men, while social ecofeminism argues for the interconnectedness of all lives. According to social ecofeminism, all living beings are integral parts of nature, and no being is inherently closer to nature than another (Gates, 1996).

To advance the movement, it's crucial to integrate intersectional perspectives that address how race, class, and colonial histories intersect with environmental issues. This includes amplifying Indigenous voices and decolonizing ecofeminism by engaging with Indigenous knowledge systems. Additionally, understanding the historical impacts of colonialism on both women and the environment can help frame more inclusive and effective ecofeminist practices. Finally, translating these theoretical insights into practical actions or policies is vital for addressing both environmental and social justice issues in a comprehensive manner.

The connection formed between women with nature and men with nature can be considered gender behaviours, both women and men practice their culture and use the knowledge they have in nature. To gain a better understanding of those cross-gender relationships and cultural practices and how they are shaped, we must differentiate between gender and sex and question if those behaviours are natural or performative, the acts that

make the gender are renewed, revised, and consolidated through time and practice (Butler, 1988). That means that gender identities and roles are shaped through social practices and interactions, which can also be formed in nature as a habitat for people who work on the land. If gender is not fixed nor inherited, the gender behaviours and cultural practices that are linked to it are also not fixed nor inherited, in other words, women and men do play different roles in nature, have different performative practices, and interact with nature differently, but none of those practices are fixed, it changes with the change of the social context and colonial violence.

Women, when discussing men's participation in the environmental and political life in Palestine, agreed that men share the women's values and spirit when working and defending the land.

“I am ready to fight and defend the land with everything I have; I would not escape or hide. If a settler comes, I am ready to grab something and strike him, I will not allow him to come and take anything. Men would also do the same, they will not allow the settler to approach the goats if he has the ability to do so.” (Mother A, a Bedouin woman from Taybeh)

Another woman agreed with that, as also acknowledged women taking agency in providing a living In Palestine.

“My mother taught me everything, she taught all of us, my father was blind, so he couldn't do much. He used to be working as a “Mo'athen” (the person who calls the prayer in the mosque), so my mother used to plant the land and sell the surplus so we buy the necessities we needed.”

(Mother A, a woman from Jerusalem)

Her daughter added on the shared work women and men do on land and agriculture in Palestine, while both take equal parts, women take agency on their production and finance by selling their produce in the vegetable markets, and on the street sides. Women usually come from villages to the cities, which is seen in cities like Ramallah, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Golan Heights. Women in Jenin for example find other ways to take agency in their financial life, like selling homemade goods, which is also a gendered issue, social norms, and colonial context and presence differ from one city to another.

“I believe men and women collaborate in working on the land. Although we usually see old women selling what they harvest in the market, the whole family shares the work in the villages around us. For us, the only season we work on the land is the olive season.”

(Daughter B, A young woman from Jerusalem)

That aligns with the historical background of Palestinians living before the Nakba, which was mentioned earlier, women and men shared working on the land, and the land was their primary source of income and pride (Abdo, 2018). Colonial policies of displacement and land confiscation changed Palestinian’s relationship with land and the relationship both women and men have with nature, their cultural practices, and identity.

Palestine is a feminist issue, Palestinian women face colonial violence in several ways including restricting access to resources, and legal discrimination, this gendered impact of the Israeli settler colonialism is one form of the intersecting forms of oppression, along with patriarchal systems of power.

Collective liberation is a feminist ethical constant and a political reference for decolonization. By acknowledging the gendered ramifications of ISC policies and violence

as a colonial and patriarchal control, we can pinpoint the impact on women's lives. This control restricts women from accessing healthcare, education, and their freedom of movement. The captivity women experience is tripled, stemming from the Israeli colonial regime, Israeli detention facilities, and the post-Oslo Palestinian political environment (Wahab, Shalhoub-Kevorkian, & Abed Rabo Alissa, 2022).

Indigenous Lands for Indigenous Peoples: How Can Land Confiscation Change the Identity of Indigenous Peoples

The relationship Palestinians had with nature, including all living and non-living things, changed immensely with the beginning of Israeli settler colonialism and is still changing due to the oppression policies of the ISC, like changing the landscape and isolating people from their land, especially after building the apartheid wall in 2002. Palestinians hold a deep respect for the land and the ecosystem which is evident by their practices in nature. Palestinians use their Indigenous knowledge systems, ecological wisdom, and traditional conservation practices to maintain the natural resources and biodiversity for future generations (Masalha, 2018).

Palestinians have maintained their deep connection to the land and nature through traditional, cultural, and agricultural practices in nature, mainly agricultural practices, and activities tied to their natural surroundings. They passed their Indigenous knowledge through generations, in ways like practicing this knowledge and narrating about them, these practices include sustainable land use and resource management. Palestinian's Indigenous knowledge is in heart an ecological wisdom, grounded in an understanding of Indigenous ecosystems

and biodiversity, this wisdom came from a cross-generational understanding of their natural surroundings, including land, plants, resources, and people, forming the Palestinian cultural and agricultural heritage and identity.

These practices underscore their Indigenous identity and how it is directly connected to the land. By preventing Palestinians from access to their land, their cultural practices and traditions will be subject to oblivion, and they will lose a part of their identity, the part that is shaped in nature and by interacting with it. Preserving these traditional practices is crucial for environmental conservation and safeguarding Palestinian identity in the face of colonial efforts to ensure its survival.

In one interview, a woman whose family is originally from Haifa got displaced to Nablus and then moved abroad, and while this woman grew up abroad and got back to Palestine later in her adult life, she expressed how being physically in Palestine and working in agriculture and on land changed her perspective of belonging and her sense of identity. This highlights the important role of physically being in land and connecting with the natural surroundings for Indigenous communities, and how this connection forms their identity.

“Through land, I started to understand my identity better” (Rommate A).

Multi-Generational Colonial Trauma

Trauma is one’s reaction or response to a wound, it can be defined as the emotional shock with possible long-lasting effects (HarperCollins Publishers, 2006). Most Indigenous peoples either lived or living in a multigenerational trauma, this trauma is a direct result of colonization (Brave Heart-Jordan, 1995). Multigenerational trauma is not limited to one’s lifespan (Danieli, 1998), colonial trauma has caused ongoing pain for Indigenous peoples.

This trauma can be physical and sexual abuse and can be passed on for several generations (Lane, Bopp, Bopp, & Norris, 2002). Other forms of contemporary trauma work are trauma related to ritual abuse, wars, sexual abuse, and psychological assaults (Linklater, 2011). Trauma can portray itself in the cultural Narrative and collective memory, perpetuating not only the struggle cycles but also resilience cycles across generations.

This multi-generational trauma seems to unfold in various ways for Indigenous families, this trauma can never be minimized, nor can their abilities to survive and adjust to such circumstances. Indigenous trauma has been diagnosed through non-Indigenous Western theories and was addressed as a mental illness, the imposition of Western diagnostic for trauma obscures Indigenous experiences and perpetuates stigma.

Many Indigenous peoples experience trauma in a multi-traumatic context that is received and processed depending on the way a person was facing this trauma, that means that not all people deal with and view the same circumstances, nor get traumatized by it, without addressing the situation, families tend to recycle the trauma they go through (Linklater, 2011). One of these circumstances for Indigenous Palestinians is the Nakba.

Colonization, since the Nakba, changed Indigenous people's livelihood and lifestyle through forced displacement, cultural assimilation, loss of land, and systemic violence. The memories and impact of these historical injustices continue to reverberate through their communities in the form of trauma; this was present in all the interviews as stated earlier. It is important to understand and acknowledge the complex dynamics within Indigenous communities and the mechanism through which trauma manifests across generations in the colonial context and to recognize the historical impact of colonial injustice on Indigenous communities. Addressing intergenerational trauma requires a holistic approach that

acknowledges the historical colonial context is crucial for achieving justice and healing for Indigenous communities, and contextualizing their experiences and emotions to support resilience.

The refugee experience reflects a complex sense of time and place. The contemporary challenges for refugees with an unknown future are viewed as an extension of generational trauma, their situation disrupts the traditional ideas of linear time and place (Jayyusi 2007). The Nakba is an ongoing tragedy that transcends time and space and is not an “event” to remember (Khoury 2012), this is embodied in the traumatic impact of the Nakba across generations.

The images and impacts of colonial trauma extend beyond the rupture of physical locations and refugee camps. It is also embodied in the lived experiences of individuals with colonial violence history. An example of this phenomenon emerges from interviews with a woman from Gaza and a woman from Haifa, the woman from Gaza articulates how the trauma of the Nakba, the forced displacement of Palestinians in 1948, continues to shape her relationship with space and time. Her Narrative underscores the enduring influence of historical traumas on individual and collective identities, as well as the interconnectedness of past and present struggles.

“Blood memory” in Indigenous beliefs stands for the experiences embedded in our physical and psychological selves, these traumatic memories are passed through by paternal patterns and bloodline (Younging, 2009, p. 327). The concept of “blood memory” relates to the Palestinian's beliefs, particularly applied through their Narratives around the Nakba, and parallels to their experience of displacement and loss of land, Palestinians carry the Nakba collective memory of their trauma of dispassion ancestral land. The physical displacement

encompasses the erosion of traditional and cultural practices tied to the land, shapes their sense of self, space, and time, and feeds their ongoing identity struggle.

This notion of rupture between time and place also goes beyond the temporal and spatial boundaries. In one interview with a woman from Gaza, explained how Palestinians believe that the colonial trauma passed from their families from the Nakba. This trauma changed the woman's relationship with the material world, how those "events" come and change their sense of space, and how she carries the first Nakba with her.

"I believe that the trauma of our grandparents from the first Nakba is in our DNA. I do not know if it is scientifically proven or not. I remember reading some papers about it, that we inherited it from one generation to the next, from our mothers' wombs...I always feel pain in my womb, like it is empty. I feel like we carry this sorrow even though we haven't lived the first Nakba. You feel like you were born in survival mode, carrying the "Emergency Bag" on your back (Emergency Bag: the term became popular among Gazans in the attack on Gaza, people used to put away their valuable things and papers in one bag for easy access when they get forced to evacuate). We always knew, in Gaza at least, that this day would come. It is like we are always ready to leave...We worked hard on healing those past traumas, and then something big came that blocked the road for us, something that is present, a real present experience besides the one we already hold from our parents. That made everything complicated, especially with our relationship with this space."

(Woman from Gaza)

Another woman shares this feeling of past trauma from the Nakba. She believes that she holds the trauma from her grandparents and parents after one of her family was displaced.

“I believe that there is trauma passed between generations. I am sure that there is something I cannot explain but I can feel. This feeling of direct occupation from Al-Nakba. I didn’t live through Al-Nakba but my grandparents did. I have questions and feelings that I cannot understand.

There is a great sorrow that is always there.” (Roommate A)

Women’s testimonies show how the Nakba is an ongoing trauma for refugees and Palestinians in the occupied territories (Masalha 2012). The Nakba is an ongoing systematic erosion of the Palestinian population and their cultural heritage, as it continues to manifest in the displacement of Palestinians and the confiscation of their ancestral land, this exacerbates the trauma of displacement that repeats the cycles of loss.

Decolonization through Emotions: How Feelings Can Be Used to Liberate and Give Agency

When listening to the interviews, women heavily use the words “Feel” “Like” and “need” to express their experiences and narrate their stories, these emotions are central to their experiences and their perspectives on it. Listening to Indigenous women’s Narratives is needed to acknowledge their emotions which are a big part of their experiences and identity as indigenous. Women express their emotions to reclaim ownership of their emotional histories and assert their agency in shaping their own stories, and realities, and deal with their struggles as a method of resilience.

Emotions are shaped by the border power dynamics and societal norms and are intertwined with the social and cultural contexts. Certain emotions are marginalized within societies, which leads to marginalizing the experiences in which these emotions were created. In the colonial context, power dynamics shape Narratives and identities, when examining the experiences of marginalized communities, it is crucial to understand the role of emotions and the acts of narrating. In this context, women focus on emotions that explain their individual and collective affective experience in their Narrative, by using words that challenge the alienation. Acknowledging and centering the emotions expressed in Indigenous women's Narratives, we challenge dominant Narratives that overlook women's experiences and honor them.

One key concept in Ahmed's (2014) work is the idea of emotional labor, which refers to the work involved in expressing emotions according to social norms in the colonial historical framework. Indigenous women navigate their complex emotional landscapes while they negotiate their identities. Foregrounding emotions in their Narratives assert agency over their emotional labor, reclaiming control over the understanding of their Narratives. Emotions contribute to the construction of historical Narratives and collective memories. Recognizing the cultural politics of emotions and affective experiences' role in Narratives deepens our understanding of history and identity, particularly in the context of Indigenous communities and their struggle.

Women's addressing and centralizing their emotions challenge colonial hierarchies and assert Indigenous epistemologies grounded in emotional connections to land, this reclaiming of emotions challenges colonial notions of ownership and control over land and asserts Indigenous connections to their ancestral land.

Mihesuah criticizes the traditional historical methods and prioritizes objective analysis over emotional engagement of women and Indigenous communities as it makes the history incomplete and impersonal and lacks the full deep understanding of the experience. She calls for a more empathetic and humanistic approach to studying the experience of Indigenous people to gain a better understanding of the colonial impact and patterns (Mihesuah, 2003). Centralizing women's Narratives challenges and changes how ways of viewing dominant power structures and that moves the academic act into a force of change and liberation (Amoah, 1997).

When critically studying the impact of colonialism on Indigenous women, we cannot ignore the emotional and psychological impact by acknowledging the profound toll that colonialism took on women and their sorrow, anger, and grief of losing their lands and homes.

Indigenous women's (and men's) experiences and emotions should be given a central focus when examining historical accounts, particularly within colonial contexts. This is crucial because it allows for a more accurate and inclusive understanding of history, we can challenge the marginalization of Indigenous Narratives by dominant ones by centralizing Indigenous experiences and emotions and approaching more ethical and respectful methods for story-telling

Understanding the thoughts, motivations and personal conflicts of indigenous peoples is essential for understanding the historical and colonial struggle Indigenous experienced during colonization. The feminist and anti-colonial analysis should also question the survival strategies and the methods of resistance women followed (Mihesuah, 2003).

This feeling of loss, sorrow, and anger was shown in many of the interviews, in one interview, the woman talked about how her family was divided and how this separation and challenge can change the way we see and view the meaning of land.

“The idea that I now cannot see my family growing while they are two hours away from me really impacted me. The feeling of sorrow and anger triggered a reverse reaction in me, making me desire to root myself more in the land.”

(Roommate A)

Her roommate has a similar experience with family division and a similar expression of anger and sorrow.

“I feel like I have a big anger that I cannot reach them or meet them, a big part of my identity is unknown to me, and that wasn’t the case back then.”

(Roommate B)

Women's feeling of anger and sorrow is the highlight of their experiences with the settler colonial violence is a complex emotional response that creates their reality; by addressing these emotions, they assert agency over how their experiences are viewed and understood, this feeling and the act of addressing it through Narrative carry the significant of their cultural and political context. Sorrow and anger in the Palestinian case are linked to their experiences of loss, displacement, and colonial trauma driven by the Nakba,

A woman from Gaza used similar words to describe her (and Palestinians in Gaza) relationship with anger, she believed that it is a privilege to think of the connection she has with land as she never knew much about it. The lack of access to the Palestinian land is living proof that people’s relationship with the land is highly linked to accessing it, the feeling of

loss and sorrow driven by the restricted access to the land impacts Indigenous connection to the land and their practice of the traditional knowledge and culture tied to it.

“I started to realize that I never had the privilege or luxury to think of my relationship with the land or even to think of settlers and settlements. We always had raging anger within us, and sometimes despair, but for me, I never had the time to think beyond that.”

(Women from Gaza)

Women’s Narratives capture the colonial reality and its daily impact on their reality and sense of belonging, consciousness, and lived experiences, and this impact appears in her relationship with the land as she describes it as a “luxury”, these emotions expresses alienation, loss, and sorrow are rooted in the Palestinian collective trauma of the ongoing colonial violence and oppression.

That was also present in another interview, we can see the way the ISC deprives women of their right to movement and accessing nature, land, and even family properties. Preventing women from lands also deprives them of accessing resources that are the core of the knowledge system, taking away their right to practice their native knowledge and cultural practices. This puts their identity, cultural practices, and native knowledge in danger of being forgotten. In an interview with a Yoga instructor, the woman explained that she lost her knowledge and reclaimed while studying and living in Tel Aviv (Jaffa).

“Any piece of knowledge about the land and nature that I lose of my consciousness feels like a theft. That’s because it has been taken from me as I was forced to be in a place where I learned everything from a big colonial

city. Working with settlers made me defensive of every little piece of information I had.”

(Yoga constructor from Majd Al-Kurum)

This Narrative offers an insight into the complex emotions related to the displacement of Palestinians, she expresses her sense of loss and disconnection from land and nature. She recognized the forced loss of knowledge and practices tied to the land as a form of theft, which also suggests that her connection to the land is not just physical, but also cultural, this knowledge forms her cultural identity and her sense of belonging. By losing this knowledge, colonialism affected her identity. As she lived in a colonial environment in what is now called Tel Aviv, she took her knowledge from colonial educational institutions, which made her feel alienated from home, physically and emotionally. In this colonial context, she highlighted the complexities of identity and belonging daily, and the resilience and determination of Palestinians to claim agency over knowledge and practices in their daily life.

This highlights the deep connection between Indigenous peoples and their land, and that any change or loss of traditional knowledge due to colonial force is akin to theft. Indigenous people are also forced to struggle for identity and belonging and to stay in an ongoing defensive state of their knowledge from any colonial influence and an ongoing process of cultural resilience. This drives Indigenous peoples to feel dispossessed and marginalized, even if they still live in their lands, the settler colonialism power dynamics exert control over both the physical land and the knowledge associated with it.

Shiva advocates for the reclamation of Indigenous knowledge systems that view the Earth as interconnected with human beings, emphasizing that decolonization must involve

the restoration of these knowledge systems, which have long been marginalized by Western epistemologies" (Shiva, 2005). The land for Indigenous Palestinians is not just a physical space, it serves as an emotional cultural, and social hub for the community, Palestinians share this value with the Indigenous peoples around the world, knowledge systems, and cultural and traditional heritage for Indigenous communities are tied to their ancestral lands, so does their struggle with colonial structures. Palestinian women's Narratives reflect the colonial impact on their emotional and cultural well-being. Women express their emotions heavily through their Narratives, their feelings of sorrow, anger, and resilience, this act of expressing emotions is a liberating act that women reclaim their agency over their experiences. When viewing Indigenous Narratives in a colonial context, it is crucial to centralize their voices and emotions, this allows us to deepen our understanding of historical and contemporary discourses and view them in a just and liberating approach. This approach helps to challenge the dominant and colonial Narratives and assert the Indigenous right to self-determination and cultural resilience in the face of colonial oppression.

Conclusion

This research explored the multifaceted impact of Israeli settler colonialism on Indigenous Palestinian women, with a focus on their relationship with their natural environment, particularly the land, and its implications for women's traditional, cultural heritage, and knowledge systems.

Using qualitative interviews and a Narrative inquiry approach as the primary source of understating, the research reveals patterns of gendered colonial oppression, and the destruction of physical, cultural, and environmental heritage. Understanding the intersectionality of Palestinian women's experiences in the colonial context that shaped their reality happens through understanding their Narratives and emotions with empathy, their feelings illuminate the interconnectedness of gender, colonialism, and environmental degradation.

The examination of women's Narrative underscores the resilience and resistance of Indigenous Palestinians and the women's effort to reclaim their cultural identity and land-rooted knowledge systems in the face of the intertwined colonial and patriarchal oppression; patriarchal systems are reinforced by colonial oppression that exploits gender norms. Women are being subjected to these double power structures, affecting their lives daily, and making liberation essential.

In exploring the Narratives of Indigenous Palestinian women, Narratives offered a critical insight into the lived experiences of Indigenous Palestinian women. This study examines the deep-rooted connection between Indigenous Palestinian women (and men) and the natural surroundings of Palestine, particularly their ancestral land. Palestinian identity is

a deep-rooted connection to the land, which serves as a source of heritage, cultural resilience, and collective memory. This exploration holds empathy toward Indigenous women and is framed in a decolonial and anti-colonial feminist approach through research and practice in conducting and analyzing the women's experiences in the historical colonial context.

In focusing on women's Narratives, we acknowledge the position of the intersection of settler colonialism structure and patriarchal systems, Indigenous Palestinian women's Narratives offered an understanding of the deep connection between Palestinian women, land, cultural heritage, and knowledge systems rooted in the land, and highlighted the resilience and agency of Palestinian women in the settler colonial context. Women's Narratives uncover the enduring legacy of Israeli colonial trauma, gendered oppression, and violence patterns while unveiling the layers of colonial resistance and cultural resilience demonstrated by Indigenous women in the face of ongoing settler colonial violence. Women narrating their experiences and expressing emotions of loss, anger, alienation, and sorrow, underscores the rupture in their identity, memories, and cultural practice. This colonial violence appears in the multigenerational trauma Indigenous communities go through. Although women and men face the same colonial violence, women's stories highlight the ways in which colonial violence is gendered and intersects with the patriarchal structure. These structures create complex challenges for Palestinian women and impact women's connection to the Indigenous land and Indigenous knowledge.

This study goes beyond the physical loss and land confiscation; the gendered colonial violence impacted Palestinian women's (and men's) connection with their natural surroundings, particularly land. Land serves as a social and cultural hub for Indigenous Palestine, along with the use of agricultural practices, making it essential for their identity

and formation. The ongoing settler colonial impacts on Palestinians are changing the landscape, population, and cultural identity of Palestinians. This impact started from the Nakba, asserting a multi-generational trauma and a rupture in space, time, and sense of belonging.

The impact of settler colonialism on women and their relationship with their natural surroundings is multifaceted and profound. Historically, colonial trauma and dispossession disturbed the physical, emotional, and cultural connection Indigenous women have with their ancestral territories. Settler colonial policies aimed at land confiscation threaten the physical displacement of Indigenous Palestine while also threatening the Palestinian culture and identity by erasing Palestinian knowledge and cultural practices that are rooted in the Indigenous land. This comes in many forms including land confiscation, restricted access, and movement to land, restricting access to basic resources such as water and agricultural land, and the destruction of architectural, cognitive, and environmental heritage.

Palestinian women exhibit emotional resilience, survival strategies, and agency, holding the knowledge and culture of Palestine and taking the responsibility of passing and creating local knowledge. Women's stories tell the importance of centering Palestinian Indigenous voices in the pursuit of justice and liberation for marginalized communities from Israeli settler colonial structures. Palestinian struggle against settler colonial oppression is inseparable from the border struggle for Indigenous rights and liberation.

My work uncovers the pattern of gendered colonial oppression and reveals the resilience and resistance of Indigenous Palestinians in reclaiming their cultural identity and land-rooted knowledge systems despite the intertwined colonial and patriarchal oppression. I emphasize the importance of amplifying Indigenous voices in the pursuit of justice and

liberation, framing my research within a decolonial and anti-colonial feminist approach. I examine women's Narratives with empathy and focus on their emotions as a tool to decolonize this study, in theory, method, and practice.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview questions

The research analyses Narrative interviews conducted with Palestinian women from different backgrounds sharing their experiences under ISC and their connection to the land and the landscape.

The interview process was divided into three phases:

1. Narrative phase: A single, carefully constructive Narrative question is asked and the participant is given the freedom to respond without intrusion from the researcher. I started by asking about their life under the ISC, I simplified my words when needed and elaborated to make my question more understandable for the different groups and individuals.
2. Narrative follow-up: Additional questions were asked to gather more information if necessary.
3. Optional second interview: More structured questions were asked to reveal specific data that may be different from one woman to another depending on their narration and experiences.

Appendix 2: In their words: scripted interviews

In this section, I present a collection of scripted interviews with women from different cities and villages in Palestine with different backgrounds and age ranges. These interviews and Narratives are the centre of my thesis project and the primary resource for understanding the living experiences of Indigenous women within the Israeli settler colonial context. As an Indigenous Palestinian, a woman, and a researcher, I aim to pass on women's Narratives and gendered experiences under colonial violence, those Narratives explore how women navigate their changing identity, agency, and connection to the land.

The interviewees are given complete freedom in their responses and in remembering and constructing the story that they feel best responds to the questions. If needed, I started by asking them to expand on the last event “Do you remember anything else about this?”, or simply help them to move on by asking something like: “And what happened after that?” or a question that makes women want to elaborate more, a Narrative follow-up. Questions in this sub-session remain strictly Narrative. Questions asked focus on women’s experiences linked to Indigenous land, cultural practices tied to their natural surroundings, Indigenous and local knowledge, and knowledge passing cross-generation. Interview questions are in Appendix One.

Colonialism shaped my research landscape, to do the interviews, I needed to move between cities in Palestine. Although I have the privilege of moving inside and outside the Green Line, it is not easy or safe to do so. The tension rapidly increased after the attack on Gaza on 7 October 2023, so I had to wait for months at the beginning to conduct my second interview, or for the same reason, I had to do two of the interviews online.

The journey of writing this research and interviewing women deepened my understanding of the gendered colonial violence, that was also practiced on me. The methods I used are anti-colonial, de-colonial, and feminist, I took into consideration the colonial and historical context and carried empathy for women and their Narratives.

A few days before the attack on Gaza, on a trip to Al-Tayyiba Eastern Bedouin Gathering near Ramallah, I met for the first time a woman in her early 40s and her daughter. With my Danish roommate at the time, I went to check on them after being attacked by Israeli Settlers. We started talking about the attack, and that led us to my paper. Openly, they agreed to be part of it, under one condition, not to publish their names.

Residences do not have electricity, infrastructure, or even accessible transportation. Mostly living in Zinc houses, people get regularly attacked by extremist settlers. “Halal”, like goats and sheep, get stolen from Palestinian shepherds, and settlers get into their private property for vandalism and theft. Bedouins believe settlers do that to push them towards migration and relocation.

Mother A: “I cannot stand staying away from Nature, I cannot imagine myself living in a village and closing the house door, I want to be able to sleep under the moon and its light, and under the stars... do you see the life I am living? (Pointing at her Zinc roof and the newly installed windows) I feel like I am a queen, I feel happy... I once moved to a house in Rammun (a nearby village). I could not stand it, so I left that house and came back to live here. I hated closing the door, the door never closes here. After the settlers started coming and attacking us, we started closing the door because we wanted to keep the children safe. I also used to take off the glass from the window frames, but now, I am being forced to have

actual doors and glassed windows. Everything is different when the door is open... I breathe better; I am telling you this from the bottom of my heart.”

All of the talking about the door and windows makes me think of my mother, our house is also open, and the windows and the doors are never locked, we never lock with keys. But since the attack on Gaza, and after a dozen soldiers broke into our house, the key is always inside the keyhole. Sometimes, my mother thinks she is claustrophobic but I believe that living in the north her whole life with 9 sisters and brothers and harvesting crops, made her embrace a lifestyle that revolves around open-air living. My 80-year-old grandmother lives alone in a house in the middle of her city, and she never closes the door either.

Mother A continues: “This is my opinion, I am not sure about my daughters, they went to universities and their culture changed.”

Daughter A: “I do not feel the same about that.”

The mother talked with pride about the olive harvest season, the season of milking “Halal” and making cheese, and her method of fermenting the dough at night so she could bake fresh bread at dawn... “The whole neighbourhood smelled the freshly baked bread.”

Mother A: “We used to live in safety (before settlers' attacks reached the area). I could go to the farthest mountain or any place I desired; there were no boundaries... I used to walk at night everywhere. We used to live in a tent made out of hair and wooden sticks, my husband used to work in Israel in construction, so it was just my daughters in the tent and the closest house was about 150 meters away from us. I used to herd goats and leave my kids alone at home, those days whenever I went to my parents' place, I begged them to keep their eyes open and to keep checking on the goats, and to never open the door for settlers.”

Daughter A: “Unbounded freedom.”

Mother A: “Do you see that new settlement on top of the mountain? (Referring to the opposite mountain) It is 3 years old, and all the people who used to live there were forced to move, this is also happening to us, the space we live in and the areas where we graze our sheep have become confined, and they have narrowed down on us. They took over the water spring where we used to sit nearby two months ago; even going out to chill in nature is dangerous.”

“We feel sad, that in ten years, if the situation remains like this, everyone will leave. I love to stay here on my land, my husband and I are determined, but went settlers may force us to leave. The children do not like the situation; they think it is dangerous for us; we may have to sacrifice for the sake of the children. I might be forced to do this; no one wants to see their children suffering in front of their eyes. If I leave, I will leave because I have to, not because I want to. I want to stay and die where I lived and was raised. We will not give up our lives and our way of living.”

Daughter A: We do have a strong sense of belonging to the land, but what to do when you are marginalized and no one knows about whether you live or die, no one cares about you? Why should I surrender to death if no one cares whether I lived or not? I choose to continue with my life because if I die, it will not affect anyone... You feel alone, and no one knows about you."

Mother A: “If we do not have water or electricity, how would we be able to defend our land? This is my perspective, mine, and everyone who lives here. Do you understand my point of view? I am ready to fight and defend the land with everything I have; I would not escape or hide. If a settler comes, I am ready to grab something and strike him, I will not allow him to come and take anything. Men would also do the same, they will not allow the settler to approach the goats if he has the ability to do so. However, sometimes they come with their

weapons, what can you do then? They threaten people with their weapons, and that ties people up, settlers come in a large group of ten people.”

Daughter A: “Bedouin women are intoned with nature, they feel nature and nature feels them, do you understand? Women from the cities do not sit under the tree, light a fire, or watch the sunrise and sunset... we have a relationship with air, fire, rain, and even mud. We feel like we are connected to it, we are more engaged with nature. We know the flowers, the trees, the seasons. We have our names for things, we use wildflowers as medicine, Al-Jeadeh (Teucrium) for stomach ache, Al-Shyh (Artemisia), al-Za'eetman (Ixiolirion), al-Khabezah (Malva Pusilla), al-Za'atar (Thyme) 'Akkoub (Gundelia), Louf (Arum Palaestinum)... We use all of those.”

The mother talked all about practices she used to observe “Al-Jadat” (grandmothers) do, like putting the eggs under their mother on Mondays and never on Sundays and never letting newborn baby clothes under the stars... “I do not know if I can say that, but I learned that we can take the chicken faces and set it on fire then use it on a burn injury on the skin, it heals it. I used it once on one of my kids when he was younger, now you won't believe that there was ever a burn.”

She also taught me how she uses olive oil in the ears and as a massage oil for the stomach, the ghee infused with Al-Shyh for inflamed wounds, and coffee grounds on open wounds. Her daughter doesn't agree with her ways of living and interacting with nature.

Daughter A: “It is difficult for me to do what my mother does, to go into the mountains to pick herbs and heat them in the ghee. I can just go to the pharmacy and buy an anti-inflammatory... I fear going to the opposite mountain and a settler comes to attack me.”

A couple of months later into the attack on Gaza, I finally had the chance to conduct my second interview with another mother-daughter duo, the mother, in her late 50s, is originally from Al-Malha in Jerusalem, but was forced to leave it as a 4-year-old child to Sharafat, another village in Jerusalem in 1967, after the confiscation of their lands. The daughter, in her early 30s, joined without any planning.

Mother B: “We used to plant the seeds of our foods in weather in winter or in summer, now it is really hard, everything is changing. Israelis cut out a road in the valley, so now we can not go there, even if we can, there are a lot of Jews (in our everyday life, it is common to say Jews about the Israeli settlers and soldiers) who come and prevent us from accessing the valley. I have a lot of memories there, my mother used to bake bread while we herd the sheep. My mother taught me everything, she taught all of us, my father was blind, so he couldn’t do much. He used to be working as a “Mo’athen” (the person who calls the prayer in the mosque), so my mother used to plant the land and sell the surplus so we buy the necessities we needed.”

Daughter B: “I like cooking traditional foods using my picks from the mountains. I remember when we used to go out and pick pine and Thyme. All the land was agricultural, filled with edible plants that we could use and eat. If we were going to pick thyme now, for example, we would gather it in small quantities and discreetly, as the police might fine us.”

Mother B: “We liked using all the resources available in hand, we used to treat ourselves with herbs like Sage and Thyme, and even build our ovens, I still remember the smell of rocks and charcoals, delicious.”

Daughter B: “We used to play all day in the valley. Kids nowadays do not do that; the valley is also gone. Things are changing so fast. All of those buildings and roads are new. I’ve never imagined things would get to this point; everything has lost its meaning.”

Daughter B: “I believe men and women collaborate in working on the land. Although we usually see old women selling what they harvest in the market, the whole family shares the work in the villages around us. For us, the only season we work on the land is the olive season.”

Mother B: “They (ISC) are working with young children to forget about Palestine. They take the land and prevent us from reaching it, they make everything illegal. We must pass our knowledge to our children.”

Daughter B: “I do not feel like I am doing anything directly to help, but I like to go hiking to understand and explore our landscape.”

A couple of months later, in Ramallah, I visited two long-term roommates in their early-mid 30s, the first roommate (Roommate A) is from Nablus, and the second roommate (Roommate B) is from Bethlehem.

Roommate A, while preparing food for Iftar (breakfast) in Ramadan: “I would like to start with my background, from my history. I grew up knowing that both my grandparents lived in Haifa, they were neighbours. In 1948, after Al-Nakba and the displacement, part of them went back to Nablus and the other part moved to Nazareth. Colonialism impacted my life even before I was born. The occupation impacts our life in every little detail. In our lives, that either empowers us to connect with land or to run away from it. For me, it made me want to understand what land means to me. I was born abroad, and later in life, I went back to Palestine with my family. It was challenging to come. It took me time to realize my

relationship with Palestine. I used to wonder if my hometown was Palestine or the town I was born in. The idea that I now cannot see my family growing while they are two hours away from them impacted me. The feelings of sorrow and anger triggered a reverse reaction in me, making me desire to root myself more in the land. In university, I started to understand the Palestinian issue better and that I have another essence, that I am who I am, and I am a woman. I realized I was Palestinian, and I had a role in the Palestinian cause, but I didn't know what my role was.

I believe that there is trauma passed between generations. I am sure that there is something I cannot explain but I can feel. This feeling of direct occupation from Al-Nakba. I did not live through Al-Nakba but my grandparents did. I have questions and feelings that I cannot understand. There is a great sorrow that is always there.

There is something magical about the landscapes in the villages where I was working after college. I understood this beauty better because I studied plant biology and environmental health, and that made me closer to the land. I went abroad again to do my masters in environmental studies, and somehow, I stumbled into a man who started environmental agriculture in Palestine. We connected and when I came back here, I started volunteering there. It took me a while to understand my relationship with land and agriculture.

Through land, I started to understand my identity better. I bought a piece of land, and I am so happy I did so, but I am sad I didn't have the chance to work on it as much as I would like to. There are a lot of obstacles, internal and external, and there is also fear. One of the things that made me buy the piece of land is to root myself here, but I have an issue knowing how. Is it through agriculture? I am not planting though I am active in the field of food sovereignty and agriculture and to help make knowledge productions about that topic... Having this land

scares me, to be honest, to get back to the land and to bear full responsibility, the responsibility of the idea of the land, not the land itself.”

Roommate B: “My relationship with the land was strengthened by my mother and father. They used to make time to go to the valley around our house, Karamisan Valley. Now a large part of the valley is being seized. A big part of my childhood was there. I had a special bond with a water spring there. I used to go there whenever I was mad or sad.” (childhood/memories) I feel at ease when I hear the sound of water, yet the ISC prevents me from being there. My mother's family is originally from Shafa Amer and was displaced to Bethlehem. My father's family is spread between Palestine, Lebanon, and Jordan. A big part of my family members is in Lebanon. They have a rural lifestyle. They make their yogurt and arak and raise goats. I feel like a big part of me is related to them. I feel like I inherited the desire to have this lifestyle, but I cannot live it. I feel like I have a big anger that I cannot reach them or meet them. A big part of my identity is unknown to me, and that wasn't the case back then. My grandfather went by car to Lebanon, met my grandmother, and took her back to Palestine. I wonder how the borders can prevent us from being together and knowing our roots.

I have a great thirst for the sea, and since we live in mountain and plain areas/regions where there is no sea, this creates a drought within me, a drought because a part of me wants to know our sea. It is like the sea is forbidden since we cannot access it. I thought to myself that I have to find a way to connect with nature even if not with the sea. I have never felt like I am satisfied. Whenever I am in nature, I feel like I need it even more. I feel lost in my own country because I do not know it. I cannot move freely here. I cannot go to Golan Heights

and meet the farmer who harvests the cherries and helps him with it. I need those practices in my life, just like my roommate said, these practices root for us. We are rooted in the land.”

As an art trainer for children, I love taking kids to nature. I connect with them. Their connection with the land is very organic. They do not overanalyse, they just exist. A big part of what I do with children is to build these practices with them. It is also therapeutic for me, even in the small physical space we have, which is also forbidden for us, especially now in the war.”

After telling me about the experiences she had as a child in nature, and all the biodiversity in Bethlehem, she exclaimed: “I also wonder what Palestine holds for me. That’s why I insist on having these practices in nature, even if it is as small as burying my organic waste. The soil is alive and doesn’t know any borders. You can know more about nature through soil than anything.

I feel like I practice this relationship through food, I make sure to have clean food from farmers who plant their harvest in small patches, I boycott the big agricultural companies and the Israeli companies, I taste the cities through food I get from different places.”

Roommate A: “I agree with that. I feel like my relationship also gets strengthened by knowing the people who work in the land. I think those practices make us feel nature more, and the occupation forces us to forget all about it. When we practice our dietary and agricultural habits, we challenge a colonial system. We know our land and nation through the people around us”.

A month later, I met a yoga instructor in her mid-30s in an online meeting.

Yoga Instructor: “I am originally from Majd Al-kurum in the north. Half of its villagers were evacuated a couple of times. I was raised there, so being with the land was not strange to me.

We make our bread, we plant the land, we pick thyme even though it is illegal, and we have a rural lifestyle regardless of everything.

In my village, most of the houses have a small garden beside them. The concept of the land is there organically, but when we think of it, we do not put much time into it. We lost a lot of things because we do not care much about it now. We barely see land being planted or trees around. I have witnessed the change in land and nature. Now, we go on “trips” to nature even though it is all around us. I started to realize how much we are disconnected from nature when I opened up to our native knowledge on land. My mother used to treat me with medicinal herbs all the time, but when I went to the university in Jaffa “Tel Aviv”, it was as if I unconsciously abandoned it and no longer paid attention to it. Then I realized that it was knowledge taken from me, replaced by other colonial and Western information.

Then I was working in Al-Lydd, Al-Ramla, and Jaffa. The detachment from the land is evident, which made me realize that the little information I have as a village girl and took for granted is so valuable, because no one knows it, even in an olive season that is so tiring, and the way people “Romanticizes it”. Any piece of knowledge about the land and nature that I lose of my consciousness feels like a theft. That’s because it has been taken from me as I was forced to be in a place where I learned everything from a big colonial city. Working with settlers made me defensive of every little piece of information I had, I stood by every mistake, like names and I made them change a lot of names on their menus. They used to call the Arabic salad “Israeli”, and they changed it because I was stubborn and didn’t let it go. Even in school I always made a point.

As a mother and a yoga and awareness instructor, people always praised me for taking my child to nature and for following a “modern parenting” school. But this is how I was raised.

We didn't take this from the Western world. It is weird to have the less intellectual society believe so and reject those practices. It is something natural for us.

Even practices that have to do with sustainable living and upcycling. As a student, I was aware of it because I saw them stealing it through naming, like "second hand" and "vintage".

We, Palestinians, always passed clothes to each other... the cultural appropriation annoyed me.

Once in a critical course, a leftist anti-Zionism professor showed us a picture from 1948 of Palestinian women drinking from a clay jug, and another photo of a settler who is drinking from another jug. The settler's lips touch the jug. The professor then asked what is the difference between the photos, and I immediately said that Palestinians do not put their mouths on the jug, they pass it to others and know it is not personal property.

The field of yoga and Ayurveda brought me back to our original wisdom. There is a woman whom I visit for treatments who barely finished the 10th grade, but that doesn't matter to me. She has the wisdom of the land. These practices are important for me to follow and reclaim. I take it as knowledge no less than academia, and I think it is important to document and pass on this knowledge. For me, it is more important to practice this knowledge than to document it. I have a friend who happens to be an Ayurveda teacher I pass what I learn to her so she can document and pay it forward.

I like to practice these recipes, especially with my child. I feel like these practices make me feel connected to the land in one way or another. My mother feels the same, she has a whole herbal pharmacy. She believes that the land heals her better. My mother and I actively reclaim and practice our Indigenous knowledge. It solves a lot of issues related to our relationship with our bodies, like accepting body image. It is a beautiful thing to reach this point. One of

the recipes the woman I told you about taught me, is using the soil. Red soil is really good for the skin. It cleanses the skin and the blood. You could make a paste with soil, vinegar, and water. It is better to use rainwater and put it on your skin when you experience skin issues like Eczema. It treats me every time. You can also make a mask for your face to cleanse it. To cut it short, I believe that many factors make us detached from the land. Colonialism is one of them, in addition to our adoption as societies of a consumption pattern that is foreign to us. We think working on the land and preparing our food is tiring, but it makes us present with our bodies, less preoccupied with ourselves, and more in harmony with the Earth. This is something I seek to promote in my work.”

A few weeks later, in a night visit in their house, I met two sisters whom I asked on the spot to interview. The older sister (Sister A) is in her late 30s, working in the maps department at the Anti-Wall and Settlement Resistance Authority. The youngest sister (Sister B) is in her late 20s and works as a hairstylist.

Sister A (The older sister): “I am now living in Ramallah, but when I was living in Jenin, I was more settled. In Jenin, there are not many settlements around us, unlike Ramallah. Movement through cities is hard, and the roads are dangerous. I am afraid to travel alone. I always think that an extreme settler would come and shoot us out of nowhere. A few years ago, we used to go out to the hills and valleys a lot, the nature in our country is beautiful, but now we cannot even go to Ain Qinya (a village next to Ramallah surrounded by settlements). Even buying a piece of land is hard. It can be seized at any time.

I think colonialism affects all Palestinians. In our societies, women's rights are generally seized. Imagine a more powerful force seizing everyone's rights. We certainly feel more affected. For example, I have a car, and I should move freely, but I cannot do so because of

the checkpoints of the occupation. Even if I were to extract my freedom from the man (the patriarchal system), for example, another force affects us (colonialism). If we free ourselves from men, we will find colonialism and borders standing in our way. That is why I believe colonialism has a greater impact on women in Palestine.

I always like to pass on my practices to my daughter. I always use my mother's recipes and orally pass them on to other people. Since the beginning of the attack on Gaza, we've suffered greater repercussions from occupation than ever before. However, I feel that we still maintain this relationship with the land. We do not feel like we've lost it. We feel that this period is temporary and that the connection with land will return as strong as it was. We will climb the mountain, pick sage and thyme, and wait for the thunder to pass to go mushroom hunting. I will not stop these practices. For me, I do not think we have lost our connection with land. I hope that we will return despite the strained relationship. I always have hope for liberation, always.

I love it when women care about those issues. I feel like women's rights are denied. Even if they are allowed to express themselves, they can still be silenced. Sometimes she might be sitting with someone she is not comfortable around so she would not say what is on her mind, or maybe this someone is a man so she will not unwind. Women play a significant role in achieving the liberation we seek.”

While breastfeeding her one-and-a-half-year-old daughter Sister B shook her head and said: “The time I find challenging the most is springtime, especially with the current situation. I want to take my daughters up the mountain but I cannot access any mountain. I live in a place that is surrounded by armed settlers and checkpoints, and there are always gunshots around. They deprived my daughters of this experience this year. They deprived

my daughters of seeing the landscape and picking flowers. All of our photos as children are in nature. I cannot give that to my daughters. I am moving to another house, that is close to the checkpoints, and all I think about is how will I move when all the incursions pass by my house. I chose this place in the first place because of the view and the natural scenery, and now I cannot even enjoy it.”

A month later, I interviewed a woman in her early 30s from Gaza who just left Gaza for Cairo.

“The difference between me and someone from outside Gaza is that we grew up in a reality that we live in an open-air prison, as people say. The notion of movement is distorted for us. To get out of Gaza is off the table. A big part of our mentality, behaviour, and plans are built on that idea. Since the inception of our consciousness, let’s say around 2007 when the siege on Gaza began, I was around 17, old enough to think of what was next for me, like studying abroad or traveling, so I was just starting to think of my choices when the siege began. The idea and practice of movement were absent. We grew up and all of our choices from that day until today were linked to the fact that we do not have the freedom of movement. We cannot move as we want and for the reasons we choose. The concept of movement, which is a basic right for everybody, was always linked to emergencies. I could only go out of Gaza if I was sick or had a humanitarian situation or an exception, like working with international organizations. Even that is linked to the humanitarian situation. These organizations exist because we live in Palestine. It gets more complicated with time and when plans change.

I do not know how to phrase this clearly, but I’ll just say it...I do not know if I am connected to the land or not. We are hurt by the situation that was put upon the land and not the land itself. The pain during times of hopelessness, pressure, and despair often places you in a

dilemma between two experiences: one communal, where you are part of society, and the other is personal, driven by your desires. I feel as though I am being tugged between these two experiences involuntarily.

The homeland or “place” is a part of you whether you wish it or not. It shapes your aspirations through your geographical presence, along with the social and psychological dimensions that come with it.

In this current war, I just want to be in a place that is quiet to make a family. A place that is safe, for me, for my loved ones, and for the children I have not carried yet. I know that once I leave, this place will never leave me. In this situation, colonialism inevitably warped the idea of our bond with space. I cannot take a position and decide if I want to leave, because if I ever left physically, this space will not leave me. I always think that I want to stay connected to this place when I move outside Palestine. What I am trying to say is that even when you decide to distance yourself from this place, it will always be part of your identity and existence. I am not trying to display patriotism but this is the reality... and I can see it now when I left Gaza. I always thought of it as a mother-daughter relationship. No one can argue about how important your relationship with your mother is. It sounds dramatic, but it is like your mother or this place is supposed to contain you, and the only relationship that must be there is love, love from two sides. When you give to this land, the land gives back, but this land is destroyed, it cannot give you no matter how much you give. It is like you are being raised with a mother who is subjected to abuse, so you have to distance yourself from this place and try to give it love from afar. As long as you are there you are harmed.

Even before the war, I always wanted to get out of there, just like the people who live abroad with a good image of this land in their eyes. Those who left by their own choice and were

not exiled. Even when this land is being destroyed, they still have a beautiful image of it in their heart. Thus, they can easily blame people who left. I wish I managed to leave this land with this image as well. It is exhausting to leave the way we left.

I believe that the trauma of our grandparents from the first Nakba is in our DNA. I do not know if it is scientifically proven or not. I remember reading some papers about it, that we inherited it from one generation to the next, from our mothers' wombs...I always feel pain in my womb, like it is empty. I feel like we carry this sorrow even though we haven't lived the first Nakba. You feel like you were born in survival mode, carrying the "emergency bag" on your back (emergency bag: the term became popular among Gazans in the attack on Gaza, people used to put away their valuable things and papers in one bag for easy access when they get forced to evacuate). We always knew, in Gaza at least, that this day would come. It is like we are always ready to leave.

We worked hard on healing those past traumas, and then something big came that blocked the road for us, something that is present, a real present experience besides the one we already hold from our parents. That made everything complicated, especially with our relationship with this space. I was thinking of my next destination from the first day I came to Cairo. Because of my relationship with the land I am from, the land that I am kneaded from is distorted, I am not sure of my ability to bond with this new land even if I found a place to contain me. The ability to be stable is linked with having a place where you feel safe, where you can ground yourself, and think of your dreams and plans; I think it will be hard for me to start over.

A few years ago, when I started working with international organizations in Jerusalem and the West Bank, I started to realize that I never had the privilege or luxury to think of my

relationship with the land or even to think of settlers and settlements. We always had raging anger within us, and sometimes despair, but for me, I never had the time to think beyond that. Another thing that I realized is that my hatred increased, the reason is that when things are closed off to me, I never knew the bliss, opportunities, and vastness, at least geographically, and all of that is around us that we could have been blessed with. Therefore, my feelings towards the colonizer changed. I am not sure if it is a blessing or a curse to see the rest of Palestine, but I knew that the issue I am in is huge.”

Appendix 3: Informed consent form

AAUP-IRB Code No: R-2024/A/128/N

AAUP-IRB Date:

I, (*Name of Participant / optional*) hereby agree to take part in the clinical research questionnaire study specified below:

Title of Study: Reclaiming Palestinian Native Culture through Explorations in Women's Knowledge: A Study of the Impact of Colonialism on the Relationship between Palestinian Women and Nature, Fulfillment of Master degree, in Intercultural Communication and literature in AAUP.

The nature and purpose of which has been explained to me by Sabreen Ahmad and interpreted by Sabreen Ahmad to the best of her ability in English.

I have been told about the nature of the research in terms of methodology, possible adverse effects and complications (as per Participant Information Sheet).

After knowing and understanding all the possible advantages and disadvantages of this research, I voluntarily consent of my own free will to participate in the clinical research specified above.

I understand that I can withdraw from this research at any time without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Date:

Signature:
(Participant)

IN THE PRESENCE OF:

Name:

Designation: **Signature:**

(Witness for Signature of Participant)

I confirm that I have explained to the patient the nature and purpose of the above-mentioned research.

Date:

Signature:

(Attending investigator)

ملخص الرسالة

يتعمق هذا البحث في التأثير المتعدد الأوجه للاستعمار الاستيطاني الإسرائيلي على النساء الفلسطينيات، مع التركيز على تأثيره على ارتباطهن العميق بمحيطهن الطبيعي، وخاصة الأرض. يدرس هذا البحث النتائج الدائمة للعنف الاستعماري القائم على النوع الاجتماعي، بما في ذلك التأثير الاستعماري على المعرفة الأصلية والممارسات التقليدية والثقافية للفلسطينيين. تمثل الطبيعة والبيئة الطبيعية في هذه الدراسة النظم البيئية والتنوع البيولوجي والعناصر البشرية وغير البشرية. يتناول هذا البحث السؤال التالي: كيف يؤثر الاستعمار الاستيطاني الإسرائيلي على علاقات النساء الفلسطينيات الأصلية بالطبيعة، وما هي الآثار المترتبة على معارفهن الأصلية وتراثهن الثقافي؟

من خلال المقابلات النوعية ونهج الاستقصاء السردي، تحلل الدراسة وتكشف روايات النساء الأصلانيات في فلسطين، وتكشف عن أنماط القمع الجندي (المبني على النوع الاجتماعي)، وتقييد الوصول إلى الأراضي، وتدمير التراث المادي والثقافي والبيئي. كما تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على تقاطع تجارب النساء الفلسطينيات، مع التركيز على الترابط بين النوع الاجتماعي والاستعمار والتدهور البيئي. وتؤكد النتائج على الصمود والمقاومة التي أبدتها نساء السكان الأصليين في استعادة هوياتهن ومعارفهن الأصلية وممارساتهن الثقافية على الرغم من العنف الاستعماري الاستيطاني المستمر. ويساهم هذا البحث في فهم أعمق للتعقيدات المحيطة بتأثير الاستعمار على المرأة وضرورة دمج روايات المرأة في خطاب إنهاء الاستعمار. في حين تركز هذه الدراسة بشكل خاص على تأثير الاستعمار الاستيطاني الإسرائيلي على الفلسطينين، فإنها تعترف بالسياق الأوسع لتأثيرات الاستعمار على مجتمعات السكان الأصليين على مستوى العالم وضرورة اتباع نهج إنهاء الاستعمار في أبحاث وممارسات السكان الأصليين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المعرفة الأصلية، السكان الأصليون، الاستعمار، الاستعمار الاستيطاني، النسوية، مناهضة الاستعمار، إنهاء الاستعمار، المستوطنون، الصهيونية، التهجير، الأرض، الطبيعة.