

FROM SETTLER COLONIALISM AND THE REMOTE-CONTROL OCCUPATION: TECH-INNOVATION, NEOLIBERAL ZIONISM, AND DIGITAL SUMŪD IN TIMES OF GENOCIDE

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FROM SETTLER COLONIALISM AND THE REMOTE-CONTROL OCCUPATION: TECH- INNOVATION, NEOLIBERAL ZIONISM, AND DIGITAL SUMŪD IN TIMES OF GENOCIDE

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ABSTRACT

This article theorizes how the convergence of technological innovation and military strategy has reconfigured the Israeli occupation into digital settler colonialism, intensified after October 7, 2023. Extending digital colonialism debates, the study shows Israel's innovation economy operates as both national project and global business model, embedding the tech sector in genocidal violence. Grounded in settler-colonial studies, digital colonialism theory, Foucauldian biopolitics, and Bauman's analysis of institutional violence, it conceptualizes a remote-control occupation produced through the military–academic–tech nexus under neoliberal Zionism. Drawing on thematic content analysis and interviews with Palestinian technologists (2020–2024), the article identifies three modalities of digital elimination: physical (AI-assisted targeting), economic (military R&D in global markets), and epistemic (digital censorship). Consequently, Palestinians cultivate digital sumūd—networked practices of endurance and resistance.

Keywords: Digital settler colonialism; neoliberal Zionism; digital sumūd; futurity.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the 2000s, scholars have framed the Israeli occupation as a paradigmatic form of settler-colonial governance structured around the logic of elimination (Lentin, 2020; Sabbagh-Khoury, 2022; Sa'di, 2021; Veracini, 2011, 2015; Wolfe, 2006). In Palestine, what historically relied on territorial seizure, military checkpoints, and demographic regulation increasingly operates through remote-control infrastructures, predictive analytics, biometric databases, and AI-assisted targeting. Across Gaza, the West Bank, and historic Palestine, military, academic, and corporate actors collaborate to refine new regimes of algorithmic violence and population management (Ahmad, 2021; Avis et al., 2025; Bevilacqua, 2022; Musleh, 2018; Sa'di, 2021; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2015, 2017; Shehadeh, 2023; Tawil-Souri, 2012; Zureik, 2016b, 2020; Zureik et al., 2010).

This transformation intensified after October 7, 2023. The ongoing genocidal assault on Gaza coincided with the expanded use of automated kill lists, facial-recognition systems, and machine-assisted aerial warfare. Israeli officers described an AI-driven “broad hunt,” where homes are destroyed on the basis of a single individual's presence. This reflects Bauman's (Bauman, 1989) account of institutional violence: bureaucratized harm that distances actors from consequences.”

These systems have expanded well beyond Israel's borders. The shift from the celebrated “Start-Up Nation” (Senor & Singer, 2009) toward what might be termed an “exit nation” was enabled not by market liberalization alone but by deliberate state coordination. Maggor (Maggor, 2020) shows that Israel's innovation economy emerged through a neo-developmental model in which the state directed capital and cultivated high-tech capacity to integrate firms into global markets. This fusion of militarism and innovation

is conceptualized here as neoliberal Zionism (Getzoff, 2020): a formation that blends nationalist security doctrine with market rationality and technological optimism, framing “tech as practical Zionism.” according to Gilad Rabinovich’s statement.¹

These developments are not merely military innovations but products of a broader political economy. Israeli technology elites increasingly act not only as beneficiaries of state policy but as political actors shaping it. As Shihadeh (Shihadeh, 2024) argues, the high-tech sector has shifted from indirect influence to direct institutional power-building, consolidating techno-political authority domestically while deepening global entanglements. Through arms transfers, cybersecurity contracts, AI partnerships, and venture-capital flows, Israeli tech actors bind multinational corporations and foreign governments to Israel’s security-innovation ecosystem (Loewenstein, 2023; Swed & Butler, 2015; Tariq, 2024; Tarvainen & Challand, 2024).

These international entanglements render foreign governments and private firms structurally complicit in the infrastructures of occupation. Albanese’s (2025)² report, **From the Economy of Occupation to the Economy of Genocide**, demonstrates how corporate systems profit from and enable displacement, apartheid, and genocide, including through dual-use technologies such as biometric surveillance, AI targeting tools, and cloud-based military platforms that turn occupied territory into a testing ground.

Following Albanese (2025)³ and Helga Tawil-Souri’s (Tawil-Souri, 2012) who theorizes Gaza as a “high-tech enclosure,” this article situates contemporary Israeli domination within a broader theorization of digital settler colonialism. Gaza exemplifies a space where physical siege converges with digital, biometric, and infrastructural control, rendering the territory simultaneously isolated, monitored, and technologically dependent. Drawing on settler-colonial studies (Lentin, 2020; Sabbagh-Khoury, 2022; Sa’di, 2021; Veracini, 2011, 2015; Wolfe, 2006), digital colonialism scholarship (Bevilacqua, 2022; Couldry & Mejias, 2019; Kwet, 2019, 2022), and informed by Foucauldian biopolitics (Foucault, 2008) and Bauman’s insights on institutional violence (Bauman, 1989), this article advances two core arguments.

First, the occupation has entered a digitally mediated phase in which settler-colonial logics extend into algorithmic governance. Under neoliberal Zionism, technological innovation legitimizes and scales violence while embedding the occupation within global AI and security markets. The civil–military–academic nexus co-produces surveillance systems that render Palestinian life hyper-visible to machines while erasing political agency.

Second, Palestinians enact **digital sumūd**, a set of resilient techno-practices that refuse erasure and assert collective presence. Activists, technologists,

1 Gilad Rabinovich is a tech investor in the Israeli High tech.

2 Albanese, F. (2025). From the economy of occupation to the economy of genocide: Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967. Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/>

3 Albanese, F. (2025). From the economy of occupation to the economy of genocide: Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967. Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/>

and civil-society collectives cultivate counter-infrastructures—archival platforms, mesh networks, and transnational digital campaigns—that sustain political agency amid surveillance, disconnection, and violence. While Israeli institutions deploy algorithmic systems to fragment and silence Palestinian presence, Palestinians repurpose digital tools to endure, document, and remain connected.

Accordingly, this study addresses two central questions: (1) How does Israel's innovation economy—intertwined with military and academic institutions—operationalize digital settler colonialism amid ongoing genocide? (2) How do Palestinians enact digital sumūd to resist, subvert, and re-signify technologies designed to physically eliminate, dehumanize, and censor them? In addressing these questions, the article contributes to scholarship on technology and innovation, settler colonialism, and Palestinian sumūd by situating digital infrastructures within global hierarchies of power and resistance.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 SETTLER COLONIALISM IN THE DIGITAL AGE: ALGORITHMIC GOVERNANCE, BIOPOLITICS, AND PHYSICAL ELIMINATION

Settler-colonial theory posits the “logic of elimination” as the core structure for removing Indigenous populations and replacing them with a new political order (Wolfe, 2006 ; Veracini, 2011, 2015; Sabbagh-Khoury, 2022). In Palestine, this logic has long manifested as land confiscation and racialized surveillance (Ahmad, 2021; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2015; Zureik, 2001, 2016b, 2016a; Zureik et al., 2010).

Over the last two decades, this structure has undergone a digital transformation where mechanisms of physical control (checkpoints, patrols) are supplemented or replaced by algorithmic governance—biometric databases, predictive analytics, and automated targeting systems (Loewenstein, 2023; Musleh, 2018; Zureik, 2001, 2016b; Zureik et al., 2010).

This shift must be viewed through a biopolitical lens (Foucault, 2008), where digital-settler colonialism is conceptualized as the fusion of settler domination with computational infrastructures. Algorithmic governance extends settler sovereignty into computational forms that manage, classify, and target Palestinian bodies, translating elimination into computational code. Importantly, this process facilitates “institutional violence” (Bauman, 1989), where the removal of human agency through automated systems creates moral distance, reducing victims to data points and enabling the mechanical execution of violence. Parallel scholarship on digital colonialism emphasizes that these infrastructures intensify, rather than replace, traditional domination circuits , (Gillespie, 2018, 2018; Kwet, 2019, 2022; Noble, 2018, 2018; Tarvainen & Challand, 2024) reproducing longstanding histories of racialization and economic subjugation under neoliberal ideologies (Clarno, 2018b, 2018a; Johnson, 2019; Lloyd & Wolfe, 2016; Wildeman, 2019).

2.2 NEOLIBERAL ZIONISM AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

The perpetuation of digital-settler colonialism is sustained by an integrated political economy. The Israeli high-tech sector, often promoted under the “start-up nation” narrative (Senor & Singer, 2009), was strategically built through coordinated state investment, military R&D, and venture capital (Maggor, 2020). This produced a powerful civil–military–academic complex where military units (e.g., Unit 8200) function as incubators, converting military surveillance tools into commercial products often tested on Palestinians and marketed as “field-proven” (Loewenstein, 2023; Swed & Butler, 2015; Wind, 2024). This formation is defined as neoliberal Zionism (Getzoff, 2020), which fuses security doctrine with market rationality, reframing technological innovation as national service—“tech as practical Zionism”. This economic engine produces structural dependency for Palestinians, who are positioned as surveilled, subcontracted labor under the rhetoric of “economic peace building” (Last, 2007). This political economy is increasingly globalized through multinational partnerships, embedding corporate firms within occupation infrastructures. The same complex that governs economic dependency also governs knowledge production, creating conditions for the second and third modes of elimination.

2.3 EPISTEMOLOGY, ARCHIVES AND THE REPRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE

The economic and biopolitical systems outlined above are maintained by an epistemic infrastructure that legitimizes domination. Epistemological violence (Fanon, 1963) is resisted through epistemic (Mignolo, 2009, 2011; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). In the Israeli context, academic and media institutions function as militarized knowledge regimes (Wind, 2024), enforcing an epistemic hierarchy that privileges Zionist narratives while marginalizing or criminalizing Palestinian history (Peled-Elhanan, 2012; Sabbah-Karkabi & Abu-Rabia-Queder, 2025). This elimination is amplified by global celebratory narratives (Senor & Singer, 2009) that sacralize Israeli technological progress, obscuring colonial conditions.⁴

Furthermore, epistemic domination manifests through archival control. While Israel has historically confiscated and destroyed physical Palestinian cultural artifacts since the Nakba (Amit, 2011; Masalha, 2012; Sela, 2018), the current genocide has escalated this into a systematic digital data-cide. The targeting of universities and servers in Gaza—defined as scholasticide (Giroux, 2025)—represents the cutting edge of digital settler colonialism. This is not merely about destroying buildings; it is an attempt to erase the “digital twin” of Palestinian society by deleting cloud-based archives, academic records, and digital memories. Coupled with algorithmic governance and platform censorship, this results in epistemic digital elimination:

4 See Books such as *Let There Be Water* (Siegel M., 2015), and *Thou Shalt Innovate* (Jorisch, 2018) frame Israeli technological development as a civilizational mission to “make the desert bloom” or “repair the world,” sacralizing innovation as moral virtue while erasing the colonial conditions that enable it. These narratives present technological progress as evidence of national genius and divine favor, thereby legitimizing Israel’s global techno-political authority and obscuring Palestinian dispossession. In this configuration, tech discourse itself functions as a **mode of epistemic reproduction**, stabilizing Zionist myths and marginalizing Palestinians as either absent, irrelevant, or “politicized.”

a remote-controlled process that renders Palestinian life unsearchable and invisible, ensuring that the destruction of the physical body is followed by the automated erasure of its history and future from the global digital record.

2.4 DIGITAL REPRESSION, SUMŪD AND DECOLONIALIZATION

Digital repression complements traditional state control through online speech restriction, communication monitoring, and surveillance, alongside physical imprisonment and censorship (Awwad & Toyama, 2024). Within this context, Israel's techno-colonial regime extends longstanding systems of domination into the digital sphere. Yet Palestinian digital practices demonstrate how online spaces function as arenas of activism, resistance and professional mobility (Althalathini & Tlaiss, 2023; Aouragh, 2011; Tawil-Souri & Aouragh, 2014; York, 2012). Digital activism creates participatory possibilities by enabling autonomous, transnational, and collective participation (Awwad & Toyama, 2024) and technological engagement can function as a form of agency (Rindova et al., 2009).

These possibilities coexist with constraints such as unequal access, echo chambers, and vulnerability to surveillance. Digital repression intensifies these limits through platform governance, algorithmic control, and the erasure of cultural infrastructures (Awwad & Toyama, 2024). These dynamics constitute **epistemic digital elimination**—the systematic devaluation of Palestinian knowledge.

Studies further highlight content moderation, algorithmic ranking, and automated classification function as epistemic infrastructures that determine what is visible, credible, or shareable (Peeters & Schuilenburg, 2023). In the Palestinian case, civil-society research demonstrates a pattern of algorithmic epistemic asymmetry: Palestinian content is disproportionately restricted, while incitement against Palestinians persists largely unchallenged (7amleh, 2024; Ahmad, 2021; Al-Salhi, 2021).

Research on Palestine distinguishes between activism aimed at expanding digital access and activism that uses digital platforms for political goals. The latter—often described as a “cyber intifada” (Aouragh, 2011; Tawil-Souri & Aouragh, 2014) —includes circulating testimonies, documenting violence, and advancing global campaigns such as the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement. Hashtags like #GazaUnderAttack have become key tools for real-time witnessing and transnational advocacy.

These practices intersect with **sumūd**, historically denoting steadfast refusal to relinquish land or identity (Abu-Lughod, 2020; Busse, 2022; Hammami, 2005; Rijke & Van Teeffelen, 2014; Tatour, 2019). Digitally, sumūd entails resisting erasure and countering algorithmic repression (Khoury-Machool, 2007; Shehadeh, 2023). Projects like Visualizing Palestine, Palestine Open Maps, and the Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question rebuild suppressed histories, while organizations such as 7amleh contest censorship—forms of **epistemic sovereignty**.

Digital sumūd also operates as epistemic disobedience aligned with decolonial design principles (Mignolo, 2009, 2011; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018) and resonates with global critiques of data colonialism (Couldry & Mejias, 2019; Milan & Treré, 2019). Concepts such as Shehadeh's "digital floating homeland" (Shehadeh, 2023) and Khoury-Machool's "electronic resistance" (Khoury-Machool, 2007) capture how Palestinians create shared digital spaces across fragmented geographies. After October 7, 2023, these practices intensified as testimonies circulated despite blackouts and algorithmic suppression, transforming surveillance systems into infrastructures of witnessing and mobilization (Aouragh, 2011; Khoury-Machool, 2007).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative mixed methods design to address the dual research questions of digital settler colonialism and digital sumūd. Grounded in decolonial research methodologies, the analysis treats AI systems and data-governance regimes as sociotechnical assemblages shaped by militarism and logics of elimination.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA

This study integrates two complementary approaches:

- One: thematic discourse and content analysis of investigative reports and media coverage (2020–2025) across five categories (AI-targeting, censorship, academic complicity, and digital sumūd) (See the full report [here](#)). A curated archive of publicly available social media posts by Gazans (October 2023–February 2024) was also analyzed to understand lived experiences of digital warfare.
- Two: semi-Structured Interview with fifteen Palestinian technologists (selected from a dataset of seventy conducted 2020–2024) from Gaza, the West Bank/East Jerusalem, and the 1948 territories. Snowball sampling was used, and interviews were conducted in Arabic. Strict anonymity protections were maintained.

This design offers a multilayered account of how digital infrastructures sustain settler-colonial power while documenting digital sumūd.

3.2 ANALYTICAL PROCEDURES

Data were gathered and coded and synthesized into thematic categories using [ATLAS.ti](#). Analysis focused on the convergence of military, private-tech, and academic institutions, and on discursive mechanisms that depoliticize technology while producing silencing and dehumanization. Coding combined deductive strategies (scholarly concepts) and inductive approaches. Interviews were analyzed through narrative strategies to identify junctures where technologists accommodate, resist, and transform constraints within the settler-colonial technological landscape

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study show that the Israeli occupation has evolved into a paradigmatic form of digital settler colonialism. In this configuration, algorithmic systems, digital infrastructures, and innovation economies do not replace traditional military or bureaucratic functions; rather, they function as an augmented layer of colonial power that accelerates and scales surveillance, control, and elimination processes. Consequently, the occupation increasingly operates through AI-driven targeting, biometric surveillance, and networked control—illustrating the convergence of technological modernity and colonial domination. Extending Wolfe’s (Wolfe, 2006) argument, this study demonstrates that the “logic of elimination” unfolds simultaneously across spatial and digital frontiers. Within this regime, Palestinians become hyper-visible as data subjects yet politically invisible—a paradox reflecting an automated apartheid where racialized control is translated into computational form. Algorithmic systems governing movement, access, and visibility embed the logic of elimination directly into digital infrastructures. This exposes the limits of “ethical” AI discourse; here AI functions as a lethal extension of settler power, where “precision” masks state violence. The following analysis examines three modalities of digital elimination—physical, economic, and epistemic—and explores how Palestinians enact digital sumūd to resist and subvert these technologies of control.

4.1 THREE MODALITIES OF ELIMINATION

4.1.1 Physical Elimination: Algorithmic Targeting, AI-Assisted Warfare, Surveillance, and Remote-control Occupation

This section extends settler-colonial and digital-colonial frameworks by showing how biometric surveillance and AI-targeting translate the logic of elimination into computational systems. Systems like Blue Wolf, Red Wolf, and Wolf Pack create an integrated surveillance regime across the oPt, which Amnesty International calls “automated apartheid,” institutionalizing racial segregation.⁵

Blue Wolf software⁶⁷⁸, allows soldiers to photograph Palestinians and instantly cross-check biometric databases. The app features a “leaderboard” rewarding military units with rewards like paid time away for capturing the most faces.⁹¹⁰ Amnesty warned Palestinians face “the risk of an algorithm

5 Amnesty International. (2023). Automated apartheid: Israel’s use of facial recognition technology in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/6701/2023/en/>

6 Middle East Eye. (2021, March 18). Israel: what’s the Blue Wolf app? Soldiers use it to photograph Palestinians. Middle East Eye. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-whats-blue-wolf-app-soldiers-use-photograph-palestinians>

7 Haaretz. (2023, May 2). Israel using facial-recognition tech to entrench apartheid, Amnesty Intl says. Haaretz. <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-05-02/ty-article/highlight/israel-using-facial-recognition-tech-to-entrench-apartheid-amnesty-intl-says/00000187-db8a-d9b4-abaf-fbbe6c080000>

8 The Guardian. (2024, April 19). How Israel uses facial-recognition systems in Gaza and beyond. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2024/apr/19/idf-facial-recognition-surveillance-palestinians>

9 The Guardian. (2024, April 19). How Israel uses facial-recognition systems in Gaza and beyond. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2024/apr/19/idf-facial-recognition-surveillance-palestinians>

10 Middle East Eye. (2021, November 9). Meet Blue Wolf, the app Israel uses to spy on Palestinians in the occupied West Bank. Middle East Eye. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-whats-blue-wolf-app-soldiers-use-photograph-palestinians>

tracking them or preventing entry to their neighborhoods.”¹¹ Red Wolf, operating at Hebron checkpoints, determines passage and automatically enrolls Palestinians into databases without consent. A resident noted that soldiers can bar entry to their own home by claiming a person is “not in the database.”¹²

These technologies exemplify Foucault’s (Foucault, 2008) epistemic infrastructures, where colonial power is embedded in code. A 7amleh report concludes this deepens insecurity and militarization under the guise of security.¹³ As Tawil-Souri (Tawil-Souri, 2012) argues, Palestinian spaces function as “high-tech enclosures,” reflecting the bureaucratic and technological order which mediate the colonial violence. Additionally, AI-assisted targeting systems extend this logic by transforming Palestine into a laboratory for computational warfare. As Avner Ben Zaken, head of the Israeli army’s Technology and Logistics Division, explained:

“If I am developing a product and want to test it in the field, all I need to do is go five or ten kilometers... Gaza Is considered a site for testing forms of unmanned combat.” (Musleh, 2018).

This corresponds with research showing that Israel’s innovation economy is intertwined with military field-testing and the export of dual-use technologies (Kwet, 2022; Tarvainen & Challand, 2024).

Several reports¹⁴¹⁵¹⁶ document systems such as **Lavender, Where’s Daddy?** and **The Gospel**. Developed by Unit 8200, these systems flagged tens of thousands of Palestinians as targets with minimal human oversight. One officer described feeding hundreds of names into the system, calling them “garbage targets,” and bombing individuals once located at home.”¹⁷

Parallel reporting describes a “ChatGPT-like” LLM automating threat analysis and generating arrest lists¹⁸. As Nadim Nashif stated, “Palestinians have become subjects in Israel’s laboratory.”¹⁹ These systems blur distinc-

11 Amnesty International. (2023, May 2). Israel/OPT: Israeli authorities are using facial-recognition technology to entrench apartheid. Amnesty International. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/05/israel-opt-israeli-authorities-are-using-facial-recognition-technology-to-entrench-apartheid/>

12 Amnesty International. (2023, May 2). Israel/OPT: Israeli authorities are using facial-recognition technology to entrench apartheid. Amnesty International. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/05/israel-opt-israeli-authorities-are-using-facial-recognition-technology-to-entrench-apartheid/>

13 7amleh. (2023, December 19). Israel’s surveillance industry and human rights: Impact on Palestinians and worldwide. 7amleh. <https://7amleh.org/post/7amleh-center-issues-a-report-on-israel-s-surveillance-industry-and-its-impact-on-human-rights>

14 +972 Magazine. (2024, April 3). Lavender AI: How the Israeli army is using artificial-intelligence tools in Gaza. +972 Magazine. <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/>

15 The Guardian. (2024, April 3). ‘The machine did it coldly’: Israel used AI to identify 37,000 Hamas targets. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/03/israel-gaza-ai-database-hamas-airstrikes>

16 Albanese, F. (2025). From economy of occupation to economy of genocide: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/a-hrc-59-23-from-economy-of-occupation-to-economy-of-genocide-report-special-rapporteur-francesca-albanese-palestine-2025/>

17 +972 Magazine. (2024, April 3). Lavender AI: How the Israeli army is using artificial-intelligence tools in Gaza. +972 Magazine. <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/>

18 +972 Magazine. (2025, March 6). Israel developing ChatGPT-like tool that weaponizes surveillance of Palestinians. +972 Magazine. <https://www.972mag.com/israeli-intelligence-chatgpt-8200-surveillance-ai/>

19 +972 Magazine. (2025, March 6). Israel developing ChatGPT-like tool that weaponizes surveillance of Palestinians. +972 Magazine. <https://www.972mag.com/israeli-intelligence-chatgpt-8200-surveillance-ai/>

tions between civilians and combatants and enable “wide-area hunting.” Such systems exemplify Bauman’s (Bauman, 1989) notion of institutional violence, where killing becomes procedural and morally distanced.

4.1.2 Economic elimination: Tech sector, academia, and military complex

This section analyzes the “economy of occupation”—and its recent escalation into what Albanese (Albanese, 2025) terms an “economy of genocide”—through the lens of neoliberal Zionism. This ideological project merges the high-tech sector, military apparatus, and academic institutions to entrench a settler-colonial order characterized by territorial consolidation and digital labor exploitation.

Civil–Military–Academic Pipeline

In this regime, Israeli universities and private technology corporations are not merely adjacent to the state; they are structurally integrated hubs where weapons and surveillance systems are developed, field-tested on Palestinian populations, and subsequently commercialized for the global market. Albanese (Albanese, 2025)²⁰ argues these institutions “have enabled the conditions for the elimination of Palestinians” by providing technical foundations for state violence.

Israeli Universities host R&D collaborations with arms firms (Elbit Systems, Rafael) serving as recruitment pipelines for military intelligence units. Marwa, Palestinian engineers feel like “stranger, doesn’t belong” at university job fairs dominated by military contractors – a sentiment echoed by activists who describe the university as a “partner in Israel’s mechanisms of occupation.”²¹

Beyond recruitment, these institutions play a direct operational role in warfare. Multiple Reports²²²³²⁴ showed direct universities’ role in weapons development, the formulation of doctrines like the Dahiya Doctrine, and wartime initiatives such as TAU’s “engineering war room” (See the [video](#)) and the University of Haifa’s propaganda campaigns and material support for soldiers.²⁵ As Maya Wind (Wind, 2024) shows, these institutions also suppress Palestinian academic rights while reinforcing apartheid structures. Palestinian students in the Israeli Academia have told Middle East Eye²⁶ they feel increasingly isolated on campus.

20 Albanese, F. (2025). From the economy of occupation to the economy of genocide: Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967. Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/>

21 Kogan, Y. (2022, April 7). Academia, weapons and occupation: How Tel Aviv University serves the interests of the army and the military-industrial complex [In Hebrew]. Zo HaDerekh. <https://zoha.org.il/111858/>

22 BDS Movement. (n.d.). Academic boycott. BDS Movement. <https://bdsmovement.net/academic-boycott>

23 New Profile. (2025). Academia under orders: Militarism in Israeli academia — The collaboration between Israeli academia, the security establishment, and the military industry. [In Hebrew]. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/14ZfAZn-ltd3hQSBtqegNoxE3uLHZoXIS/view>

24 Kershner, I. (2024, December 5). Tel Aviv University developed dog-cameras for army unit linked to Gaza attacks. Middle East Eye. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/tel-aviv-university-developed-dog-cameras-army-unit-linked-gaza-attacks>

25 Al Jazeera. (2024, September 10). Israeli academia is directly complicit in the crimes of the state. Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2024/9/10/israeli-academia-is-directly-complicit-in-the-crimes-of-the-state>

26 Kershner, I. (2024, December 5). Tel Aviv University developed dog-cameras for army unit linked to Gaza attacks. Middle East Eye. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/tel-aviv-university-developed-dog-cameras-army-unit-linked-gaza-attacks>

“I walk through the university knowing some of my fellow students are taking part in war rooms, designing more efficient methods to carry out the genocide in Gaza,” said one who declined to be identified over fears they could be suspended for speaking out. “This marriage of militarism and educational institutions makes it extremely challenging to seriously engage with my studies, as I constantly question the ideology behind what we’re being taught.”

This militarized knowledge regime is sustained by significant international backing. European funding. European (Horizon Europe: over €2.12 billion)²⁷ and U.S. institutions provide extensive funding, embedding them further within the military apparatus.²⁸ The high-tech sector, rooted in military intelligence is central to automated repression (e.g., NSO Group, IBM). According to several reports^{29,30,31,32}, Project Nimbus (Google & Amazon) and Azure Microsoft intensified support for combat operations. Employee protests (No Tech for Apartheid) against corporate complicity led to mass firings^{33,34,35,36,37}, underscoring the structural entanglement of corporate infrastructure with the occupation, enabling the shift from an “economy of occupation” to an “economy of genocide”.³⁸

Ultimately, Israeli academia functions as a central R&D hub for the state’s surveillance infrastructure. Universities such as the Technion and Tel Aviv University host specialized laboratories where AI-driven biometric systems and predictive policing algorithms are developed in direct coordination with the Israeli Ministry of Defense. This structural integration creates a seamless pipeline between academic innovation and military application, where Palestinians in the 1967 territories serve as the involuntary subjects for ‘field-testing’ these digital tools. Embedding cyber-surveillance within university missions turns academic production into an extension

27 Il Manifesto. (2025, May 31). Fondi europei per la ricerca, 1 miliardo alla difesa di Israele. il Manifesto. [In Italian]. <https://ilmanifesto.it/fondi-europei-per-la-ricerca-1-miliardo-alla-difesa-di-israele>

28 New Profile. (2025). Academia under orders: Militarism in Israeli academia — The collaboration between Israeli academia, the security establishment, and the military industry. [In Hebrew]. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/14ZfAZn-ltd3hQSBtqegNoxE3uLHZoXIS/view>

29 Albanese, F. (2025). From the economy of occupation to the economy of genocide: Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967. Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/>

30 Davies, H. (2025, August 6). “A million calls an hour”: Israel relying on Microsoft cloud for expansive surveillance of Palestinians. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/aug/06/microsoft-israeli-military-palestinian-phone-calls-cloud>

31 Davies, H., & Abraham, Y. (2025, January 23). Revealed: Microsoft deepened ties with Israeli military to provide tech support during Gaza war. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jan/23/israeli-military-gaza-war-microsoft>

32 Davies, H. (2025, October 29). Revealed: Israel demanded Google and Amazon use secret ‘wink’ to sidestep legal orders. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/oct/29/google-amazon-israel-contract-secret-code>

33 Singh, K. (2025, August 29). Microsoft fires four workers on-site protests over company’s ties to Israel. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/society-equity/microsoft-fires-four-workers-on-site-protests-over-companys-ties-israel-2025-08-29/>

34 Singh, K. (2025, August 29). Microsoft fires four workers on-site protests over company’s ties to Israel. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/society-equity/microsoft-fires-four-workers-on-site-protests-over-companys-ties-israel-2025-08-29/>

35 De Vynck, G., & O’Donovan, C. (2024, April 16). Google workers arrested after protesting company’s work with Israel. The Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2024/04/16/google-sit-in-employee-protest-nimbus-israel/>

36 Middle East Eye. (2022, September 9). “Google chooses apartheid over justice”: Workers protest Project Nimbus — Israel, Amazon and Google cloud deal. Middle East Eye. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/project-nimbus-israel-apartheid-google-amazon-protests>

37 Middle East Eye. (2024, April 18). War in Gaza: Google fires employees protesting contract with Israel’s Project Nimbus. Middle East Eye. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/war-gaza-google-fires-employees-protesting-contract-israel-project-nimbus>

38 Albanese, F. (2025). From the economy of occupation to the economy of genocide: Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967. Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/>

of remote-control occupation. While the physical destruction of Palestinian universities in Gaza (Scholasticide) constitutes a profound epistemic erasure requiring separate extensive study, it must be understood here as the violent counterpart to the rise of Israel's militarized digital hegemony.

Technological Control and Dependent Labor Regimes

Economic elimination is also achieved through territorial consolidation, using technology to expand settler control. The “Silicon Wadi” project in East Jerusalem is viewed by Palestinian residents as an instrument of Judaization—aiming to integrate the area into a settler vision (Al-Arnaout, 2021)^{39,40}. Simultaneously, colonial economic relations structure Palestinian labor into dependent forms. Israeli regulations limit the Palestinian ICT sector's growth through import restrictions and spectrum denial. Outsourcing, framed as “coexistence,” exploits Palestinian labor potential and low cost⁴¹. Employment models (e.g., NVIDIA) are contingent on Israeli permits and security approvals⁴². Inas, a senior engineer, describes waiting daily for a Shin Bet-issued permit to reach her workplace at a tech company in Herzliya, noting: “Sometimes I wait for hours—or cannot cross at all,” and reflecting on the surreal image of passing the checkpoint with her laptop while her father crosses to build settlements. Such experiences exemplify what Clarno (Clarno, 2018a) terms **neoliberal apartheid**: a system that exploits Palestinian labor while sustaining dependency through administrative controls and coercive mobility regimes.

In response, some Palestinians pursue independent entrepreneurship to avoid subordination. Adnan founded his own start-up because he “did not want to be captive in an exploitative system,” yet even his cross-border partnership faced obstruction, as Israeli authorities repeatedly detained him and his business partner, Palestinian from the 48' territories, at checkpoints—an effort he understood as designed to “keep dividing us constantly.” Hazem similarly affirms that “any attempt at an independent Palestinian initiative...is halted by occupying forces,” underscoring Israel's refusal to allow Palestinian technological autonomy. These dynamics reveal how economic elimination does not erase Palestinian economic activity but restructures it into dependent and reversible forms, with Israeli regulatory power determining access to markets, mobility, and growth. Since October 7, 2023, mobility restrictions deepened, and military destruction wiped out Gaza's ICT sector—formerly 30% of the oPt's IT economy [27]—erasing infrastructure and knowledge.

4.1.3 Epistemic Elimination: Digital Platforms and Corporate Workplaces

Digital platforms are critical arenas for epistemic elimination, the systematic destruction of the ability to produce and circulate knowledge. In digital settler colonialism, this manifests as algorithmic epistemic violence that determines whose speech is amplified and whose is erased.

39 See more of the project here: <https://www.jerusalem5800.com/about/the-project>

40 See more of the project here: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org>

41 Alliance for Middle East Peace. (2025, November 20). Working together: Israeli and Palestinian coexistence in tech. <https://www.allmep.org/allmep-resources/working-together-israeli-and-palestinian-coexistence-in-tech/>

42 The Times of Israel. (2020, October 15). US firm Nvidia to employ 100 West Bank engineers as salaried workers. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/us-firm-nvidia-to-employ-100-west-bank-engineers-as-salaried-workers/>

7amleh (2024)⁴³ documents systematic suppression of Palestinian content through biased moderation, creating epistemic asymmetry: Palestinians are hyper-visible to surveillance but inaudible in public discourse. Post-October 7, this intensified. Meta's platforms amplified violence and dehumanization in Hebrew (e.g., "human animals"), allowing incitement to circulate while systematically censoring Palestinian narratives.⁴⁴⁴⁵ The Israeli army itself operated a Telegram channel publishing graphic content and dehumanizing language, confirming incitement originated from the IDF.⁴⁶ This disparity reveals a double standard embedded in Meta's policies where tolerance for Hebrew incitement amounts to complicity.⁴⁷

Epistemic elimination extends into the "neutral" spaces of high-tech workplaces. Digital repression is mirrored in tech hubs where Palestinian engineers are silenced or dismissed.⁴⁸⁴⁹ A survey by NAS⁵⁰ documents widespread fear among Palestinian engineers in Israel—44% afraid to attend work - highlighting how the workplace reinforces societal suspicion and fails to uphold diversity during crisis.⁵¹ This creates an epistemic hostile environment, where the Palestinian professional must choose between their career and their reality.

Furthermore, the discourse over diversity itself has been silenced. While Israeli tech international companies often market themselves globally through the lens of "coexistence" and "inclusion," the post-October 7 reality has exposed these frameworks as superficial. Diversity is tolerated only as long as it remains "politically mute." This misinterpretation is mirrored in the American and Israeli "Progressive" tech circles, which have adopted the stance known as "Progressive Except for Palestine" (PEP) offered by Ghassan Al-Hajj (Al-Hajj, 2019).

In this configuration, the high-tech workplace functions as a secondary border, where the "ideal" Palestinian worker is politically neutralized and rendered invisible.

43 7amleh – The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media. (2024, August 28). 70% of Palestinian youth in Israel practice self-censorship online. <https://7amleh.org/post/palestinian-youth-practice-self-censorship-online-en>

44 7amleh – The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media. (2024, August 28). 70% of Palestinian youth in Israel practice self-censorship online. <https://7amleh.org/post/palestinian-youth-practice-self-censorship-online-en>

45 7amleh – The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media. (2025, September 2). Meta's role in amplifying harmful content during genocide in Gaza. <https://7amleh.org/post/meta-s-role-during-genocide-en>

46 7amleh – The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media. (2025, September 2). Meta's role in amplifying harmful content during genocide in Gaza. <https://7amleh.org/post/meta-s-role-during-genocide-en>

47 7amleh – The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media. (2025, September 2). Meta's role in amplifying harmful content during genocide in Gaza. <https://7amleh.org/post/meta-s-role-during-genocide-en>

48 7amleh – The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media. (2025, September 2). Meta's role in amplifying harmful content during genocide in Gaza. <https://7amleh.org/post/meta-s-role-during-genocide-en>

49 7amleh – The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media. (2024). Delete the Issue: Tech Worker Testimonies on Palestinian Advocacy and Workplace Suppression [PDF report]. <https://7amleh.org/storage/Advocacy%20Reports/Delete%20the%20issue-11.11.pdf>

50 NAS Research & Consulting. (2024, January). Arabs in Hi-Tech: From Diversity to Inclusion [PDF report]. https://www.nasconsulting.co.il/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/NAS_Arabs-in-Hi-Tech-Diversity-to-Inclusion_En_Tsofen_Aug23.pdf

51 Gams, N. (2024, January 22). "It's hard to say what would be different if I were Israeli, but I come from a country ..." TheMarker. [In Hebrew]. <https://www.themarker.com/career/2024-01-22/ty-article-magazine/premium/0000018d-2bf2-daf5-a1bf-aff282150000>

4.2 RESISTING ELIMINATION: DIGITAL SUMŪD AS A MULTI-LAYERED ARCHITECTURE OF PRESENCE, SURVIVAL AND FUTURITY

Digital sumūd materializes through counter-infrastructures, archives, and alternative networks that resist physical, economic, and epistemic elimination. Bombardment, siege, displacement, starvation, infrastructural collapse, corporate entanglement, censorship, and scholasticide are not discrete processes but mutually reinforcing mechanisms designed to produce disappearance. In response, digital sumūd emerges as a layered architecture of resistance that sustains Palestinian life, visibility, and futurity across these domains. Rather than constituting isolated online acts, digital sumūd materializes through four interrelate practices: Material and infrastructural persistence, Connectivity as an act of Care and Survival, Digital Witnessing, Counter-Archives, and Institutional Mobilization, Rebuilding the nation as an act of digital Sumūd and Futurity

4.2.1 Connectivity and Infrastructural Persistence

The empirical evidence shows Palestinians respond to physical elimination—bombardment, displacement, siege, and engineered communication blackouts—by constructing improvised infrastructures that sustain life, connection, and visibility. Diaspora volunteers, digital-rights organizations, and civilians mobilized eSIMs, VPNs, mesh networks, satellite links, and mirrored accounts to counter deliberate disconnection. Rather than treating connectivity as a secondary communicative tool, the findings demonstrate that digital infrastructure becomes a survival architecture. Staying online is not symbolic—it is existential. Campaigns such as #ConnectingGaza⁵² and Reconnect Gaza⁵³ frame connectivity not only as a communicative right but as a matter of survival, aligning with decolonial design scholarship in which infrastructural practice becomes a means of repurposing technology for liberation.

During communication blackouts, maintaining digital connectivity becomes a life-affirming act. Grassroots engineers and NGOs—such as the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) and Access Now's KeepItOn Coalition—have also supported mesh networks, satellite communication, and offline archiving systems to preserve the flow of information. These acts of technological care expand the meaning of sumūd beyond defiance to include relational maintenance and mutual aid. Here, digital sumūd signifies the ethical practice of “staying online” as a collective refusal of erasure.

Individual narratives deepen this picture by showing how digital survival is inseparable from physical survival. Yasmina, a Palestinian tech worker in Gaza later killed in the 2024 airstrikes, described how electricity and internet shortages repeatedly disrupted her work. Under bombardment, she improvised continuity:

52 Landy, H., & Shabana, Y. (2025, October –). Tens of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza are staying connected to the world via donated eSIMs. Quartz. <https://qz.com/tens-of-thousands-of-palestinians-in-gaza-are-staying-c-1851078107>

53 7amleh – The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media. (2025, February 26). #ReconnectGaza – Reconnecting Gaza, empowering the future. <https://7amleh.org/reconnectgaza/en/>

“There was barely any electricity... My father helped by charging the laptop at the mosque, which always had a generator... He did this five times a day, during each of the five prayers.”

Her account reveals digital survival as a collective family effort rooted in care and endurance. The mosque’s generator—intended for worship—became part of an improvised network where religious space, family labor, and technological necessity converged. Connectivity emerged not from formal infrastructure but from relational coordination and sacrifice. In this context, remaining online was more than a technical task; it was an act of survival and visibility. Yasmina’s continued presence depended on intergenerational care and the deliberate maintenance of connection. Digital sumūd thus materialized through everyday practices of endurance.

The connectivity extends beyond the household to transnational networks. Amid acute food insecurity in Gaza⁵⁴—documented by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)⁵⁵ and the World Food Programme (WFP)⁵⁶—digital platforms became channels for survival and, grassroots solidarities have emerged. Jordanian chef Yasmin Nasir, for example, used Instagram to share ways of preparing meals from scarce ingredients.⁵⁷ Her activism illustrates how digital platforms facilitate cross-border relational solidarities, consistent with scholarship on affective forms of digital engagement.

Such exchanges demonstrate how connectivity operates as distributed care across borders. Through affective and practical solidarities, digital platforms become infrastructures of mutual aid. Connectivity enables emotional reassurance, informational exchange, and material survival strategies to move across territorial constraints.

Digital **sumūd** therefore expands beyond defiance to encompass connectivity as a deliberate practice of care and survival. To “stay online” is to refuse social death, to insist on relational continuity even when physical infrastructures are destroyed. Connectivity becomes both lifeline and political act—an everyday enactment of presence against disappearance.

4.2.2 Digital Witnessing, Counter-Archives, and Institutional Mobilization

This theme traces how Palestinians mobilize digital tools as a multidimensional strategy against physical and epistemic elimination. Through real-time witnessing, counter-archiving, and institutional advocacy, digital space becomes not only a terrain of surveillance but also a site of sumūd (steadfastness), narrative authority, and historical continuity.

54 World Health Organization. (2025, August 22). Famine confirmed for first time in Gaza. https://www.who.int/news/item/22-08-2025-famine-confirmed-for-first-time-in-gaza?utm_source

55 The Food and Agriculture Organization

56 The World Food Programme

57 See Yasmin’s Instagram page: <https://www.instagram.com/yasmin.nasir>

Digital witnessing as Resistance.

Digital witnessing and documentation by journalists such as Motaz Azaiza⁵⁸ and Bisan Owda⁵⁹ (Image 1 and 2) demonstrate how visibility becomes a form of resistance. Reporting from Gaza amid extreme danger, they livestream, photograph, and archive events in real time, countering both restrictions on foreign media and platform moderation practices. Here, documentation becomes a political act: it challenges narrative monopolies and produces an alternative evidentiary record. Visibility itself becomes an act of electronic resistance (Khoury-Machool, 2007; Shehadeh, 2023).



Image 1



Image 2

Digital Solidarity and Survival.

Beyond bombardment, starvation constitutes another dimension of elimination. Agencies such as The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)⁶⁰ and the World Food Programme (WFP)⁶¹ report unprecedented levels of acute food insecurity in Gaza.⁶² In response, transnational solidarities emerge online. Jordanian chef Yasmin Nasir used Instagram to share improvised cooking methods, offering practical knowledge and symbolic support.⁶³ Social media thus operates not only as a channel of information but as a space of relational care, sustaining life through shared knowledge.

Counter-Archives and Epistemic Disobedience.

In the face of censorship and destruction Palestinians increasingly turned to digital preservation (Ghaddar, 2025). As one scholar notes, “this systematic erasure is not new.”⁶⁴ Consequently, Initiatives such as the Palestinian Museum Digital Archive and Decolonize Palestine assert Palestinian perspectives as authoritative, refusing colonial control over what counts as

58 Motaz Azaiza—a journalist and photographer with a degree in English Translation from Al-Azhar University, one of several universities destroyed in recent Israeli airstrikes—emerged as one of the most influential visual chroniclers of the war. Beginning his career as a freelance photographer, Azaiza became one of the most widely followed and trusted voices reporting from Gaza during the Israeli military assault that began on October 7. Time selected one of his photos, depicting a child under the rubble caused by an Israeli bombing, as one of the ten most representative images of 2024 (See the link: https://www.arabnews.com/node/2612324/amp?utm_source)

59 Bisan - a digital content creator and youth activist from Gaza with a degree in Business Economics, has become internationally recognized for her on-the-ground reporting. Through her social-media series “This is Bisan from Gaza” and “I’m Still Alive,” she documents daily life under bombardment with a blend of immediacy and narrative clarity that has reached millions. Her work earned global acclaim, winning an Emmy Award after being nominated in the category of Outstanding Hard News Feature Story: Short Form at the 2024 News and Documentary Emmy Awards.

60 The Food and Agriculture Organization

61 The World Food Programme

62 World Health Organization. (2025, August 22). Famine confirmed for first time in Gaza. https://www.who.int/news/item/22-08-2025-famine-confirmed-for-first-time-in-gaza?utm_source

63 See Yasmin’s Instagram page: <https://www.instagram.com/yasmin.nasir>

64 Wilson, L. (2025, June 27). Historicide in Gaza: Israel’s destruction of official and personal archives is changing how Palestine’s story can be told. New Lines Magazine. <https://newlinesmag.com/essays/historicide-in-gaza/>

legitimate knowledge. Micro-archives—recording, screenshotting, and sharing—circulate widely during blackouts, while projects like Fighting Erasure coordinate transnational preservation efforts. Together, these practices form an infrastructure of memory and epistemic disobedience that safeguards historical continuity and contests epistemic hierarchies (Mignolo, 2009, 2011).

Institutional and Corporate Accountability.

Digital sumūd also operates through organized civil society advocacy. Organizations such as 7amleh, Adalah, Sada Social Center, and SMEX document algorithmic bias and content removal, transforming individual cases into evidence of structural censorship. Advocacy by Facebook, We Need to Talk⁶⁵ prompted an independent audit by Business for Social Responsibility, which confirmed systemic moderation disparities.⁶⁶

Parallel mobilization extends into academia and the tech sector. The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement and Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel challenge university and corporate ties to Israeli military and surveillance infrastructures.⁶⁷ PACBI⁶⁸ argues that the boycott disrupts knowledge pipelines that sustain military and surveillance regimes.⁶⁹ The intensification of global student activism post-October 7 exposed the “hypocrisy” of prestigious universities, leading BDS co-founder Omar Barghouti to frame the movement as “Palestine’s South Africa moment.”⁷⁰ This momentum has led dozens of universities to adopt divestment or suspend partnerships, marking unprecedented global academic engagement.



Image 3



Image 4

Within global tech firms, coalitions such as No Tech for Apartheid oppose projects like Project Nimbus.⁷¹ (See Image 3), a cloud-computing contract

65 7amleh – The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media. (n.d.). Delete the issue (Issue 11.11). <https://www.7amleh.org/storage/Advocacy%20Reports/Delete%20the%20Issue-11.11.pdf>

66 Human Rights Watch. (2022, September 27). Statement Regarding BSR’s HRA for Meta on Palestine & Israel. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/09/27/statement-regarding-bsrs-hra-meta-palestine-israel>

67 BDS Movement. (n.d.). Academic Boycott. <https://bdsmovement.net/academic-boycott>

68 The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel

69 BDS Movement. (n.d.). Academic Boycott. <https://bdsmovement.net/academic-boycott>

70 The Guardian. (2024, June 4). BDS founder hails campus protests for taking Israeli divestment mainstream. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/article/2024/jun/04/bds-omar-barghouti-israel-campus-protests>

71 Middle East Eye. (2022, September 2). Project Nimbus: Google employee accuses tech giant of profiteering from Palestinian pain. Middle East Eye. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/palestine-google-project-nimbus-employee-accuses-profiteering-pain>

between Google, Amazon, and the Israeli government.⁷² Direct-action campaigns such as Shut Elbit Down⁷³ (See image 4), target firms implicated in surveillance technologies, predictive analytics, and cloud infrastructure.

Collectively, these initiatives function as an economic and epistemic resistance toolkit, exposing corporate complicity and contesting digital colonial power from within its own infrastructures

4.2.3 Rebuilding the nation as an act of digital Sumūd and Futurity

This theme conceptualizes nation-building under conditions of siege not only as a post-colonial aspiration, but as an ongoing practice of **sumūd** (steadfastness) oriented toward futurity and building the economic nation. Palestinian technological and entrepreneurial initiatives demonstrate that rebuilding is not limited to physical reconstruction; it also entails the creation of alternative economic, epistemic, and infrastructural tech ecosystems virtually and physically. In this sense, technological practice becomes both a survival strategy and a prefigurative political act — an effort to materialize autonomy within structures of constraint.

Constructing Alternative Ecosystems Palestinian tech initiatives serve as institutional counterweights to structural dependency. Gaza Sky Geeks (digital incubator) and MENA Alliances (founded by Abeer Abu Ghaith - See image 6 below) connect workers to global markets, circumventing mobility restrictions and reducing reliance on Israeli labor. Palestine Open Maps reconstructs erased geographies, while BuildPalestine strengthens community-based innovation. These initiatives build sustainable, autonomous economic ecosystems (Althalathini et al., 2020; Althalathini & Tlaiss, 2023; Aouragh, 2011; Rindova et al., 2009), embodying entrepreneurial agency and decolonial technological practice despite the settler colonial reality.

Abeer, a tech entrepreneur from Jenin, articulated this logic succinctly. Despite movement restrictions and the absence of an airport, she emphasized the portability and autonomy enabled by digital labor:

“The laptop is very important; I always told my parents and my sister who work that the most important thing is the laptop. Even if all the roads were closed in your face, [the laptop] is still your portal/ door to the world...It was the only thing I needed to connect with people and recruit people from Gaza to work with me”



Image 6

Abeer's testimony highlights how digital labor transforms spatial restriction into networked mobility. The laptop operates as a micro-infrastructure of autonomy, enabling participation in global markets despite territorial enclosure and movement constraints. Connectivity thus functions not only as an economic strategy but as a political practice that challenges-imposed immobilization. By recruiting workers from Gaza, Abeer also

72 The Guardian. (2025, August 19). Microsoft workers protest Washington-Israel tech deal. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/aug/19/microsoft-workers-protest-washington-israel>

73 The Guardian. (2025, August 19). Microsoft workers protest Washington-Israel tech deal. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/aug/19/microsoft-workers-protest-washington-israel>

demonstrates how digital platforms re-link fragmented Palestinian geographies, fostering internal economic cohesion. In line with scholarship on entrepreneurial agency and digital transnationalism (Aouragh, 2011; Rindova et al., 2009), such initiatives position technology as an infrastructure of **sumūd** — a means of actively reorganizing economic relations under conditions of constraint rather than merely enduring them.

Majd, another tech entrepreneur from Gaza, exemplifies a materially grounded form of digital **sumūd**. Drawing on her technical expertise, she founded SunBox, a solar-energy startup that provided sustainable electricity and water access to tens of thousands of residents, including vulnerable communities without the need of Israel. “We barely have electricity, before October 7th we had only 6 hours of electricity. This is where the idea of Sunbox came from”. In the context of infrastructural collapse and chronic energy shortages, renewable technology functioned simultaneously as a survival mechanism and as a model for decentralized autonomy.



Image 7

After an airstrike destroyed her home, Majd and her father developed GreenCake, an initiative that transformed rubble from demolished buildings into recycled construction materials. This project earned her the nickname “Bint al-Hajar” (The Brick Lady). (See image 7). Her trajectory illustrates how technological skill can be mobilized to reconstruct both material conditions and social infrastructure under extreme precarity. She shared:

“My friends were murdered during one of the military invasions.... This incident had a huge impact; our house was also destroyed. I developed a sense of frustration, like how long are we going to wait for Qatar and the United Nations to build our town, and how long are we going to wait for the help of international organizations when ninety-four percent of us are educated? so why don’t we produce? I have always had this curiosity, you see people abroad producing, so why can’t we produce as well?”

The war on Gaza, however, severely disrupted these projects. SunBox was buried under rubble. On her Facebook page, Majd wrote (See image 8):

“All the memories, certificates, awards, gifts, and photos—my entire life’s work—have disappeared and been erased under the rubble.”

This statement reflects not only material destruction but epistemic loss — the erasure of professional trajectories and accumulated recognition.



Image 8

Similarly, Dalia, another tech entrepreneur from Gaza, posted an image of the damaged premises of Gaza Sky Geeks shown on the following page (See image 9). Beneath the photograph of the ruins, she wrote:

“The Gaza I knew has been completely transformed by the destruction caused by the occupation’s attacks. I believe with all my heart that we will rebuild it like a phoenix rising from the ashes—full of life!”

These testimonies reveal how digital platforms mediate destruction and futurity simultaneously. Social media platforms become a space where loss is documented, grief is articulated, and reconstruction is imagined. Individual resilience is transformed into communicative resistance: an assertion of presence, continuity, and collective determination. Such cases resonate with scholarship suggesting that technological entrepreneurship can operate as an emancipatory pathway for marginalized communities seeking autonomy and collective transformation (Awwad & Toyama, 2024; Mignolo, 2009; Rindova et al., 2009; Shehadeh, 2023). Tech innovation, in this framing, is not detached from politics; it is embedded within struggles over survival, dignity, and future-making.

At the end, rebuilding through technology and digital platforms is not postponed to a hypothetical post-war future. It unfolds amid destruction as an act of **sumūd** and as a claim to futurity. Through alternative digital ecosystems, renewable energy initiatives, entrepreneurial reconstruction, and online testimony, Palestinians enact a form of nation-building grounded in technological skill and collective imagination. These practices demonstrate that technology can serve not only as an instrument of control but also as a medium for survival, reconstruction, and political agency. The rebuilding of Gaza thus emerges as both a material and epistemic project — one that insists on life, continuity, and the right to imagine a better future.

5. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the Israeli occupation has entered a fully digital phase in which algorithmic systems, data infrastructures, and innovation economies now perform functions once carried out by soldiers and bureaucrats. Remote-control governance—through AI-assisted targeting, biometric surveillance, automated checkpoints, and network control—intensifies rather than replaces colonial domination. Palestinians become hyper-visible as data subjects yet illegible as political actors, rendered knowable to machines while erased within humanitarian, academic, and innovation discourses. This is the automation of apartheid: the translation of racialized governance into computational form. The analysis identifies three interlocking modes of digital elimination: physical (automated targeting and systems like Blue Wolf/Lavender), economic (embedding occupation in global markets and



Image 9

denying technological sovereignty via the civil–military–academic nexus), and epistemic (platform censorship, archival destruction, and scholasticide).

Against this regime, Palestinians cultivate digital sumūd—a form of epistemic disobedience that builds alternative communication, archiving, and community infrastructures. Through distributed documentation and transnational solidarity, they reclaim digital space for resistance and endurance.

Resisting algorithmic occupation requires dismantling oppressive digital systems and designing decolonial technological futures that prioritize Palestinian digital sovereignty, moving beyond narrow Western AI-ethics frameworks. The rise of digital sumūd underscores that struggles over data and AI are integral to liberation and accountability.

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