



Palestine and EU

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INTRODUCTION

Diplomacy involves a set of practices that govern formal dialogue between sovereign states. This state-based conception fails to capture the complex and networked international politics that involve a multiplicity of actors (Kuus 2014). Diplomacy is a product of the Westphalian geopolitical ordering. Political struggles against the binary divide of the world into sovereign centres of power and unsovereign peripheries of unrecognised and subaltern subjects are constantly challenging this ordering. From this perspective, self-determination and anti-colonial movements are always involved in various forms of diplomatic practices in an attempt to resist their exclusion from the world's map and relegation to unsovereign or 'liminal' spaces (McConnell 2017).

As critical scholarship suggests, geopolitics is an imperialist discipline that imbricates knowledge and power to impose an imagined spatial order (Dalby 2008; Tuathail 1996). The universalisation of state-based division of the earth is premised on denying many nations their right to exercise

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self-determination and self-representation over their territories. Subjugated nations retaliate against this exclusionary geopolitical and diplomatic structuring. To that end, these ‘liminal’ actors engage in diplomacy in an attempt to “carve out subject positions, repertoires of practice and alternative spaces of diplomacy which embrace inbetweenness, processuality and ambivalence” (McConnell 2017, 2). To interpret non-state actors’ conduct of diplomacy, relevant literature qualifies the term ‘diplomacy’ by adding prefixes (e.g., para- or protodiplomacy) or adjectives (e.g., constituent, multi-layered, plurinational or transnational diplomacy). According to Alexander Kuznetsov (2015), these concepts refer to the same phenomenon and may be used interchangeably.

This chapter demonstrates the explanatory limitations of these frameworks and concepts with respect to liberation and resistance movements against alien rule. It does so by examining Palestinian diplomatic interactions with the EU. This chapter seeks to answer the following questions: How and why does Palestine engage in diplomacy with the EU? What are the concrete achievements of this diplomatic effort? The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is the official representative of the Palestinians and has been leading its diplomatic struggle since its creation in 1964. Hamas is another significant Palestinian political and resistance movement that conducts diplomacy outside the PLO. Hamas’s (para-) diplomatic interactions with the EU are limited because of ideological and political reasons (Charrett 2019; Pace and Pallister-Wilkins 2018). For reasons of space, this chapter focuses only on the representative Palestinian diplomatic activities.

I argue that Palestinian diplomacy is inextricable from their pursuit of independence and must therefore be situated in the context of decolonisation struggles. The central aim of Palestinian diplomacy is geopolitical. Through diplomatic action, Palestinian actors seek to achieve self-determination and reposition ‘Palestine’ on the world’s map as a sovereign state. The precise shape of this desired statehood varied over time. The PLO initially defined independence as the creation of a democratic Palestinian state for all in the entire historical space of Palestine (Palestinian National Charter 1968). In 1974, however, the PLO settled for a Palestinian state in 22 percent of this space, i.e., the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip—known as Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT).

Considering the colonial context and extensive Palestinian diplomatic representation worldwide, and in the EU in particular, there is a need to

critically appraise the debate on paradiplomatic practices. This chapter contributes to this effort by focusing on liberation movements and colonised authorities' use of diplomacy in their struggle for decolonisation and independence. The chapter makes two contributions. Theoretically, it questions the applicability of the paradiplomacy framework to colonial situations. First, actual colonial or occupation authorities lack the normative and legal dimensions of sovereignty, and, by implication, liberation movements are not sub-units of the colonial state. Second, it demonstrates that the nature of their diplomatic conduct is contingent on the degree of institutionalisation of diplomatic presence within the international society and how the majority of other states and international institutions diplomatically interact with liberation movements.

The other contribution concerns the Palestinian diplomatic interactions with the EU and shows that although the EU does not recognise Palestine, the level of diplomatic engagement between them has crossed the threshold of liminality and paradiplomacy. A related argument I make posits that PLO-EU advanced diplomatic structures are founded on the EU's terms. The PLO is entrapped in state-level diplomacy that affords it a semblance of statehood that restricted its authentic character as liberation and anti-colonial movement.

Palestine (represented by the PLO) and the EU are atypical diplomatic actors. As Merje Kuus (2014, 75) suggests, "EU diplomacy is transnational rather than international" and runs through multiple networked institutions. This multiplicity provides unrecognised diplomatic figures, various opportunities and access points to convey their political interests. For instance, Palestinian and Sahrawi 'diplomats' found the European Parliament (EP) a convenient political environment to practice diplomacy and lobbying techniques, and began to seek new avenues to communicate with other EU institutions such as the Commission and European External Action Service (EEAS) (Bouris and Fernández-Molina 2018; Voltolini 2016).

Since 2012, Palestine has achieved extensive international diplomatic presence. This presence and action fit neither the classical grammar of diplomacy nor paradiplomacy or protodiplomacy. The last two frameworks seek to explain diplomatic practices of sub-units of states such as provinces, regions and secessionist areas. Although the Palestinians have no sovereign control over any part of Palestine between River Jordan and the Mediterranean, their supposed 'statehood' in the OPT has wide international recognition. The EU-Palestine interactions are multifaceted and

deeply institutionalised in ways that transcend the limitation of paradiplomacy, as the following sections demonstrate. Against this backdrop, the diplomatic activities of political entity that has an extensive level of diplomatic relations, international recognition and a priori right for independence and sovereign self-representation transcend the exegesis of paradiplomacy.

Irrespective of exact terms, all forms of diplomacy are political practices that originate from how diplomats see the world, judge and act. What matters here is diplomatic practices and their outcomes, which the following four sections seek to illustrate. The first section provides a brief overview of the concepts that attempt to theorise non-sovereign diplomacy. The second section situates the Palestinian conduct of diplomacy within the broader struggle for self-determination and independence against Israeli settler-colonial practices. The third section examines the Palestine-EU diplomatic relationship and illustrates its evolution, consolidation and institutionalisation. The fourth section explores proactive Palestinian diplomatic conduct involved in the so-called internationalisation of the Palestinian cause. This chapter concludes by underlining the need for broadening the scholarly debate on diplomacy in order to account for diplomatic practices of colonised and unrecognised authorities or states.

DIPLOMACY, POLITICS AND NON-SOVEREIGN ACTORS

In the aftermath of World War II, nation-states further institutionalised diplomatic conduct as an exclusive sovereign competence. Almost all United Nations (UN) member states, including the ‘non-member observer state’ of Palestine, ratified the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, which defines diplomatic privileges (UN 1961). Although this structural exclusion has pushed non-sovereign players (e.g., de facto states, native peoples, national movements, supranational institutions, multinational corporates, cities and regions) to the margins of the international society, it failed to prevent them from developing innovative and parallel diplomatic practices in order to transcend the relatively closed state-based geopolitical order. Non-sovereign diplomats tend to actively replicate “UN structures and mimicking the protocols of formal state diplomacy” (McConnell 2017, 2). Moreover, diplomatic privileges are no longer restricted to state representatives but may also be extended to non-sovereign diplomats. For example, Norway (in 2011) and Sweden (in 2012) granted the Palestinian Missions in Oslo and Stockholm and their

diplomatic personnel and families diplomatic privileges equivalent to the Vienna Convention (Riksdag 2012; Norwegian Government 2011).

International Relations (IR) scholars who embrace a non-state-based research agenda emphasised role non-sovereign diplomatic practices play in international politics. To capture this phenomenon, diplomacy literature developed different concepts that, for example, include: “paradiplomacy”, “protodiplomacy” (Duckacek 1990), “constituent diplomacy” (Kincaid 2001), “multilayer diplomacy” (Hocking 1993), “plurinational diplomacy” (Aldecoa 1999) and “liminal” diplomacy (McConnell 2017) to account for non-sovereign diplomacy.

Paradiplomacy and protodiplomacy are relevant for the purpose of this chapter and therefore must be clarified here. The former refers to the international political activities of sub-state governments such as local authorities of cantons, cities, provinces, regions, sub-states or federates. These sub-state actors engage in paradiplomatic practice to advance a variety of low politics objectives (e.g., promotion of local development, resolving transborder issues, cultural exchange) without challenging the central state’s sovereignty. Protodiplomacy, however, is enacted with the intention of contesting the parent state’s authority, and therefore has a secessionist dimension (Duckacek 2019; Cornago 2018; Kuznetsov 2015). Alexander Kuznetsov (2015, 88) distinguishes separatist and non-recognised states’ diplomacy from “nationalist/cultural” paradiplomacy. Separatist diplomacy stands in direct opposition to the parent state and uses diplomacy to break away from its authority.

Protodiplomacy is strongly linked to struggles for state recognition, and thus it presents an opportunity to cross the threshold and leave the ‘liminal’ space and join the sovereignty club (Coggins 2014; McConnell 2017). Furthermore, a central aspect of unrecognised or *de facto* states’ diplomatic practices is ideational. Actions of representatives of unrecognised states or secessionist entities are premised on their firm self-perceived sovereign agency and legitimacy to represent their people in international forums. For that purpose, they usually emulate orthodox diplomatic protocols as a means to satisfy their identity (as sovereign agents) and accrue symbolic power and demonstrate their state-like capabilities to the international community.

It is worth mentioning that Kuznetsov (2015) excluded diplomatic actions of Palestine and Western Sahara, and did not refer to them as cases of para- or protodiplomacy. As far as Palestine is concerned, the following remarks must be clarified before applying either framework. First, Palestine

and the Palestinians (this also applies to Western Sahara and East Timor until 1999) is a colonised space and nation rather than a sub-national group (or sub-unit) of Israel. Israel is an external settler-colonial power from which the Palestinians seek freedom and independence (Veracini 2006; Pappé 2017; Badarin 2015). Second, this is also a struggle for decolonisation rather than secession/separation (Badarin 2021d). Third, Palestine is not a de facto state but rather meticulously colonised spaces, some of which are partially administered by the Palestinian Authority (PA) in populated Palestinian towns in the West Bank or by Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Although Israel is the only sovereign power in the historical land of Palestine, its control of the OPT—and the Occupied Syrian Golan—is illegal under international law, and therefore the international community and the EU do not recognise Israel's sovereignty over these territories (European Commission 2013).

Fionna McConnell (2017) uses the notion of 'liminal space' to account for the diplomatic activists that stand outside the state/non-state binary division. According to her, these actors are situated on the threshold and occupy the in-between space. It is vital, however, to emphasise that the threshold position and marginality are the outcome of contingent and heterogeneous conditions of international politics. Unrecognised diplomats' degree of 'liminality' and marginalisation in the international system is experienced differently, depending on their capabilities, legal and moral legitimacy and resources. Thus, their diplomatic conduct must be carefully differentiated.

Although colonised nations, as in the case of Palestine, remain within this liminal geopolitical space, international law grants them a priori right for independence and self-representation. Post-World War II, normative architecture articulated self-determination of colonised nation as a positive right (Fabry 2010), which enabled anti-colonial movements to establish diplomatic contacts with different states and international institutions. The Palestinian right for self-determination and the illegality of the Israeli occupation provide the legal and moral scaffolding for the Palestinian political and diplomatic interaction with the international society. This effort culminated in an international consensus affirming the need to establish a Palestinian state and wide international recognition of Palestine (Badarin 2021d). This widespread international consensus not just enabled the broadening of Palestinian diplomatic presence globally, but also prompted numerous countries and international organisations like the EU to set up representative diplomatic missions and offices in the OPT.

DIPLOMACY VERSUS SETTLER-COLONIAL ELIMINATION

In 1799, Napoleon sought to establish a foothold in Palestine and offered to transform it into a Jewish homeland under French protection (Merkley 1998). In 1882, this vision became a concrete project and European Jewish settlers began to arrive at and establish their first settlements in Palestine. In the late nineteenth century, the Zionist movement was founded as a response to hostility towards Jews and rampant anti-Semitism in Europe. Zionism is driven by theological and irredentist impulses calling for 'redemption' and 'return' of Jewry to 'the Land of Israel' and establishing Jewish sovereignty there. European imperial expansions and Zionism coincided and overlapped (Badarin 2021d).

The conquest and occupation of Palestine in 1917 are direct results of European imperialist and geopolitical designs. Unlike former colonial spaces, European powers, Britain in particular, denied the Palestinian people the right to independence after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. In 1917, Britain's support for the Zionist project was unequivocally articulated in the so-called Balfour Declaration, a pledge to turn Palestine into a Jewish homeland regardless of the native population's interests and desires (Schneer 2011). Many scholars interpret this structuring from the paradigm of settler-colonialism (Veracini 2006; Khalidi 2020; Pappé 2012). As Patrick Wolfe (2006) forcefully argues, the desire to establish a settler state in the conquered territory, which usually requires the elimination of the natives and replacing them with settlers, is the essence of settler-colonialism. European colonialism and Zionist settler-colonialism of Palestine are premised on the problematisation of the relationship between the Palestinians and their land (Masalha 1992). Breaking this bond and eliminating the Palestinian presence on the land is the core of the Palestine-Israel conflict (Badarin 2021c).

In 1948, the combined effects of British imperialism and Zionism resulted in two indivisible outcomes: the foundation of Israel and the displacement of the majority of the Palestinian population (about 800,000) and the destruction of over 500 of their villages and towns (Pappé 2007; Morris 2004). From the Palestinian perspective, this process put in place an-Nakba (the Catastrophe), a phenomenon that represents the continued spatial and social fragmentation of Palestine.

Since 1948, this struggle can be characterised not just as a one for decolonisation, liberation and independence but also as a struggle for *sumud* (steadfastness) on the land of Palestine and resistance to

settler-colonial elimination (Badarin 2021a). An-Nakba and the breakdown of the Palestinian political elite and system inflected a diplomatic void. The Palestinian people were subsequently left without self-representation. In 1964, the PLO was founded to officially embody the Palestinian political agency in the international arena (Heikal 1996; Al-Shuqayri 1964). Further, the centre of their political and diplomatic system was repeatedly displaced. It was initially displaced from Palestine in 1948 and 1967, from Jordan in 1971, from Lebanon in 1982 and from Tunisia in 1993 to Gaza, and now it is located in Ramallah in the West Bank. The Palestinian diplomatic centre has been built either in exile and on borrowed or on colonised land and premises, and has therefore been chronically unstable and deeply vulnerable to external pressure.

In 1967, the PLO prioritised the armed struggle over diplomatic and political action as a strategy for liberation and the establishment of a democratic state in Palestine's historical space. In 1974, however, the Palestinian National Council (PNC) reversed this order. It adopted the so-called Ten-Point Program (PNC 1974), and officially prioritised diplomacy as a tool for creating a Palestinian state in the OPT, on only 22 percent of its original position (Badarin 2016). Since the mid-1970s, diplomacy dominated the PLO's activities abroad. The PLO's 1974 concession was a stepping stone into its normalisation and socialisation within the UN and European diplomatic and political realms. The UN recognised the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the PLO as their legitimate representative. It also invited the PLO to set up an observer mission in the UN headquarter. In 1988, the PLO declared the independence of the State of Palestine, and over 80 states recognised it within a few months. In 1988, while being part of the Warsaw Pact, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia (currently EU member states) recognised Palestine thanks to the PLO's close relations with the Soviet Union. In addition to these Eastern European countries, Palestine has full diplomatic representation with Cyprus, Malta and Sweden.

In hindsight, the PLO's major territorial concession and clutch to diplomacy engendered an array of events that gave rise to the 1993 Oslo Accords. As stipulated in these accords, the PA was established as the executive body of the PLO in populated Palestinian urban centres in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Although the PLO remains the official representative of the Palestinian people, its actual capacity to represent is deficient for two main reasons. First, it has failed to adapt to the Palestinian political environment, and thus major Palestinian political movements are still

unrepresented in the PLO. Second, the overlap between the PLO and PA (and, since 2012, the ‘State of Palestine’) relegated the PLO’s role in practice. The PA adopted a state-like structure and discourse and began to act as a state and employ diplomatic protocols. It founded various ministries and ministers. The PLO/PA developed extensive diplomatic corps. In the early 2000s, the PA officially established the Ministry and Minister (subject positions) of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates (PMFAE). The PMFAE and the ‘President of Palestine’ are responsible for the diplomatic relations. However, it is hard to assess their degree of influence over Palestinian diplomacy because of the institutional overlap and authoritarian structure of the PA.

PALESTINE-EU RELATIONS BEYOND PARADIPLOMACY

Palestine and Europe both have prefigured in each other’s geopolitics, history and narratives. As noted earlier, the roots of the ongoing conflict in Palestine is inextricable from the European imperialist legacy and its colonial and neo-colonial geopolitical designs and interventions in non-European spaces (Badarin and Wildeman 2021; Pace and Roccu 2020). Palestinian and EU diplomatic and political relations are always already performed against this background and the path-dependence it produced.

Human imaginations, judgements and narratives about the world shape their political actions. During the 1950s and 1960s, many European actors perceived Israel and Zionism (the ideological movement) as embodiments of progressive social ideals (Lidén 2017). At the same time, the Palestinian narrative was generally dismissed, and started to gain traction only in the 1980s (Pappé 2017). The acceptance of the Zionist narrative and denial of its Palestinian counterpart constrained the latter’s diplomatic interactions with official Europe for a long time.

In the early 1970s, the PLO arrived at the European diplomatic stage through the Euro-Arab Dialogue between the European Community (EC) and Arab states. The EC opposed initially any Palestinian representation alongside the Arab delegations, at a time when the PLO already embraced the EC’s position and implicitly recognised the UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution 242. The European rejection coincided with the UN invitation to Yasser Arafat, then head of the PLO, to deliver a speech and participate in the General Assembly’s debates.

To outmanoeuvre the Palestinian diplomatic representation, the EC proposed that only cooperation and technical issues may be discussed in

the meetings of the Euro-Arab Dialogue. It also downgraded the political stature of these meeting by sending delegations of experts. This arrangement, dubbed the ‘Dublin formula’, permitted a form of PLO’s representation within the Arab delegations. The PLO accepted a technocratic representation and sent a representative from the Palestine National Fund who conveyed its desire to establish a cultural, economic and political dialogue with EC. Despite their reduced stature, the PLO considered its participation in these meetings as an opportunity to engage in future diplomatic communication with Europe (Al-Dajani 1980).

The discussion of the political issues proved to be unavoidable. Despite its diluted political representation, the PLO played a significant role in the background (Al-Dajani 1980). In 1977, the EC issued a statement supporting the “legitimate right of the Palestinian people” and their “need for a homeland”; it also reaffirmed its support of the UNSC resolution 242 and non-recognition of Israel’s occupation of the OPT (European Council 1977, 2). Meanwhile, the EC adopted a restrictive policy towards diplomatic contacts with the PLO; its constituents (Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, Italy) permitted the PLO to set up information offices in their capitals. The PLO’s presence in Belgium, in particular, facilitated its communication with the EC’s institutions in Brussels.

The Euro-Arab Dialogue created a platform for indirect diplomatic interactions between the PLO and EC. The PLO’s growing political socialisation in the European and international arena further consolidated its shift from the liberation of historical Palestine to independence and statehood in the OPT (Badarin 2016). In 1980, the EC issued the Venice Declaration, which outlined a common European position recognising the need to enable the Palestinian people to “exercise fully its right to self-determination” (EC 1980). The Venice Declaration created a new direction for the PLO to widen its political representation in the EC and other European capitals. Later, the EU promoted the Palestinian representation into the Mission of Palestine to the EU, and the “Mission of Palestine to the Kingdom of Belgium, the EU and Luxemburg” in 2012.

Since the early 1990s, the PA/PLO-EU relations have experienced a significant evolution. In 1993, this relationship entered a new phase following the signing of the Oslo Accords. This created a new political impetus and a gradual institutionalisation of the PLO-EU diplomatic communications and economic and security relations. In particular, the EU used its economic and diplomatic weight to manage the conflict and to govern from a distance (Badarin 2021b). Furthermore, the EU

undertook the Oslo peace process and its relationship with the PLO/PA as a central feature of its foreign policy in the Middle East (EUGS 2016), and presented its interventions as state-building and development aid (Bouris 2014; Wildeman 2018). The EU considered its active diplomatic and economic engagement with the PA as central to its geopolitical and security strategy in the Middle East. It accordingly established a network of cultural, economic, political and security institutions and programmes and stepped up its influence over Palestinian civil society and non-governmental organisations.

In November 1993, the European Parliament formed a temporary delegation for Palestine, which became permanent (in 1996) before it was renamed as the “Delegation for relations with Palestine” (DPAL) in 2015 (European Parliament *n.d.*). Its main mission is to provide information on Palestine to the European Parliament and its committees. It also organises visits to the OPT and holds meetings with various Palestinian political actors and non-governmental organisations. In doing so, the DPAL combines both traditional diplomatic and activist actions. In the following year, the EU founded the Office of the European Union Representative for the West Bank, Gaza Strip and United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) (previously known as the European Commission Technical Assistance Office) to facilitate the EU-funded projects and interventions in the OPT. In particular, the European Commission appoints its own representative within the office’s diplomatic personnel who provides it with a direct access to the “diplomatic community along with the Member States represented locally” in Palestine. The EU uses the office to conduct diplomatic communications with the Palestinians (EEAS *n.d.*).

In 1996, the EU founded the subject position of the EU Special Representative (or Envoy) to the Middle East Peace Process. The representative performs specific diplomatic tasks in coordination with the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR/VP) and the Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP) missions operating in the OPT (e.g., EUBAM, EUPOL COPPS). The following year, the EU-PA/PLO relationship acquired legal force after they had signed the Association Agreement in 1997 (EEC 1997).

The PA-EU economic and political relations are tightly focused on the security field. The EU approaches the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through the prism of the CFSP, and thus it places a particular emphasis on geopolitics and security (Müller 2017). In 2005, and within the framework of the 2003 Roadmap, drafted by the Quartet on the Middle East (the EU, the

United States [US], Russia and the UN), the EU deployed the European Union Border Assistance Mission for the Rafah Crossing Point (EUBAM Rafah) and the European Union Police Mission for the Palestinian Territories (EUPOL COPPS). The EU security mission focused on disciplining and training the Palestinian police forces, developing criminal justice and the judiciary system based on EU (foreign) codes. These missions provide a medium for direct interaction between the EU and its sub-commissions and multiple Palestinian political institutions and actors (e.g., Ministry of Interior, Prime Minister) (Council of the EU 2005). Official EU discourse presents these missions in the guise of technical assistance. However, critical research demonstrates how they serve the EU's efforts to impose its geopolitics through social and economic reforms, which are premised on securitisation, governmentality and disciplinary rationalities (Badarin 2021b; Tartir and Ejodus 2018).

The Palestine-EU diplomatic interactions are further consolidated by incorporating the PA into various EU geopolitical projects. For example, Palestine has full membership in the 1995 Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), the 2004 European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the 2008 Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). Moreover, the EU considers “political dialogue” with the Palestinians a central piece of their relationship (EEAS n.d.). These frameworks provide an institutional and legal umbrella for a wide-ranging PLO/PA-EU relationship and direct diplomatic communication at different levels and fields (cultural, economic and political), including bilateral agreements (e.g., Action Plan 2013, Special Support Framework 2014–2016, European Joint Strategy in Support of Palestine 2017–2020).

Diplomacy and recognition are intimately interlinked (Bull 1977). In the post-1945 international order, external recognition is constitutive of statehood and sovereignty (Coggin 2014). The PLO appreciates the constitutive value of external recognition, especially from global actors, and uses diplomacy to accomplish this goal. Despite the EU's non-recognition, the institutionalised diplomatic relations with the EU constitute a critical external economic and political scaffolding that sustains the PA's authority. More importantly, these diplomatic structures are the only vestiges left from the two-state solution, which both the PA and EU (at least rhetorically) aspire to achieve.

PALESTINIAN DIPLOMACY, INTERNATIONALISATION AND THE EU

Having discussed the general decolonial premise of Palestinian diplomatic practices and the institutionalisation of the PLO/PA-EU diplomatic interactions, the analysis now proceeds to examine a recent Palestinian diplomatic campaign, which was referred to as the ‘internationalisation of the Palestinian cause’ (*tadwil al-qadiyya al-falastinia*).

In 2009, the PA anticipated that the Obama Administration would be more responsive to the Palestinian needs. The leaked negotiation record reveals that the maximum this administration offered was “a mutually agreed outcome” (i.e., not a two-state solution on the 1967 borders) that would tolerate “subsequent developments” in the West Bank (i.e., Israeli settlements) and the annexation of East Jerusalem (Document 4899 2009). The PA’s optimism vanished rapidly. It began to seek avenues to break away from the US-Israel-dominated political process. In this context, the PA invoked the so-called ‘international legitimacy’ and recognition as a way forward. This diplomatic strategy, dubbed ‘internationalisation’, focused on the recognition of Palestine as an independent state in the OPT. It aimed to “re-put the state of Palestine on June 1967 with East Jerusalem as its capital on the geographic map” and to keep the Palestinian cause at the centre of Arab and international politics (Erekat 2012, 4).

The internationalisation campaign involved active diplomatic actions at the international stage to promote the recognition of Palestine. Accordingly, the PLO/PA released the ‘State 194’ campaign (the number 194 signifies both the Palestinian right of return and the total number of the UN’s member states if Palestine were to be recognised) in an attempt to influence the international opinion and to lobby other states, in particular the EU and its member states, to support its application for a UN membership, which was submitted in September 2011 (PA 2011). The US vowed to veto this bid, and therefore the PA approached the UN General Assembly in 2012, which accorded Palestine an observer non-member state status (UN 2012).

The EU and its member states were primary sites for the Palestinian diplomatic campaign. For example, the PA lobbied in the European Parliament, held official meetings with EU representatives, sent official letters, constructed online campaigns and mobilised Palestinian embassies and missions in European capitals to convince the EU and its member states to support the Palestinian UN membership. Several European

parliaments (e.g., France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom [UK]) adopted non-binding motions urging their governments to recognise Palestine.

The EU did not develop a common position on recognition, and by implication, it was up to each member state to vote according to its foreign policy (Euractive 2012). On November 29, 2012, the same day the UN General Assembly granted Palestine a non-member observer state status, the EU issued a statement pledging to recognise a Palestinian state when “appropriate” (EU 2012). In 2014, the EU Parliament echoed the EU’s statement and expressed its readiness to recognise Palestine “in principle”; it also acknowledged the PA’s state-like functions and capacities (European Parliament 2014). This was a pragmatic way to balance the EU’s so-called state building interventions and the refusal to support the recognition of Palestine when it was required.

Palestine’s new non-member observer state status enabled it to gain membership in several international organisations and to become a party to international agreements and conventions. Some western European states upgraded the Palestinian representative missions and granted them diplomatic immunity, while Iceland and Sweden recognised Palestine in 2011 and 2014, respectively (Badarin 2020).

As the official EU recognition seemed unforthcoming, the PA focused on urging the EU to take concrete measures to corroborate and consolidate its non-recognition of Israel’s control over the OPT. Official Palestinian representatives and advocacy groups resorted to diplomacy to extract an unambiguous exclusion of the OPT from EU-Israel cooperation projects and trade arrangements (Voltolini 2016). The Palestinians concentrated intensely on EU rules of origin and preferential treatment of products made in Israeli settlements. Since 2012, the EU has adopted positions that require an unequivocal “differentiation” between pre-1967 Israel and the OPT; these positions also affirmed the inapplicability of the EU-Israel agreements beyond the 1967 borders (Azarova 2017).

In 2013, the European Commission issued “guidelines” outlawing EU support in the form of financial instruments, grants and prizes for Israeli entities and activities in territories occupied by Israel in 1967 (European Commission 2013). In 2015, the EU required that Israeli goods produced in the territories occupied in 1967 must be labelled clearly as originating from the settlements (European Commission 2015). The issue of settlements’ products has significant legal and symbolic impacts for both the Palestinians and the EU. Non-preferential treatment of settlement

products has broader legal, normative and symbolic significance as a concrete manifestation of the EU's commitment to the illegality of Israel's control over these areas.

The 2012 UN recognition of Palestine bolstered the Palestinian diplomatic practices. Since then, the PA started to identify itself as the State of Palestine. It has been officially using state semantics in its discourse, emblems, titles and structures, and acts like a state (even if only symbolically). The PMFAE (2019) continues to situate its diplomatic activities within the context of 'internationalisation'.

It is worth noting that the Palestinians understand their diplomatic action as a component of their "political struggle" to attain their national rights. Politically, PLO/PA-led diplomacy aspires to (1) affirm the legal character of the state of Palestine, (2) represent Palestinian interests in the UN and its organisations, (3) promote the popular support for the Palestinian cause, (4) hold Israeli leaders to account, (5) impel Israel to implement international law and resolutions, (6) expand the international recognition of Palestine and pursuing full membership in the UN (PMFAE 2019; n.d.-a, n.d.-b). The economic dimension is central to Palestinian diplomatic activities. The PA relies on diplomacy to safeguard the Palestinian representation at donor nations and organisations to ensure a consistent flow of economic aid to the PA (PMFAE n.d.-b).

For Israel, Palestinian diplomatic activities that seek to hold it to account are "political terrorism" (Jerusalem Post 2014; Ynet 2019). Israel counteracts Palestinian diplomacy in several ways. Israel practices assassination as a strategy to silence Palestinian political leaders both in Palestine and abroad (Bergman 2018). Israel's spatial control of the Palestinian centre of diplomacy is another powerful tool. In 2002, for example, Israel raided and destroyed the PA's headquarter (*al-muqata'a*) in Ramallah and imposed a siege on it as a means to isolate and restrict Arafat's communication with the outside world. Furthermore, Israel controls the spatial movement of Palestinian diplomats through a permit system and VIP Cards. In May 2021, for instance, Israel revoked the Palestinian foreign minister's VIP permit after his return from a mission at the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague to follow on the Court's investigation of potential Israeli war crimes in the OPT (Aljazeera 2021). Another method Israel (along with the US and certain European states) uses to inhibit Palestinian diplomacy and recognition is the application of counter diplomatic and economic pressure on states and international organisations to forestall further recognition of Palestine. For example, Israel and

the US withdrew from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and withheld funds as punitive measures against it after its 2011 decision to grant Palestine full membership (Aljazeera 2019). A similar pattern of threats was witnessed after Palestine joined the Rome Statute in 2015 and requested the ICC to investigate potential Israeli war crimes.

CONCLUSION

This chapter makes two contributions. Theoretically, it questions the applicability of the paradiplomacy framework to colonial situations on two grounds. First, actual colonial or occupation authorities lack the normative and legal dimensions of sovereignty, and, by implication, liberation movements are not sub-units of the colonial state but have a priori right to self-determination and self-representation. The second considers liberation movements' diplomatic practices and demonstrates that the nature of their diplomatic conduct is contingent on the degree of institutionalisation of their diplomatic presence within the international society. How the majority of other states and international institutions diplomatically interact with these actors are essential factors that determine the attributes of the diplomatic conduct in practice. The case of Palestine illustrates these points well. The widespread international recognition of Palestine has normalised its diplomatic activities and presence in the international society. Palestinian politicians are treated as accomplished diplomats by 139 states and multiple international organisations, including the UN, that recognise Palestine. The concept of paradiplomacy reaches its explanatory limits when considering the post-1993 diplomatic context and conditions of the PLO/PA. Thus, there is a need for a conclusive theoretical and empirical engagement with the diplomatic practices of recognised liberation and anti-colonial movements.

The second contribution concerns the Palestinian diplomatic interactions with the EU. Since 1993, diplomatic relations between PA/PLO have been steadily extending and consolidating. Although the EU does not recognise Palestine, their level of diplomatic engagement has crossed the threshold of liminality and paradiplomacy. Palestine is the only non-recognised polity that has signed an Association Agreement and is a member 'state' in various EU geopolitical regional formations alongside other states.

This intricate network of diplomatic structures is founded on the EU's initiatives and terms. They co-opt the PLO in state-level diplomatic practices that afford it a semblance of statehood and restrict its authentic character as liberation and anti-colonial movement. The PLO has become bound to the trappings of diplomacy as a result of its absorption into the EU's double process of full diplomatic relations and denial of external recognition (which is necessary to achieve sovereignty). This exhausted the PLO's identity as a liberation movement and restricted its ability to lead the struggle for self-determination. In the Palestinian context, diplomatic and economic trappings are extensive and used to curb local agency. In 2006, for example, the EU broke its economic and political relationship with the Palestinian government after Hamas's electoral victory. The EU refused to deal with the results of the democratic process and decided to reorient this relationship away from the legitimate government. Against this backdrop, one can start to see how the PLO's state-level diplomatic relations with the EU are, in reality, part of the EU's geopolitical schemes of governmentality rather than recognition and statehood.

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