

**Navigating Power, Protection and Connections: A Case of UN
Inactions in Gaza**



By

Hiba Malik

(Registration No: 00000401802)

Department of Peace and Conflict Studies

Centre for International Peace and Stability (CIPS)

National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST),

Islamabad

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By

Hiba Malik

(Registration No: 00000401802)

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Supervisor: Dr. Humaira Shafi


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National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST)

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Signature:  _____

Name of Supervisor: **Dr Humaira Shafi**

Date: _____

Signature (HoD): **Dr Ansar Jamil**  _____

Date: _____

Signature (Dean/Principal):  _____
ASSOCIATE DEAN
Centre for International Peace and Stability
NUST Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies
Islamabad

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National University of Sciences & Technology

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We hereby recommend that the dissertation prepared under our supervision by: (Student Name & Regn No.) Hiba Malik & 00000401802

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Examination Committee Members

1. Name: Brig (R) Mohsin Shah

Signature: 

2. Name: Brig (R) Imran Rashid

Signature: 


3. Name: _____

Signature: _____

Supervisor's name: Dr. Humaira Shafi

Signature: 

Date: _____



Head of Department

Date

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Date: _____



Associate Dean
Centre for International Peace and Stability
UNF Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies
Islamabad

Dean/Principal

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Student Name: **Hiba Malik**

Signature: 

Examination Committee:

a) External Examiner 1: **Brig (R) Mohsin Shah (HoD, PKT)**

Signature



b) External Examiner 2: **Brig (R) Imran Rashid (Former HoD, PKT)**

Signature



Name of Supervisor: **Dr Humaira Shafi**

Signature:



Name of Dean/HOD: **Dr. Ansar Jamil**

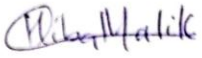
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List of Abbreviations

ABBREVIATION	FULL FORM
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
AU	African Union
WSOD	World Summit Outcome Document
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General
P5	Permanent 5 Members of Security Council (The United States, China, Russia, France, and the United Kingdom)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization

ABSTRACT

This study explores the complex dynamics of power, protection, and connections in the context of the Gaza conflict, with a particular focus on the role of the United Nations (UN). Through a detailed analysis of primary and secondary sources, this research examines how the UN's efforts in Gaza are shaped by power imbalances within the Security Council, particularly the influence of powerful member states such as the United States. The study utilizes Stephen Lukes' three-dimensional view of power to unpack the visible, agenda-setting, and ideological factors that impact the UN's ability to protect civilians in Gaza. A key argument of this thesis is the need to broaden the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) framework to address the complexities of modern conflicts, where states often evade responsibility by framing situations as counter-terrorism or non-international armed conflicts. The research highlights the limitations of the current UN system, established in 1945, in addressing contemporary challenges and underscores the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in advocating for civilian protection, raising awareness, and holding powerful actors accountable. By developing the Power, Protection, and Connection framework, this thesis provides a framework for understanding how informal connections and civil society can complement formal international mechanisms to enhance protection in conflict zones. The findings of this research contribute to ongoing debates on UN reform, the efficacy of R2P, and the role of non-state actors in global peacebuilding efforts.

Keywords: R2P, Gaza, Power, Connections, Protection

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is a global political commitment of member states of the United Nations endorsed at the World Summit in 2005. It is based on the premise that sovereignty not only gives states the right to control their internal affairs without interference but also the responsibility to protect their populations from mass atrocity crimes. The doctrine of R2P is pillared on the primary responsibility of the state to protect its populations from the four atrocity crimes, the international community's obligation to assist states in fulfilling this responsibility via economic assistance or capacity building, and lastly, pursuing military action through the UN Security Council authorization, in situations where a state is noticeably failing and all diplomatic measures have been exhausted.

The Gaza Strip has been the choke point of a protracted conflict between Israel and Palestinian groups, primarily Hamas. The region has witnessed repeated cycles of violence, leading to widespread humanitarian suffering. Gaza went under Israeli occupation after the 1967 Six-Day War. Despite Israel's withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, it has maintained a blockade, controlling most of Gaza's borders, airspace, and maritime access since then. Gaza's population of about two million people has since then lived in dire conditions, facing recurrent military conflicts, and political instability. International organizations have frequently reported the severe humanitarian crisis exacerbated by restrictions on movement, shortages of essential goods, and inadequate access to healthcare, clean water, and electricity.

The Gaza situation arguably meets the criteria for the application of R2P due to the persistent risk of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Reports of disproportionate use of force, targeted attacks on civilian people and infrastructure, and the collective punishment of Gaza's population due to the blockade highlight the urgent need for protection as per the R2P doctrine. Despite the evident need for intervention, the international response to the Gaza situation under the R2P framework has been minimal.

The Gaza situation starkly illustrates the challenges of operationalizing the Responsibility to Protect in complex international relations. While the principles of R2P underscore the moral and legal imperative to protect civilians from mass atrocities, realpolitik often constrains the international community's capacity to act decisively. Addressing these challenges requires a nuanced understanding of the intersection between humanitarian imperatives and geopolitical realities, advocating for balanced and moral engagement to uphold the responsibility to protect.

1.2 What is the Gaza Strip?

Gaza Strip is a 41km long and 10km wide narrow strip of land between the Mediterranean Sea and Israel. Habitating more than two million people, it is one of the most densely populated places on Earth. In the 1948-49 war, it was occupied by Egypt before losing it to Israel in the Six-day War of 1967. Israel kept on building Jewish settlements until it withdrew its troops and settlers in 2005. In the next year, 2006, Hamas- a representative of the Palestinian people- won elections and seized control of Gaza initiating several wars with Israel since then.

Moving onto the history of Gaza and what caused this inhumane war takes us back to the broader conflict known as the Israel-Palestine conflict. The area-Palestine- was under the control of the Ottoman Empire until World War I when the British took over. Gaza was inhabited by an Arab majority, a minority of Jews, and some other ethnic groups. The issue started when the UK, which was given the mandate of Palestine, promised the Palestinian lands to Jewish people and made efforts to relocate them as per a pledge made by then Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour to Britain's Jewish community. This made the territory disputed since both Arabs and Jews laid ancestral claims over the area. From the 1940s-60s, the Jews went to the Palestinian lands in large numbers to escape the holocaust. Given the sensitive nature of the conflicts, the UN in 1947 voted for the land to be split into separate Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem- a holy place for Muslims, Christians, and Jews- to be made an international city. Jews accepted the resolution; however, it received severe backlash from the Arabs. In 1948, the British withdrew and Jewish leaders declared the creation of the state of Israel. Arabs did not well receive this move, and five Arab states namely Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria attacked Israel. What followed was suffering and displacement for around 750,000 Palestinians, famously known as the Al-Nakba or the catastrophe (Sky News 2023). As a result of the war, Jordan got hold of the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip fell under the control of Egypt. As for Jerusalem, it was controlled by Israel in the West and Jordan in the East until the war of 1967 when Israel got hold of East Jerusalem and the West Bank, as well as most of the Gaza, Sinai Peninsula, and Golan Heights.

As of recent, the Palestinian militant group and designated terrorist organization Hamas launched an attack on Israel in October 2023, resulting in the death of 1200 people and 250 hostages, as per Israeli tallies. In response, Israelis have been carrying out airstrikes and ground operations, killing more than 33,000 Palestinian People as per Hamas-run health ministry (BBC News 2024).

The current war is the most prominent and deadliest one between the Hamas and Israel (Frankel 2024b). It has been more than nine months, yet there is no visible opportunity for peace; the Palestinian plight continues to grow, questions are being raised on the Israel and US alliance, Hezbollah and Iran are also becoming players in the conflict, and overall, the ripples are being felt from regional to the international level (Minor et al. 2024). Around 33,000 people have died, 55% of buildings destroyed, 60% of homes and 90% of schools damaged, only 10/36 functioning hospitals, 100% of children out of school, and around a million people facing catastrophic food insecurity (Frankel 2024b).

1.3 Research Problem

The ongoing humanitarian upheavals in Gaza, marked by extensive civilian casualties, infrastructure destruction, and displacement, highlight a grave failure of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine, which aims to prevent mass atrocities and safeguard civilians. Despite the international community's commitment to R2P, its implementation in Gaza has been ineffective majorly due to the paralysis of the United Nations at the hands of the UN Security Council, thereby necessitating the study of a way out. Hence, this research problem focuses on analyzing the complex power dynamics and social connections between the key players in the Gaza situation—namely, the United States, Israel, and Hamas, and their impact on the UN's capacity to invoke R2P. The UN's ability to mediate and invoke R2P is hindered by the political interests and power dynamics within the UN Security Council, where influential member states' positions can impede decisive action. Unfortunately, in Gaza, all these players are winners, with only the civilian population facing the burnt.

This research aims to expansively evaluate the power dynamics and social connections to understand their influence on the UN's efficacy in protecting civilians in Gaza and to propose strategies for enhancing the protection strategies. Analyzing how these power imbalances and connections can be navigated is critical for resolving future conflicts marred by complex power imbalances to strengthen and empower the UN to invoke the three pillars of R2P: prevent, react, and rebuild.

By problematizing these relationships, the study seeks to uncover the multifaceted barriers that prevent humanitarian intervention and explore viable pathways for addressing the persistent crises in Gaza and similar future conflict terrains. The choice of Gaza as a case study is rooted in it being a contemporary case where power dynamics have hindered conflict resolution, thereby demonstrating the necessity for a holistic approach to protect civilians from adverse human rights violations.

1.4 Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following key questions:

What role is the UN playing in addressing humanitarian concerns and implementing Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principles in Gaza?

This question aims to probe the role of the United Nations in the Gaza situation, particularly focusing on its efforts to sustain the principles of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) in conflict zones like Gaza, where big powers have interests and allies.

How does power explain the actions of the USA in Gaza?

This research question aims to investigate various dimensions of power, including overt actions, agenda-setting processes, ideological motivations, and underlying implicit factors, to uncover how the power dynamics of US are shaping the behavior, interactions, and outcomes in Gaza.

How can informal social connections impact the efficacy of collaborative actions in addressing humanitarian crises?

This question focuses on the influence of social connections on collaborative efforts to address humanitarian crises, specifically within the context of the Gaza conflict. It explores how diplomatic relationships, alliances, and networks among states and organizations affect the question of humanitarian interventions.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study aims to contribute to the extant pool of literature in international affairs and conflict studies by investigating the power dynamics and providing valuable guidance for developing more effective ways to promote peace and manage conflicts in areas where power politics play a significant role. Furthermore, comprehending the impact of worldwide social connections on

collaborative endeavors will establish the foundation for improving cooperation and coordination among global participants. Efficiency and cohesiveness in responding to humanitarian disasters are particularly crucial. The study's ultimate goal is to analyze the behaviors of powerful entities to understand the conflict better and improve the implementation of R2P principles ultimately contributing to the noble objective of ensuring civilian protection, and lasting peace in Gaza and elsewhere.

1.6 Methodology Overview

This study will adopt a qualitative research approach to delve into the complexities surrounding the role of the UN particularly in implementation of Responsibility to Protect within the context of Gaza. The data collection will consist of both primary and secondary sources. For primary data, the target is approximately 10-15 semi-structured interviews with experts specializing in R2P and professors of foreign policy. Additionally, a diverse array of secondary sources, including academic articles, news reports, and books, will complement the interview data. The next steps of data analysis will involve thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the data and the identification of key insights. For reporting purposes, the final chapters of the thesis will present the study's findings in a clear, coherent manner supplemented by quotes from interviews, as well as relevant excerpts from secondary sources. The aim is to highlight key themes emerging from the data and providing an understanding of the research findings.

1.7 Thesis Structure

The thesis will follow the below-mentioned outline for chapters to answer the research inquiries:

Chapter 1: Introduction

The first chapter will provide an overview of the research, including background, research questions, significance, methodology, and structure.

Chapter 2: Literature Review- Historical Context and Dynamics of the Israel-Palestine Conflict

The second chapter will explore the historical background and major events of the Israel-Palestine conflict and specifically the situation in Gaza. It will also detail the main themes that have been researched regarding Israel Palestine Conflict.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework

The third chapter will discuss the theoretical underpinnings related to power dimensions, R2P principles, and social connections.

Chapter 4: The Role of the United Nations

The fourth chapter will examine the UN's role and challenges in implementing R2P principles in the conflict.

Chapter 5: Dimensions of US Power and Their Influence in Gaza

The next chapter will analyze how different dimensions of power influence the conflict.

Chapter 6: The Role of Social Connections

The sixth chapter will investigate the impact of international social connections on humanitarian actions.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

In the last chapter, all the findings will be synthesized to discuss their implications. The last chapter will summarize the key findings, implications for policy and future research, and recommendations.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW- HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND DYNAMICS OF THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

The Israel-Palestine conflict, one of the most protracted disputes in modern history, has been the subject of extensive scholarly research and international debate. Hence, this review aims to provide a comprehensive idea of existing research on the Israel-Palestine conflict, laying the groundwork for the conceptual framework that follows.

The objectives of this chapter are threefold. First, it will outline the historical background of the conflict, highlighting key developments that have shaped the current situation. Second, it will examine the roles and perspectives of the main stakeholders, conflicting parties, international organizations, and the USA. Third, it will explore major issues central to the conflict, such as territorial disputes, the refugee crisis, security concerns, and humanitarian impacts. Finally, the chapter will identify gaps in the existing literature, highlighting areas that require further research and emerging issues that are becoming increasingly relevant. By doing so, this review not only synthesizes current knowledge but also sets the stage for the subsequent discussion on the conceptual framework of power, protection, and connections in the coming chapters.

2.1 Origins and Historical Context of Israel and Palestine

According to the Hebrew Bible, the origins of Israel can be traced to Abraham, considered the father of both Judaism (through his son Isaac) and Islam (through his son Ishmael). The name "Israel" is derived from Abraham's grandson, Jacob, who was named "Israel" by God in the Bible. Abraham's descendants are believed to have been enslaved in Egypt for centuries before settling in Canaan, an area roughly corresponding to modern-day Israel. The land that is now Israel was ruled by various empires over the centuries, including the Seljuks, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, , Mamelukes, Crusaders, Seljuks, Fatimids, Egyptians. Due to its many rulers over centuries, Jerusalem houses important religious sites, including the Dome of the Rock, the Western Wall and the Al-Aqsa Mosque (Sisodia 2023).

The name "Israel" first appeared in historical records around the end of the 13th century BC. At that time, it referred to the people living in what was then known as Canaan. A few centuries later, this region was home to two related kingdoms: Judah and Israel. According to the Bible, these kingdoms were initially part of a united monarchy called Israel. In 722 BC, the kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Neo-Assyrian Empire, which was centered in the area now known as Iraq. This conquest ended the use of "Israel" as a geographic term. The kingdom of Judah survived for a bit longer but was eventually conquered. In 586 BC, the Babylonian Empire overthrew Judah, destroyed its capital Jerusalem, and the Jewish Temple, and exiled many of its people to present-day Iraq. After about 50 years, the exiled Jews were allowed to return, and the territory of Judah became the central area of Jewish life for nearly seven centuries.

In AD 135, Roman Emperor Hadrian expelled Jews from Jerusalem and renamed the area "Syria-Palestina" to diminish any Jewish ties to the region. The name "Palestina" came from the ancient Philistines, historical enemies of the Israelites. After the Islamic conquest of the Middle East in the seventh century, Arab people began to settle in the former "Palestina." Except for about 90 years of Crusader rule, the region remained under Muslim control for nearly 1,200 years. Although there was always a Jewish presence, the population was predominantly Arab (Miller, n.d.).

Jewish History in Israel played a strong part in their cultural and religious identity and dates back to around thirty-five centuries. Over centuries, many different empires and rulers came, ruled, and disappeared but the Jewish sentiment towards the lands remained a constant. From 1517 to 1917, while the area was under the Ottoman Empire, in other parts of the world the Zionism movement was emerging due to the rising antisemitism, burgeoning violence against the Jews, and waves of nationalism. The Jewish Businessmen and intellectuals of the World Zionist Organization (WZO) met in 1897 and decided to create a Jewish nation-state in Palestine. They encouraged the European Jews to move to Palestine however the permission to systematically settle in Palestine was denied by Sultan Abdulhamid II. The WZO then turned to the British who proposed the 'Uganda scheme' thereby granting the Jews the Uasin Gishu region of present-day Kenya. The proposal, as expected, was rejected by the Jews.

The turning point was the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I as the lands were ceded to the victorious Allies who carved out new states like Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria. As for Palestine, as per the treaty of Sevres (1920), the League of Nations tasked the British

government to implement the Balfour Declaration which expressed the British desire to create a homeland for Jews in Palestine in return for their help in World War I. During this period, the Jews had already started returning to Palestine and many Arabs were skeptical of this return and British actions. Hence there was a clash between the rising Palestinian nationalism and Jew return. The British control of the Palestinian lands also known as the mandate lasted from 1923 to 1948 and it was the growing Jewish-Arab violence due to which Britain announced its end of the mandate. After the British gave up the mandate in 1947, the UN General Assembly appointed the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) (“A Brief History of Israel” 2016) which recommended the establishment of two separate states for Jews and Arabs. However, the plan was accepted by the Jewish side but the Arab states rejected the plan. Irrespective of this, the leading Zionist leader David Ben-Gurion stated independence on Friday, May 14, 1948, following UN Resolution 181. Israel was immediately invaded by five Arab nations: Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon in the War of Independence 1947-1948 but the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) managed to prevail (Siniver 2018).

The State of Palestine was ‘born dead’ as all the parties of the war took over areas, Egypt got control of the Gaza Strip and Jordan annexed the West Bank. In the years that followed, two more wars were fought in the 1967 notoriously known Six Day War, Israel attacked the Egyptian forces and got control of the Gaza Strip, Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank from Jordan, and the Golan Heights from Syria (Makdisi 2018). However, under Resolution 242, the new Israeli occupations were labeled illegal (Beinin and Hajjar 2014). Later on, in 1973 Egypt under Anwar Sadat led an attack famously known as the Yom Kippur War and had some initial victories but later on lost the war. The situation flipped for the Palestinian cause when Anwar Sadat recognized Israel in return for the Sinai Peninsula as per the Camp David Accords of 1979.

The 1970s was a tumultuous year for the Palestinian struggle. There was an uprising among the people who raised against Israel today remembered as the First Intifada where 1500 Palestinians and 422 Israelis died. The First Intifada garnered world attention and was the talk of international affairs. This intifada led to a move towards a peaceful solution where Israel and Palestine got into the Oslo Accords in 1993. As per the Oslo Accord, Israel was supposed to withdraw from Gaza and some parts of the West Bank, Palestine would be granted self-government in their areas but in return, they would recognize the State of Israel. However, this Accord failed due to problems in its operationalization such as the slow Israeli withdrawal and the sudden murder of the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by a Jew. These two events led

to an irreconcilable Jewish stance towards Palestine. Further exacerbating the heat of the moment, Israeli Minister Ariel Sharon visited the Al-Aqsa and used derogatory terms for the mosque which incited the Second Intifada till 2005 leading to the deaths of 3682 Palestinians and 69 Israelis (Brym and Araj 2006). It was at this point that Hamas became popular with the people at the grassroots level as it attacked Israel and increased the suicide bombings. It won general elections by a 60 percent majority in 2006. Since then, Israel initiated a deadly blockade on Gaza both from land and sea.

In 2007 however, the Palestinian struggle had another setback when Hamas and Fatah broke into fighting eventually leading to Hamas taking control of Gaza. Given the hardline style of Hamas, there have been sporadic incidents of intense fighting between Hamas and Israel since then. Israel conducted various operations such as Operation Cast Lead (2008), Operation Pillar of Defense (2012), and Operation Protective Edge (2014) (Clarke 2017) to minimize threats from Hamas.

2.2 *A Chronology of the Conflict*

A brief chronology of the Israel Palestine Conflict is elucidated below.

2.2.1 *1897: First Zionist Congress*

The First Zionist Congress was held in 1897 in Switzerland, where Herzl and other prominent Jewish figures marked the birth of modern political Zionism (“Timeline: Key Events in the Israel-Arab and Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” 2024). The widespread antisemitism and persecution of Jewish communities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries catalyzed the Zionist movement.

2.2.2 *World War I*

The Ottoman Empire controlled the area from the early 16th century the World War I. At the time, both Israelis and Palestinians developed various movements to voice their rights for self-determination. There were several contradicting diplomatic efforts by the great powers to gain support for the war from both parties. One of the prominent efforts was the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence between McMahon, the British High Commissioner in Egypt, and the sheriff of Mecca, Ali Ibn Husain which is a series of ten letters from 1915-1916 where McMahon tried to outline a promise of an independent Arab state (University of Delaware, n.d.; The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica 2010). However, the other agreements undermined the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence for instance, in 1916 Britain and France negotiated the Sykes-Picot

Agreement behind closed doors where they agreed to internationalize Jerusalem. In another effort in 1917, Britain's foreign secretary expressed support for the home of the Jewish people in a letter to Baron Walter Rothschild, the head of an influential Jewish banking family. This was a formal promise of Britain to the Jew's right of Israel to exist. After this Declaration, large-scale Jewish immigration followed as an act of asserting their right to establish a state (Westfall et al. 2024).

2.2.3 The Independence of Israel

The United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 181 in 1947, formally declaring the partition of the land into two independent states. Considering the religious significance of Jerusalem it was to be placed under a special international administration. The resolution was not accepted by the Arabs. Violence in the region grew as Israel declared independence in May 1948. The next day a coalition of Arab states, allied with Palestinian factions, attacked Israeli forces in what is known as the War of Independence. In the end, Israel prevailed and an estimated 700,000 Palestinians fled or were driven from their land in a phenomenon known as the "Nakba," or "catastrophe" in Arabic (Westfall et al. 2024).

2.2.4 The Suez Crisis of 1956

The already tense situation was further sensitized after President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal, a vital trade route connecting the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. As a result, Israel along with the UK and France invaded Egypt until a peace deal was signed (Westfall et al. 2024).

2.2.5 The Six-Day War of 1967

In June of 1967, a war known as the "Six-Day War" or the 1967 Arab-Israeli War broke out as Israeli warplanes struck Egyptian airfields, and Israeli ground forces entered the Sinai Peninsula. While Jordan joined the fighting alongside Egypt, Israeli forces had the upper hand after nearly wiping out Egypt's air power (Westfall et al. 2024). Israel took control of the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank, the Golan Heights, and predominantly Palestinian East Jerusalem.

2.2.6 The Yom Kippur War of 1973

Arab nations, led by Egypt and Syria, launched a surprise attack on Israel on a Jewish holy day known as Yom Kippur. Initially, the Arab forces gained ground but were driven back by an Israeli counteroffensive.

2.2.7 Camp David Accords of 1978

The US brokered a peace agreement between Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin in 1978 known as the Camp David Accords (Westfall et al. 2024). The accord laid a framework for a process of self-government of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and Israel's withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula.

2.2.8 First intifada of 1987

A Palestinian uprising also known as the catastrophe or intifada was a period of intense civil disobedience against Israeli military crackdowns and occupation (Westfall et al. 2024). The first intifada continued for years, with many killed and injured on both sides.

2.2.9 Oslo Accords of 1993

The Oslo Accords was signed between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to chart a peace process and some sort of Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. As part of the accord, a Palestinian Authority was created to oversee the administrative affairs of the accord (Westfall et al. 2024).

2.2.10 The assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin

On Nov. 4, 1995, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was shot dead while departing a peace rally in Tel Aviv by, Yigal Amir, on a religious basis. He told police that he acted on the "orders of God" to stop the holy land from being handed to Palestinians (Westfall et al. 2024).

2.2.11 Second intifada of 2000

Another catastrophe or naqba broke out after Ariel Sharon, a right-wing Israeli political figure, visited a venerated compound in Jerusalem and passed scathing remarks hurting the Muslim sentiment. Severe clashes left hundreds of dead in five years.

2.2.12 Hamas elected in Gaza in 2006

As Israel withdrew its troops from Gaza in 2005, the Palestinian militant group Hamas won legislative elections in 2006 and took over. Israel then imposed a blockade on the Strip limiting the mobility of people and deepening Gaza's humanitarian crisis (Westfall et al. 2024). Most Gazans have since then lived in refugee camps relying on U.N. rations. Several rights groups have referred to Israel's policies in Gaza as an "apartheid." In a 2022 report, Amnesty International stated that there is a clear Israeli intent to deny rights to the Palestinians.

2.2.13 Israel attacks Gaza in 2008

More than 1,110 Palestinians and at least 13 Israelis were killed after Israel retaliated with a three-week attack on Gaza after a rocket barrage into Israel by the Palestinian militants.

2.2.14 Israel killed the Hamas military chief in 2012

Israel killed Hamas military chief Ahmed Jabari and at least 150 Palestinians.

2.2.15 Hamas killed three Israeli teenagers in 2014

Hamas killed three Israeli teenagers near a Jewish settlement prompting a conflict that left more than 2,200 Palestinians and 73 Israelis dead.

2.2.16 Jerusalem Recognized as Israel's Capital in 2017

Donald Trump's administration recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel stirring outrage from the Muslim community.

2.2.17 Protests in Gaza in 2018

Israeli troops killed more than 170 protesters over several months.

2.2.18 Israeli police raid al-Aqsa Mosque in May 2021

Weeks of tension in Jerusalem led to Israeli police raiding al-Aqsa Mosque. As a result, Hamas fired rockets toward the city, prompting Israel to retaliate, killing more than 200 in Gaza and at least 10 in Israel.

2.2.19 Terrorist Attacks in Israel in Spring 2022

A series of terrorist attacks killed 14 Israelis in 2022 prompting a response by Israel in the form of a “Break the Wave” military operation. Israeli forces killed 146 Palestinians in the West Bank in 2022.

2.2.20 Netanyahu's sixth term-2022

Benjamin Netanyahu's sixth term as Israeli prime minister started with a cobbling of the far-right government in Israeli history, which crushed any prospect of a two-state solution. Netanyahu formed one of the most pro-settler governments, which has encouraged an expansion of settlement activity in Occupied Palestinian territories.

2.2.21 Retaliatory attacks Flare Summer 2023

Israel launched surprise airstrikes across Gaza killing at least 33 Gazans. Later in June, Israeli forces deployed helicopter gunships to the West Bank. The next day, two Hamas gunmen opened fire at an Israeli settlement, killing four Israelis. Hundreds of Israeli settlers then

rampaged through Palestinian villages, incinerating homes, and shooting residents. In July, Israel killed many in a refugee camp inside Jenin by staging an air and ground attack.

2.2.22 Israel says it's 'at war' after Hamas attack

Netanyahu formally declared war on Hamas on Oct. 8 following a surprise assault by Hamas militants on October 7th.

2.3 Recent Conflicts

Since Israeli withdrawal in 2005, the Gaza Strip has been under the control of Hamas. Since then, Israel has launched five military assaults on Gaza:

Table 2.1: *Timeline for Gaza Strip Being Undercontrol of Hamas*

Serial	Year	Duration
1	2008-2009	23 days
2	2012	8 days
3	2014	50 days
4	2021	11 days
5	2023	October 7 - present

2.3.1 2008-2009 Gaza War (Operation Cast Lead)

From December 27, 2008, to January 18, 2009, Israel launched airstrikes, shelling, and a ground invasion in response to the rocket attacks from Gaza. This was the first major conflict since the end of the Second Intifada known as the Operation Cast Lead resulting in significant destruction and international condemnation.

2.3.2 2012 Gaza Conflict (Operation Pillar of Defense)

From November 14 to November 21, 2012, Israel launched another operation under the pretext of increased rocket attacks from Gaza (Marks 2023).

2.3.3 2014 Gaza Conflicts (Operation Protective Edge)

In June 2014, the murder of three Israeli teenagers led to a widespread Israeli crackdown in the form of Operation Protective Edge, from July 8 to August 26, 2014 (“Timeline: Key Events in the Israel-Arab and Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” 2024).

2.3.4 2021 Gaza-Israel Clashes

Hamas launched rockets at Israel resulting in intense airstrikes until a ceasefire was brokered on May 21, 2021.

2.3.5 *Gaza Strip since 7th October 2023*

The Palestinian militant group and designated terrorist organization Hamas launched an attack on Israel on 7 October, resulting in the death of 1200 people and 250 hostages, as per Israeli tallies. In response, Israelis have been carrying out airstrikes and ground operations, killing more than 33,000 Palestinians as per Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry (BBC News 2024). The current war is, however, the most prominent and deadliest one between the Hamas and Israel (Frankel 2024b). Around 33,000 people have died, 55% of buildings destroyed, 60% of homes and 90% of schools damaged, only 10/36 functioning hospitals, 100% of children out of school, and 1.1 million people facing catastrophic food insecurity (Frankel 2024b). The Israeli offensive in Rafah since May has uprooted around 1 million people, many of whom had already fled violence several times before. In addition, the United Nations has repeatedly warned of a 'full-blown famine' in Gaza (Guilfoil 2024). It has also pointed out that the amount of humanitarian aid entering the enclave has dropped by two-thirds since the Rafah operation and only a limited amount of aid supplies is entering via the southern crossing of Kerem Shalom. The World Health Organization has also analyzed that the health sector is facing significant deterioration (Farge 2023).

2.4 Key Stakeholders and Actors

2.4.1 *Israel*

Israel formally created in 1948 is bounded to the north by Lebanon, to the northeast by Syria, to the east and south-east by Jordan, to the southwest by Egypt, and to the west by the Mediterranean Sea. Israel, a small country with Jerusalem as the proclaimed capital, consists of highlands in the north and central regions, a lengthy coastal plain, and a desert in the south ("Israel | Facts, History, Population, & Map" 2024). The State of Israel is the only Jewish nation in the modern period. The area was once a part of the Roman Empire before falling under the control of the Islamic caliphate. The region, at the end of World War I, was placed under British mandate when a vast influx of Jewish immigrants in the area caused tension with the native Palestinians, leading up to the United Nations' plan to partition Palestine and Israel's declaration of statehood.

Moving on to the political set-up, the legislative body of Israel known as the Knesset consists of 120 seats. Voters cast ballots for parties and any party receiving over 2% of the vote secures a proportional number of seats. The Prime Minister is elected by the Knesset from among its members by a simple majority. The formation of a government necessitates assembling a coalition, as no single party has ever achieved an outright majority. Major political parties include Kadima, Likud, Yisrael Beytenu, and the Israeli Labor Party, among others. Likud, the party of Benjamin Netanyahu, is a right-wing party known for its nationalist policies and security-focused agenda, particularly regarding threats from Iran and Palestinian militant groups. Netanyahu's tenure has reinforced Likud's prominence in Israeli politics (Kaplan 2009).

Israeli politics is a complex tapestry of parties split along ideological, ethnic, and religious lines, leading to frequent splintering, merging, and rebranding of parties. This fragmentation has intensified, exemplified by the recent election where thirteen parties won seats, resulting in the most divided Knesset in two decades. Golda Meir once told U.S. President Richard Nixon, "You are the president of 150 million Americans; I am the prime minister of six million prime ministers," capturing the essence of Israel's highly fragmented political landscape. This multifaceted nature poses significant challenges for coalition-building and governance, as no single party or leader, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, can easily secure a majority, necessitating intricate negotiations and compromises among diverse political factions (The Economist 2021).

Israel's economic challenges, exacerbated by its regional conflicts such as the ongoing one with Hamas in Gaza and skirmishes with Hezbollah, further strain its political stability. The nation's economic health has been impacted, with significant drops in GDP. The government faces the challenge of balancing increased military spending and national debt while managing political opportunism and coalition dynamics. Despite these political and economic hurdles, Israel's strong civil society and engaged population continue to drive its growth (Ben-Gad 2024). Since the war has been going on since October last year with no plans for the future, there has been an increasing 'chorus of complaints' against the country's military chief and prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu from the public, allies, and military. Netanyahu claims that there are plans for the 'day after the war' but will remain covert until Hamas is finished (Northam 2024).

Israel has a strong military with up-to-date sophisticated technology. The militarization of the 9 million Israelis can be evidenced by the fact that the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) has around

170,000 military personnel and more than 3 million men and women are signed up for military service. IDF also has a massive military budget amounting to \$20.5 billion which is globally the fifteenth highest as per 2019 statistics (Tian et al. 2020). Moving onto weaponry, Israel possesses a robust military industry, exporting weapons to various countries, including Russia, the US, and European nations. The Israeli Air Force significantly outnumbers Palestinian capabilities, with 684 fighter jets compared to none for Palestinians. Similarly, the Israeli Navy surpasses Palestinian naval capabilities by a wide margin (Karataş 2020). On the other side, Israel has nuclear-capable medium and short-range cruise missiles with sophisticated capabilities and power to even attack countries like Egypt, Iraq, etc. It also has an Iron Dome defense system to protect itself from incoming rockets.

2.4.2 Fatah

Fatah, a secular Palestinian nationalist movement, is a reverse acronym for Harakat al-Tahrir al-Filistiniya, meaning Palestinian National Liberation Movement in Arabic, with "Fatah" translating to "to conquer." Founded in Kuwait in the late 1950s by diaspora Palestinians following the 1948 Nakba, Fatah was established by prominent figures like Yasser Arafat, Khalil al-Wazir, Salah Khalaf, and Mahmoud Abbas. The group's military wing, al-Asifah (the Storm), operated from several Arab countries and within the West Bank and Gaza. Fatah began its armed struggle against Israeli occupation in 1965, primarily conducting operations from Jordan and Lebanon. Post-1967, Fatah became the leading party in the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), an umbrella organization formed in 1964 to liberate Palestine and now representing Palestinians at the UN. After being expelled from Jordan and Lebanon and the influence of the regional pressures, Fatah shifted towards negotiation with Israel. In the 1990s, the Fatah-led PLO renounced armed resistance and endorsed UN Security Council Resolution 242, advocating for a Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders. This led to the Oslo Accords and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA), a provisional self-governing body aimed at achieving an independent Palestinian state. Fatah is distinguished from Hamas in its approach: while Hamas employs grassroots activism and ideological education in mosques and universities, Fatah relies more on financial support to attract followers. Fatah enjoys more international support and financial stability, contrasting with Hamas' ideological appeal (Tahhan 2017).

2.4.3 Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)

After the Nakba of 1948, Palestinians placed high hopes on Arab states to help reclaim their land. Insistence on a separate Palestinian identity was often viewed with suspicion as undermining Arab solidarity. Though underground groups like Fatah called for Palestinian independence, the emphasis remained on Arab unity. Arab nationalism dominated the political scene, leaving little space for a distinct Palestinian nationalist movement. Recognizing the need for a distinct Palestinian organization, the first Arab summit in Cairo in 1963 called for its establishment. The Palestinian Students' Federation in Cairo was led by future leaders like Yasser Arafat, Salah Khalaf, and Faruq Al-Qaddumi and was the only prominent Palestinian organization. This led to the first Palestinian National Council (PNC) in 1964. At its inaugural session in Jerusalem in 1964, the PLO was declared to address the Palestinian national cause. The key resolutions adopted during the PNC's concluding session on June 1, 1964, included the appointment of an Executive Committee, chaired by Ahmad Shuqeiri, the representative at the Arab League, and the creation of a military, financial, political, and administrative framework. The PNC also adopted a National Charter and Fundamental Law, serving as the PLO's basic constitution, and established the Palestine National Fund and Palestine Liberation Army to provide financial and military capabilities. Initially, the PLO remained under the control of Egypt until the Palestinian resistance factions gained greater influence. By the end of the decade, Yasser Arafat was elected Chairman of the PLO, slowly evolving PLO into an umbrella organization and the sole representative of the Palestinian people.

PLO's reliance on neighboring Arab states for establishing bases made it vulnerable to external influence. The conflicting interests of the Arab states rarely allowed the PLO to maintain a degree of independence. At the same time, the organization itself was governed by its Fundamental Law, which outlined the responsibilities among its organs namely the Central Council, Palestine National Council (PNC), and the Executive Committee. The highest authority in the PLO is the PNC which serves as the parliament for Palestinians worldwide and represents various sectors, including political parties, popular organizations, and resistance movements. It meets every two years, elects a Bureau and an Executive Committee, and can amend its own membership and foundational documents.

Secondly, the Central Council, established in 1973, functions when the PNC is not in session. Its 124 members are drawn from the PNC and chaired by the PNC President. The Executive Committee is the PLO's primary executive organ representing the organization internationally.

It is responsible for representing the Palestinian people, supervising various PLO bodies, executing PNC policies and decisions, and handling financial issues.

2.4.5 *Hamas*

Hamas- a Nationalist-Islamist Palestinian Movement and non-state actor seeking independent Palestine- was cofounded by Abdel Aziz Al Rantissi and Ahmed Yassin in 1987. The roots of its ideological and structural makeup date back to 1948 when the Palestinian refugees settled among the members of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. These refugees on their return came to be known as the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood (PMD) and created the Islamic Centre in 1973. Hence the ideology and group existed long ago before it officially changed its name to Hamas in 1987 (Karataş 2020b).

Some claim that its ideological considerations emanated from the view that Fatah had failed to fight for the Palestinian cause as well as to revive Islam. As a response to strengthening the Muslim identity of Palestinians, Hamas built mosques, taught lessons, and connected with people via humanitarian associations. An analysis of the Hamas Charter reveals significant details about the group. The Charter reveals the groups' affiliations with the Muslim Brotherhood. It also associated itself with the Izz Al Din-Al Qassam fighters who fought in the war of 1948 and the jihadi operations of the Muslim Brotherhood from 1968 onwards. It categorically states Jews as its enemy and claim that their struggle will continue till the enemy is 'vanquished'. Hamas aligned itself with Sharia law and termed nationalism as part of its religious creed (Karataş 2020b). An updated Hamas Charter in 2017 titled the 'Document of General Principles and Policies' accepted the Palestinian state based on pre-1967 borders (Green 2023). It does not mention the Muslim Brotherhood and differentiates among Judaism, Jews, Zionism, and Israel and refers to Zionists as their enemy and not Jews. Despite these changes, many members of Hamas believe the new charter to be just an adjustment to the new times and claim that the fight for Palestine is perpetual until Palestine is cleared.

The first intifada birthed Hamas but it was the Second one that consolidated its power and influence. Other significant drivers were the incapacity and secularism of Fatah and the Israeli cruel and disproportionate use of force. While Yassir Arafat-leader of Fatah-arrested many Hamas fighters he also turned a blind eye to their actions in the Second Intifada. Due to the success of military operations by Hamas, they won the elections in 2006 and ruled all of Palestine for a year before being ousted by Abbas-who replaced Arafat as leader of Fatah-with

the help of international actors. Hence, Hamas left the West Bank and since then has remained in control of the Gaza Strip.

There is a division on the international stage regarding the legitimacy of Hamas. It has been labeled as a terrorist organization by many countries including the US, Canada, EU, Japan, and Israel. Countries like Australia New Zealand, the UK, and Paraguay only list the military wing as a terrorist organization. Turkey, China, Russia, and Switzerland do not see it as a terrorist group, and Arab states like Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt, and Jordan do not approve of the group's policies.

Hamas has been relying on rockets as a primary means of combating Israel as rockets are easy to produce, use, and launch remotely. It has been producing rockets in Gaza via reverse engineering as it is unable to acquire modern and sophisticated parts. As an estimate, it fired around 4500 rockets from 2001 to 2009 which killed around 28 Israelis. Such attacks have helped them continue their resistance, cause psychological trauma to Israelis, and pause their daily lives. Other than rockets, Hamas has used suicide bombings extensively killing more than 400 Israelis before 2008. It was due to a large number of attacks, more than 300 from 1993-2003, that Israel constructed security barriers. Hamas spends \$40 million annually on constructing tunnels that help them hide weapons and commanders, kill and kidnap Israeli soldiers, and carry arms smuggling.

As per the Jerusalem Post, Hamas has around 8000 short-range rockets and can easily attack 40-50 km from the Gaza border. Israel also points out from its analysis of rockets fired at Israel or found on their way to Gaza that Hamas possesses dozens of rockets that can cover up most of Israel when fired (Bob 2021). Another important finding is that while Hamas has had a stock of rockets since 2001 which increased in 2014 during Operation Protective Edge many updated rockets have been added since 2019. Initially, the rockets were smuggled but now it is capable of developing its weaponry. The most recent estimates declare that Hamas has a manpower of 40,000.

Even though Hamas claims to be ready for war, it cannot unlike other armed groups access weapons or use hit-and-run tactics due to the siege. And even though they have caused losses to Israel, a large chunk of casualties around 87 percent has been of the Palestinian people. The economic and political losses to Hamas have been undeniably strong. A wall was constructed around Gaza which not only doubled the unemployment rate in 2019 but also disrupted daily life. International actors increased pressures and halted aid. Gazans consider Hamas as a reason

for their poverty and humanitarian despair and Hamas is aware of this fact. The general public applauds the group for their military fight and supports them in the cause however concerning political power, the unemployment, aid blockade, and disruption of social life have made Hamas lose the political support of the people. Many analysts consider that Hamas accepts their failure in the political domain and would not pursue political power. However, it will continue its fight in the military domain.

2.4.6 Palestinian National Authority (PNA)

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) was established in the mid-1990s as an interim governing body to create an independent Palestinian state. However, its power has dwindled over the years, until it went under the control of the Israeli military. The PA has mostly been dominated by the secular political party Fatah, but its journey has been characterized by a struggle to assert itself amidst internal divisions. The PA's legitimacy has been called into question due to its failure to hold elections, the political split between Fatah and Hamas, and the accusations of the PA collaborating with Israeli authorities to maintain control over the Palestinian population. Its reputation has been marred by allegations of corruption and authoritarianism, leading to widespread disenchantment among the locals. Over the recent years, there has been widespread disapproval of Abbas's government with views such as them as pawns of international donors. The failure to hold elections and the suppression of dissent have further eroded public trust in the PA's leadership, raising questions about its legitimacy and viability as the representative of Palestinians (Jazeera 2023a).

The Palestinian Authority (PA) is governed by an interim constitution known as the Basic Law. The president, also the commander in chief of security forces, is elected for four-year terms and holds significant powers such as managing foreign relations, vetoing legislation, appointing the prime minister and council of ministers. The appointment of the prime minister and council members requires the confidence of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). The 132-member PLC is also elected for four-year terms. In 2006, a mixed electoral system led to Hamas winning 74 seats despite having 44% of the vote, sparking controversy. Post-2007, the Hamas-Fatah conflict led President Mahmoud Abbas to dismiss the government and rule by decree. The PA administers 16 governorates—11 in the West Bank and 5 in the Gaza Strip. As per the 1995 Oslo II agreement, these areas are divided into different administration zones: Areas A, B, and C, with varying degrees of PA and Israeli control. Yasser Arafat, elected as the first PA president in 1996, faced the challenge of building the PA's institutions and

addressing violence against Israel as stipulated by the Oslo Accords. His tenure saw increased violence, particularly from Hamas, which opposed the Oslo Accords' concessions. This violence led to delays in the accords' implementation under Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The 1998 Wye River Memorandum aimed to resume Israeli withdrawals contingent on the PA's action against violence but was suspended in 1999 due to Israeli domestic politics. The second intifada erupted in 2000 following Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount. As violence escalated, the Israeli Defense Forces confined Arafat to his Ramallah compound until he died in 2004. In 2003, under international pressure, the PA created the prime minister's post, with Mahmoud Abbas as the first appointee. However, he resigned months later, citing undermining by Israel, the U.S., and Arafat. Ahmed Qurei succeeded him.

After Yasser Arafat died in 2004, Mahmoud Abbas became the chairman of the PLO and was elected president of the PA in 2005. The 2006 PLC elections saw Hamas unexpectedly defeating Fatah. A coalition government was formed, but violent clashes between Hamas and Fatah in Gaza led to Hamas taking control of Gaza in June 2007. Abbas dismissed the Hamas-led government and declared a state of emergency, appointing Salam Fayyad as prime minister. Fayyad put forward his idea of "Fayyadism," focusing on development and growth. It received international praise but little support from Palestinians, leading to his resignation in 2013. Rami Hamdallah succeeded Fayyad as prime minister, and a 2014 government aimed to reconcile with Hamas. However, integration efforts repeatedly failed, and Abbas faced criticism for authoritarianism, delayed elections, and mishandling relations with Gaza, including imposing sanctions on the Hamas-governed region. In 2005, Abbas and Sharon agreed to suspend hostilities which ended the second intifada after five years of massive violence and unrest. The 2007-08, negotiations nearly reached a deal, but Abbas did not finalize it. Under Netanyahu's premiership from 2009, negotiations stalled, with only brief, unsuccessful attempts in 2010 and 2013-14.

After direct talks with Israel broke down in 2010, Abbas sought international recognition for a Palestinian state. In 2012, the UN General Assembly upgraded Palestine's status to a "nonmember observer state." This move aimed to enhance PA's leverage internationally, despite Israeli opposition. In 2017, U.S. President Donald Trump proposed a new peace initiative, but relations soured after the U.S. recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital, prompting Abbas to reject U.S. mediation. Subsequently, the U.S. cut aid to the PA and closed the PLO office in Washington, D.C. Throughout his presidency, Abbas faced internal criticism for his

governance style and inability to reconcile with Hamas or advance the peace process with Israel (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica 2024).

2.5 Role of Neighboring States

The roles of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon in the Israel-Palestine conflict have been multifaceted, involving direct military engagements, diplomatic negotiations, and internal political developments. Each country's actions and policies have had profound impacts on the conflict and the broader Middle Eastern geopolitics. Starting with Egypt, it was a leading Arab state in the 1948 war against Israel's declaration of statehood. Another significant action by Egypt was the nationalization of the Suez Canal in 1956 leading to an invasion by the UK, France, and Israel. In the subsequent years too, Egypt played a role as the regional power in the Israel-Palestine conflict such as in the six-day war in 1967, it amassed troops in the Sinai Peninsula and blocked Israeli shipping routes, leading to a preemptive strike by Israel. The war resulted in Israel occupying the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip, West Bank, and Golan Heights. In the 1973 Yom Kippur War, Egypt, along with Syria, launched a surprise attack on Israel and had initial successes however, the war ended in a military stalemate but paved the way for future negotiations in the 1979 Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty where Egypt became the first Arab country to officially recognize Israel, and eventually gaining control of the Sinai Peninsula. This treaty significantly altered the dynamics of the Israel-Palestine conflict and regional geopolitics.

Moving on, Jordan's Arab Legion was involved in fighting and managed to hold onto the West Bank, including East Jerusalem in the 1948 war. However soon in 1949, both Jordan and Israel signed a ceasefire, leading to Jordan's control over the West Bank until 1967 when Israel recaptured the West Bank and East Jerusalem. This hurt the Palestinian people massively. Soon in 1970 Jordanian forces clashed with the PLO, resulting in the expulsion of Palestinian armed groups from Jordan. This was a critical moment in the Palestinian national movement as it paved the way for the 1994 Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty.

Syria too played a role in the conflict. Syrian forces participated in the 1948 war against Israel but were less successful compared to other Arab armies. A significant loss for Syria was losing the Golan Heights in the 1967 war and failing to get back hold of it in the 1973 war. Due to the turmoil of the Arab Spring since 2010, there has been less participation yet Syria has supported

various Palestinian factions over the years. The Golan Heights remains a focal point of Syrian-Israeli tensions.

Lebanese forces participated but played a minor role compared to other Arab states in the 1948 war. It has hosted a significant Palestinian refugee population, which has impacted its internal politics and security. The PLO's presence in Lebanon and the subsequent Israeli invasion in 1982 significantly impacted Lebanon. Israel aimed to eradicate PLO bases in Southern Lebanon, leading to a prolonged occupation and the rise of Hezbollah- a Shiite militant group and political party, supported by Iran and Syria, and engaging in several conflicts with Israel, most notably in 2006.

2.5.1 Influence of Regional Powers: Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey

The regional powers have influenced the Israel-Palestine conflict through their political, financial, and sometimes military support for various actors in the conflict. Each country's involvement is shaped by its interests, regional alliances, and ideological leanings. Iran, a major supporter of Palestinian militant groups, particularly Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), provides aid, training, and weapons. Moreover, the Iranian government consistently voices opposition to Israel by positioning itself as a leader in the region.

Historically, Saudi Arabia has been a key player in the peace plans, including the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, which proposed normalization of relations with Israel in exchange for a return to pre-1967 borders. Saudi Arabia has provided substantial aid to the Palestinian Authority (PA), supported stability and provided basic services. However, in recent years, the Kingdom's stance has been tilted towards pragmatism, driven by shared concerns with Israel over Iran's influence and the desire for technological cooperation. While not officially normalizing relations, Saudi Arabia has indicated potential future cooperation.

Under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Turkey has become a vocal supporter of Hamas, viewing it as a legitimate representative of Palestinian resistance. Turkey provides political support and has been accused of offering sanctuary to some Hamas members. It has been active in providing humanitarian aid to Gaza and other Palestinian areas, emphasizing its role in alleviating Palestinian suffering.

2.5.2 *International actors*

The European Union and Western nations generally support a two-state solution and provide substantial aid and diplomatic efforts to promote peace in the region. The United Nations and other international organizations play crucial roles in advocating for human rights, providing humanitarian assistance, and holding parties accountable for violations.

2.5.2.1 European Union and other Western Nations

European Union (EU) advocates for a two-state solution, promoting peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. The EU has agreements with both Israel and the PA. EU provides significant aid, helping to improve governance, and fostering economic development in Palestinian territories. It maintains strong trade ties and scientific cooperation with Israel, while consistently condemning Israeli settlement expansions in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, viewing them as illegal under international law and a major obstacle to peace.

The UK has a balanced approach, advocating for Palestinian rights while maintaining strong ties with Israel. Canada supports Israel's right to security and has strong bilateral relations with Israel while also contributing to Palestinian humanitarian aid. Australia maintains a supportive stance towards Israel, advocating for its security and right to exist while providing aid to Palestinian refugees.

2.5.2.2 United Nations (UN)

The UN has passed numerous resolutions regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict which call for Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories. The General Assembly frequently addresses the issue, advocating for Palestinian rights and condemning Israeli actions. UN Agency UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) provides education, healthcare, and relief, to Palestinian refugees while the UN Human Rights Council investigates and reports on human rights violations in the conflict, often criticizing Israeli policies.

2.5.2.3 ICC and ICJ

NGOs and Human Rights Organizations including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and others, monitor and report on human rights abuses by both Israeli and Palestinian actors. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has issued advisory opinions on the

legality of Israel's occupation and highlighted violations of international law. Moreover, the International Criminal Court (ICC) has opened investigations into alleged war crimes committed by both Israeli forces and Palestinian groups in the occupied territories, aiming to hold individuals accountable for serious violations.

2.5.2.4 The United States

Regarding the US role in the Israel-Palestine conflict and more specifically with Hamas has been prominent in undermining the human rights and self-determination struggle of the Palestinian People. The 2016 Trump era was one of the most damaging times when the US openly sided with Israel. Trump moved the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem despite the hard critique. From March 2018 to May 2018, Palestinians conducted peaceful protests to show their worsening life conditions yet more than 150 were killed and thousands wounded. In 2019, Trump recognized the Golan Heights as part of Israel, giving a green light to Israel's annexation of the Jordan Valley, and declared Israeli settlements as legal. Moreover, Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, revealed the 'Deal of Century' clauses which suggested a demilitarized Palestine under Israeli control with no airspace or border control (Studies 2021). Moreover, the deal suggested Al-Aqsa and many areas of West Bank to be under Israeli control. While the Palestinians rejected the deal many Arab states managed to somehow back it up from a fair distance (Yeranian 2020); (Karataş 2020b).

2.6 Main Issues of Contention

The intractable, complicated, and deadlocked (Alsaafin 2024) conflict can be traced down to a few roots, explained below:

2.6.1 Territory and Borders

The issue of territory and borders is central to the Israel-Palestine conflict. A major point of contention is the 1967 borders, which refer to the boundaries before the Six-Day War when Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. The international community largely supports a return to these pre-1967 borders. The issue is further complicated by the presence of illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank (Alsaafin 2024).

2.6.2 Jerusalem

The holy Jerusalem holds profound significance for Jews, Muslims, and Christians. The Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif compound is the flashpoint. Muslims believe it marks the spot from where the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) ascended to heaven while Jews venerate the site as being built on the ruins of the biblical temple. Therefore, proposals to share sovereignty have met with objections. Israel considers the entire city its capital, and for Palestinians, Jerusalem is the third-holiest city, which leads to their demand that Israel withdraw and insist East Jerusalem serve as the capital of their future state (“The Core Issues of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict - Israel” 2007).

2.6.3 Refugees

The plight of Palestinian refugees is another critical issue. Four million Palestinians have been displaced due to wars and have been living in refugee camps in Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria, supported by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The Palestinian ‘right of return’ (“The Core Issues of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict - Israel” 2007) is a deeply contentious topic, with Palestinians demanding the right to return to their former homes in what is now Israel, while Israel fears that allowing this would alter the country's demographic balance.

2.6.4 Security Concerns

Security concerns have remained a dominant concern for both Palestinians and Israelis. Israel has implemented extensive security measures from checkpoints to border walls to protect itself against rocket attacks however these measures have had a momentous humanitarian impact on Palestinians by affecting their freedom of movement and access to basic everyday services.

2.6.5 Water Resources

Scarce water supplies further complicate the conflict as Israel controls the majority of the water resources in the West Bank due to its extensive infrastructure. Consequently, the Palestinians face limited access to clean water, exacerbating the tensions and contributing to broader humanitarian challenges.

2.6.6 Economic and Humanitarian Issues

Economic disparities significantly impact the daily lives of Palestinians. Restrictions on movement, trade, and access to resources imposed by Israel exacerbate the challenges of unemployment, poverty, and economic stagnation. Moreover, Humanitarian conditions in Gaza are particularly dire, with frequent power shortages, inadequate healthcare, and poor living conditions.

The Israel-Palestine conflict encompasses innumerable issues that are interconnected and complex, each contributing to the ongoing tensions and rendering conflict resolution a tough task.

2.7 Israel-Palestine Conflict in Literature

The Israel-Palestine conflict is one of the most extensively studied and documented disputes. Various scholars have investigated its roots, geopolitical implications, socio-economic impacts, and human rights concerns. This section provides an overview of how the conflict has been explained in the literature to highlight the lens that has been used to analyze the conflict.

2.7.1 Historical and Geopolitical Perspectives

The historical roots of the Israel-Palestine conflict trace back to the late 19th century, paralleling the rise of Arab nationalism and Zionism. Scholars such as Benny Morris and Ilan Pappé provide detailed accounts of the conflict's early stages where the former focused on the jihadi nature of the conflict and the latter focused on the plight of Palestinians. Morris (2008) emphasized the military and strategic dimensions, the roles of the great powers, decision-making, and the on-the-ground situation (Yale University Press 2024). Similarly, Pappé (2006), referred to as the 'bravest, most principled, most incisive historian', provided compelling evidence that the forcible removal of Palestinians during the Arab-Israeli war was a pre-planned part of Israel's ideology. The conflict has also been studied under the lens of geopolitics. Shlaim (2001) in "The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World," critiqued US involvement and Israel's consistent reliance on military force, arguing that political parties of Israel, both left- and right-wing, prioritized power over peace.

2.7.2 Socio-Economic and Humanitarian Dimensions

The socio-economic impacts of the Israel-Palestine conflict have been a major focus in the literature. Sara Roy examined the economic conditions in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank in her book, culminating her twenty years of research and more than 2000 interviews, Roy (2007) argued that the Israeli occupation created severe economic deprivation and social disintegration. Humanitarian concerns are another critical aspect, with numerous studies documenting human rights violations and humanitarian catastrophes. Researchers such as B'Tselem (2023) provided extensive reports on violence against civilians, home demolitions, and movement restrictions.

2.7.3 Political and Diplomatic Efforts

The political efforts to resolve the Israel-Palestine conflict have been widely analyzed by various scholars like Enderlin (2003) who provided an insider's perspective on the negotiations, and Khalidi (2007) who critiqued the lack of genuine commitment to a two-state solution. An analysis of the diplomatic measures has also been a key theme in the literature covering the conflict with the Oslo Accords of the 1990s, detailed by Yossi Beilin (1999), discussing the successes and failures of the peace process, noting the challenges of implementing agreements in cases of mutual distrust.

2.7.4 Critical and Postcolonial Analyses

Postcolonial analyses offer a different lens for understanding the Israel-Palestine conflict. Edward Said's (1978) seminal work *Orientalism* critiqued the Western representations of the Middle East and highlighted the cultural aspects of the conflict. Said (1978) argued that Western depictions of Palestinians have often been shaped by Orientalist stereotypes that dehumanized and marginalized them. Postcolonial scholar Pappé (2006) discussed ethnic cleansing, while Masalha (1992) examined the Israeli policies of demographic engineering. A plethora of such research has challenged the dominant narratives and called for a decolonial lens.

The literature on the Israel-Palestine conflict is vast and multifaceted, covering in detail the historical, geopolitical, socio-economic, humanitarian, political, critical, and cultural perspectives. Each of these perspectives has provided a valuable insight and highlighted different aspects of the conflict. However, despite the extensive research, significant gaps

remain, particularly in integrating the concepts of power, protection, and connections in a comprehensive framework. The next section will address these gaps and introduce the Power, Protection, and Connections (PPC) model as a novel approach to analyzing and addressing the conflict.

2.8 The United Nations

The failure of the League of Nations was paramount and the anarchy needed to be kept under check. As a result, the victors came forward with a blueprint of a post-war organization was created in 1944 at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, DC. The United Nations also known as the UN was founded with an aim to maintain international peace, develop friendly relations, and promote and human rights. The representatives of 50 countries gathered in San Francisco to finalize out the ultimate text today widely known as the UN Charter, one of the most important texts of the modern day.

As per the UN Charter, the UN was created to serve four main purposes. Firstly, to keep peace in the world, to develop friendly relations among the countries, to improve the living standards and provide rights to all for instance conquer hunger, disease and illiteracy, and lastly to develop a harmonious relation among all states for the achievement of the above-mentioned goals. Overall, the United Nations family encompasses 15 agencies and several bodies however there are six key organs specifically working closely towards the fulfillment of the above-mentioned purposes. The key agencies include the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice, and the Secretariat (Auli 2023); (United Nations, n.d.).

The General Assembly is the main deliberative organ of the UN and it provides a unique forum for multilateral discussions on international issues covered by the Charter. The work of the United Nations derives largely from its mandates. The Assembly meets in regular session from September to December each year, and thereafter as required. Decisions on questions of peace and security, admission of new members, and budgetary matters, require a two-thirds majority while decisions on other questions are by a simple majority.

Another important organ is the Security Council which has primary responsibility as the UN Charter. The Council is composed of five permanent members namely: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The UNSC also has non-permanent members

which are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms. Each Council member has one vote. The decisions on procedural matters are made by an affirmative vote of at least nine of the 15 members, decisions on substantive matters require nine votes, including the concurring votes of all five permanent members.

Some other organs include the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) which coordinates the economic, social, and related work of the United Nations. The International Court of Justice, located at the Hague in the Netherlands, is the judicial organ of the United Nations. It settles legal disputes between States and gives advisory opinions to the UN. Moreover, the Trusteeship Council was established in 1945, by the UN Charter to provide international supervision for Trust Territories placed under the administration of 7 Member States. By 1994 its work was completed, and the Council had amended its rules of procedure to meet as required.

The Secretariat administers the policies laid down by other UN organs. It is headed by the Secretary-General, appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the UNSC for a five-year term. The duties of a Secretary General range from administering peace operations to surveying economic and social trends. The current Secretary-General, and the ninth occupant of the post, is Mr. António Guterres, from Portugal, 2017-present.

2.8.1 United Nations Peacekeeping Operations

The UN Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKOs) involve field operations authorized by the UN with the consent of stakeholders. These operations aim to control and peacefully resolve conflicts under the command of the UN. The funding for UNPKOs comes from UN member states, and they deploy military and other personnel voluntarily. These personnel are expected to act in an unbiased and independent manner, using minimal force, when necessary, as detailed by Krishnan (2020, 123). Furthermore, Wedgwood (1995, 4) elucidates that peacekeeping works on three main principles: primarily the minimum use of force, which means that peacekeepers can only use force in case of self-defense or for the Protection of Civilians (POC), secondly consent, which means that United Nations Peacekeeping are only carried out if the warring parties agree on their intervention and lastly neutrality which means that United Nations Peacekeeping remains neutral in all sorts of conflict.

Peacekeeping in its initial days also referred to as 'first generation', was mandated with the task of monitoring the adherence to peace agreements, ceasefires, troop withdrawals, etc.; first-generation peacekeeping can also be distinguished from later peacekeeping operations because of the relatively simple nature of inter-state conflicts (Dzinesa 2004); (Krishnan 2020,124); ("Our History," n.d.). The very first two United Nations Peacekeeping Operations- still active- were sent for Israel and its Arab neighbors and Pakistan and India. Since then, not only has the number of peace missions augmented, mission mandates have expanded, and peacekeeper capabilities have been enhanced. The second-generation peacekeeping missions were more relevant for intrastate conflicts, and their mandates expanded to include demobilization, human rights protection, elections, state building, economic revitalization, etc. The changing nature of conflict from interstate to intrastate presented challenges for peacekeeping as well, which was captured by Fjelde Hultman and Nilsson (2018) in their comment that at the subnational level, the peacekeepers are equipped to infer costs on a non-state actor and protect civilians but while facing a government, they require consent and hence cannot efficiently protect the civilians. Consequently, it was elaborated that UN should reform its policies as well as managerial and operational domains for better outcomes after the massacres in Sierra Leone and Srebrenica (Malone and Thakur 2001). Moreover, Dzinesa (2004) posited that the mission mandate, equipment and logistics, and the operational environment dictate the fate of the peacekeeping missions.

R2P has been invoked in various conflict zones by United Nations Peacekeeping. Analyzing the connection between United Nations Peacekeeping and R2P, it is important to reiterate that R2P was established to ensure timely actions and protect civilians. However, there are numerous debates on the interplay of United Nations Peacekeeping and R2P, such as Renshaw (2021) stating that R2P is an empty mantra with inconsistent and hypocritical aims.

2.8.2 Resolutions of the UN Security Council and General Assembly

United Nations resolutions are formal expressions of the will ("Resolutions | United Nations Security Council," n.d.; UNRCCA, n.d.). The binding force of UNSC resolutions is reiterated in the Article 25 of the Charter which states that all UN members agree to carry out decisions made by the Council. In essence, a UN Security Council resolution is valid if it has been approved by the votes of 9 Security Council member states including 5 Permanent Members or permanent member states of the UN Security Council without a veto. If one of the permanent

member states of the UN Security Council issues a veto, the resolution has no legally binding force.

Table 2.2: *A brief overview of UN Resolutions for the conflict of Israel and Palestine*

Resolution	Context	Key Points	Significance
UNSC Resolution 242 (1967)	Adopted after the Six-Day War of 1967	Calls for the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from the occupied territories and an acknowledgment of every state's right to live in peace within its borders	The basis for the land-for-peace framework and subsequent peace negotiations
UNSC Resolution 338 (1973)	Adopted during the Yom Kippur War	Calls for a ceasefire and urging negotiations for durable peace in the region	Reinforces Resolution 242 and emphasizes immediate peace talks.
UNSC Resolution 478 (1980)	Following Israel's declaration of Jerusalem as its capital	Declares the Israeli proclamation of Jerusalem as its capital "null and void" and calls on member states to withdraw their diplomatic missions	Reaffirms the international status of Jerusalem and the need for a negotiated settlement regarding its status

UNSC Resolution 1397 (2002)	Amid the Second Intifada.	Affirms a vision of two states living side by side within secure borders.	Explicitly endorses the two-state solution for the first time
UNSC Resolution 2334 (2016)	Continuing Israeli settlement activities.	Calls the Israeli settlements in OPT as illegal and a violation of international law.	Reaffirms the international community's stance against Israeli settlements.
UN General Assembly Resolutions			
UNGA Resolution 181 (1947)	Plan for the partition of Palestine.	Proposes the creation of independent Arab and Jewish states and a special international status of Jerusalem.	Basis for the establishment of Israel and intended to address conflicting national aspirations.
UNGA Resolution 3236 (1974)	Growing recognition of Palestinian rights.	Affirms the inalienable rights of the Palestinians, including the right to self-determination, independence, and sovereignty.	Marks a shift towards recognizing the political rights of Palestinians.

UNGA Resolution 67/19 (2012)	Bid for Palestinian statehood.	Grants Palestine a non-member observer state status in the UN.	Enhances the diplomatic status of Palestine and its ability to participate in UN activities.
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2.8.3 UN Agencies and Their Roles

2.8.3.1 United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)

Around 700,000 Palestinians were displaced as a result of the war of 1948. As a result, UNRWA was established by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 302 (IV) to carry out direct relief programs for refugees. Since its creation in 1950, and the absence of a solution to the Palestine refugee problem, the General Assembly has repeatedly renewed its mandate, most recently extending to June 2026. UNRWA has a unique character due to its long-standing commitment to Palestinian refugees' welfare and development for around four generations and even the children of those refugees. UNRWA considers the people who resided in Palestine from 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the War as refugees. Since its operations started in 1950 till today, UNRWA has been responding to the needs of about 750,000 Palestine refugees to some 5.9 million Palestine refugees (UNRWA, n.d.); (Jazeera 2024).

The primary functions of UNRWA include providing vital services to Palestinian refugees such as healthcare, social services, education, and emergency assistance. The UNRWA operates in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in Palestine and supports millions of Palestinian refugees. Their key activities include running to provide free basic education to children. The UNRWA also offers medical services to the refugees as well as food and aid for the most vulnerable populations.

Israel has long advocated for the dismantling of UNRWA, arguing that its mission is obsolete and it has been “perforated with Hamas”. Its accusations have not been backed by facts and have been questioned because the UN agency shares the list of its staff with both the Israeli and the Palestinian Authority. Further suspicion arose over Israel’s allegations due to the timing

of the allegations which surfaced the same day as the ICJ's interim ruling ordering Israel to prevent genocidal acts and scale up aid to Gaza.

2.8.3.2 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

OCHA is concerned with humanitarian needs, resource mobilization, and collaboration among other UN agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders in the Palestinian territories. It conducts regular inspections to determine humanitarian needs, facilitates the collaboration of humanitarian actors, and advocates for the respect of IHL and the POC.

2.8.3.3 UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund)

UNICEF has been operational as an impartial entity since 1946 and stands to alleviate the suffering of children irrespective of their identity by delivering resources and offering guidance to policy-makers. In some situations, UNICEF even mobilizes its staff to supply direct assistance to the affected populations. The work done by UNICEF is underpinned by the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, international humanitarian and human rights law ("UNICEF's Role in Israel and the State of Palestine," n.d.).

UNICEF has been vocal about the human rights violations in Gaza. UNICEF has constantly pleaded for a ceasefire, end of bombardment of civilian objects as well as access for aid in the Strip. At the moment, the Gaza Strip is considered the most dangerous place for a child. UNICEF has also been pleading for the children on both sides of the conflict, calling for an immediate release of all Israeli and foreign hostages held in Gaza. It has been constantly imploring the adoption of a resolution that includes the release of all abducted children. UNICEF senior officials have maintained close contact with the families of victims and also traveled to Gaza, the West Bank, and Israel to meet with and press for humanitarian action for child survivors of all violations.

The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) faces a severe funding crisis due to cuts from major international donors, primarily led by the United States, over allegations related to terrorism. This has been described by UNRWA's chief as additional hardship for Palestinians already suffering from ongoing conflict. UNRWA plays a crucial role in Gaza, providing essential services like education, healthcare, and humanitarian aid to over 1.5 million refugees. UNRWA has 1,476,706 registered Palestinian refugees in eight Palestinian camps. The agency employs thousands of Palestinians and operates in several

refugee camps across Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. Israel has criticized UNRWA, alleging ties to Hamas, although these claims have been disputed, with UNRWA regularly sharing staff lists with Israeli authorities. (Jazeera 2024)

2.9 Gaps in the Literature

Despite the extensive body of research on the Israel-Palestine conflict, several gaps and areas for further exploration remain. Identifying these gaps is essential for advancing our understanding of the conflict and informing future research. While studies have individually addressed the themes of power dynamics, protection of civilians, and the role of connections in the Israel-Palestine conflict, there is a lack of comprehensive frameworks that integrate these three concepts. Existing literature often treats these themes in isolation, missing the complex interplay between them and their cumulative impact on the conflict.

Secondly, the role of informal connections, such as those facilitated by civil society organizations is underexplored. Most research focuses on formal ties, overlooking how informal networks can contribute to protection efforts. Further investigation into these informal connections could provide a more nuanced understanding of dealing with the conflicts of the 21st century. Additionally, a comprehensive analysis of different dimensions of power specifically Luke's Multidimensional view of power is not adequately addressed in the recent literature on the conflict.

Despite being celebrated as a significant normative advancement, there is a consensus that R2P has not led to substantial changes in how states respond to such crimes as expected. Researchers note that the anticipated normative shift through moral persuasion has not materialized, prompting calls for further research into the reasons behind this stagnation (Bellamy 2015; Welsh 2006, 2014). Majorly it is recognized that a more critical examination of the factors limiting R2P's effectiveness, specifically the role of great powers and the structural limitations of international institutions needs to be studied (Hehir 2019; Bloomfield 2016).

Chapter 3

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter serves as the foundation for the analysis of the multifaceted dynamics of the Israel-Palestine conflict. By integrating the three critical concepts of Power, Protection, and Connections, this chapter lays the groundwork for a nuanced analysis that is crucial for addressing the persistent issues in Gaza and for proposing more effective strategies for peace and stability. This analysis begins with an exploration of power, examining both the visible and hidden forms, that shape the conflict. This is followed by a detailed discussion on protection, highlighting the various actors and structures that contribute to or hinder the protection of civilians. Finally, the chapter delves into the concept of connections, emphasizing the importance of informal networks in mediation and enhancing protection strategies.

3.1 Power

Power is a contested concept (Gilpin 1981) in international relations, and its proper definition remains controversial (Waltz 1986). However, understanding power dynamics is crucial as they shape state behavior, alliances, and matters of conflict and cooperation. Considering the significance of this term, there are various definitions by several scholars. For instance, Max Weber defined power as “the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance...” (Weber 1947 quoted in Baldwin 2002, 180). However, if A successfully imposes its own will into action, it means that A is powerful.

In politics, power is defined as “the general capacity of a state to control the behaviors of others” (Holsti 1972, 155). In a similar vein, Deutsch defines power as “the ability to prevail in conflict and to overcome obstacles” (Deutsch 1968, 22). According to Kenneth Waltz (1979, 192), a powerful actor has an influence on others. Jeffrey Hart succinctly summarizes that power is more about control over actors, events, and resources (Hart 1976).

All these efforts to conceptualize power entail a conflict between A and B, an intentional exercise of power by A over B, and a zero-sum game in which B is forced to act contrary to its interests (Akgül and Renda 2020). Bertrand Russell went so far as to say that power is “the fundamental concept in social science, in the same sense that Energy is the fundamental

concept in physics” (Russell 2004,4). Moreover, Menge (2018) suggested that “the laws of social dynamics have to be formulated in terms of power.”

The debate about power was initiated in the seminal article of the American Political Scientist Robert Dahl, in which he argued that anyone managing to get another person to do something they would not have done on their own had power. In Dahl’s own words (Dahl 1957, 202–203). Dahl conducted a detailed study of New Haven, Connecticut, to explore the question of who truly governs in a democratic society. He focused on various influential groups and institutions, elites, political parties, interest groups, and community organizations to assess their levels of power and influence. Through his empirical research, Dahl defied the idea that a small elite group holds influence over political outcomes and suggested that multiple groups play significant roles in decision-making. He illustrated that different groups advance their agendas via lobbying, advocacy, and electoral politics (Dahl 2005).

Maurice Bachrach and John Baratz critiqued Dahl and introduced the concept of "the second face of power." They argued that political power was also the ability to exclude certain issues from the decision-making agenda and make them the objects of non-decision (Bachrach and Baratz 1962). While Dahl focused primarily on observable decision-making processes and the competition among various groups within a democratic society, Bachrach and Baratz argued that power operates in more covert ways or 'Hidden Agenda-setting'. They suggested that power is not only about influencing decisions that are openly contested but also about shaping the agenda and determining which issues should not even be brought to the table for discussion. They argued that certain groups wield power by preventing certain issues from being raised or by framing the debate in ways that favor their agendas (Bachrach and Baratz 1962,949). This hidden agenda-setting power effectively silences dissenting voices. By highlighting the presence of hidden forms of power that operate beyond the scope of Dahl's pluralist theory, Bachrach and Baratz opened up new avenues for understanding the complexities of power relations and how power can be exercised to maintain the status quo.

As a response to the definitions proposed by Dahl and by Bachrach and Baratz, Steven Lukes contended that an entity such as A may exercise power over another entity such as B by getting them to do what they do not want to do, but by also influencing, shaping, or determining the very wants of B (Lukes 2005a). Adding to this open discussion about power, Lukes’s first edition of *Power: A Radical View* well fitted into the debate. Lukes argued for the addition of a third dimension comprising the ability of the powerful, including both individuals and groups,

to influence other people's perceptions in unique ways. The powerless and weak could thus, according to Lukes, even sacrifice their own 'real' interests in favor of those of the powerful without realizing what they were losing (Lukes 2005).

3.2 Steven Luke Multidimensional View of Power

Luke's idea has found applications in various domains of life, from education to wellness. With regard to corruption in health systems, Lukes' model predicts an inverse relationship between the importance of corruption issues and the level of public debate they receive, suggesting that more serious forms of corruption may be less discussed (Reynolds 2019). Another study utilizing the Lukes power model was conducted by Mulinari and Vilhelmsson (2019), where they explored the power dynamics in the pharmaceutical domains of pandemic influenza, focusing on the 2009 H1N1 pandemic vaccination strategies in Sweden and Denmark. The study elucidated the decision-making processes during three stages of vaccination response: planning, vaccine procurement, and the vaccination campaign. The first face of power was demonstrated by the influence of bureaucratized expertise, where experts' preferences shaped vaccine procurement contracts differently in Sweden and Denmark. The second face of power was demonstrated through subtle power structures involving actors like the state, vaccine manufacturers, and the WHO, which influenced vaccine orders and strategies. The paper highlighted how state power played a role in vaccine procurement via legal protections and contractual agreements, ultimately impacting the vaccination outcomes in both states. (Mulinari and Vilhelmsson 2019)

Hathaway (2015) discussed the interplay between society and the formal political arena, emphasizing societal outcomes over political outputs. The study concluded that hidden power involves manipulations behind the scenes, thereby limiting choices, excluding less powerful actors, and biasing decision-making procedures, ultimately influencing policy outcomes. The study also identified structural invisible power and agential invisible power by demonstrating how certain discourses and situations were ignored while the discourses beneficial to the actors were repeated on a loop.

Cossa (2013) discussed the power in international relations and stated that developing countries should assert their independence and indispensability to ensure fairness. It is important to ensure that global or regional regulations do not violate their sovereignty. Many scholars, such as Steven Lukes and Joseph Nye emphasized on exploring power through different conceptual lenses to enrich the understanding of power. Berenskötter and Williams (2007) enhanced the

understanding of power by explaining factors beyond the military-centric aspects. Dowding (2006) aimed at avoiding oversimplifying the power dynamics by differentiating between those who dominate knowingly and unknowingly.

3.3 The Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

The doctrine of Responsibility to Protect was advanced by the Independent Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) in 2005. Since then, it has been deemed a '*simple and powerful idea*' (Evans 2008). He claims that rather than focusing on prevention, reaction and rebuilding, R2P advocates for the states' responsibility to protect their citizens. If they fail to do so, the international community should assist them firstly by persuasion and then- as a last resort- by military coercion. Breakey (2012, 2) reiterates that the first pillar of R2P denotes the responsibility of the state, the second pillar is the responsibility of the international community, and the third pillar stands for the responsibility of the international community to use military force.

Furthermore, the doctrine encapsulates a tripartite outline of obligations, delineated as (a) the Responsibility to Prevent, (b) the Responsibility to React, and (c) the Responsibility to Rebuild. Regarding responsibility to prevent, the 2013 Secretary-General report talked about "various entry points" to prevent damage and a vast array of actions that the international community could take to help states prevent crimes, for instance, human rights organizations, education system media, etc. (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect 2021). Nevertheless, a critical perspective of the pillar of Responsibility to Prevent suggests that the effectiveness of diverse entry points and collaborative actions has faced challenges in implementation until now, thereby raising questions about the practicality of such measures.

Moving onto the second pillar, a failure to prevent the crimes then calls for 'Responsibility to React', which is mostly, though not preferably, purported via coercive military action. The execution of Responsibility to React is contingent upon the antecedent implementation of the Responsibility to Prevent. The ICISS reported six military criteria for military intervention: right authority, cause, right intention, last resort, proportional means, and reasonable prospect (Evans 2002; Haesebrouck n.d.).

The six criteria within the second pillar are elucidated now. Firstly, the UNSC holds the right authority to approve the military intervention for R2P. It is done after credible assessments and verification (ICISS 2001 pg. 49). The ICISS did not exclude other options like the UN General

Assembly, regional organizations, or coalition of the willing in its reports (Gagro 2014). The ICISS report on R2P communicated about using the General Assembly for building pressure in articles 6.29 and 6.30 and about regional organizations in 6.31- 6.35. While states do consider the authorization from the UNSC to be more respectable, in many cases, states do not waver to act in coalitions if the UNSC does not grant the authorization. The second criterion for military intervention is the just cause, i.e., the situations which provide a reasonable pretext for military action. Generally, the massive loss of life, actual or apprehended, with or without a genocidal intent, either due to the state's deliberate action, neglect or inability, or a failed state situation; a large-scale ethnic cleansing, actual or apprehended, by killing, expulsion, acts of terror or rape are all considered to be a just cause.

Thirdly, the stakeholders must acknowledge the right intent and should be within the mandates and boundaries of R2P. Article 4.37 of the report by ICISS (2001 pg. 36) talks about using force as a last resort after ensuring that all diplomatic and humanitarian means have either been employed and failed or there is reasonable judgment in believing that they ought to fail. Furthermore, ICISS (2001, 35) highlights that the right intention of advancing R2P is also evidenced via multilateral actions, regional support, or the support of the affected population, as stated in articles 4.33-4.36 in the ICISS Report of 2011.

The means employed, especially the military ones, must be in sync with the necessary force and should not cost the future political trajectory of the country. The scale and intensity of the interventions must be kept proportional to the objectives as stipulated in article 4.39 (ICISS 2001 pg. 37). Under the responsibility to react, the ICISS Report in article 4.41 clarifies that any military action should only be carried out if there is evidence to believe that it will lead to averting the catastrophes. However, even while acknowledging the necessity of 'Responsibility to React' in certain situations, the reliance on coercive military action raises concerns about potential unintended consequences and ethical dilemmas. Even the six military criteria outlined by the ICISS may encounter significant challenges in interpretation and utilization, questioning their effectiveness in guiding ethical interventions.

Moving on to the third responsibility, the 'Responsibility to Rebuild', is tasked with ensuring the restoration of societal functionality. Despite its critical role, Gagro (2014) underscores that this responsibility needs to be more timely, possibly due to its long-term commitment, revealing a substantial gap in the comprehensive implementation of the doctrine of Responsibility to Protect (R2P). The fulfilment of the 'Responsibility to Rebuild' as a critical facade within the

Responsibility to Protect (R2P) framework, unfortunately, coupled with its frequent neglect, emphasizes the need for proper obligation towards comprehensive societal restoration in conflict-ridden regions.

The doctrine of R2P, ever since its inception, has been hailed as a panacea by some and critiqued as being neo-imperialistic by others. Bellamy (2009,112) explored these contrasting viewpoints and elucidated that initially, the Chinese were skeptical of the misuse of force and hence demanded the authorization of the United Nations Security Council for R2P invocation. At the same time, Russia and India were cynical of unilateral interventions under the pretext of R2P. Bellamy (2009) argued that for the responsibility to protect doctrine from gaining acceptance, three essential steps are necessary: first, clearly defining the concept of prevention; second, employing practical measures for its execution; and third, calling out for institutional reform for its smooth working. In essence, he emphasizes that by following this three-pronged strategy, the doctrine of R2P can garner support and smooth implementation.

Evans (2008,13) contends that R2P entails conceptual challenges as some consider it a cure-all for climate change to HIV. In contrast, others think of it as just a replica of humanitarian intervention. Another obstacle cited by Evans lies in the institutional domain. Evans believes that the UN should develop early warning and response capability systems to ensure timely diplomatic, civilian and, in some cases military responses. Nevertheless, for this course of action, it is significant that the members of the UN develop a parallel understanding and cooperation with regional organizations, too. Evans (2008) underscores that effective international political will in support of the responsibility to protect (R2P) relies on timely action, which can be achieved through well-informed decisions, organized efforts, and compelling arguments.

In contrast, Reed (2012, 320) contends that R2P is deeply rooted in Western discourse, thereby legitimizing unilateral and regional interventions previously exemplified by NATO's actions in Kosovo. She posits that the military component of R2P often causes more harm than good. In essence, Reed suggests that the military dimension of R2P, particularly illustrated by interventions like NATO in Kosovo, tends to perpetuate harm rather than fulfill its intended protective role. While Reed's perspectives are noteworthy, a closer examination reveals that Reed's critique focuses primarily on Kosovo and presents a one-sided and limited perspective. Consequently, Glanville (2013) claims that the use of force does not come as a given with R2P; rather, it requires authorization from the United Nations Security Council. Glanville (2013,173)

writes that "use of force is allowed where peaceful means have been inadequate and national authorities have manifestly failed in protecting their populations from the four widely known atrocity crimes such as genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity." Glanville submits that it is the lack of political will of states that halts R2P. An analysis of Glanville's discourse sheds light on the importance of UN authorization and the role of political will as a decisive factor in the implementation of R2P.

An analysis of Reeds and Evans' perspective highlights the ongoing debate over the practicality and consequences of R2P, emphasizing the need for nuanced discussions and assessments beyond specific case studies. In response, the literature by Glanville (2013) has yielded nuanced responses to the censures towards R2P via a much broader scope in his analysis. Summing up the debates over R2P in the words of Catherine Renshaw (par.5): despite critics highlighting the inconsistency, hypocrisy, and potential economic motivations behind the application of R2P, proponents have long argued that the principle extends beyond intervention and encompasses broader moral and humanitarian values.

3.4 Social Connection Model by J. Craig Jenkins and Charles Perrow

The Social Connection Model, developed by J. Craig Jenkins, offers an understanding of social networks and their implications for collective behavior. Their model emphasizes the importance of interactions among actors such as individuals, groups, and organizations in shaping social phenomena. The model's central components encompass formal and informal connections, where the formal connections are explicitly defined by structure and hierarchies, while informal connections include personal relationships. By integrating both of these dimensions, the social connection model sought to provide a holistic understanding of social dynamics. Jenkins explored the model's implications for welfare policies and interventions, emphasizing the importance of considering both types of connections for effective social interventions. Overall, their article offered a framework which highlighted the interconnectedness of social relationships and social welfare (Jenkins 1997).

In their seminal article, Jenkins and Perrow utilized the social connection Model to analyze the farmer movements in the United States. The authors investigated how informal connections and networks among farmworkers played a pivotal role in enabling action and resistance against oppressive labor conditions. The authors demonstrated how social networks served as channels for disseminating information and building alliances, thereby strengthening the capacity of the movement and the transformative power of collective action in challenging

systemic injustices (Jenkins and Perrow 1977). In the same stream, Schneiberg (2008) applied the Social Connection Model to analyze the alternatives to traditional corporations in the American insurance, dairy, and grain industries and concluded the positive role of connections among cooperative members in collective decision-making, and mutual support, thereby contributing to resilience and sustainability.

Jenkins analyzed her model in the domain of health and asserted that the nature of social relationships is multifaceted and cannot be understood by oversimplifying the complexities. She advocated for a holistic perspective that recognized the diverse implications of social connections on social relationships with impact on physical and mental health (Jenkins 2004). Furthermore, Jenkins and Eckert investigated the impact of informal ties on young people's decision-making and the extent to which formal structures and institutional arrangements facilitated or hindered their involvement. Through their analysis, Jenkins and Eckert emphasized the importance of considering both formal and informal social connections in understanding the dynamics of youth participation in civic activities (Jenkins et al. 2015). In their study published in the Children and Youth Services Review in 2014, Pamela Jenkins and Corinne Wilkins delved into how both formal and informal connections with peers and teachers impacted student motivation, and overall well-being. Through their analysis, Jenkins and Wilkins highlighted the significance of fostering positive social connections in the classroom for promoting academic success (Jenkins et al. 2014).

Talking about the 'connections' in the social connection model, Granovetter (1973) argued that while strong ties (close relationships) are important, it is weak ties/ casual acquaintances or distant connections that are more effective in facilitating social mobility. He introduced the concept of "the strength of weak ties" to highlight the utility of weak ties in enabling individuals to achieve goals that may be beyond the reach of strong ties alone. Although not directly focused on the Social Connection Model, Granovetter's classic study on the strength of weak ties provides theoretical insights that align with Jenkins and Perrow's framework.

The versatility of the Social Connection Model is elucidated by its applicability to diverse social phenomena, from social movements to organizational behavior and community development. It provides valuable insights for exploring collective action. The model's theoretical foundations and practical implications for understanding social relationships and interactions in different contexts offer valuable insights.

3.5 The Integrated Framework of Power, Protection and Connections (IF-PPC)

Based on the above literature review, a proposed PPC framework depicts the interconnectedness of three key concepts: Power as in Luke's Three-Dimensional Power, Protection as in Responsibility to Protect (R2P), and Connections as in the Social Connection Model. Firstly, Luke's Three-Dimensional Power framework highlights three dimensions of power: Visible Power, Agenda-setting Power, and ideological Power. These dimensions provide a lens through which to analyze the power dynamics within the international community. Next, R2P encapsulates the three pillars of the doctrine of Responsibility to Protect, namely civilian protection, conflict prevention, and accountability. These pillars underscore the principles guiding international interventions in situations of humanitarian crisis, including the Gaza conflict. By understanding these interconnections, this research can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of collaborative actions and interventions to address crises like the Gaza conflict and advance the pillars of R2P. Finally, the Social Connections illustrate the varying strengths and types of connections among different actors involved in addressing humanitarian crises in the Gaza conflict. Strong, weak, and conflictual ties represent the diverse nature of social connections that influence decision-making, issue-framing, and collaborative actions.

By integrating these dimensions, the PPC framework offers a holistic understanding of the complex dynamics underlying collaborative actions and interventions in response to humanitarian crises. It provides a structured framework for analyzing the interactions between power dynamics, social connections, and R2P principles, thus informing theoretical discourse and empirical investigations within the chapter on a conceptual framework.

Chapter 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A methodology is the art of conducting research scientifically. It includes the stages generally employed by a researcher to study the research problem along with the logic of using the methods (Kothari 1990,8). Understanding the methodology behind any research endeavor is paramount, as it not only explains 'how' the research will be conducted but also increases the transparency and credibility of the research (Chris 2021). Hence, this methodology chapter outlines the approaches and methods to explore the multilayered subtleties of the Gaza conflict, particularly focusing on the concept of power, the role of the United Nations (UN), and the influence of international social networks on collective responses.

This introduction provides an overview of the rationale behind the selected research inquiries and the methodological framework intended to address them. The primary research inquiry explores the role of the United Nations (UN) regarding its commitments in peacekeeping and humanitarian interventions. This primary inquiry aims to examine the effectiveness and consequences of the UN's actions and inactions in implementing effective protection strategies in Gaza. The second inquiry draws upon Luke's framework of power to investigate the multifaceted interplay of power dynamics to uncover the underlying complexities. Furthermore, the research extends to investigate the need of informal social connections among the already existing network of strong formal connections between governments and the UN. Overall, this study questions the aim of examining power dynamics, institutional responses, and informal social connections within the international community and their influence on the Gaza conflict.

4.1 Conceptual Framework and Case Study

The conceptual framework guiding this study is a combination of three diverse concepts, distinct yet inter-related, namely: Steven Luke's multi-dimensional view of power, the doctrine of Responsibility to Protect or R2P, and its three fundamental components: prevention, response, and rebuilding and lastly the Social Connection Model by J. Craig Jenkins and Charles Perrow. The objective is to offer a thorough perspective for examining the intricacies

of Protection strategies in Gaza. The choice to use Gaza as the primary subject matter is based on the current recurrence of aggression and severe violations of human rights in Gaza, as well as the uncertainties surrounding the future of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) philosophy. The primary objects of analysis in this study include the opposing parties, Israel and Hamas, and the United Nations Security Council (P5), notably the United States. The conflicting parties and their interests are crucial for understanding the conflict dynamics, and the role of the USA is also essential, considering its significant influence within the Security Council in shaping the international responses to conflicts.

4.2 Research Questions and Research Methods

To guide this investigation, three central research questions have been formulated:

- **What role is the UN playing in addressing humanitarian concerns and implementing Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principles in Gaza?**

This question focused on the role of the United Nations (UN) in addressing the Gaza conflict to examine the challenges and opportunities facing the UN in implementing R2P principles in Gaza and how its actions or decisions impact conflict resolution efforts for the conflict. The methodology involved reviewing literature and interviewing experts to analyze the role, challenges, and effectiveness of United Nations actions in the Gaza conflict. This helped in investigating the political and operational challenges in civilian protection and gain insights into the organization's decision-making processes, internal dynamics, and external pressures.

- **How does power explain the actions of the USA in Gaza?**

This question aimed to investigate how power via overt actions, agenda-setting processes, ideological influences, and implicit factors are interacting to shape the dynamics of the conflict, specifically regarding the USA. To understand the dimensions of power in the Gaza Conflict, an extensive literature review has been carried out to explore theoretical frameworks of power. Interviews were also conducted to gather qualitative data on perceptions of power dynamics. The dynamics were then categorized according to Luke's dimensions of power to assess their impact on conflict dynamics.

- **How can informal social connections impact the efficacy of collaborative actions in addressing humanitarian crises?**

The third research question aimed to explore the numerous facets of social connections and their influence on collaboration in addressing humanitarian crises. For this question, qualitative analysis was used involving in-depth interviews with key stakeholders and experts of R2P to gain insights into their perspectives, experiences, and decision-making processes related to collaborative efforts.

4.3 Research Philosophy

This study has utilized an interpretive research philosophy to carefully scrutinize the complex facets of UN in Gaza. Interpretivism is opposite of the positivist philosophy and argues that truth is subjective. It is shaped by experiences unique to every human and is influenced by culture and history. In essence, researchers of this paradigm recognize that their attitudes, views, and experiences have a predictable impact on how they gather, interpret, and analyze data.

An interpretive approach has allowed the researcher to examine the underlying motivations, ideologies, and power dynamics that influence the behavior of the stakeholders like US and UN in a nuanced manner. To summarize, by integrating an interpretive method into this research has enabled a thorough examination while offering significant perspectives on future paths of global interventions.

4.4 Deductive Research Approach

Typically, two research methodologies contribute to the development of knowledge: inductive and deductive techniques (Hyde 2000, 83). The former refers to a method of constructing theories that begin with observations and develop established generalizations. On the contrary, deductive reasoning is more of a testing process that initiates with an established theory and seeks to test if the theory applies to a specific case. This research design has followed a deductive approach, commencing with the established concepts of R2P, Steven Luke's concept of Power and its dimensions, and the Social Connection Model by J. Craig Jenkins and Charles Perrow. This approach has enabled the current study to produce context-specific insights for Gaza.

4.5 Research Design

A research design serves as a systematic plan or framework to investigate a problem. Usually, a research problem dictates the type of design, with qualitative and quantitative designs being

common categories. Creswell (1998) suggests that the type of design carried out in a study is a strategic choice as the design encompasses the strategy to ensure an effective addressal of the inquiry (Indu 2020) and acts as a blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. This study has employed a qualitative research design.

Within the qualitative research, this study has employed an exploratory case study design, which has allowed for an in-depth exploration. This study sought to perform thorough investigations on the role of UN (R2P) by examining various sources of data, such as interviews and documents. This method is consistent with Stake's (1995) description of the qualitative case study tradition, which emphasizes the examination of a specific instance.

4.6 Methods of Research

Research methods are instruments utilized for the acquisition and examination of data. The choice of research methods is contingent upon the nature of the study. According to Kothari (1990,7), choosing appropriate research methods is crucial for any research.

4.7 Data collection

This research has utilized a combination of primary and secondary data sources.

4.7.1 Primary Data Collection

Primary data collection entails acquiring primary information straight from the source in real time and customized to meet the exact requirements of the researcher. This process requires techniques such as surveys, observations, questionnaires, and personal interviews. Although original data gathering may require a significant investment of time and money, it offers a superior level of precision as the researcher has full control over the data collection process.

This study utilized semi-structured interviews as a method of research. Semi-structured interviews are necessary when the topic of investigation necessitates the interviewees' beliefs and personal experiences. The study necessitated conducting semi-structured interviews with various experts on the subject matter of R2P, foreign policy, and human rights activists. The purpose of these semi-structured interviews was to examine the qualitative aspects of perceptions thoroughly.

Sampling is the process of selecting a smaller sample that is representative of a larger population under study. Due to time and resource constraints, a large population cannot be

studied; hence, sampling is used to draw out a smaller population that can be representative of the whole group (Acharya et al., 2013). Between the probability and non-probability sampling techniques, the one to be used for this study was the purposive sampling from the latter branch. The purposive sample is selected due to a prior purpose of the researcher (Alvi 2016). A purposive sampling strategy was employed to select participants with expertise in protection and power. This approach ensured a rich and varied dataset that captures a spectrum of perspectives. Moreover, based on snowball sampling the interviewed experts were asked to connect with others who were experts in the field.

4.7.2 Secondary Data Collection

In contrast, secondary data refers to information that others have previously collected for purposes other than the current research. This data is sourced from existing records, publications, websites, and other repositories. The process of acquiring secondary data is quicker and more cost-effective since the information already exists. However, it may need more immediacy and specificity for the researcher's unique study. Secondary data is available in a refined or processed form, having undergone analysis for its original purpose. While it offers efficiency in terms of time and cost, there may be concerns about its accuracy and reliability. For this study, secondary data from UN documents, resolutions, and reports were analyzed. Additionally, news reports, journal articles, human rights reports, etc. were also scrutinized.

4.8 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the data. It is a research method which involves identifying and analyzing recurring themes. According to Joffe and Yardley (2004), the themes or patterns in the data are categorized and analyzed deeply for analysis. It is a flexible and widely used approach, making it suitable for addressing the complexities inherent in the context of the three research questions for this study.

4.9 Limitations

While this study aims for comprehensive insights, it acknowledges the potential limitations, such as the reliance on participant perspectives, potential biases, and the dynamic nature of conflict situations that may have impacted data collection. Firstly, in terms of scope, the study focused primarily on Gaza and hence may not have been able to capture the full range of

complexities present in other conflicts, thereby limiting generalizability. Secondly, the study might not have been able to fully capture the complex and multifaceted nature of power dynamics as certain aspects of power relations may remain obscure. Thirdly, limited access to certain data sources and bias in the available might have impacted the reliability of findings. Lastly, in terms of contextual and temporal factors, the Gaza conflict is influenced by political, economic, and social dynamics, as well as external interventions. Hence, the changes in the conflict landscape are beyond the scope of this study and may impact the relevance and applicability of the findings in the coming times. While a rigorous research design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation were employed to address these limitations and increase transparency, acknowledging the limitations can contribute to a clear understanding and help guide future research.

4.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval and informed consent were sought from all participants, emphasizing voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw from the study at any point without consequences.

4.11 Data Storage

Interview transcriptions are securely stored on Google Drive, facilitating access for the researcher and her supervisor while ensuring data sharing and collaboration with the Centre of International Peace and Stability (CIPS) for thesis requirements as needed. Considering the need for privacy, different measures such as encryption, access controls, and regular backups are being implemented. Compliance with privacy regulations is being maintained throughout, and access permissions will be managed to ensure access to authorized individuals only.

Chapter 5

ANALYZING THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN GAZA

The main roles of the UN in Gaza as identified in the data analysis process in light of the three pillars of R2P include humanitarian aid, Mediation and Peacekeeping, Monitoring and Reporting, Coordination of Response, Implementation of Sanctions, and Advocacy. An analysis of these roles in the light of the three pillars of R2P can help clarify the level and impact of these roles.

5.1 R2P-Prevention

The main roles identified for the UN in Gaza that come under the premise of Prevention include Monitoring and Reporting, Coordination of Response, and Advocacy. As for the monitoring part, the UN has failed blatantly considering that the atrocities in Gaza have been happening for decades. There was no action on the early warning system, as per an interviewee:

The risks existed before October 7th, responsibilities under the three pillars existed before October 7th as well, and there are overarching atrocity crimes and likely crimes against humanity that have been perpetrated on a daily basis that span many decades...those risks were there, and they were completely ignored, so disregarding the whole invoking R2P conversation..the reason that this happened pre-October 7th is for the same reason it hasn't happened post-October 7th, is because we have a specific set of member states that have very, very strong geopolitical aims, but that also at the same time wield power in the Security Council.

(IP-1 2024)

Another respondent said:

As we have seen throughout the years, the responsibility to protect is called upon when the house is already on fire, if you allow me the image, right? So, everyone is very heated, polarized, divided, and it's extremely difficult as we see it now on the situation in Ukraine or Gaza-Israel or Sudan, et cetera, to take quiet, objective decisions in the wake of these emergencies where the fronts are already extremely polarized.

(IP-2 2024)

Another respondent highlighted the lack of political will as the main factor of failure of prevention in the case of Gaza. In their words:

So, it's this thing that, you know, you wait for the fire to break out, and then you try to, you know, kind of respond to the fire rather than preventing it from breaking out in the first place. So, I think that's a big problem that there's still that. And maybe it's a question of political will, right? Maybe it's a question of resources, that states just don't really, they will talk, they will say that they take prevention seriously.

(IP-5 2024)

Overall, the findings conclude that the UN has failed to monitor and report the massacre in Gaza for decades and take action before 7th October specifically. The attack by Hamas did not happen in a vacuum. There was a clear lack of monitoring and reporting of early warning signs. Moreover, even after the attacks started there has been a delayed and slow effort by the UN. Themes based on lack of political will and geopolitics are significant in this regard. Most states hesitate to spend on prevention. A respondent noted: “We know that states and other international actors, they don't, they don't like to spend money on prevention (IP-4)”

5.2 R2P- Reaction

In terms of the reaction phase, the roles identified by the UN include humanitarian aid, mediation and peacekeeping, Monitoring and Reporting, Coordination of Response, Implementation of Sanctions, and Advocacy. These measures include both non-coercive as well as coercive measures as per Chapters VI and VII of the UN Charter.

In terms of reaction by non-coercive means, humanitarian aid has been a cardinal tool of the UN. A respondent noted: “UN is trying to focus on what it knows it can do, which is the provision of humanitarian acts, humanitarian goods” (IP-3 2024). Another applauded the humanitarian work by the UN Relief Works Agency and said:

UNRWA is the sort of like major Service delivery. I think their position has been challenging. I think it was challenging before I think it's only gotten harder. And so, I think there are clear security issues in a relay as it relates to humanitarian assistance delivery.

(IP-6 2024)

There has been resistance to invoke Chapter VII in many cases and in Gaza too considering many factors and specifically the US-Israel alliance, there seems to be little hope of the use of force. However, this does not mean that there is a lack of options for the UN. As per Chapter VI, there are various means and tools, supplementing this statement a respondent said: “I think, you know, the Security Council, of course, can block any military action authorized by the UN. But there's still a lot of other things that can be done” (IP-4 2024).

However, there has been minimal action in the mediation and peacekeeping efforts. A respondent noted:

They have a responsibility for International Peace and security and should be able to pass resolutions that enable actors whether they are states member states or groups of states or a UN mandated peacekeeping Force to try and prevent the continuation of violence like this. So, this the role of the Security Council is very clear.

(IP-7 2024)

There is a plethora of options available to the UN in the reaction phase. Firstly, there can be various diplomatic and non-coercive options from embargos to sanctions and this does not require UNSC authorization. The problem starts with the failure of such non-coercive measures which necessitates the invocation of Chapter VII and the use of or threat of use of force after UNSC authorization. So, while there has been a blatant lack of invoking coercive and non-coercive means there is also a lack of realization of the non-coercive means. There is a general understanding that since resolutions are being vetoed in the UNSC so the UN is paralyzed. But in reality, there are a myriad of options and the only factor lacking is a political will. A respondent noted: “The thing is that there are many actions, but they are not leading to a final decision result, okay? So, there are many, you know, there are many diplomatic initiatives that have not succeeded” (IP-8 2024)

In the other domains such as Monitoring and Reporting, Coordination of Response, Implementation of Sanctions, and Advocacy, too there have been a limited action. There are no monitoring systems by UN in Gaza. There is little credibility in the numbers and on ground situation as reported by Israel and Hamas or ministries in Gaza. Moreover, there has been a visible lack of coordinated and sustained effort by the UN, regional organizations, or alliances in Gaza. For sanctions etc. too there has been little progress with the USA providing vital

military equipment to Israel. Lastly, in terms of advocacy too UN has been playing a very little role but it is this ignorance that has sparked more advocacy and activism by other actors.

5.3 R2P-Rebuilding

The responsibility to rebuild is one of the major pillars of R2P. While there are contrasting viewpoints on when the rebuilding should start; either during or after the hostilities. Yet in both cases, there need to be some prerequisites such as monitoring and reporting of human rights violations and war crimes are essential for accountability and transitional justice mechanisms for the reconciliation part of peacebuilding. Moreover, rebuilding is a holistic and long-term commitment and it requires a coordinated effort with advocacy and awareness. In the case of Gaza, while there are active hostilities there has been no effort to prepare for the ‘day after’, as said by a respondent:

I think that the worst aspects of what happened afterwards in Libya were the lack of follow-up. It's the same kind of thing that we're seeing, to go back to Gaza for a minute, the idea that there is no plan for the day after, whatever the day after is. Even if you think Hamas is going to be destroyed, which it won't be, you have to have something in place for the day after. What does a two-state solution look like? What is a one-state solution? None of this is carried out. And the lesson for me from Libya is that the tragic lack of commitment to providing any breathing room is probably the biggest lesson.

(IP-6 2024)

Summing up the roles of the UN in Gaza in the light of the doctrine of R2P, one can observe a clear failure of R2P. A respondent said: “On the actual implementation, whether it's prevention or reaction or rebuilding, you'd give UN very low grades” (IP-3 2024). In the domain of prevention, a respondent noted: “It gets very failing grades, awful grades in fact, because the politics of prevention, whether it's mass atrocities or anything else, is very hard to sell politically” (IP-5 2024). Another said: “Well, the fact of the matter is that rarely do we act early enough to prevent atrocities or even low-level atrocities, let alone high-level atrocities” (IP-7 2024). In the second domain of Reaction a respondent noted: “And it's rare, actually, that the international community of states reacts effectively to mass atrocities” (IP-9 2024). The above findings reveal a singular factor of major power interests for the limited utilization of R2P by UN in Gaza. A respondent told: “The responsibility to protect actually can only possibly work in places where major powers are not involved. Let's face it” (IP-8 2024).

The UN has been involved in various roles in Gaza and an analysis of the effectiveness of their actions is crucial to gauge the strengths and weaknesses facing the system. From the review of the literature and primary data collection, it has been identified that despite numerous challenges, UN agencies provide essential humanitarian aid, which mitigates some of the immediate suffering in Gaza. An interviewee revealed: “UN is trying to focus on what it knows it can do, which is the provision of humanitarian acts, humanitarian goods” (IP-7 2024). This direct support is crucial in addressing the urgent needs of the population. UNRWA and UNICEF are just two important agencies of UN working in Palestine since 1947. As noted by a respondent: “The UN can do a lot of things. The situation on the ground would be even worse than it is without the UNRWA or UNICEF or the World Food Program” (IP-8 2024). The role of the UN can be labeled as a mixed success. While direct intervention has been found to be limited, yet UN's humanitarian efforts has contributed to somewhat manage the humanitarian crises.

5.4 Challenges for UN Actions in Gaza

Overall, the UN has been playing a crucial role in Gaza, addressing urgent needs such as food, shelter, and medical supplies. This is evident from the interviews: "The UN has been at the forefront of providing humanitarian assistance to Gaza, delivering essential supplies to alleviate the suffering of civilians caught in the conflict" (IP-6 2024). The UN also serves as a mediator and facilitates peacekeeping efforts in Gaza. As per the findings: "Through its peacekeeping missions and mediation efforts, the UN has strived to mitigate tensions and promote dialogue" (IP-7 2024). The UN is also empowered to implement the doctrine of Responsibility to Protect as noted by an interviewee: “The United Nations accepted R2P in 2005. So definitely, there is a responsibility of the UN to implement R2P” (IP-6 2024). However, there are various challenges facing the UN which can be divided into two main streams first the lack of political will by states and secondly the operational and structural challenges of the UN. A detailed analysis of challenges is explored below:

5.4.1 Lack of Political Will

5.4.1.1 Political Barriers

The actions taken by the United Nations in Gaza have been limited as per the findings of this study. While the UN has a plethora of options at its disposal, yet its actions were restricted primarily due to constraints on intervention options. The UN's intervention both in terms of

diplomatic and non-coercive as well as coercive measures was significantly limited, especially due to the alliance between Israel and the USA which is a major power and P5 Member of the UNSC. Commenting on this, an interview respondent said: "The responsibility to protect actually can only possibly work in places where major powers are not involved" (IP-5 2024).

The working of the UN in Gaza has also been hindered by various political barriers and ties that impact the security council dynamics. A respondent said: "The political barriers to entry are so high" (IP-6 2024). The strong political ties between the US and Israel have been a major point of hindrance to UN actions as per a respondent:

Now, the other issue, of course, is that generally speaking, the Security Council gets involved in R2P referrals. And this is very problematic, because as we know, the permanent members of the Security Council, especially the United States and Britain, possibly France, are likely to veto or disregard any kind of ruling that might be made. But it doesn't entirely depend on the Security Council.

(IP-1 2024)

Another respondent said:

Then if there's any kind of lack of political will, or any of the P5 are, you know, not happy with the situation, then that's, you could say, well, that's the end of a response that might have to be issued.

(IP-8 2024)

Secondly, it is now widely recognized that the UNSC is limited in its functions by the use of veto powers and geopolitics of the P5 and their allies. "There are many resolutions that have invoked the risk of genocide, but they have been vetoed" (IP-8 2024). Any sort of meaningful action from non-coercive to coercive means is hindered by the interests of member states. A respondent rightly said on this situation: "The Security Council is going to be powerless to do anything in Palestine, given the geopolitics of it" (IP-1 2024).

5.4.1.2 Security Concerns

There is usually a plethora of security risks in highly fragile conflict zone which impedes the humanitarian, advocacy and operational tasks of the UN. Given the sensitive nature of conflict

and the highly active war in Gaza, the security risks have hindered the UN's ability to operate effectively. An interviewee noted that "Security risks often disrupt UN operations in Gaza, jeopardizing the safety of humanitarian workers and hindering the delivery of aid" (IP-10 2024). An expert on US atrocity prevention efforts talking about the challenges facing the UN and the reluctance of the US said: "And so, I think there are clear security issues in the relay as it relates to humanitarian assistance delivery" (IP-9 2024).

5.4.1.3 Regional and International Interests

The strategic location of Gaza, the significant position of Israel and Arab states, as well as the USA's interest in the region, add a new layer of complexity to the already multifaceted and complex conflict. The influence of international and regional players such as the economic relations between the USA and Israel, and the regional clashes between Saudi Arabia and Iran have led to a lack of comprehensive UN action in Gaza as well as a non-discussion on the agenda of R2P. An interviewee noted: "Political fragmentation complicates UN operations in Gaza, as different factions may have conflicting interests and priorities" (IP-6 2024).

Another interviewee said:

Finally, it is for serious discussion to research whether states are willing to improve the situation in the world community or only pursuing their own national interests. Of course, national interests are important. However, the improvement of the world situation is moral obligation. In addition, many aspects of this moral obligation are legal obligations.

(IP-9 2024)

Moreover, it has also limited actions available for regional powers or organizations. A respondent noted that:

And if somehow the UN Security Council would take action against the Chinese in Myanmar or against the U.S.-Israeli coalition in Gaza, you would have a major war on your hands instead of just an awful local suffering and war. So, I don't actually see any chance that one could take action against major powers. And I would say the major powers would also include your neighbor, India, or Brazil, or – I mean, if there were involvement in conflicts.

(IP-9 2024)

This statement not only adeptly highlights the inaction by UN in Myanmar and Gaza in the present times but also brings to notice that even if the UNSC were to take action, there is no guarantee of peace and stability rather it would make matters worse. The response also highlights potential inactions by regional actors like India and Brazil in conflicts in their regions.

5.4.2 Structural and Procedural Constraints of the UN

Another major theme from data analysis pointed out at the structural and procedural constraints of the UN, some of the sub themes are:

5.4.2.1 Funding and Resource Constraints

A limited willingness of states to allocate resources for humanitarian catastrophes is another challenge facing the UN. The human rights of citizens in another part of the world are not the core interests of public and hence the leaders of a state reduce their attention and funding to such matters. As the UNSC is dependent on the member states, its work is impacted by resources and funding constraints from states. However, an uproar has been observed in public since the conflict erupted in Gaza and the states and public are vocal about humanitarianism, even in such situations the work is hindered due to issues such as framing UNRWA being involved with Hamas. As a result, the member states suspended their funding to UNRWA which caused a pause in its humanitarian work. A respondent contended that "resource constraints limit the UN's ability to provide comprehensive aid and support to all affected communities in Gaza" (IP-2 2024). Other interviewees also noted similar trends and also pointed out a stark lack of willingness of states to allocate funding and resources for the preliminary state of conflict i.e., for the prevention stages. a respondent states: "We know that states and other international actors, they don't, they don't like to spend money on prevention" (IP-9 2024).

5.4.2.2 Logistical Nightmares

The operational difficulties during the delivery of aid and ground operations have further lowered the capabilities of key agencies of the UN to act. An expert on US policies commented: "It's just a logistical nightmare and just incredibly difficult" (IP-6 2024).

Another interviewee noted:

UN is trying to focus on what it knows it can do, which is provision of humanitarian acts, humanitarian goods. But even there, we've seen that it's run into this problem where member states then determine whether or not it can operate, it has the budget to operate, but also it wasn't getting the access via Israel.

(IP-9 2024)

5.4.2.3 Security Council Paralysis

All the actions and inactions by the UN boil down to the actions and inactions of the P5. In the case of Gaza, the Security Council's inability to reach a consensus or take effective action can be rightly attributed to the veto power and political disagreements. An interviewee noted that:

The Security Council was paralyzed, as it always, or virtually always is. And at present, we are back to the Security Council paralysis that existed in the Cold War. It actually couldn't be worse, frankly.

(IP-6 2024)

5.5 Analysis and Discussion

Gul and Batool (2019) note that the goal of setting up the United Nations was to prevent wars and conflicts. However, achieving this noble aim has proved to be a daunting challenge as evidenced by the current situation of global peace and stability.

UN has an obligation to maintain peace and stability in the world and follow R2P when needed after accepting it in 2005. However, an analysis of UN actions in Gaza as per the doctrine of R2P reveals a failure in its three pillars. Judging the pillar of Prevention on the basis of monitoring efforts, advocacy and coordination one can observe a clear lack of procedural measures for preventing the massacre and bloodshed. Secondly, in the domain of reaction too, it has also miserably failed in providing an adequate reaction given the grave situation and lastly it has not built any mechanisms for reconciliation, development or reconstruction for the last pillar of peacebuilding.

Even then, UN has achieved limited success in its endeavor of humanitarian assistance. It has been providing food and medical supplies by its agency UNRWA and UNICEF. Secondly, a silver lining of its in-action has been the normative influence towards other actors and the public as well debates on the future of humanitarianism, power and R2P. Considering the grave human rights violations and blatant use of force in Gaza with an inaction by UN necessitates an analysis of the challenges facing UN to identify, acknowledge, and mitigate them in future conflict zones.

The actions of the UN in Gaza have been met with significant challenges, the most prominent of which revolve around the limitations of political will and dynamics of power within the UNSC. The influence of major powers, particularly the United States, has created a considerable barrier to effective action. The core issue is the political stalemate due to the veto power of the members of UNSC. The recurring theme of geopolitical interests overriding humanitarian concerns has been a recurring theme in the data, for instance, a respondent noted that the Security Council is going to be powerless to do anything in Palestine, due to the geopolitics.

Additionally, the strong political ties between the US and Israel have further complicated the UN's efforts by hampering action due to the economic and political interests. Secondly, the UN's structural limitations also play a critical role in its ineffectiveness as the post WWII institution was not designed to address the complexities of modern conflicts like those in Gaza, leading to significant enforcement challenges. A respondent noted that the UN was established in 1945 is an outdated framework further exacerbating its difficulties.

Limited funding and the reluctance of states to allocate resources for prevention also impede UN's abilities in conflict zones. Security concerns are also a pervasive issue as regional instability poses constant risks to UN operations in Gaza. These risks not only jeopardize the safety of humanitarian workers but also disrupt the delivery of aid. Without organized efforts for post-conflict reconstruction, the situation in Gaza remains precarious. Overall, a pattern of political barriers, resource limitations, and security risks converge to hinder the UN's effectiveness in Gaza. The most frequently quoted challenge, the political dynamics within the UN Security Council, underscores the critical need for reform and a more cohesive international approach to addressing the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Reiterating a response from an interview:

From the perspective of the design of UN, as designed after the Second World War, the key institution for having a better world is the Security Council. It was designed as it was designed. The main powers as permanent members of this institution are China, Russia, United States, UK and France, but not some others. These states with nuclear weapon have the main responsibility for building the better world and the international cooperation. So, the system was designed in a way that every of these countries, while permanent members of UNSC, have the right to veto important decisions. Is it a good regulation or not? We can discuss about that.

(IP-4 2024)

It is important to realize that the UN has had limited success due to external factors. The UN per se does not have any agency to act, it is dependent on its members. So, while the UN has had some successes in raising awareness, providing aid, and making diplomatic efforts, its overall effectiveness has been limited by the unwillingness of states to comply with international norms such as the doctrine of responsibility to protect (R2P) and the lack of enforcement mechanisms. While UN has the primary responsibility to act, its main organ the UNSC has been designed in a way to work for a certain major power. Due to this situation, while there are calls to reform the UNSC it still is a utopian idea. Hence a major insight that derives from the above literature and findings is the pressing need for permanent and domestic implementation. There is a need for R2P and related protective measures by UN to be adopted permanently at national and regional levels, rather than relying solely on international interventions and waiting for the UNSC to act.

The UNSC is often paralyzed by political barriers, and while its reform is desired, such changes are unlikely soon. Remaining dependent on the UNSC, a platform designed for the post-World War II era, is not a viable solution for addressing 21st-century conflicts marred by power politics. The results reveal a significant interference of US power in the UNSC. A respondent noted: "It's another black eye for the Security Council and the international community of states and another missed opportunity for the responsibility to protect, but it's hardly surprising" (IP-9 2024). The inaction of the UN can be attributed to the paralysis of the UNSC due to the US's veto action. Such a non-democratic structure of the UN is based on the power dynamics where the victors of World War I too made a system that aimed to maintain control by the powerful actors back then however with changing times it is not only essential to reform the structures

based on the features of the twenty-first century but also to dissect the power dynamics and its lethal role in international relations.

5.6 Summary

This chapter analyzed that the UN has been able to achieve a limited success in Gaza due to its aid and humanitarian assistance endeavors. However, judging on the basis of the three pillars of R2P, a doctrine accepted by UN in 2005 thereby being obligated to act on it, also reveals a complete failure in the domain of prevention and peacebuilding. Only some success is visible due to actions of UNRWA and UNICEF. The lack of action by UN can be attributed to the power dynamics within the UN hence necessitating the study of the role of power factors and its impact on the situation in Gaza.

Chapter 6

APPLYING LUKES' POWER DYNAMICS IN GAZA: A CASE OF USA IN UN

In the previous chapter, it was established that the UN has only had limited success in the humanitarian assistance provided to the people in Gaza in the reaction phase of R2P. UN has failed in preventing the atrocities even after decades of gross human rights violations and in building credible mechanisms for effective peacebuilding later on. Out of the various challenges encountered by the UN in its failure the most prominent one was the lack of political will by states and the power of the US expressed by veto action in the UNSC. This finding necessitates the analysis of the power of the US in backing up Israel. Hence the purpose of this chapter is to develop an understanding of the role of power in the ongoing conflict in Gaza. The power dynamics expressed by the USA has had a multi-layered impact on the ongoing conflict situation.

For this study, the Multidimensional view of power proposed by Stephen Lukes is being. The multidimensional view of power is a holistic blend of different elements of power from visible power to ideological power and agenda setting. The First Dimension of Power refers to the most overt forms of power where power is measured by the ability to influence outcomes directly. Moving on, the second dimension of power involves the ability to shape the agenda or control what issues are discussed or framed. This dimension emphasizes the control and the ability to prevent certain issues from being raised. Power in this case is often less visible but can be highly influential in shaping outcomes. Unlike the first two dimensions, the third dimension of power highlights the ability to shape beliefs in ways that serve one's interests. This dimension involves controlling the consciousness of individuals and influencing how they think.

The main idea that this section aims to put forward is that the power dynamics of the United States, characterized by visible, hidden, and invisible power as outlined by Luke's framework, profoundly influence the Gaza conflict, creating a complex interplay that challenges the effectiveness of international interventions and exacerbates the humanitarian crisis. Lukes's conception of power is a suitable lens to study the multiple ways in which the USA and Israel

are operationalizing power and its impact on the role of the UN in Gaza. The study of power dynamics in Gaza is crucial to not only understand the broader conflict dynamics but also acknowledge the prevalence of power in conflicts and analyze measures to steer through to materialize the idea of 'Never Again' This chapter will step by step analyze the four factors of power elucidated by Lukes to sketch out how power politics is at play. In the second last section, an analysis from the primary data will be drawn to supplement the results from the secondary data and an analysis will be made in the last section.

Lukes' Power Dynamics in the Gaza Conflict: An Analysis of Primary and Secondary Data

6.1 Visible Actions

Visible power refers to the straightforward, observable use of power in decision-making processes. This involves the ability of one actor to directly influence the actions or decisions of another, often through explicit means. In the current analysis, this includes examining US aid and economic assistance, diplomatic support, veto power in international organizations, and direct interventions. These factors illustrate how the US exerts direct influence over other states and international affairs.

6.1.1 Military Aid

US has been a staunch supporter of the Jewish state since its founding in 1948. While both countries do not have a formal defense setting like US shares with Japan or NATO members yet Israel forms a part of its short list of major non-NATO allies. Being a part of this list, Israel has access to the most sophisticated and advanced US Military technologies. Israel is the recipient of the highest US foreign aid, receiving about \$300 billion, out of which \$ 81 billion was economic aid and \$216billion military aid (Masters and Merrow 2024). Both countries signed a memorandum of understanding in 2018 which aimed to provide a total of \$38 billion for ten years till 2028 to buy military equipment and defense systems (Zengerle 2024). Moreover, Israel is the first operator of the most sophisticated and advanced fighter jet F35 Joint Strike Fighter. It has already taken the delivery of 36 vehicles and is in the process of buying 75 more with US help. The famous Iron Dome- Israel's anti-missile defense system- was also developed and maintained by the US help. US has also assisted Israel develop its "David Sling system" to shoot rockets from a 100- 200 kilometers distance.

Joe Biden has kept on the legacy of his predecessors in supporting Israel despite the humanitarian outcry. He has stated his commitment to Israeli security as ‘ironclad’ (Vernon 2024); (Günerigök 2024). By December 2023, 230 cargo planes and 20 ships had delivered weapons, including over 5,400 MK84 bombs, 5,000 MK82 bombs, and other advanced munitions. A recent arms deal included F-35 and F-15 fighter jets, Apache helicopters, drones, and ammunition. The U.S. also provides assistance in intelligence, planning and consultations as confirmed by the Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin. Additionally, U.S. aircraft and warships have been deployed to the region, with a significant naval presence in the Mediterranean and surrounding seas (Ali 2024). As of recent, there have been calls for a scrutiny of the aid being given to Israel yet Biden has been a stringent supporter of Israel and was able to secure a new \$ 94 billion foreign funding bill for Israel, Ukraine, and Taiwan after an impasse of months. The package will provide Israel with \$ 17 billion despite the killing of 34,000 Palestinians by the Israeli military (Al Jazeera Staff 2024); (Reuters and TOI Staff 2024). On the day the bill was passed, he termed it ‘a good day for world peace’ (Youngs 2024); (White House 2024).

6.1.2 Diplomatic Support

In the diplomatic domain, the US and Israel share a symbiotic relationship where Israel provides various economic benefits as well as the role of a credible ally in the Middle East in return for sophisticated military technology and support at the United Nations. The help extends from bilateral level and the UN to the multilateral forums as well. Trump withdrew from the UN Human Rights Council protesting the critique of Israel’s treatment towards Palestinians. The USA also left the UN body of UNESCO known as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization because of what it terms a ‘bias’ against Israel. During the Trump era, he recognized Jerusalem as the capital. The US has repeatedly leveraged its diplomatic influence to garner support for Israel in international forums by coordinating with Germany, United Kingdom, and Australia, lobbying within organizations, and fostering regional alliances to reinforce Israel's objectives. Additionally, regional allies like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt have increasingly cooperated with the US and Israel on various issues.

The US also has had a significant impact on the peace process such as the 1990s Oslo Accords where the US mediation facilitated historic agreements between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Moreover, the 2003 Roadmap for Peace was a win but faced significant implementation challenges. The 2020 Abraham Accords were a recent effort

towards normalization of ties, reshaping regional alliances and creating new dynamics for peace in the region. In terms of mediation, the US has often success in the beginning, but the processes frequently stalled due to deep-rooted issues.

The consistency of US diplomatic support has fluctuated across different administrations, impacting the dynamics of the conflict. For instance, the Clinton administration's active engagement in the Oslo process contrasts with the Bush administration's focus on the War on Terror, which deprioritized direct intervention in the peace process. The Obama administration's efforts to halt settlement expansion. The United States has long sought a two-state solution, although the Trump policies were controversial and diverged from the originally defined US goal. While the Biden administration has supported U.S. support for a two-state solution, they have not reverted much of the Trump policies. The Middle East has long been of cardinal significance to the US as evidenced by the successive administrations pursuing goals like securing energy resources, deterring Soviet and Iranian influence, countering terrorism, promotion of democracy and human rights, ensuring the security of Israel and Arab allies and reducing refugee flows. US has been steering its way toward these goals by balancing its alliance with Israel and aiming for a broader stability of the region. However, as of recent the US interests in this conflict resolution have faded, especially after the 2011 Arab Spring and the consequent wars in Syria and Yemen along with surging of the terror groups (Robinson 2023).

6.1.3 Veto

The importance of power in Gaza can be elucidated by studying the veto tool being used by USA in various UNSC resolutions calling out for ceasefire. The US has repeatedly used its veto power in the UN Security Council to block any resolutions that were critical of Israel. Even during the recent war, it has vetoed several resolutions blocking ceasefires. Generally, for any resolution to pass in the UNSC, it requires 9 of the Councils' 15 members to vote in favor with no vetoes by the permanent members i.e., United States, UK, France, China, and Russia. Since the start of the assault on 7 October, it has passed three binding resolutions (“Voting System | United Nations Security Council,” n.d.).

Resolution 2712 was passed on 15 November 2023 and called for the immediate release of all hostages and for “urgent and extended humanitarian corridors” in Gaza. The P-5 of UNSC mainly Russia, the UK, and the United States abstained from voting (“Adopting Resolution

2712 (2023); (Security Council Calls for ‘Urgent and Extended’ Humanitarian Pauses in Gaza, Immediate Release of Hostages | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases” 2023). Another resolution passed on 22 December as Resolution 2720 demanded an increase in aid. Russia and the United States abstained, and the UK supported it (“Security Council Adopts Key Resolution on Gaza Crisis; Russia, US Abstain” 2023). And lastly, Resolution 2728 was passed on 25 March and it demanded an “immediate ceasefire” during Ramadan and the release of hostages. All members voted in favor, except the United States, which abstained and said that while the resolution should be implemented, argued it was “non-binding” (“Gaza: Security Council Passes Resolution Demanding ‘An Immediate Ceasefire’ During Ramadan” 2024). Moreover, on April 18th USA vetoed a resolution recommending membership of Palestine into the United Nations (“Security Council Fails to Recommend Full United Nations Membership for the State of Palestine, Owing to Veto Cast by United States | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases” 2024).

This is a significant aspect of power being showcased by the USA, an old-time ally of Israel and member of the P5. The study of power and its impact on the UN is necessitated by the fact that power politics has dominated International Relations for decades. Similar dynamics of power were visible in the case of Syria and Myanmar where Russia in the first case and China in the second expressed their powers and impeded any meaningful action to protect civilians or propel humanitarianism. The idea that there is no ‘state morality’ has been more than visible in the global affairs in twenty first century than ever. From Syria to Myanmar and now Gaza, one can see the role of power dynamics in a stringent contrast with the case of Ukraine, the main idea while power politics will always dominate IR, it is important to steer through and protect the collateral damage which is civilians in most cases.

6.1.4 Public Statements and Policies

The Public statements by US officials have a profound impact on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, shaping both regional perceptions and international reactions. For instance, declarations of unwavering support for Israel by US Presidents or high-ranking officials have encouraged Israeli policies and actions, while statements advocating for Palestinian rights, very rare though, have somewhat pressurized Israel to reconsider certain measures. The recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital by the Trump administration in 2017 significantly altered the diplomatic landscape, demonstrating how rhetoric can shift long-standing policies and influence peace negotiations.

In the domain of media, media outlets echo the narratives which reinforce the U.S. perspectives affecting the immediate parties and the broader international community. Also, through its position as a massive donor in the United Nations and other multilateral forums, the US shapes global responses to the conflict, from sanctioning measures to peacekeeping initiatives. By its policies and statements, the US either paves way for collaborative efforts toward peace or contributes to more polarization.

6.1.5 Primary Data

The visible support of USA in terms of using the veto option was reiterated by many respondents during the interviews. A respondent said: "Power is manifested in the UN Security Council by the veto." Talking about the diplomatic support provided to Israel, a respondent said: "The US wouldn't want language that used R2P language in relation to Israel." The USA has been using the veto option to disregard any resolution condemning Israel but also it has been providing aid and humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian People. The USA has been at the forefront of explicit and visible actions garnering both censure for its help to Israel and some praise for the humanitarian aid being provided. A respondent noted: "One of the intriguing things I think about Gaza is if you just look at the humanitarian response. And you look at the country that's actually donated most money and has actually done the most practically is the US." Talking about the veto power and its extensive use by the USA to support Israel was reiterated by another respondent claimed that "The permanent members of the Security Council, especially the United States and Britain, possibly France, are likely to veto or disregard any kind of ruling that might be made."

There is a clear impact of US support of Israel on its policy measures. Around 23,000 US citizens have joined the Israeli Defense Forces and are complicit in the genocide. However, the Congressmen have put forward a bill that those individuals upon their return should be given favorable treatment just like any US servicemen is give. In the words of a respondent: "So, what I'm saying here is that things are so skewed that these American IDF fighters backing into America, but according to them with honors that, you know, I find that very perplexing."

6.2 Agenda-Setting

Agenda-setting power is the ability to control the context within which decisions are made. This dimension of power involves shaping of the agenda, determining which issues should be discussed, and which are kept off the table. In this research, the US's influence on media, its

impact on international discourse, and its role in shaping peace negotiations and policies are used to demonstrate how the US shapes global priorities and narratives.

6.2.1 Media Influence

American media plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions as major news outlets like The New York Times, CNN, and Fox News frame narratives by emphasizing particular viewpoints. The impact of American media extends to shaping the actions of International Organizations like the UN.

6.2.2 Influence on International Discourse

The US role in Gaza conflict has made it lose its soft power and positive image with big questions on its credibility and neutrality. In a survey carried out in six key Arab publics, one can observe America reaching its lowest score on the topic of trust among the Arabs. Only 7% Arabs believe that America has a positive role in the war while the percentage of those who believe that Russia has a positive influence neared half averaging 47% (Dagher and Kaltenthaler 2021). USA has been a potent ally for Israel in its war and one can observe clear trends of its implications on the humanitarian catastrophes in Gaza.

Media in the twenty-first century serves as a great tool for this agenda setting. The coverage of international events often exhibits systemic biases, including dehumanizing language and passive constructions that downplay the responsibilities of certain parties. For example, a Sky News report on the killing of a Palestinian child by Israeli forces described the incident as a bullet "accidentally straying" and killing a "3-4-year-old young lady," later revised to "young girl" but still portraying the bullet as acting independently (Elliards 2024). These issues are not unique to Gaza but have been observed in other crises, such as the Rwanda genocide (Estes 2010), Hurricane Katrina, and the invasions of Iraq (Fair 2024) and Ukraine (Kimunguyi 2022) by the US and Russia. This pattern highlights a consistent reproduction of limited perspectives in media coverage of global events (Gathara 2024).

Moreover, as per a memo of New York Times for its journalists covering the Israel war on Gaza, the use of the words like "genocide", "ethnic cleansing" and the phrase "occupied territory" should be avoided. Even it has been suggested to not use "Palestine" in "except in very rare cases" (Scahill and Grim 2024). The Centre for Media Monitoring's (CfMM) report, 'Media Bias Gaza 2023-24', reveals significant biases in media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from October 7 to November 7, 2023. The report found that media coverage

disproportionately used emotive language to describe Israelis as victims 11 times more frequently than Palestinians. Additionally, TV channels overwhelmingly promoted Israel's right to defend itself over Palestinian rights by a ratio of 5 to 1, with Israeli perspectives referenced almost three times more on TV and nearly twice as much in online news. The report also highlighted a lack of context in media framing, with 76% of online articles describing the conflict as an "Israel-Hamas war" and only 24% mentioning "Palestine/Palestinian."

Such a skewed framing contributes to a narrative that lacks comprehensive understanding. Pro-Palestinian voices are often misrepresented, and harmful stereotypes are perpetuated, with right-wing media frequently depicting pro-Palestinian protesters as antisemitic or violent. Further insights reveal that unverified claims, such as "beheaded babies," were prevalent in TV news clips, especially on right-wing channels, with few instances of these claims being challenged. The report calls attention to the need for fair, accurate, and inclusive media coverage, ensuring that all perspectives are represented. Lead author Faisal Hanif emphasizes reporting on Palestinians as human beings with full rights, while Director of Centre for Media Monitoring's (CfMM) Rizwana Hamid urged media organizations to uphold principles of fairness and inclusivity. Veteran journalist Peter Osborne notes that some misreporting may stem from ignorance rather than prejudice, highlighting that Israeli journalists have sometimes been more truthful about the conflict than their British counterparts (Centre for Media Monitoring 2024). A review conducted by Adam Johnson and Othman Ali for The Intercept has revealed a significantly biased portrayal of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by major U.S. newspapers. The analysis of The New York Times, The Washington Post, and Los Angeles Times found that "Israeli" or "Israel" received far more mentions than "Palestinian" or related terms, despite the higher number of Palestinian casualties. Johnson and Ali noted that strong, condemnatory language such as "slaughter," "massacre," and "horrific" was predominantly used to describe the deaths of Israeli civilians.

Moreover, headlines about children affected by the conflict seldom mention Palestinian victims. Out of over 1,100 news articles published from October 7 to November 25, only two referenced young Palestinian victims, even though the Israeli military killed 6,000 children in Gaza during this period. This selective reporting effectively obscures the extensive impact of Israel's actions on Palestine's younger generations and the broader humanitarian crisis. Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Mona Chalabi, through a series of numbers-driven infographics, highlighted how major U.S. newspapers devalued Palestinian lives. In her analysis, Chalabi presented a chart showing that The New York Times gave disproportionately more attention to

Israeli deaths compared to Palestinian deaths. On average, every Israeli death received one news article, establishing a one-to-one ratio that starkly contrasted with the minimal coverage given to the significantly higher number of Palestinian casualties. This visual representation underscores the imbalance in reporting and emphasizes the disparity in how these deaths are portrayed in the media.

Cable news networks exhibited similar biases in their coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. An analysis conducted by a Palestinian-American quantitative researcher, specializing in disinformation and censorship in mass media, revealed a significant pro-Israel tilt in the first month of the war. The Israel Defense Forces spokesman, Peter Lerner, made 44 appearances on CNN, MSNBC, and Fox News during this period. These channels mentioned Israelis four times more often than Palestinians, despite the higher number of Palestinian casualties. Emotional terms like "massacre" were almost exclusively used to describe the deaths of Israelis, while the killings of Palestinians, including children, were often reported with passive language such as "left to die." This phrasing conceals the perpetrators' identity and implies parental negligence, thereby softening the culpability of Israel. The study concluded that by early November, even after 11,000 Palestinians had been killed in Gaza, the plight of Israeli hostages held in Gaza continued to receive more attention on American TV.

This imbalance mirrors the pervasive media bias that devalues Palestinian lives. The deeply entrenched biases within Western media's portrayal of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be attributed to the underlying layers of white supremacy, Islamophobia, and colonialism. These lenses strip Palestinians of their humanity thus rendering their lives less worthy of public sympathy. Terms like "terrorism" have been strategically applied for with Palestinian actions while similar acts by Israel have been framed as self-defense. Reputable outlets like BBC's avoidance of the term "terrorist" have been criticized as maintaining neutrality at the expense of truth and honest journalism.

Moreover, the silencing of dissenting voices critical of Israel, often through accusations of antisemitism, further exacerbates the skewed narrative (Youmans 2024); (Johnson and Ali 2024); (Edwards 2023); (Adam 2023); (The New Humanitarian 2023); (Middle East Eye 2023); (Simpson 2023). By consistently framing the conflict in terms of combating terrorism and Israel's right to self-defense, the U.S. shapes international discourse impacting how other nations, international organizations, and the global public perceive the conflict.

6.2.3 US Influence on Peace Negotiations and Policy Measures

The U.S. has historically played a central role in facilitating peace negotiations in the said conflict. Key examples include the Camp David Accords (1978) and the Oslo Accords (1993). In these negotiations, the U.S. acted as a mediator, providing a platform for dialogue. The involvement of the U.S. was crucial in setting the agenda such as border security, and recognition. As of recent, the US played a crucial and often obstructive role. By consistently vetoing Security Council resolutions calling for ceasefires and humanitarian pauses, and insisting on Israel's right to self-defense, the US significantly influenced the conflict dynamics. US stance, while aimed at supporting Israel, frequently stalled broader international efforts to achieve a lasting peace (Sosnowski 2024).

One notable effort was the Camp David Accords in 1978, facilitated by President Jimmy Carter, although this did not directly address the issue, it set a precedent for U.S. involvement in Middle East peace processes (Quandt 2009). The United States benefited from the Camp David Accords by enhancing regional stability, strengthening its alliances with Egypt and Israel, and improving its global reputation. The accords secured the flow of critical resources and aligned with U.S. interests. Furthermore, the peace agreement helped the U.S. counter Soviet influence and bolster its geopolitical strategy ("The Camp David Accords: The Framework for Peace in the Middle East - Israel" 1978). Clinton also hosted the Camp David Summit in 2000 with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat. Although this summit did not result in an agreement, it highlighted the U.S. commitment to seeking a resolution.

President George W. Bush proposed the Roadmap for Peace in 2003, which outlined steps toward a two-state solution but faced significant challenges in implementation (Kader 2009). The Annapolis Conference in 2007, also hosted by Bush, aimed to revive the peace process. While it didn't lead to a final agreement, it reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to facilitating dialogue. The Trump administration proposed the "Deal of the Century" in 2020, a peace plan perceived as heavily favoring Israeli interests, including recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital. The plan was rejected by Palestinian leaders who felt it did not address their aspirations for statehood and sovereignty (Ward 2020).

Critics argue that U.S. policy is overly biased toward Israel, undermining its role as an impartial mediator. This perception is fueled by strong political and cultural ties between the U.S. and Israel, as well as significant lobbying efforts by pro-Israel groups in the U.S. (Mearsheimer and

Walt 2006). U.S. administrations have varied in their response to Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank, considered illegal under international law. Settlements are a major sticking point in negotiations, and the U.S. stance on this issue has significant implications for the peace process (Tilley 2005). The Biden administration has expressed support for a two-state solution and has restored some aid to the Palestinians cut by the previous administration. However, achieving significant progress remains challenging due to ongoing violence, political divisions, and mutual distrust between Israelis and Palestinians.

In summary, the U.S. has been a central figure in mediating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, balancing its strategic alliance with Israel with efforts to facilitate a negotiated settlement that would ensure peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians. The U.S. provides substantial military aid to Israel, which strengthens its security. While some argue this could be a reason for bias in favor of Israel, others view it as a way to maintain stability and ensure that Israel can make concessions from a position of strength (Congressional Research Service 2023). The U.S. has consistently advocated for a two-state solution, envisioning an independent State of Palestine alongside the State of Israel. This has been a cornerstone of American policy, although the specifics of achieving this have varied with different administrations.

The U.S. often uses its influence in UN to support Israel by vetoing resolutions. While Israel views this as an act of preventing it from unfair targeting in UN, it is also seen as an obstacle to addressing the grievances of the Palestinian people. The U.S. leverages its substantial economic and political influence to shape the priorities of the peace process. By providing financial aid, military support, and diplomatic backing, the U.S. can steer the focus of negotiations towards issues that align with its interests and those of its allies, particularly Israel. This often means prioritizing Israel's security concerns and ensuring that any agreements address threats posed to Israel, sometimes at the expense of other issues that may be important to the Palestinian side or other regional actors.

6.2.4 Primary Data

Agenda setting and discourse promotion is a widely used strategy in the twenty-first century. Commenting on the different statements by government officials of USA, a respondent said: "The officials have to be careful what they say to public media. Sometimes speech of officials can make some other people commit atrocities" (IP-3 2024). In addition, commenting on the discourse and framing of the conflict as being one between a sovereign state and terrorist organization by the USA, an interview said:

And this is because there is an acceptance, after 70 years or so, of Israel's position as, undeniably, a sovereign state that can exercise its rights of sovereignty, including self-defense. But if we go back, if we wind the narrative back, and if we point out that Israel, in fact, is an occupying settler state, then the legal position does shift. And we can certainly say that it is the people whose land is being occupied that they have, under international law, the right to resist.

(IP-1 2024)

While the respondents agreed to the widespread use of media for such a discourse setting many claimed against this setting of sovereign state vs terrorist organization. One respondent said:

There's been an almost uncritical acceptance of the view that Israel has a right to defend itself. Now, that is debatable. On one hand, we might be able to put that argument forward, particularly if we were to see that atrocities have been committed against Israelis. But, as you will know, I'm sure, the other view is that because Israel is an occupying state, then the people who are being occupied and the land that is being occupied do have the right to resist. And then Israel, under those circumstances, does not have a right to what it calls self-defense.

(IP-3 2024)

Another said: There are complex views on this. There is no one view that prevails. My own personal view is that Israel, it's a stretch to think that Israel has the right to self-defense precisely because of the fact of its position as a settler occupying state. And certainly, as a state whose history has been one of unending violation of international law, international human rights law.

(IP-6 2024)

The agenda setting seems to be a characteristic feature of propaganda and conflicts in twenty first century and is highly evident in the conflict zone of Gaza. However, one can clearly observe that the discourse setting is failing incredibly as presented by the findings of interviews. Moreover, the general public reaction and critique over governments also reveals a lack of success of media discourse setting in case of Gaza.

6.3 *Ideological Influences*

Ideological power, or the third dimension of power, pertains to the ability to shape, influence, or manipulate ideas, and preferences. It involves the control of ideologies, norms, and values, often subtly influencing what people consider to be acceptable. In this analysis, ideological

influences include US promotion of democracy and human rights, its rhetoric on counter-terrorism, and the influence of religious factors.

6.3.1 Promotion of Democracy and Human Rights

The United States' stance on the Gaza conflict is significantly influenced by its ideological commitment to human rights and democratic values. This emphasis shapes its policy measures by aligning ideologically with Israel, the only democratic state in the Middle East as per US. In contrast, other Palestinian groups like Hamas are often portrayed as undemocratic. This ideological dichotomy reinforces U.S. support for Israel and skepticism towards Palestinian groups that it sees as undermining democratic values and human rights.

The influence of pro-Israel lobbying groups, particularly the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), plays a significant role in shaping U.S. policy and public opinion regarding the Gaza conflict. AIPAC and similar organizations work to ensure that U.S. policies favor Israel, leveraging significant political influence and resources to advocate for continued U.S. support. These groups also influence public discourse, promoting narratives that emphasize Israel's security needs and democratic values (Mearsheimer and Walt 2006). Stephen Walt, a professor of international affairs at Harvard University has called US-Israel relations stronger than US and Great Britain. He underlined two significant factors of their bilateral relations, firstly Israel being an asset in the volatile and conflict-ridden Middle East and secondly Israel representing a democracy or the only democracy in the region. However, many argue against the idea that Israel is a democracy citing that there are more than 65 laws in Israel that discriminate against the Palestinian people, something no democracy would allow. (Jazeera 2018)

6.3.2 Terrorism and Security Discourses

Media portrayals of the conflict contribute heavily towards shaping the public perception. U.S. media has leveraged this power often by highlighting Israel's security concerns and depicting Israeli military actions as defensive measures against terrorism. Conversely, Palestinian actions are frequently framed in terms of terrorism and aggression. This media framing aligns with the broader U.S. narrative that prioritizes Israel's right to defend itself while often marginalizing the context of Palestinian grievances and the humanitarian impact of the conflict on the Palestinian population (Herman and Chomsky 2008). In summary, the U.S. approach to the Gaza conflict is deeply rooted in its ideological commitment to democratic values and human rights, its political alignment with Israel as a fellow democracy, and the influential role of pro-

Israel lobbying groups and media narratives that shape public opinion and policy (Mearsheimer and Walt 2006; Herman and Chomsky 2008)

6.3.2 *Religious and Cultural Factors*

Many scholars cite that while the US-Israel partnership is beneficial for USA, the cost is outweighing the benefits as noted in a March 2023 Gallup survey. Even the public opinion that had favored Israel has waned over the years (Narea 2023b). The survey noted that Democrats are now siding more with the Palestinians than Israelis with percentages of 49% versus 38% (Saad 2024). The Independents too are siding with Palestinians while the Republicans remain a staunch pro-Israel group. The change in Democrats' preferences while is a positive sign yet it can be attributed to their 'waning religiosity' (Saad 2024). Various studies show that the percentage of Americans who do not identify with any religion has grown from 8% (1998-2000) to 13% (2008-2010) and 21% over the past three years (Jones 2024).

As most of the people supporting Israel are found to be more religious than other people as per a report using church membership as a criterion to calculate religiosity. Over the period of the last 14 years, an average of 66% of Americans who attended church weekly or almost every week were found to be sympathetic to the Israelis, compared to 13% who were sympathetic to the Palestinians. (Newport 2021).

6.3.4 *Primary Data*

The ideological factors based primarily on human rights and democracy as well as the discourse surrounding terrorism have played a crucial role in the Gaza conflict. Talking about the terrorism discourse being propagated by Israel and its powerful allies is a significant manifestation of power and needs to be understood. Talking about this a respondent said:

It's made it quite easy to hide behind the terrorism label. When Israel is constantly using, oh, but these are terrorists, we have—you know, when they're constantly using that as a shield to really smoke and mirrors everybody into believing that this is really a counterterrorism operation, it's really easy to sweep atrocity crimes under the rug because you have this overarching sort of fear of terrorist organizations that are—that looms large, much larger than the protection of people in real-time.

(IP-7 2024)

It is important to understand that the terrorism discourse not only helps Israel put forward its claims of self-defense but also the fact that such a discourse has been widely used for a long to gain legitimacy and credibility of the masses. Commenting on this a respondent said:

I think we've also seen, if history serves anything, we've seen how counterterrorism operations in countries across the region and also across the world can really act as a guise for widespread atrocities. We saw it in Iraq. We saw it in Afghanistan.

(IP-7 2024)

Another respondent said:

Then the framing of this conflict as being, you know, Israel, a democracy, versus an Islamic extremist terrorist organization, Hamas, that framing has been very effective, and a lot of people do believe that that's what's happening here, which clearly isn't the case. So yeah, it does have an influence politically, but legally I don't think it should have any bearing on how or why or how and when R2P is invoked.

(IP-1 2024)

The recurrence of the theme of counter-terrorism in primary data reveals how there has been widespread use of such a discourse by major powers to advance their interests.

6.4 Implicit Factors

The fourth dimension of Implicit power refers to the subtle and unspoken, ways in which power operates. It includes the underlying structures, systemic advantages, and covert interests that influence outcomes without any overt action. This dimension encompasses indirect influences and the latent power embedded in social, economic, and political systems. To analyze the implicit factors a mix of the conditionality of US aid and economic assistance, geopolitical strategies, and the influence of domestic electoral politics is used. These factors highlight the underlying mechanisms through which the US exerts its influence globally.

6.4.1 Foreign Aid and Economic Assistance

Both Israel and the USA have had a decades-old history with the latter sending Israel around \$3.8bn in military aid annually. And no matter how hard the USA has been trying to support Israel and be a credible supporter, the questions and anger over its foreign policy goals have reached a peak since Israel's onslaught of thousands of Palestinians. Talking about US-Israel relations, Raed Jarrar, the advocacy director at a thinktank called Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN), said that both states share ties that are 'deeply entrenched' (Stepansky and Kestler-D'Amours 2024). While Israel is already the number one recipient of US weapons, Biden has been trying to increase its access to more technologically advanced weapons at a lower cost and with less congressional oversight. Biden has been advocating for a change in policies in the War Reserve Stockpile Allies-Israel (WRS-A-I), an Israel-based US weapons stockpile which has been used by Israel to gain access to some weapons recently (Al Jazeera 2023).

6.4.2 Reward and Punishment

The economic relationship between the USA and Israel, including trade and technological partnerships, indirectly influence the USA's stance on the Gaza conflict. In return for aid, the USA gets an ally to tone down its Arab counterparts such as Iran, Iraq, and Syria as well as counter any Chinese or Russian influence. Israel has the most sophisticated military in the Middle East (Axios 2023) as more than 80% of Israel's weapons imports come from the U.S (Knutson 2023). Both countries have conducted military drills together and have stringent communication-sharing channels. Apart from the military and weapon grants, the USA is home to the largest Jewish population. The annual trade of both states amounts to nearly \$50 billion annually. The relationship seems asymmetrical to many but like any other alliance is based on conditionality leading to dependency and control by either sanctions or incentives.

6.4.3 Geopolitical Strategies

The broader US geopolitical strategies in the Middle East include countering the influence of Iran in the region as well as keeping Russia and China as far away as possible. Moreover, the chessboard of geopolitics is further intermingled with the role of energy and sustainable development. Their relationship is based on burgeoning security and economic interests, and not just shared values of democracy. For USA, Israel is a reliable counterbalance against forces of violent extremism. Israel was a potent force in thwarting the proliferation of Iraqi and Syrian

weapons of mass destruction. Both countries share intel on nuclear proliferation and terrorism. Israel's military research and development is at peak globally and has pioneered many cutting-edge technologies that are transforming the face of modern warfare, from cyberweapons, sensors and electronic warfare systems, unmanned vehicles for instance land robots and aerial drones, advanced defenses and the notorious David's Sling counter-rocket. This way the US has been able to maintain its economic competitiveness and promote sustainable development, while addressing a range of military and non-military challenges.

In the non-traditional domain, Israeli innovators have also come up with novel solutions to water and food insecurity, population growth, climate change, and development. Israel has initiated development of renewable energy sources. These innovations have been bolstered by American investment, and have effectively contributed to long-term U.S. domestic and foreign policy objectives (Eisenstadt and Pollock 2022). US officials have time and again reiterated their unwavering support for Israel. Biden, was unequivocal in an address at the White House where he explicitly stated that US will make sure Israel has what it needs to take care of its citizens and defend itself. Similarly, the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken appeared alongside Netanyahu, and said that as long as America exists, they will always be on the same side.

6.4.4 Internal Political Pressures and Electoral Politics

Domestic political considerations significantly impact U.S. policies towards the Gaza, influenced heavily by the Jewish-American community and Christian groups. The Jewish-American community, through influential organizations like AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee), actively lobby in support of Israel. Additionally, the Christian groups, who view the state of Israel through a religious lens, also exert substantial influence in the Republican Party, advocating for strong U.S. support for Israel due to religious convictions. The advocacy of these groups' have shaped foreign policy decisions.

“Its personal for me” said Biden in one of his speeches in 2015 remembering how his father his family about the holocaust at the dinner table. It was the at the age of 29 as a senator that he started developing cordial relationships with Jewish leaders including Netanyahu. He has often been found to quote Golda Meir, the first female prime minister of Israel words in his speeches whom he met in his inaugural year as a senator. More inclinations developed when Biden was a vice president to Obama, often serving as a good cop and trying to warm the frosty

relations between Obama and Netanyahu. “I am a Zionist at heart”, said Biden (“Foreign Relations United States Senate” 1999) in another speech he openly said “I love Israel” (“Remarks by Vice President Joe Biden the 67th Annual Israeli” 2015). Biden's current approach has been called a bear hug diplomacy due to his hug to Netanyahu after the violence broke in Gaza signaling his support (Kestler-D'Amours and Stepansky 2024).

In addition, Electoral politics play a crucial role in how presidential administrations respond to constituency pressures regarding the Gaza conflict. During election cycles, candidates often emphasize their support for Israel to secure votes and campaign contributions from pro-Israel constituents. This support manifests in policy promises, such as pledges to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital or to increase military aid. Once in office, administrations must balance these campaign commitments with broader foreign policy goals. The need to maintain electoral support can lead to policies that favor one side in the conflict, affecting peace process dynamics and the overall approach to the Gaza situation.

6.4.5 Primary Data

Implicit factors derive action at the forefront but happen so subtly and deep within the system like a routine that they are hardly noticed. Some of the implicit factors in Gaza war are geopolitics, electoral politics, and identity-based conflicts, etc. A respondent noted: “It tries and it shall understand underlying dynamics that you don't always see or notice when problems are happening” (IP-7 2024). Geopolitics and national interests are the core of any decision making at national level. A respondent said: “Countries look at these situations from a geopolitical point of view, not from a humanitarian point of view. They prefer this over everything” (IP-3 2024). The importance of implicit factors is evident by the US lack of interests in Burma, a respondent said:

It limits the number of options available because you know, so if we have a huge trade partner, well, then that's a lever, right? We don't have a lot of trade with Burma. So, there's not a lot there. We don't have a historical connection. There's not a Cultural connection and so just the sheer number of options in that context are pretty limited. And so, we're doing it externally we're doing it like in pieces Parts. There are Geographic challenges associated with and so there's a whole bunch of reasons on why it's really hard to have a big impact in a way that's helpful.

(IP-4 2024)

Another respondent said:

However, the ongoing support for Israel had been due to a number of other factors as well. It's an important region for the U.S. to feel that it has a foothold, that it has a platform, it has a position in a volatile part of the world. Economically, it's also likely that the United States will benefit from mining and gas drilling opportunities in that part of the world, offshore from Gaza, for example.

(IP-2 2024)

One of the prominent underlying factors in US support for Israel is identity. A respondent noted:

And one specific trend to these underlying factors might be the exacerbation of identity-based threats or attacks or hate speech or discrimination that are focusing on a specific group. And these groups are not, per se, only based on a shared identity, cultural, religious, ethnic, or gender. They might also be because of political opinions of all kinds of reasons.

(IP-1 2024)

This idea of identity is significant in this case because of the deep-rooted idea of “us” versus “them” or Orientalism which makes America consider Israel its own but Muslim/Arab states as the others or aliens. The passage discusses how identity plays a crucial role in shaping US support for Israel, often leading to a dichotomy between "us" (Israel) and "them" (Muslim/Arab states). This perspective is influenced by Orientalist ideas propagating the identity-based dynamics leading to tensions and crimes against humanity.

6.5 Analysis and Discussion

6.5.1 from Secondary Data

Visible power is the observable dimension of US influence in Gaza manifested through its humanitarian aid and veto power. With regards to agenda-setting power, the US's influence on global media helps shape public opinion and political discourse on counter-terrorism. Thirdly, in the Ideological power, the US promotes democracy and human rights as well as counter-terrorism efforts to justify its policies. Lastly, Implicit power refers to the subtle, often

unspoken ways in which the US exerts influence in Gaza. This includes the geopolitical strategies which play a crucial role in shaping international priorities.

From the secondary data, the Visible Power has emerged as the most critical in the context of Gaza. The direct influence of US aid, diplomatic support for Israel, and veto power significantly shape the reality on the ground. The ability to deliver or refuse aid and support international resolutions, gives the US a tangible impact. This dynamic is crucial as it will set the stage for long-term geopolitical and humanitarian outcomes in the Middle East. While media has been playing a role in framing the conflict in a particular way, using the ideological discourse of democracy and human rights and the implicit factors of geopolitics yet the major influence that USA has been able to make has been through its visible actions of diplomatic support and veto actions.

6.5.2 From Primary Data

The close partnership between the US and Israel is dependent on a number of factors as identified by a respondent who is an expert in US policies, they:

We have a security relationship with Israel. We have a trade relationship with Israel. We have a long-standing treaty relationship. All of these things are real and need to be factored in and included. Everyone understands just as well as I do that there are multiple factors being considered so when watching this situation understanding all of the competing factors is really important and that's the nature of it. It's not a problem so much as it's not like Russia or China aren't making decisions based on a host of actions.

(IP-2 2024)

The most prominent form of power evident in the Gaza conflict is visible power, as reflected in the explicit actions and decisions of the United States. Multiple respondents highlighted the US's use of its veto power in the UN Security Council to block resolutions condemning Israel. This direct exercise of power has prevented international action, allowing Israel to continue its massacre without any significant external interference. The US also provides substantial humanitarian aid to Palestinians, which, while commendable, does not offset its strong diplomatic and military support for Israel. This dual approach showcases the visible manifestation of power in international arena.

Secondly, the Agenda setting plays a critical role in shaping the narrative around the Gaza conflict. The media and public statements by US officials significantly influence how the conflict is perceived globally. Respondents pointed out that the conflict is often framed as one between a sovereign state (Israel) and a terrorist organization (Hamas), which reinforces Israel's legitimacy and right to self-defense. This framing obscures the overall issue of occupation and the right of self determination of the Palestinians. Despite attempts to control and propagate the narrative which serves US foreign Policy goals, there is a growing recognition of the complexities and criticisms indicating a partial failure of the agenda-setting.

Ideological factors are deeply entrenched with the visible power and agenda-setting dynamics. The discourse surrounding terrorism and democracy is used to justify actions in Gaza. Respondents noted that labeling Hamas as a terrorist organization has enabled Israel and its allies to legitimize their actions under the guise of counterterrorism. This ideological framing allows atrocities to be overlooked and portraying an overly simplified view of the conflict. Many respondents pointed out the use of human rights and democracy as complicating factors being selectively applied to support geopolitical interests. Lastly, the Implicit factors shape policies without being overtly acknowledged. It has been found that Geopolitical interests and national agendas drive decisions more than humanitarian concerns. Respondents highlighted the US's preferential treatment of Israel due to its deep-rooted identity-based ties with US and shared Orientalist perspectives.

A thorough exploration of the power factors from primary data in the form of expert interviews reveals that there is a pronounced presence of visible power. It is the most prominent factor in the Gaza conflict, as the explicit actions of powerful states like the US significantly shape the situation. However, agenda setting, ideological factors, and implicit dynamics also play crucial roles, contributing to a multifaceted power structure in IR. An understanding of these dimensions is essential for promoting a sustainable resolution.

An analysis of the Israel Hamas war and US role through the lens of Luke's Multidimensional view of power reveals the following themes in Table 6.1:

Table 6.3: *Israel Hamas war and US role through the lens of Luke's Multidimensional view of power*

Power Dynamics	Primary data	Secondary data
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Agenda-Setting Power	Self-Defense framing	
Visible Power	Veto action	Aid
Ideological Power	Counterterrorism	Human Rights and Democracy
Implicit Power	Geopolitics	

As per the findings, there is an agenda-setting regarding Israel’s right to defend itself from a terrorist organization i.e., Hamas which is resulting in two streams of visible actions by the US which are veto actions and aid delivery. The primary data emphasized veto action while there was more focus on humanitarian aid in the secondary data. Moreover, the interviewee participants highlighted the narrative of counter-terrorism while the secondary data noted the recurrence of the themes of US rhetoric of Democracy promotion and human rights. Lastly, the geopolitical aims of major powers lie beneath the ongoing power games.



Figure 6.1: Agenda Setting

This diagram effectively shows how different dimensions of power interact and culminate in visible actions in Gaza. Agenda-setting power sets the stage by influencing global perceptions, visible power executes direct actions, ideological power provides justifications, and implicit power operates subtly to shape policies. The combined effect of these dimensions results in significant and observable actions in Gaza, demonstrating the multifaceted nature of power dynamics in the conflict.

Both the primary and secondary data reveal that veto and aid are the most common manifestations of US power show in Gaza. In the domain of Agenda Setting, one can observe

that there is a lot of focus and study on the media framing yet this was only discussed in primary data when the interviewer questioned. The primary data revealed that the agenda setting has failed remarkably and for the first time there is a massive disconnect between the public and the governments. Moreover, regarding the ideological power too there was little discussed until asked. An important observation was that counter-terrorism discourse has been recklessly used to provoke atrocity crimes and humanitarian catastrophes. The significance of cultural factors stems from an interview with the US policies expert who drew parallels between Gaza and Burma and revealed that the lack of any cultural familiarity between US and Burma was one of the reasons of its lack of interest and actions in Burma. The respondent thereby conveyed that the cultural familiarity between US and Israel derives the US interests and actions in its support for the latter. This factor reveals the highly significant idea of culture in twenty first century along with the role of strong lobbying such as the AIPAC which makes sure to put pressures where required. And lastly the geopolitics is a crucial element of national security and foreign policy decision making. The geopolitics of the middle east, oil and other reserves, are the most important factors deriving the US policies.

Chapter 7

BRIDGING POWER AND PROTECTION THROUGH CIVIL SOCIETY

In the preceding chapters, I have established that the UN's ability to act effectively is often paralyzed by the power dynamics within the Security Council, particularly due to the interests of the permanent members, notably the United States. This chapter moves forward by exploring the vital role of civil society organizations (CSOs) and the need for strong formal and informal connections to enhance protection in conflict zones like Gaza. A meaningful approach for civilian protection can be utilized by a more holistic approach encompassing the civil society to effectively undermine the UN paralysis and self-interests of powerful states.

The main argument of this chapter is that power imbalances within the UN structure, influenced significantly by the interests of powerful member states such as the USA and Israel, undermine its ability to provide adequate protection in conflict zones. However, strengthening connections among various actors, including CSOs, can enhance the UN's protective role. To establish this argument, the current chapter will reiterate the structural challenges and power imbalance challenges facing the UN, then move on to exploring the role of civil society in the twenty-first century and finally a findings and discussion section.

The United Nations (UN) faces significant structural challenges that halt its success in addressing conflicts like the one in Gaza. The cardinal reason for such impediments lies in the outdated post-World War II design of the UN. The design of the UN is such that it grants disproportionate power to the Permanent Five (P5) members of the Security Council. As noted by a respondent: "And it was a system created by Stalin and Churchill and Roosevelt, you know, this kind of dinosaurs from a different era." This design is inherently flawed as it hampers the UN's ability to hold powerful states accountable. There is a whole new debate about how the non-democratic nature of UNSC is it necessary to have some sort of control, yet is important to consider that more power and resources means being better equipped to deal with issues such as the one in Gaza. Hence the great powers in UNSC should not be viewed as something that halts humanitarianism but, on the contrary, should be seen as having more responsibility. As noted by a respondent: "It is true, that five permanent states have special

responsibility in the international arena. These are in many aspects' powerful states and states with nuclear weapons.”

However, the problem boils down to the question of how to make the states more responsible as reiterated by a respondent: “If it is acceptable that these states have more political power when compared to other states, they should also have more responsibility. But, how to make UN SC more responsible? So, this is the first problem.” As noted by many academics and analysts, all the efforts to reform the Security Council to enhance its accountability and responsiveness have been in vain due to the entrenched interests among its most influential members, perpetuating a system that prioritizes state sovereignty over collective humanitarian obligations.

This structural imbalance not only limits the UN's capacity to intervene effectively in conflicts but also undermines its legitimacy in the eyes of many member states and civil society actors. As such, addressing these structural challenges is crucial for enhancing the UN's role in protecting vulnerable populations in conflict zones and promoting international peace and stability. However, the challenges remain: “The current structure of the UN system designed after World War II grants special privileges to the P5. This design flaw makes it difficult to hold these powerful states accountable or to change the system.” In reality, conflicts are and will be marred by power imbalance and geopolitics. That is how the international system is, due to this fact it is important to push forward a system that is more inclusive and equipped to deal with the contemporary features of armed conflicts. Hence, while there should be efforts to make the UN a better system yet civil society needs to be used in a much responsible way until a UN 2.0 is created.

Civil society is important though it also very much like the UN does not have an agency or teeth of its own yet it is quite free from the shackles of power and borders. It can do advocacy and awareness which is quite needed as one respondent noted:

There is a concern that state officials, especially those in foreign affairs, may not be familiar with the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principles. Moreover, "There is uncertainty about whether state officials are committed to the principles of R2P... the pursuit of national interests with the moral and legal obligations to improve the global situation.

(IP-1 2024)

Additionally, the major force behind the US support for Israel is the former's strong lobbying. The pro-Zionist elements are deeply entrenched in the state and society of the US thereby gaining widespread support in return for votes. An interviewee noted:

The pro-Zionist element of the Jewish diaspora is very, very influential in the governments of various states, of many, many Western states." Another respondent noted the success of Israel lobbying and said: "Israel's most important ally is the United States... nothing has been invoked militarily is easy to understand.

(IP-2 2024)

It is important to analyze the landscape of armed conflicts in the current century, it is all about public opinion and 'winning the hearts and minds of people', and while this may not be working to its full capacity due to the massive human rights violations by Israel which is ultimately putting even the US at a difficult position to condone their actions yet the significant realization is the role of lobbying. Hence the civil society and other informal channels need to be powered enough to counter the Israeli narratives.

7.1 Role of Civil Society

Civil society has played a significant role in different streams of life due to its advocacy roles, some of the functions that it is performing and can perform better as per the findings are:

7.1.1 Broadened Awareness

Civil society organizations (CSOs) can play a critical role in raising awareness about humanitarian crises that may otherwise remain underrepresented. CSOs can heighten awareness through a plethora of channels, such as legal institutions, academia, and grassroots social movements. For instance, as noted by one interviewee, "So what the International Criminal Court, the International Court of Justice, the university encampments, the marching in the street, what they have all done is to broaden the awareness at a level that has never been present before" (IP-3 2024).

Legal institutions like the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) provide formal mechanisms to highlight violations of international law. These bodies not only work for justice but also as platforms to educate the global community as their

decisions attract media coverage and public attention. Additionally, the academic institutions have also contributed to these efforts by fostering rational discussions and research.

The grassroots movements and street marches are another crucial element of this awareness-raising strategy as these actions mobilize communities. By physically occupying public spaces, protestors can draw the attention of policymakers, making the plight of affected populations more visible and pressing. This is a unique case in Gaza unlike Burma where even discussing the crises was difficult as discussed by one of the respondents who belongs to an advocacy group.

7.1.2 Pressure and Influence

CSOs can exert significant pressure on governments and international bodies to protect vulnerable populations. The influence of civil society is evident in its ability to coordinate and persuade through various means as highlighted by one who emphasized the potential of civil society in creating change via ‘persuasion and coordination.’ CSOs work beyond the traditional entities by leveraging diverse platforms, amplifying advocacy efforts and pushing for concrete actions. For instance, they might engage with the UN General Assembly or Human Rights Council to address issues that the Security Council is unable or unwilling to tackle.

CSOs can also mobilize regional organizations and offer alternative forums for advocacy which can act more decisively than formal channels. Informal networks also play a critical role in civil society's efforts to influence policy. A multifaceted approach ensures that issues like the conflict in Gaza remain on the international agenda, thereby fostering a more informed global community. Commenting on this, a respondent rightfully said:

So, the way that we try to mobilize support is we do it in two ways, sort of navigating that inside-outside role. The first way that we do it is we do obviously a lot of advocacies with other human rights organizations. So, and that's a lot of public facing, a lot of pressure building campaigns, whether that's through briefings or letters or other advocacy tools. That's one way that human rights organizations usually do that kind of work and that we usually do that kind of work. The other way is sort of more backdoor diplomacy kind of advocacy with member states directly, working with them as partners. And that has often been extremely effective when paired with strong public facing advocacy as well. Because the way that we often do our advocacy is we try our best to reach out to member states as, look at us as a resource. Please come to us. We're happy to have a conversation.

7.1.3 Counteracting Pro-Zionist Lobby Influence

One of the significant challenges faced by CSOs advocating for Palestinian rights is the substantial influence exerted by pro-Zionist lobbies in Western countries, particularly in the United States. Organizations like AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) wield considerable power in shaping political discourse and policy decisions regarding Israel and Palestine. As one interviewee noted

The pro-Zionist element of the Jewish diaspora is very, very influential in the governments of various states, of many, many Western states... AIPAC in the United States has tremendous influence on individual politicians, on congressmen, on senators, on business, on universities, on companies.

(IP-1 2024)

This influence often manifests in significant political and financial support for pro-Israel policies, creating a challenging environment for CSOs advocating for Palestinian rights. The lobbying efforts of AIPAC results in policies that favor Israel, sometimes at the expense of addressing humanitarian concerns in Gaza and the broader Palestinian territories. It is essential to counter the pro-Zionist discourse by lobbying and CSOs since it is one of the means which is translated to visible action.

Despite the power of pro-Zionist lobbies, CSOs have employed various strategies to counteract this influence. One effective approach is persistent advocacy and raising awareness to challenge the dominant narratives propagated by influential lobbies. In addition, their efforts include building coalitions with other human rights organizations, engaging with policymakers, and utilizing media platforms to disseminate information. Furthermore, CSOs can push for resolutions and statements that reflect a humanitarian-focused approach. By employing these diverse tactics, CSOs can challenge entrenched power structures and advocate for a more equitable conflict resolution.

7.1.4 Understanding State Priorities and Competing Interests

One of the significant challenges faced by civil society organizations (CSOs) is the intricate web of state priorities and competing interests. As one interviewee aptly put it, "Every state makes the decisions on how they're going to operate based on their priorities and no state makes decisions on one source" (IP-3 2024). This highlights the multifaceted considerations of governments which need to prioritize security and diplomatic interests which can contradict with humanitarian concerns. In the case of Israel, many countries have military cooperation, trade agreements, and political alliances which create significant obstacles for CSOs in Gaza.

A way out for CSO is to balance their advocacy efforts with a pragmatic understanding of the political realities. While it is essential to remain steadfast in highlighting human rights abuses and advocating for change, these organizations need to recognize the limitations imposed by state interests and to finding common ground and solutions aligning with broader policy goals.

By adopting a pragmatic approach, CSOs can negotiate with state actors, propose realistic policy alternatives, and focus on achievable goals that can pave the way for more significant reforms in the future.

7.1.5 Building Community Resilience

Empowering informal channels and engaging grassroots communities contribute to building community resilience. Resilient communities are better equipped to withstand challenges, recover from the impacts of conflict, mobilize in response to crises, provide mutual support, and advocate for their rights. By strengthening social networks and local capacities, informal channels can help communities to become more self-reliant and less dependent on external assistance.

7.1.6 Amplifying Voices

One of the key advantages of informal channels is their ability to amplify the voices of marginalized and vulnerable populations. By providing platforms for these voices to be heard, informal channels can challenge dominant narratives, highlight injustices, and advocate for change. This is particularly important in conflict zones like Gaza, where the voices of those most affected by violence and human rights abuses are often silenced or ignored. The media's role in supporting CSO efforts cannot be overstated. "Media are important, not only for national states to have free society with free media, but also, obviously, for preventing the crimes." The

media helps to raise awareness about humanitarian crises and human rights abuses, mobilizing public opinion and support for CSO efforts. Free and independent media are crucial for ensuring transparency and accountability. "The situation in the region of Southeastern Europe changed when important media in some countries have broadcasted killings and dramatic situation in this region."

7.2 Analysis

The findings of this section indicate that the UN's ability to act is heavily influenced by the political will and interests of powerful member states, particularly the USA, which often prioritizes national interests over humanitarian responsibilities. This power imbalance leads to a failure in adequately protecting vulnerable populations in conflict zones. Hence, the discussion highlights the need for a reformed approach where civil society organizations and other non-state actors/informal channels play a more prominent role in advocating and implementing protection measures. Strengthening formal and informal connections among these actors can mitigate the paralysis caused by power imbalances within the UN. A respondent commented on this: "The UN matters and yes regional organizations matter and yes governments matter, but actually our ability to support Civil Society on the ground is ultimately what's going to really fix things. And so that's the complete approach that my organization takes."

CSOs can play a huge role in providing awareness and mobilizing public opinion to pressurize the governments to act. An interviewee said: So, what can be done is the continuation of mediation efforts, a much more decisive pressure on the states that are supporting and sending weapons, not only to Israel but in other contexts to the ones who are using them against civilian populations, right? Moreover, CSOs can help governments keep the humanitarian agenda on the front and move from a rulebook approach to a principles-based approach in international relations, where decisions are made based on universal principles rather than selfish interests.

A respondent commented: "The international community largely operates within the rulebook model prioritizing selfish national interests over principles like equality and prevention of atrocities." In simple words, CSOs can balance national interests with global responsibilities, recognizing their moral and legal obligations to protect. In case of non-compliance, CSOs can also call out for actions considering that Protecting the global community is not only a moral obligation but also a legal one in many aspects."

CSOs have a huge role in mobilizing people as well as raising awareness. A respondent rightly noticed the role of CSOs and said:

So CSOs say let's, you know, map out some policy steps together. These are the risks that populations are facing. This is the language you should be using. These are the steps you can be taking. This is how you can vote. So really making it extremely concrete for decision makers and policymakers to exercise their responsibility to protect in relation to a certain mounting atrocity situation.

This idea is essential for balancing humanitarianism and national interests.

While the power and agency still rest with states and will continue to do so, such informal mechanisms are important since these CSOs are more local, grassroots, and culturally aware entities, a respondent noted "I don't think anyone's gonna say that we shouldn't dissolve more power away from states. But at the same time, we have to not overlook the protection that's going on at the local level already" (IP-1 2024).

There is a general surprise among most scholars and practitioners about the scope of the role of CSOs in conflict zones. The massive mobilization of people from Gaza is a first of its kind and points out the success of CSO initiatives. A respondent said: "Civil society and non-governmental organizations around this situation in Gaza have really unified, mobilized, and the movement is so large and so powerful."

Many scholars and academics interviewed for this study highlighted the primitiveness of the UN in dealing with the new armed conflicts and highlighted the role of CSOs, one of the respondents noted: "Thinking beyond the Security Council and exploring other avenues within the UN, regional organizations, and informal networks is important...the potential of civil society in bringing pressure and creating change through persuasion and coordination" (IP-7 2024).

While there is a general understanding that the problems in Gaza are much bigger and need immediate action and it requires time to change behaviors and impressions when dealing with conflicts having decades of resentment yet a respondent noted

And so, this pressure has to continue. And all this work which is happening behind the curtains shall also continue. And more directly, the protection of population has to be done as much as possible and the best that can be done, given, for example, the circumstances where

no one can enter now in Gaza. So, there is a general understanding, and it is flawed, of course, that R2P, that military force, it comes as a given with R2P.

(IP-9 2024)

The awareness building and small brave choices taken by the CSOs can bring results as explained by another respondent:

I think that what we've seen is a huge mobilization of people power. We've seen a mobilization of international law, and while these things don't bring about immediate results, they don't bring about a ceasefire, unfortunately, they don't bring about an end to the slaughter, unfortunately, but I think they still have consequence. To my mind, the case that was brought by South Africa, which is now supported by a number of other states, in the International Court of Justice was a landmark case. It was possibly the most historically important case that has been brought to the International Court of Justice in its history, since 1945.

(IP-5 2024)

7.3 Chapter Summary

In conclusion, the chapter argues for a paradigm shift in how protection is approached in conflict zones like Gaza. By acknowledging the limitations imposed by power imbalances and leveraging the strengths of civil society and other informal channels, the UN and the global community can better fulfill their responsibility to protect vulnerable populations.

Chapter 8

CONCLUSION

This chapter synthesizes the key findings of the research and provides a comprehensive overview of how the United Nations' role in Gaza has been influenced by power dynamics and strong formal connections between the US and Israel. The findings are contextualized within the conceptual frameworks of Stephen Lukes' three-dimensional view of power, Responsibility to Protect (R2P), and the Social Connection Model of Jenkins and Perrow.

8.1 Power

For the case of Gaza, applying Luke's three interconnected dimensions of power provides a inclusive lens to analyze the complexities of power relations. The research recognized various layers of power at play in the Gaza conflict. The use of veto power by the United States, has significantly molded the UN's actions in Gaza where the visible application of power often stalls protection initiatives. Additionally, the media's portrayal of the conflict has influenced international attention and the agenda of international bodies. The framing of issues around the discourse of terrorism and counter-terrorism has limited the UN's ability to act justly. The ideological stances of powerful member states also shape and undermine the protection mandate. Geopolitical interests, such as alliances between the US, Israel, and other influential states, implicitly influence the UN's actions. These implicit power dynamics create a complex environment where protection efforts are often secondary.

8.2 Protection

The UN's role in protecting civilians in Gaza is multilayered, involving peacekeeping, humanitarian aid, and advocacy. However, structural challenges within the UN, influenced by power imbalances, hinder effective protection led to uneven fulfilment of the pillars of R2P. The study found that the reactionary measures in Gaza are delayed and obstructed by political interests and both preventive measures and rebuilding efforts have been stalled in Gaza.

8.3 Connections

The Social Connections Model by J. Craig Jenkins and Charles Perrow emphasizes the significance of social connections in shaping collective behaviors. In the context of Gaza, where multiple actors with divergent interests are involved, mapping out these connections is important as it can guide policymakers and conflict resolution practitioners to identify avenues for dialogue.

This research discusses that CSOs can play a critical role in filling the protection gaps left by the formal channels. Their ability to operate at grassroots levels allows them to provide immediate relief and support. Strong informal connections and networks among CSOs enhance their effectiveness by enabling better coordination, resource sharing, and advocacy.

This thesis has discussed the elaborate chemistry between power, protection, and connections in Gaza, emphasizing the crucial role of the UN and CSOs in addressing humanitarian needs. The findings suggest that while the UN faces significant challenges due to power dynamics, the potential for improved protection lies in strengthening CSOs. This framework underscores the necessity of addressing power imbalances to improve the UN's efficacy by advocating for stronger partnerships with CSOs.

The path to peace and stability in Gaza is fraught with challenges. The international community is marred by power imbalances and strong robust connections among some states, hence considering the nature of the twenty-first century it is essential to broaden the means and mechanisms of protective capacities. This thesis contributes to the ongoing discourse on conflict resolution and protection, offering insights and models that can inform future efforts to build a more just and peaceful world.

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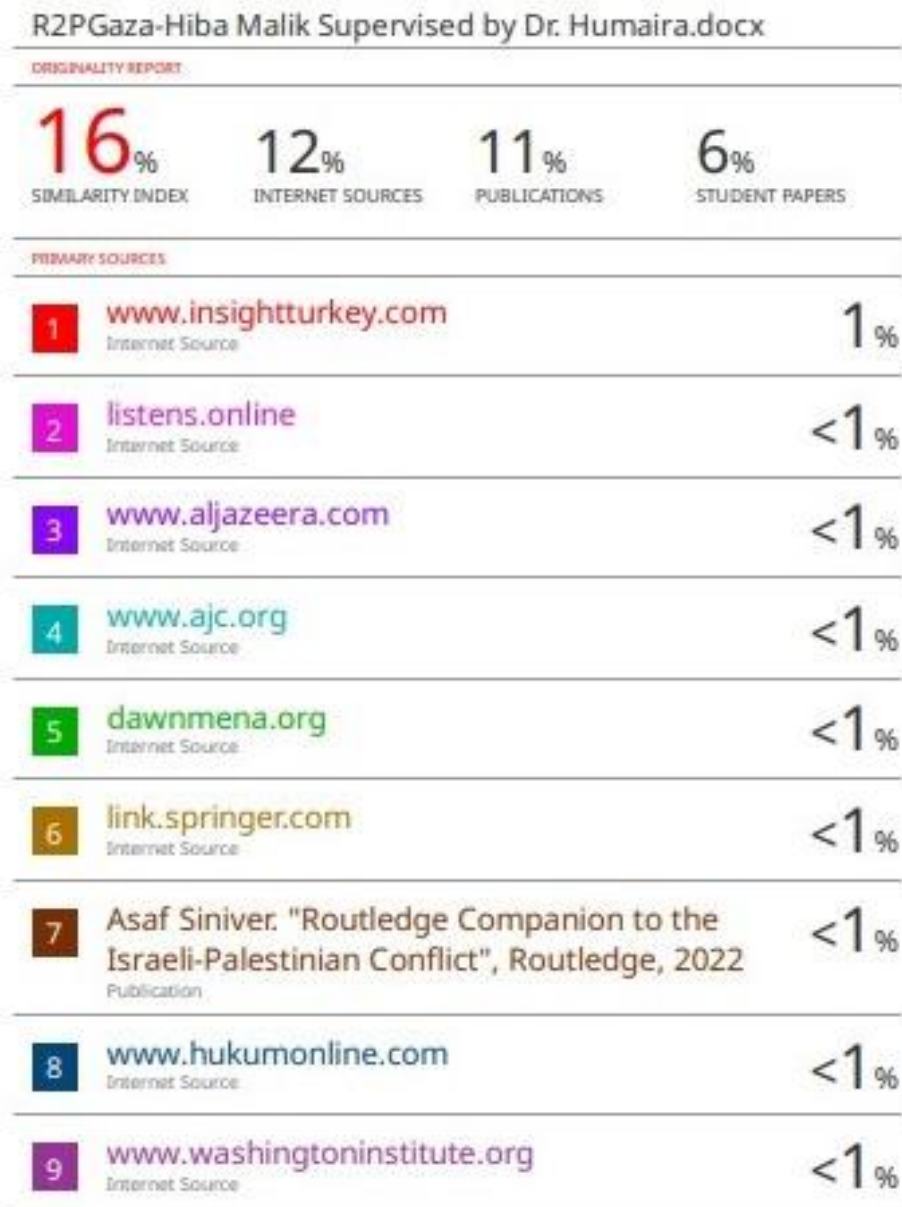
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APPENDIX A

PLAGIARISM REPORT



APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

I volunteer to participate in a research project by Hiba Malik under the supervision of Dr Humaira Shafi Awan from the National University of Sciences and Technology. I understand that the project is designed to gather information about the power dynamics and the role of the USA in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The research specifically examines how the relationships between Israel, Hamas, the USA, and the UN influence the invocation of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). I will be one of approximately 10 people being interviewed for this research.

1. My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If I decline to participate or withdraw from the study, no one on my campus will be told.
2. While most interviewees will find the discussion interesting and thought-provoking, if at any point during the interview session, I feel uncomfortable, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview.
3. Participation involves being interviewed by researchers from NUST. The interview will last approximately **40-45 minutes**. Notes will be written during the interview. An audio tape of the interview and subsequent dialogue will be made, unless otherwise. Audio tape will only be made after consent.
4. I understand that my confidentiality as a participant will be ensured, and the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from the interview. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies that protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.
5. The data collected during the study will be stored appropriately to ensure confidentiality. There will be no one present during the interview and only the

researchers, their supervisor, and the participants (if they request access) will have access to the transcripts and data.

6. I have read and understood the information sheet provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

7. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

My Signature

Date

My Printed Name

Signature of the Investigator

For further information, please contact:

Hiba Malik

Email: hibaaqmalik@gmail.com

APPENDIX C

INFORMATION SHEET

Navigating Power, Protection, and Connections: A Case Study of UN Inactions in Gaza

The Gaza conflict, marked by the involvement of key actors such as the United Nations (UN), Israel, and Hamas, is profoundly influenced by the dimensions of power—visible actions, agenda-setting, ideological influences, and implicit factors. This conflict presents a complex landscape where the power dynamics significantly shape the interactions and responses of these actors. Despite the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Gaza, the invocation of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principles remains elusive, hindered by the power imbalance between states, particularly the high influence of the USA and its strong ties with Israel.

The argument of this project posits that the power imbalance, especially the significant influence wielded by the USA and its robust support for Israel, severely limits the invocation and effective implementation of R2P in the Gaza conflict. This imbalance exacerbates the humanitarian crisis by impeding decisive international intervention. Furthermore, the United Nations faces substantial challenges in navigating its roles and responsibilities due to USA's role in UN Security Council and UN's conflictual connection with both conflicting parties. These dynamics lead to inefficiencies in addressing the humanitarian needs and conflict resolution efforts in Gaza.

Understanding the intricate power dynamics and the UN's navigation of R2P principles in the Gaza conflict is crucial for devising more effective conflict resolution strategies. The social connections within the international community significantly impact the efficacy of collaborative actions aimed at addressing humanitarian crises. This project aims to shed light on how these connections and power imbalances influence the implementation of R2P, offering insights into potential pathways for more effective international intervention and support for the civilian population in Gaza.

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

R2P Implementation

What institutional obstacles or limitations hinder the effective implementation of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principles in Gaza?

How do public perceptions, both locally in Gaza and globally, shape the political will and commitment of governments and international actors to prioritize R2P implementation in the region?

What strategies can be employed to mobilize public support and political momentum for R2P initiatives in Gaza?

Role of Power Dynamics

In what ways do power dynamics among various stakeholders impact the decision-making processes and actions related to R2P implementation in Gaza?

How can the power imbalances or competing interests among key actors be navigated to ensure effective R2P implementation in Gaza?

Visible Actions

How do you perceive the visible actions (such as Veto power in the case of the USA and airstrikes in the case of Israel and Hamas) of various actors involved in the Gaza conflict, including state and non-state entities, and their impact on the conflict dynamics?

Agenda-setting

How does agenda-setting by powerful actors affect the allocation of resources and attention to R2P-related initiatives and interventions in Gaza?

Ideological Influences

Can you identify specific ideologies or narratives propagated by different actors in Gaza, and how do these ideologies shape their actions and policies? / How do ideological influences

manifest in the discourse surrounding R2P implementation in Gaza, and what challenges do they pose for achieving consensus and cooperation among international actors?

Social Connections

How do social connections (informal channels and actors such as civil society, media, academia, R2P centers, and NGOs) within the international community influence collaborative efforts aimed at implementing R2P principles in Gaza?

How do you address challenges related to the prominence of certain actors or groups within the international community and their influence on R2P implementation in Gaza?

How has the strong social connection of the US and Israel facilitated collective inaction in responding to humanitarian challenges in Gaza?

In your opinion, what role can prominent informal actors and influential networks play in shaping the agenda and priorities of international responses to humanitarian crises like the Gaza conflict, and how does this influence R2P efforts?

USA and R2P in Gaza

How do you perceive the United States' strategic interests in the Gaza region, and how do these interests influence its policies and actions in the area?

The United States has vetoed several ceasefire resolutions concerning the Gaza conflict. Could you explain the rationale behind these decisions and how they align with US interests and objectives in the region?

How do you assess the impact of US vetoing of ceasefire resolutions on humanitarian efforts and conflict resolution initiatives in Gaza?

Considering the challenges posed by conflicts like Gaza, where there are significant interests of dominant powers, what do you envision as potential future scenarios for addressing such situations?

How can the United States balance its strategic interests with its humanitarian obligations and international commitments in conflicts like Gaza, moving forward?

Thank you for your time. Please take a moment to add any comments or suggestions that you have about the topic.

Comments/Suggestions:

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS

IP-1

Interviewer

What are the indicators for measuring the success when evaluating R2P?

IP-1

So, it's a mixed bag, right? I think we've had some, there have been some successes, but they're maybe not that well known, right? So, I think that's maybe where the problem lies, that the kind of bigger situations that are in the news, that are well known, those are the ones where we haven't really seen success. But of course, it also depends on how you define success, right? And so, I think, I think it depends on whether you've, you know, think about R2P as essentially being important for response. So, responding to atrocities versus, you know, there's been a much, much more focus on the prevention side of R2P.

And so of course, one could argue, well, if you take that into account, there have been many more successes, but of course, they're difficult to prove because of the nature of prevention, right? So of course, if you prevent something, it's difficult to then afterwards kind of counterfactually say, you know, this could have happened, or this would have happened. And so, in that sense, I think, yeah, it's a, it's a, it's a kind of a mixed bag, also depending on, you know, how you, how you define success.

Interviewer

Yeah, you're saying that it totally depends upon the nature of the conflict and circumstances the UN faces there, or the peacekeepers faces there. So, it depends upon that. Okay. Thank you.
Karen

IP-2

Interviewer

First of all, I want to ask that how would you overall assess the effectiveness of R2P since its implementation in 2005?

IP-2

Listen, as you know, the whole history, when you analyze a phenomenon like this, you have to think about, okay, back to the roots, which were the circumstances into R2P has been created and approved unanimously. And you see that there was one blatant reaction, which I find very positive, to say this never again, right? Now, you have two paras preceded by an immense work done by the International Commission before, but what remains of it is, are these two paras, right? So, for states who have been not involved in the conversation before, what they have approved are these two paras. But no details have been formulated in how to implement it,

right? So, and this was in the wake and it has been followed by instrumentalization of R2P for other pretexts, as you know.

So, what I would say is that one element which is missing is how to implement responsibility to protect on an ongoing basis, right? As we have seen throughout the years, the responsibility to protect is called upon when the house is already on fire, if you allow me the image, right? So, everyone is very heated, polarized, divided, and it's extremely difficult as we see it now on the situation in Ukraine or Gaza-Israel or Sudan, et cetera, to take quiet, objective decisions in the wake of these emergencies where the fronts are already extremely polarized. So, now this said, when one looks at the history of the different bodies, initiatives, et cetera, that have developed a kind of insight about prevention to halt such atrocity-prone dynamics to happen and protection of populations, this work began much earlier, also in the wake of the Genocide Prevention Convention, right? So, there is one thing that is missing for both communities. It is the understanding that prevention is a permanent task, a permanent endeavor.

If you think that if one thinks that one can prevent or one can appeal on prevention only when the house is burning, as I was saying, or in a heated situation, one totally misunderstands what prevention is. So, now I want to come to the specific nature of atrocity crimes. There are many people who kind of mix up between conflict prevention, you know, what could I say, ecological prevention, and everything.

But all these focuses of prevention are extremely important. But because I work on this, the atrocity prevention lens, as I call it, is very specific. It tries and it shall understand underlying dynamics that you don't always see or notice when problems are happening.

And one specific trend to these underlying factors might be the exacerbation of identity-based threats or attacks or hate speech or discrimination that focuses on a specific group. And

IP-3

Interviewer

I will be having some questions related to Gaza, the power dynamics related to USA and of course R2P. But I'm more inclined towards learning from you, so I'll be listening to the conversation.

IP-3

I'll try to answer your questions based on my article. "Is the R2P norm a legal norm?" I have to say that I'm more interested in theoretical questions and doctrine. You are interested in implementation of R2P in particular cases.

Interviewer

Okay, no problem. So, should I start? So, my first question is that since its adoption in 2005, how would you overall assess the effectiveness of R2P doctrine?

IP-3

I differentiated conception and doctrine, which can be political doctrine or legal doctrine. I am interested in legal aspects of R2P, especially in legal principles and legal norms. The conception of responsibility to protect was developed and established. It was developed by International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty and published in 2001. This activity is the same like a theoretical work of scholars. R2P conception was written by distinguished international experts in law and international relations. Legal and political scientists but also in role of diplomats. I think that R2P conception itself is great. It is the best what we have. But conception is conception. It would be a great improvement of international community if it were implemented in practice. The conception could not be developed before because it was a result of the changes, and circumstances during the 1990s. And it was developed as requested by UN Secretary General (Kofi Annan). So, R2P is a conception. Conception can become doctrine. If it is applied by political actors, then it's political doctrine. If it is applied by legal actors, then it is a legal doctrine. And it became political doctrine when it was partially adopted by General Assembly of UN. So, at that point, some parts of this conception about how international relations should be or are constructed became political doctrine.

It is useful to compare national to international law. For example, if you have conception of parliamentary democracy in a national arena, at the beginning it was a theory. Once when it is accepted by the relevant political actors, e.g. parliament or president of the state, it became political doctrine. If it is applied by courts, it became a legal doctrine. The problem with international community is that we don't have the same law-applying organs like in national states. In national states we have courts. In international community, we don't have one court with compulsory adjudication for all states. We have international courts which can be voluntarily accepted or not. UN Security Council is political body. It is the main political body in the UN system, which was designed and constituted after the Second World War. Our UN system was designed after the Second World War. We can think this and that, but it was designed as we have it today. And it is difficult to change it by changing the UN Charter. The Security Council sometimes act purely as political body, but sometimes it makes some legal

IP-4

Interviewer

Jahaan, if you allow, can I record the audio of this interview so that I can transcribe it later? Absolutely. Thank you. So before starting the interview, let me introduce my topic and introduce my friend here, Memoona. Both of us are working on R2P but my case study is related to the UN and the interest of USA which is leading to a problem in invoking R2P, specifically in the case of Gaza. And Memoona will now explain her topic to you.

Interviewer

So, I am actually analyzing the effectiveness of R2P in preventing the atrocity crimes by using a multiple case study approach in which I will be analyzing the cases of success and failure to determine how much effective this doctrine is and what are the limitations when it comes to its implementation.

Interviewer

So, how would you interpret or assess the success of R2P as a doctrine in itself? How do you explain R2P?

IP-4

It's an interesting question. So maybe I'll preface this by saying first that I'm coming specifically from a practitioner's lens and I know that often times there can be a bit of a divide between how academia perceives the success of R2P as a norm versus how we witness it in real time within the UN system and within the multilateral system. So just for context, my organization, the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect was created in the aftermath of the World Summit Outcome Document and also in the aftermath Sorry, just a pause. Are the sirens bothering you? Can you still hear me?

Interviewer

We can hear you loud and clear.

IP-4

Okay, good. It's just really hot in my apartment so I had to open the windows but I want to make sure that the sirens aren't disturbing the audio. Okay, great. So, my organization was founded in the aftermath of the World Summit Outcome Document in 2008 and the creation of R2P as a political commitment, which as you know, it is a political commitment.

It's not a legally binding norm. It's a principle to which member states pledged to uphold after signing the World Summit Outcome Document in 2005. And so, we were created in the aftermath of that by Kofi Annan and a few other key international leaders who really believed in the promise that R2P and the letter in spirit of what R2P was going to deliver to alleviate suffering of populations that suffer from war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide globally.

IP-5

Well, I think the important thing for me in looking at this topic is that prevention the hardest thing to do in my view. Some people would say that everything the UN does is prevention in some way. Preventing things from getting worse, preventing human rights abuse even when there is human rights abuse and even when there is no development. And the responsibility to protect has this three-part responsibility: prevention, reaction, and rebuilding. When the commission was put together, the real focus was on reaction

The fact of the matter was nothing had happened in Rwanda; thought that it was too little, too late. And in Kosovo, some people thought too much, too soon because the Security Council in the UN was not involved. So, the real focus when Canada put together the commission was on how to do something in the eye of the storm. To sell that notion, which was not popular in many places, in particular places like Pakistan and China or Zimbabwe, the idea was that there should

be a bigger framework. And because one of the chairmen happened to have been Gareth Evans who was at the International Crisis Group, who had made a living basically on trying to introduce prevention as a lens in international affairs. The responsibility to protect became prevention, reaction, and rebuilding.

Well, the fact of the matter is that almost never do we actually act early enough to prevent atrocities or even low-level atrocities, let alone high-level atrocities. And it's rare, actually, that the international community of states reacts effectively to mass atrocities. And rebuilding sometimes happens, sometimes does not. But in fact, in the version of the responsibility to protect approved in 2005 by the World Summit, the third part, rebuilding, was thrown out and not focused on. So, I think to make a long story short, there's been a rather significant normative evolution. It's hard to say out loud any longer that we shouldn't prevent atrocities.

It's hard to say that we shouldn't react, although most people do not, most countries do not prevent or react. And it's also imperative, if one has ever intervened or reacted, that there should be a responsibility to put things back together. But in the cases of, I mean, the most recent case in Libya of intervention, there was absolutely nothing after. There was virtually no rebuilding. So, I'd have to say that if you were trying to draw up a balance sheet on the normative development, you'd give it pretty high grades. On the actual implementation, whether it's prevention or reaction or rebuilding, you'd give it very low grades.

Interviewer

Okay, so thank you. And now I will start with my interview questions. So, first of all, I want to ask that how would you overall assess the effectiveness of R2P in preventing the atrocity crime since its adoption in 2005?

IP-5

Well, I mentioned to you, the first statement should say that it gets very failing grades, awful grades in fact, because the politics of prevention, whether it's mass atrocities or anything else, is very hard to sell politically.

It's hard to say, let's do something when you cannot prove that what you're doing will actually have an impact. And if successful, it is hard to prove that the actions were necessary. So, on the whole, it's important for you guys who are, if you're studying prevention, to go back and look at what I would say is the birth, the conception of the prevention industry, which followed Rwanda in 1994. And the first major set, I mean, people had talked about it earlier, don't get me wrong, but I mean, the real emphasis and what I would call the prevention industry, grew out of the Carnegie Corporation of New York's financing for a report called "Preventing Deadly Conflict."

And interestingly, the president of the Carnegie Corporation at the time was David Hamburg, whoa pediatrician, whose medical background basically says, why don't you do things earlier rather than later? And Rwanda was an unbelievably good case study, because this was not a surprise. I mean, the ethnic conflict in Rwanda and neighboring Burundi had occurred

throughout the colonial period. It had included the period after independence, starting in the early 1960s. And in 1994, when 800,000 or a million or however many people, figures differ, were killed in real time, virtually nothing happened. A small UN force was there, led by a Canadian general, and they couldn't do anything. There were some 500 soldiers, and they could do absolutely nothing.

So, nothing happened in April to June. And then that summer, the US and France, for different reasons, got involved in coming to the rescue, delivering water, helping people, protecting camps, etc. While nothing could happen in April, in September, you had a massive mobilization of resources, a billion and a half dollars overnight, to pick up the pieces, humanitarian relief.

Humanitarian relief is much easier to sell to you, or to me, or to anybody on the street, than preventing the conflict, because the political barriers to entry are so high. So, you could do nothing in April, but anything was possible to pick up the pieces in September. So that was the lens used by the Carnegie Commission on the Prevention of Deadly Conflict.

And there were 14 or 15 books that grew out of that project and the report. But that case, while it also spawned, as I said, the prevention industry, it also was a very good illustration as to why it's so difficult, politically, to mobilize support to do anything in advance of the atrocity. It's politically virtually impossible to mobilize support to do something when all hell is breaking loose let alone on the evening of the disaster..

And to try to do the same kind of mobilization in advance, there are almost no examples of successfully acting earlier rather than later. And as I say, the fact that it's so logical, and so important in the medical arena, and there are countries like my own, that still don't invest

IP-6

Interviewer

How would you overall assess the effectiveness of R2P since its adoption in 2005?

Aidan Hehir

Well, I think if you're going to judge something, effectiveness of any concept or any theory or any law or norm or anything like that, you have to look at what it was established to do. And the original report, the ISIS report, said that it wanted to avoid two scenarios. One was Rwanda and one was Kosovo. So those two scenarios are very different. In one situation you had in Rwanda, nobody wanting to intervene.

So, you have a genocide taking place but the international community doesn't want to act. And then the Kosovo situation, you have a massive atrocity crime happening but you have a

division. So, there are two very different scenarios and the ISIS commission tried to work through means to address both of those problems, which was a very noble endeavor. It clearly was the right thing to do to try to solve those two problems. But you can see since 2005 that both of those two scenarios have happened many, many times. So, it's been a spectacular failure.

I don't believe it has saved a single human life. I don't think it has influenced any decision ever made by any government or any international organization. It's actually made a bad situation worse because it's allowed governments to use a term that gives them a veneer of respectability that makes them sound like they care about human rights.

But it's a cost-free term so they can use it without actually having to change any of their policies, domestic or international. So, if you look at the countries that routinely invoke R2P or at the annual General Assembly debates on R2P who say that they endorse it and they like it and they don't have a problem with it. It includes countries like Iran, Sudan has said nice things about R2P, Saudi Arabia, various different countries, Israel, the United States, Russia, all these kinds of countries that are actively involved in the commission of mass atrocity crimes or supporting governments that are committing mass atrocity crimes.

They can all cheerfully say they'd like the responsibility to protect it because it's so vacuous of any kind of real content and you can see in the course of the last 19 years since it was created that mass atrocity crimes have increased. Human rights violations have increased. So judged by any objective measurement it's been a complete and utter failure. The only thing I would say is that there are two things just to add maybe slightly to that. One thing it did do that was useful I think was it established that the threshold for humanitarian intervention was those four crimes. Genocide, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and war crimes.

I think that was a useful initiative. So, we now know that when we talk about humanitarian intervention, we're only really talking about those four crimes. The second thing is a bit more cynical. The reason it was established was to prevent Rwanda and Kosovo officially. But I think a lot of the reason behind it as well was there was a lot of academics and politicians and various different world leaders who wanted to improve their reputation to make themselves

look like they were global statesmen and women. And to use this concept as a means to present themselves to the world as somebody who was worthy of respect.

And it has worked for a lot of them. A lot of non-governmental organizations, a lot of academics, a lot of politicians have used the responsibility to protect to get there, to raise their

IP-7

Interviewer

Hi,

IP-7

Hello.

Interviewer

Thank you, Jeff. Thank you for taking out the time for this interview. I'll try to keep it brief. Okay, so it was really an honor to listen to you in the dabs course, and I'm sure that you can help me in understanding my own thesis topic for now. I'm trying to work on r2p in the case of Gaza and I'm trying to look at how the United Nations is facing challenges in in addressing the humanitarian concerns. And for that I'm also trying to look at the power imbalance and the relationships of Israel and USA and how that in this case is quite detrimental to the the whole situation.

So, what do you think are the primary challenges and the institutional obstacles in that un is facing for considering and addressing the humanitarian issues in Gaza?

IP-7

What do I think the oh who is like, I understand you mentioning issues are us UNI didn't hear who I'm supposed to be speaking for.

Interviewer

United Nations

IP-7

UNRA as the sort of like major Service delivery. I think their position has been challenging. I think it was challenging before I think it's only gotten harder. And so, I think there are clear security issues in relay as it relates to humanitarian assistance delivery. I think throughput is an issue I think both Internal issues, we've seen reporting that getting it there and then also some of the neighboring states unwillingness to move just sufficient quantities.

And so yeah it, In the folks that I've talked to that are sort of like I don't do humanitarian, right? Like I'm on the kind of protection side, but in the humanitarian folks I've spoken to it's just a logistical Nightmare and just incredibly incredibly difficult kind of across the board.

Interviewer

Okay. So, do you think that the alliance of US with Israel is what kind of role is it playing in this whole situation?

IP-7

I mean so every state makes the decisions on how they're going to operate based on their priorities and no State makes decisions on One Source, right? One of the things I like very much about my position is I am only required to advocate for one thing. But that one thing does not determine US policy. That one thing is a part of it is a factor, but it is not the only Factor security trade counterterrorism. Moral requirements legal requirements all of these things factor in to how a state operates and so There is no kind of place where our relationship with the States involved is not included. And so, we have a security relationship with Israel. We have a trade relationship with Israel. We have a long-standing treaty relationship. All of these things are real and need to be factored in and included and I think you know for the advocacy Community that's their job right to advocate for this is the only thing that matters and I have

IP-8

Hiba Malik

So what do you think are the institutional obstacles that are hindering any sort of humanitarian concerns addressed in the R2P in Gaza? What are the chances of R2P being used in Gaza?

IP-8

So far to my knowledge, that hasn't happened. And the process that has been used, of course, is referral to the International Court of Justice and then the individual, I see, International Criminal Court indictments that are still, I believe, in the process. But R2P has not been officially invoked.

Now, I think there are a number of reasons for this. First of all, R2P is meant to be politically binding states. So, I'm just explaining that the R2P doctrine is a political commitment and while all states have, in principle, agreed to it, there is no clear formal mechanism in the same way that there is for referring a state to the ICJ or individuals to the ICC. The problems also are that because Palestine is not yet officially recognized as a fully-fledged state member of the United Nations, it makes it a little more complicated and difficult to use that particular avenue. But having said that, it's not by any means impossible.

And R2P is designed to put pressure on not just states and governments, but individuals also. So, one would think that it should be an ideal case for being referred to the United Nations. So,

I think that there is potential there, but to my knowledge, R2P has not been officially invoked, as far as I know.

Now, the other issue, of course, is that generally speaking, the Security Council gets involved in R2P referrals. And this is very problematic, because as we know, the permanent members of the Security Council, especially the United States and Britain, possibly France, are likely to veto or disregard any kind of ruling that might be made. But it doesn't entirely depend on the Security Council.

In principle, this can still be done. But, as I say, there are a number of problems. And I think what this has meant is that organizations, individuals and states have decided to take the route that South Africa has taken, which is to hire the International Court of Justice, and more recently, the International Criminal Court.

Hiba Malik

Thank you for the detailed answer. What do you think is the role of the power factors in this whole situation?

IP-8

The power imbalance would mean the different parties that are in the conflict. The power imbalance is crucially important. And this has been in the case now for 17 years. We know that. The creation of the State of Israel was done on the basis of colonialism and Western dominance of the international system.

APPENDIX F

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Dr. Humaira Shafi Awan & Hiba Malik

failed in Gaza, excluding the broader origins and multifaceted nature of the Israel-Palestine conflict..

Keywords

R2P, Israel, Palestine, Hamas, Gaza, Politicisation, the UN, NATO, AU, Accountability.

Introduction

The concept of R2P is praised for emphasising the ethical obligation of the international community to intervene in cases of large-scale crimes against humanity through prevention, reaction, and rebuilding. It demonstrates safeguarding civilians when their governments are unable to do it. The principle gives humanity hope by advising governments to not hide behind sovereignty, but instead to embrace genuine sovereignty through accountability. Although R2P has good intentions, its effectiveness is frequently doubted, particularly in the Israel-Palestine conflict and specifically in the Gaza Strip. The situation in Gaza showcases the shortcomings of R2P and underscores the wider difficulties in preventing severe human rights violations. As the world deals with the results of inaction, it is becoming more evident that the principles of R2P need to be revitalised. This article analyses the intricate power dynamics and political factors that have rendered R2P ineffective in Gaza, illustrating how peacekeeping organisations can be hindered by power struggles, geopolitical factors, and national agendas. This paper tackles these issues by utilising a qualitative method that relies only on secondary sources. The sources that were chosen were assessed based on their relevance and credibility to ensure a thorough review of the topic.

The article is divided into three main parts. The initial part delves into the history and importance of the R2P doctrine regarding the current crisis in Gaza. It explores the application of R2P principles in Gaza, taking into account the intricate political tensions and humanitarian challenges that influence the situation. The roles of global and regional organisations like the United Nations and NATO are examined in the second section to explore the reasons for the difficulties

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