
The Abraham Accords and the Strategic Reshaping of the Middle Eastern Order: A Postcolonial and Settler-Colonial Analysis from the Palestinian Perspective

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ABSTRACT

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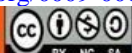
This article examines the 2020 Abraham Accords as a turning point in Arab–Israeli diplomacy and a strategic reshaping of the Middle Eastern order. Through qualitative comparison with Camp David, Oslo, and Wadi Araba, it shows that normalisation has been detached from any commitment to Palestinian statehood and instead anchored in shared threat perceptions (especially Iran), economic diversification, and U.S.-backed realignment. Using postcolonial and settler-colonial theory, the study interprets the Accords as reproducing colonial hierarchies of power and discourse, legitimising Israel's settler project, and further marginalising Palestinian agency. Document analysis and critical discourse analysis of official texts, policy debates, and societal reactions indicate that the Accords weakened Arab collective leverage on Palestine, eroded prospects for a just two-state settlement, and provoked rising popular resistance to normalisation after Gaza. The article concludes that any stability produced by the Accords is fragile unless Palestinian rights and decolonial justice are meaningfully centred.

Keywords: Abraham Accords, Postcolonial Framework, Palestinian Perspective, Deal of the Century.

Introduction

The Arab-Israeli conflict, especially the Israeli-Palestinian one, is one of the most lasting, complicated and politically significant conflicts in the

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contemporary Middle East. It has a historical background dating back to the late nineteenth century, influenced by the growing Jewish immigration to Ottoman Palestine and the corresponding rise of Arab nationalism. These tensions were further provoked by the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which gave formal approval to the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine without obtaining the political rights of its Arab population. The United Nations partition plan of 1947 and the proclamation of the State of Israel that followed in 1948 triggered the mass displacement of Palestinians into what is now known as the Nakba, creating a legacy of dispossession, territorial rivalry, and rival national identities that have been shaping the conflict to date (Pappe 2024). The core topics of self-determination, rights of refugees, territorial sovereignty, and security have been left unaddressed, regardless of the many attempts made by diplomats

The decades have witnessed repeated efforts to establish peace, such as the Camp David Accords of 1978, the Oslo process of 1993-95, and the Wadi Araba Treaty of 1994, all aimed at reorganising relations between the region and reducing conflict. These agreements had different levels of diplomatic normalisation of Israel and certain Arab states, but they never managed to reach the fundamental levels of political desire of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian question was, in most cases, relegated or postponed, leading to a partial or unreliable settlement that could not yield a complete and permanent settlement.

A significant change occurred in 2020 when the Trump administration introduced the so-called *Deal of the Century*, a peace scheme widely seen as designed in line with the Israeli stance and utterly contrary to accepted international legal and diplomatic provisions (ACRPS, 2020). The plan itself, though denied by the Palestinian leadership, was a clear-cut shift in American policy by making Israeli security and sovereignty claims rather than minimising the relevance of Palestinian rights and hopes.

It is under this new geopolitical reality that the Abraham Accords appeared. The Accords signed between Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain (with Morocco and Sudan joining later) represented a significant break with the logic of past peace agreements. Contrasting with the previously established treaties, which were based on resolving bilateral issues or promoting a negotiated solution to the Palestinian issue, the Abraham Accords redefined regional relationships and grounded them in common security issues, economic dependence, and cooperation to counter emerging regional threats

(Ross 2022). Although advocates believe that these accords come with significant economic and security payoffs, opponents believe that they further ensure a status quo of asymmetrical power politics, an even-handed acceptance of occupation, and undermined collective Arab bargaining power concerning Palestinian rights.

In addition, the sustainability of the Abraham Accords has been subjected to growing doubts, even though there was initial optimism. In many Arab societies, the mood has become increasingly averse to normalisation, especially following the recent acts of escalation in Gaza, where pictures of mass destruction sparked a massive widespread backlash against Israeli policy (Alhurra 2023). To a large number of people in the region, the Accords are viewed as circumventing the Palestinian cause and normalising the occupation of the territories by Israel. As a result, critics suggest that without a corrective of structural inequalities and any meaningful interaction with the Palestinian rights, the Accords can pose a threat to increasing the instability in the region instead of alleviating the situation.

Against this context, the study examines the political, economic, and societal aspects of the Abraham Accords by situating them within broader changes in the Middle East's order. It seeks to clarify their consequences for the regional balance of power, the strategic choices Arab states make, and, above all, the direction of the Palestinian question. The overarching research question of the study is: How have the Abraham Accords reshaped the regional order of the Middle East and altered the trajectory of the Palestinian question? The study further seeks to answer two sub-research questions: How do the Abraham Accords differ from earlier Arab–Israeli agreements in their core objectives and design? And What impact have the Abraham Accords had on Palestinian political rights and the prospects for a future peace settlement?

Research Methodology

The research design used in this study is qualitative, focusing on document analysis due to limited access to the field. The evidentiary basis comprises primary and secondary sources, including official government documents, policy papers, academic literature, news reports, public statements, and social media discourse. The qualitative content analysis will identify key themes and trends, and the comparative analysis will evaluate continuities and discrepancies between the Abraham Accords and previous Arab-Israeli agreements. The framework of the framing, language, and power relations

contained in the political discourses related to the Accords is interrogated through critical discourse analysis.

Theoretical Framework

The current research has a dual theoretical basis, with Postcolonial Theory as the main analytical approach and Settler-Colonial Theory as a supplementary approach. Combined, these two allow for rigorous questioning of the Abraham Accords, placing them in the context of the larger historical, political, and structural trends that define the Palestinian question and the Middle Eastern regional order, which is beginning to change. These theories shed light on the power relations, discursive practices and structural repeat ties that inform the normalisation mechanisms that are embedded in the Accords and enable the research to not only look at the results of diplomacy but also at the underlying logics that perpetuate the existing asymmetries of power between Israel and Arab states and also the Palestinians.

Postcolonial Theory as the Primary Analytical Framework

The main conceptual framework of the study is the postcolonial theory. It extends the insights of Edward Said (1978, 1979), Frantz Fanon (1952/1967, 1961/2004) and Homi Bhabha (1984, 1994) in challenging the persistence of colonial subjugation, politics of representation and the subordination of colonised people in modern geopolitical systems.

The work of Edward Said, especially *Orientalism* (1978) and *The Question of Palestine* (1979), will be the key to this analysis. Said illustrates how the discourse of the West and Israel creates and maintains systems of knowledge and power marginalising Palestinian voices and authorising colonial results. The postcolonial theory, therefore, allows one to analyse how the Abraham Accords reproduce orientalist discourses that portray Israel as modern and progressive, indispensable to regional stability, and Palestinians as an obstruction, a burden, or a remnant political subject.

That the arguments of Frantz Fanon on the violence of the colonial and the psychology of domination further contribute to the situation of Palestinian political marginalisation within larger frameworks of coercion, his observations can shed light on how the Accords' framework for peace and normalisation hides persistent structures of dispossession and structural violence. The concepts created by Fanon regarding the possibility of collaboration between the elites of colonised societies and the dominant

powers, in the name of strategy or material interests, offer a helpful perspective on the calculations of the Arab signatory states, where the state's domestic and regional interests and the aspirations of the Palestinian people often collide violently.

Homi Bhabha has put forward the ideas of ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity, enabling one to interpret the Accords in such a way that they give rise to a kind of hybrid political order through which Arab states are at once reproducing and negotiating with the old colonial structures. The theorisation of resistance through the interstices of power offered by Bhabha also highlights how counter-discourses in Palestinian civil society and public opinion challenge the Accords, questioning their right to peace and legitimacy.

Combined, the postcolonial theory assists in understanding the way in which the Abraham Accords operate not just as a tool of diplomacy but as a process that supports an asymmetrical regional hierarchy based on colonial pasts, Western-supported hegemony, and structural silence of the subaltern political actors, who are, in this case, primarily the Palestinians.

Settler-Colonial Theory as a Supporting Framework

To further elaborate on and sharpen this analysis, this article uses Settler-Colonial Theory, especially the work of Patrick Wolfe and Lorenzo Veracini, as a supporting framework to explain the structural character of Israeli power in the occupied Palestinian territories. The difference between settler-colonial theory and classical colonialism is that the former is not premised on extraction but on the logic of the elimination of the native (Wolfe, 2006). This model views Zionism and the Israeli state project as a continuing settler-colonial project built upon the dispossession of territories, demographic management, and the removal of native Palestinians.

The Abraham Accords can therefore be interpreted as a subset of a broader international and regional design that normalises, stabilises, and legitimises a settler-colonial order. In this sense, normalisation is not only a diplomatic gesture but a tactical continuation of settler-colonial agglomeration, which helps Israel escape the responsibility of the region and the ineffectiveness of external pressure to stop the growth of settlements, annexation schemes, and the occupation practices. The language of peace, coexistence and regional integration incorporated into the Accords then serves to mask the mechanisms of land appropriation and displacement that are the core of the organisation of settler colonialism.

Lorenzo Veracini's reflections on how settler-colonial projects attempt to rebrand and reinvent indigenous claims as irrelevant, outdated, or unreasonable can further serve as an analytical lever for examining why the Palestinian question is becoming increasingly marginal in Arab and Western diplomatic discourse. The settler-colonial theory is also used to explain how the Accords prime the internationalisation of Israeli discourses that disassociate normalisation with the necessity to discuss the topics of occupation, refugee rights, or Palestinian sovereignty.

With the incorporation of this second lens, the paper conceptualises the Abraham Accords not merely as pragmatic alignments based on evolving threat perceptions, but as structurally entrenched in a long-term settler-colonial agenda that aims to embed Israeli territorial and political supremacy.

The Value of Combining These Two Frameworks

The synthesis of postcolonial and settler-colonial theory is a theoretically consistent and analytically powerful method for this study. Postcolonial theory predicts the historical afterlives, discursive authority, and the hierarchies that persist in shaping the relationships between Arabs and Israel, whereas settler-colonial theory provides a structural explanation of the practices of the Israeli state that focus on the materiality of occupation, land possession, and eliminationist discourses.

All these lenses combined permit the study to:

- connect the Abraham Accords with more general histories of imperialism and regional dependency.
- examine normalisation as a mode of compliance as opposed to a disavowal of colonial frameworks; view Arab state behaviour as determined by internal interests as well as external hegemonies.
- foreground The Palestinian subalternity, agency and resistance in a hostile geopolitical order.
- and critically evaluate arguments that the Accords increase regional peace, even though they marginalise the fundamental conflict.

In this way, the theoretical framework used in this study provides a solid foundation for interrogating the political, discursive, and structural aspects of the Abraham Accords. The incorporation of the postcolonial and settler-colonial lenses will ensure that the analysis is sensitive to the hierarchies of power at the global level, on the one hand, and to the localised

institution of domination within the Palestinian experience, on the other. This two-pole framework does not simply contextualise the study with the depth of its substantive focus but also places it within the critical currents of International Relations scholarship, allowing a more complex and rigorous analysis of the process of normalisation in reconstituting regional order and reinforcing ancient colonial imbalance.

Significance of the Study

The study is a significant addition to the body of research because it has focused on the Palestinian experience, which many studies on the Abraham Accords often overlook. It presents a comprehensive analysis of the political, economic and social aspects of normalisation and questions their implications for the region's stability, the realignment of Arab foreign policy, and the future of the peace process. The research criticises existing discourses that portray normalisation as a smooth path to peace but highlights the multifaceted and frequently contradictory implications for Palestinian rights and regional peace. The study is useful for expanding scholarly knowledge of current Middle Eastern geopolitics by placing the Accords in a broader historical and comparative context.

Literature Review

A broad corpus of scholarship examines the implications of the Abraham Accords on regional security, Palestinian rights, and economic development. The existing literature on the subject can be categorised into the following thematic domains.

Security and Stability

Researchers have noted conflicting interpretations of the security implications of the Abraham Accords. Al-Saeed (2021) cautions that the agreements will only increase instability where Israeli territory growth is not checked. According to findings from many other researchers, the Accords institutionalise current security patterns and could enhance cooperation, but their long-term stabilising impact is unclear (ORION, 2022; Kirby, 2022). Ali (2025) highlights the unresolved Palestinian issue as one of the structural constraints to sustainable peace.

Palestinian Rights and Self-Determination

A large body of existing literature explicitly highlights the negative implications of the Accords on Palestinian political agency. According to McDonough (2021), research showing a lack of Palestinian support for the two-state paradigm reflects disillusionment with the diplomatic stalemate. Yossef (2021) states that the process of normalisation can threaten the institutional legitimacy of Palestinians, and Bakare (2024) and Pressman (2024) report that the majority of Palestinians feel betrayed. Similar reports by Afnanilian (2024), Mekay (2021), and Vizcarra (2021) argue that the Accords strengthen occupation and undermine the chances of self-determination.

Economic and Social Development

Arab signatories of the Accord and Israel get substantial economic benefits, as noted by a variety of economic analysts. Prospective gains in trade, investment, tourism, technology, and employment are reported by Vakil and Quilliam (2023), Egel et al. (2021), and Even et al. (2020). However, multiple studies emphasise that Palestinians remain excluded from these economic benefits, and normalisation disproportionately benefits only the wealthier states and Israel (Vizcarra 2021).

Comparison with Previous Peace Agreements

A part of the scholarship compares the Abraham Accords to previous accords. According to Zedan (2020; 2022), Britannica (2020), and Musmar (2021), the Accords are oriented differently, focusing on multilateralism, people-to-people relations, and economic integration rather than achieving a territory-wise compromise or resolving the conflict. Through such analyses, the structural departure embodied by the Accords is highlighted in the larger history of Arab-Israeli diplomacy.

Limitations of Existing Research

The existing scholarship, despite paying large attention to the issue, is limited in many ways. The majority of the research focuses on short-term impacts, and little research has been done on the long-term strategic implications on Palestinian rights, the region's geopolitics, or the sustainability of normalisations. Very few studies use a comparative historical approach to link the Accord to earlier peace agreements, and even fewer incorporate the

views of the Palestinian people or civil society. This paper fills these gaps by providing a longitudinal, comparative and critically based evaluation.

Moreover, there is an analytic vacuum regarding the long-term consequences of the Abraham Accords for the Palestinian cause, Arab regional politics, and the dynamics of the peace process. This paper aims to address this gap by primarily assessing the impact of normalisation on Palestinian political agency, Arab support systems, the course of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, and the future of a comprehensive settlement. Discussing these problems in a comparative and critical context, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how the Accords shift the lines of conflict and collaboration in the Middle East.

Comparing the Abraham Accords to Previous Arab–Israeli Agreements: Divergence, Continuity, and Implications for Regional Peace

This paper analyses the Abraham Accords of 2020 in a comparative perspective to the previous historic Arab-Israeli agreements, such as the Camp David Accords (1978), the Israel-Lebanon Agreement (1983), the Oslo Accords (1993-1995), and the Wadi Araba Treaty (1994). It posits that the Abraham Accords can be seen as an essential shift from previous models of diplomatic relations, as they focus on normalisation based on collective security and economic collaboration, while paying little attention to the unresolved Palestinian issue. By comparing purposes, negotiations, incentives, and geopolitical regions, this paper shows that the Accords represent a greater change in Middle Eastern geopolitics, driven by the rearrangement of regional priorities, shifts in perceptions of threat, and the realignment of relationships with outside powers. This amounts to the strategic reshaping of the Middle East. The article also assesses the future of the Accords and their impact on the region's stability.

Since the late twentieth century, the Middle East has seen several significant efforts to resolve the conflict and normalise relations, each of which has occurred in its own geopolitical context and calculations. Among them, the Abraham Accords of 2020 are remarkable for their open restructuring of Arab-Israeli relations. The Abraham Accords introduced a somewhat different paradigm at a time when earlier accords like Camp David (1978), Oslo (1993-1995), and Wadi Araba (1994) were grounded in resolving bilateral disputes or in pursuing a negotiated solution to the Palestinian question. They aimed to normalise relations between Israel and some Arab

states, such as the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan, based on shared security interests, economic ties, and geopolitical realignments.

The main argument of the study is that the Abraham Accords mark a significant break with previous Arab-Israeli accords. As opposed to previous accords that were based on mutual enmities or put the Palestinian problem at their centre, the Abraham Accords predict and caused normalisation and strategic alignment without giving much attention to the historic Palestinian conflict. This redirection is an indicator of more profound changes in the region's power distribution, security agenda, and strategic reasoning among Arab nations. In short, this article attempts to place the Abraham Accords in the broader context of Arab-Israeli agreements, comparing their purposes, circumstances, mechanisms, and outcomes. It also evaluates the wider implications of these changes for the Palestinian question and regional stability, as well as the role of international powers in Middle East diplomacy.

Comparative Landscape of Arab–Israeli Agreements

Understanding the Abraham Accords merits situating them within the context of previous agreements.

Camp David Accords (1978): Territorial Peace and Limited Palestinian Autonomy: The first significant development towards Arab-Israeli peace-making was the Camp David Accords of 1978. The idea of Camp David was embedded in Egypt's desire to reclaim the Sinai Peninsula, Israel's need to counterbalance its most potent Arab adversary, and the overall efforts to resolve the Palestinian issue, though only on a small scale of autonomy. The focus on territorial concessions and its connection to the Palestinian problem made Camp David an agreement aimed at radical regional change.

Israel–Lebanon Agreement (1983): Fragile Bilateralism Under Civil-War Conditions: Conversely, the 1983 Israel-Lebanon Agreement failed soon after it was established because of Syrian resistance, factionalism in Lebanon, and the lack of binding obligations. It could not address the structural political problems in Lebanon, and it emphasised the inherent difficulties of negotiating agreements amid a continuing internal war.

Oslo Accords (1993–95): Mutual Recognition and Deferred Final Status: The Oslo Accords (1993–1995) represented a significant conceptual breakthrough: they were the first agreements to formally recognise the political situation of the Palestinian people by establishing a framework for

Israel-Palestinian Relations. Oslo created a Palestinian Authority, conceived a step-by-step strategy of Palestinian self-government, and put the core issues, such as Jerusalem, refugees, settlements and borders, on the negotiating table. More importantly, the other accords were based on the idea of land in exchange for peace, thus turning Palestinian statehood into one of the main elements of regional normalisation.

Wadi Araba Treaty (1994): Border Normalisation Under the Shadow of Palestine: In 1994, bilateral peace was cemented by the signing of the Wadi Araba Treaty between Jordan and Israel; it formalised borders, increased water-sharing agreements and stabilised the eastern frontier. Jordanian normalisation had nonetheless taken place, four decades on, in a situation whereby the Palestinian problem was still acute, and King Hussein still had an active stake in Palestinian representation and rights.

The Abraham Accords are quite different to these previous accords. The normalisation of the relations between Israel and several Arab states, without mentioning the primary Palestinian question that had previously been the precondition of such diplomatic acknowledgement, became their major goal. By doing this, the Accords not only marked the departure from the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002 but also the redefinition of the strategic priorities of the involved Arab states—comparative Perspective of historical Agreements.

The Abraham Accords (2020): A Strategic Reorientation

The Abraham Accords ushered in a new paradigm in Arab-Israeli politics. Their claimed motive was to normalise the relations between Israel and various Arab countries. But there is another significant dimension, the avoidance of the Palestinian question. This marked a reversal of the old Arab stance that normalisation has to come after the Israeli pullout of the occupied territories. The Accords provided for full diplomatic relations, cultural and trade exchanges, and extensive collaboration in defence, technology, investment, and tourism. One-sided concessions, including US recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara accompanied this.

The goal of Israel in seeking the Accords was to build its diplomatic base, neutralise Iranian regional dominance and annex its legitimacy in the Middle Eastern region. The Arab signatories wanted to diversify their economies, strengthen security alliances, and be more closely associated with the United States. The Accords were influenced by instability in the region, financial needs, the perceived threat from Iran, and changing priorities of the

people in the wake of the Arab Spring and increasing climate-related challenges.

Most importantly, the Accords depicted how the Palestinian issue has lost its place in local politics. According to Soliemane (2020), the Accords had been a manifestation of the growing belief amongst Arab and international actors that progress with Israel could no longer require any substantial engagement with the demands of Palestinians.

Table 1 below summarises the principal contrasts between key Arab–Israeli agreements and the Abraham Accords across objectives, mechanisms, and unresolved issues.

Table 1: Comparative Table of Arab Israeli Peace Agreements

Feature/Aspect	Camp David Accord (1978)	Israel-Lebanon Agreement (1983)	Oslo Accord (1993-1995)	Wadi Araba Agreement (1994)	Abraham Accords (2020)
Main Objectives	To conclude a comprehensive peace treaty between Egypt and Israel and end decades of hostility	To end the state of war between Israel and Lebanon.	To establish a Palestinian state based on the principle of land for peace and a two-state solution	To end the state of war between Jordan and Israel and establish peaceful relations between them	To establish normal ties between Israel and several Arab nations, moving beyond the customary framework of the Arab Israeli dispute

Key Provisions	Israeli withdrawal from Sinai, Egyptian recognition of Israel, security arrangements	Not fully implemented	Mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO, establishment of the Palestinian Authority, framework for negotiations on the final status	Establishment of full diplomatic relations, demarcation of borders, economic cooperation, water cooperation, ensuring security and stability	Creation of complete diplomatic ties, collaborative pacts across diverse sectors, and affirmation of Israel's sovereignty by involved Arab nations
Short-Term Effects	Improved Egyptian-Israeli relations	A short-term agreement that did not address the core issues	Relative calm, some progress towards Palestinian self-governance	Achievement of peace and stability on the Jordanian-Israeli border and enhanced economic cooperation	A rise in commerce, travel, and cross-cultural activities has been observed between Israel and the Arab nations involved
Long-Term Effects	There remains a landmark agreement with a	Limited impact due to the short duration	Laid the foundation for Palestinian self-	This peace treaty facilitated regional	Enduring effects are yet to be seen, the agreement

	mixed impact	and ongoing conflicts	governance, but the two-state solution remains elusive	stability and bolstered security, also fostering economic collaboration involving the two countries	s possess the capacity to transform the regional environment and establish collaborations among the signatory states
Outstanding Issues	The Palestinian issue	Conflicts in southern Lebanon	The final status of Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, and borders	The Palestinian-Israeli conflict	The Palestinian issue

Negotiation Processes and Mechanisms

The Varied Impact of US Mediation

US participation has also become characteristic of the majority of Arab-Israeli agreements, though its functions have varied. In the Abraham Accords and at Camp David, Washington demonstrated forceful pressure and offered strong incentives, accelerating breakthroughs. In comparison, the 1983 Israel-Lebanon Agreement was plagued by a lack of consistent American involvement, which illustrates how the balance of power, influence, and unity among stakeholders is measured by standing commitment.

Trust, Confidentiality, and the Limits of Secrecy

This is because confidentiality allows exploratory dialogue, as was the case with the secret Oslo channel in Norway. But even Oslo showed how secrets can break free; the leaks and suspicion between the PLO and Israel destroyed the execution. Secrecy was not the only factor sustaining peace processes; trust was.

Bilateral Versus Multilateral Dynamics

Multilateral negotiations are usually more complicated; for example, the divided Lebanese political system in 1983. The Abraham Accords, on the other hand, was a successful case of a multilateral agreement, since the involved states had overriding interests that counterbalanced Iran and pursued economic gains, with strong US leadership curbing divergences.

The Role of Great Powers and Regional Alignments

The Accords were strongly influenced by the Trump administration's strategic shift, which focused on building a regional coalition against Iran. It was a strategy that redefined the regional alliances and reduced the prominence of the Palestinian issue. At the same time, shifting regional politics, such as Saudi-Iran rapprochement (Zein 2025), Gulf priorities, and new regional leadership, provided a favourable environment in the normalisation process.

Abraham Accords: Context and Analysis

In 2020, the Abraham Accords were signed, representing a radical restructuring of Middle Eastern diplomacy by legalising diplomatic ties between Israel and several Arab nations. Although usually presented in terms of pragmatism, future-oriented treaties aimed at fostering stability and collaboration, the underlying message can only be fully interpreted within the two theoretical frameworks of postcolonial theory and settler-colonial theory. These models shed light on the historical pasts, power relations, and discursive structures enshrined in the Accords, which are not merely a diplomatic breakthrough but rather a tool that enforces an unequal regional order based on the marginalisation of the Palestinians.

The postcolonial theory emphasises that the Accords reproduce colonial-era hierarchies, legitimise the position of Israel and make Palestinian claims peripheral. The settler-colonial theory reveals the normalisations of the

agreements that structuralise and internationalise a political order that entrenches the Israeli settler-colonial project by means of diplomatic normalisation that avoids the issue of Palestinian sovereignty. Collectively, these views shape the following analysis: although the Accords present a sense of security and economic benefits to the signatory states, the Accords are used as tools that not only enhance the process of Palestinian dispossession but also strengthen the Israeli regional hegemony.

Political and Regional Context

The Abraham Accords were founded on the context of changing regional relationships. The last ten years of the conflict, including the emergence of ISIS and the war in Yemen and the disintegration of Syria, left the region in a state of acute insecurity. The Gulf states, specifically, re-evaluated their threat perceptions, which were increasingly shaped by viewing Iran as the main regional enemy. The uncertainties of cyber insecurity and technological vulnerability also drove the quest for new security relationships.

A postcolonial reading places such developments within a continuum of historical patterns: Arab states, struggling with internal instability and external threats, moved into alignments that reproduce dependencies on Western-supported security structures that, in previous times, had been determined by global configurations of power. In this regard, Israel, armed, technologically qualified, and supported by the United States, was less and less observed in the prism of solidarity with the anti-colonial Palestinian nationalism and rather as an object of material benefits.

Settler-colonial theory refines this analysis to reveal that this was a favourable regional environment for consolidating Israeli power. The disintegration of Arab political structure, the undermining of pan-Arab commitments and the emergence of authoritarian existence measures provided structural breaks to allow the settler-colonial state to legitimise its presence in the territory without giving in to Palestinian demands. The Accords are therefore a component of a larger structure that solidifies Israeli territorial and political dominance in a time of increased Arab defencelessness.

Motivations and Interests

Israel

The motives of Israel are indicative of the rationale of a settler-colonial project aimed at consolidation in the long run.

Security: Altering the regional consensus on the issue of Iran strengthens Israel at the depth of its strategic level and decreases the burden on its military occupation.

Diplomacy: Recognition will diminish the centrality of the Palestinian question in regional diplomacy and make Israel legitimate.

Economy: Economic integration enhances the technological and financial hegemony in Israel.

Discursive Power: In a postcolonial view, the Accords increase the dissemination of stories that describe Israel as a stabilising modern force and Palestinians as peripheral, illogical, or inconvenient impediments. This difference in discourse is necessary in the naturalisation of continued dispossession practices.

Arab States (UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, Sudan)

The incentives of Arab signatories are complicated by the activities of domestic, regional, and geopolitical incentives: Collaboration with Israel in security provided sophisticated surveillance and defence strategies in line with the existence of authoritarian regimes. Modernisation was ensured by economic diversification through high-tech alliances. The regional power also enabled states to establish themselves as leaders of the post-ideological diplomacy, such as the UAE.

A postcolonial analysis, however, reveals that these incentives are hidden in the broader politics of dependency. The obsession of Arab states to gain the approval of the West, sophisticated armament, and economic relations recreates the subordinate ties that were established by colonial rule. Settler-colonial theory emphasises how these alignments have a functional legitimising effect on Israeli claims to the territory and undermine common Arab stands on Palestinian sovereignty.

Palestinian Perspective

Their subaltern status in the postcolonial hierarchies is best illustrated by the fact that Palestinians had to be excluded from the talks. It is not a coincidence; their absence is imperial, that settler-colonial states tend to avoid negotiating with indigenous political actors but with foreign powers that have a coercive or economic advantage. The Palestinians see the Accords as an extension of the old colonial system, where they are denied the right of

political subjectivity, and Palestine is no longer a nation; it is a leftover problem that has to be handled. This aligns with Veracini's analysis of settler-colonial narrative strategies that displace indigenous claims as outmoded, impractical, or irrelevant.

Provisions of the Agreements

The Accords include details that form vast diplomatic, technological, and economic connections but strategically fail to address the structural violence of occupation.

Diplomatic Relations

Recognition is institutionalised through the creation of embassies and official diplomatic ties, which do not require mutual obligations regarding Palestinian rights, and this is an example of postcolonial tendencies, whereby colonial states retain sufficient legitimacy despite the unresolved status of colonised groups.

Cooperation Agreements

Technological and security partnerships are beneficial for boosting the capacity of Arab states and for entrenching Israel as a security provider in the region. In settler-colonial terms, this type of collaboration forms more material infrastructure of occupation, namely, the joint system of intelligence, surveillance technologies, and cyber capabilities.

Mutual Recognition

The acknowledgement of Israeli sovereignty without the need to acknowledge Palestinian sovereignty is a demonstration of the asymmetry of the core of the Accords.

Normalized People-to-People Initiatives

The celebration of cultural exchanges and tourism as peacebuilding tools is regarded as a success, but postcolonial critiques expose the practices as a way of whitewashing the structural domination that exists, refusing to acknowledge colonial relations as being antagonistic.

The Role of the United States

Strategic Facilitation

The U.S. played a decisive role in the drafting of the Accords, leveraging its diplomatic power to pressure and reward Arab states. It conforms to postcolonial conceptualisations of imperial power, according to which the world's hegemonic actors influence regional alliances to reinforce existing geopolitical inequalities (Jeffery 2023).

Diplomatic Incentives and Coercive Leverage

The U.S. mediation was organised in such a way that it forced the Arabs to obey the regional order to favour Israeli power. Neocolonial dynamics of exchanging sovereignty with material gain can be seen in security guarantees, arms sales and various political concessions (Heiran-Nia 2023).

Stabilising the Settler-Colonial Order

Settler-colonially speaking, the participation of the U.S. is part and parcel of keeping the Israeli project on the international level by internationalising its validity, shielding it against any forces to de-occupy Palestinian territory, and establishing it as a system of normalised relations in the region.

Critical Analysis and Future Outlook

Critical Analysis

Abraham Accords are not impartial diplomatic tools. They reproduce hierarchies of the world in a postcolonial approach, making Palestine's sovereignty disposable. They are structural reinforcers, using a settler-colonial prism, that safeguard and expand the Israeli project of land grabbing and demographic domination.

Events after October 7 also demonstrate the weakness and inconsistency of a regional order which is constructed upon the exclusion of the Palestinians. The eruption of conflict once again indicates that normalisation in place of decolonisation is not possible, nor can diplomatic repositioning erase the frameworks of occupation (Erikat 2025).

Structural Drivers of the Accords' Future

- **Palestinian Question:** There will never be any stable condition so long as the settler-colonial order prevails.
- **Power redistribution in the region:** Competition with Iran continues to influence strategic decisions.
- **Domestic Public Opinion:** The rejection by the masses in the Arab world, particularly following Gaza, makes normalisation by the elite more difficult.
- **U.S. Policy:** Regional differences in U.S. engagement will either strengthen or undermine normalisation.

Public Rejection as Postcolonial Resistance

Successive intensification of popular opposition to normalisation is not merely a moral issue about Palestinians, but also a postcolonial opposition to authoritarian elite formations deemed to be complicit with the Western-supported hegemonic formations. The Abraham Accords are not merely a realignment of diplomacy, but a fundamental structural shift grounded in postcolonial and settler-colonial logics. Focusing on Israeli strength, marginalising Palestinian rights and strengthening unequal reliance of Arab regimes, the Accords are considered to be a breakthrough in decades of joint Arab demands regarding Palestinian self-determination.

In these theoretical terms, the Accords can be seen as having much more to them: normalisation becomes a mechanism of geopolitical cannibalisation rather than a way onto just peace. Regional stability in a sustainable manner will be, then, not a matter of widening the architecture of normalisation but of tackling the structures of colonialism on which the Accords disguise, rationalise and institutionalise, namely, occupation, dispossession, and the systematic denial of Palestinian sovereignty.

How the Abraham Accords Affect the Palestinian Question and Regional Peace

The Abraham Accords present a pivot point in Middle East politics that has normalised the relations between Israel and some Arab nations without the need to address the Palestinian question in the long term. Contrary to the previous accords, which were made based on the logic of conflict

resolution, including Camp David, Oslo, or Wadi Araba, the Abraham Accords are an indication of a restructuring of regional priorities whereby the Palestinian claims to sovereignty, return, and self-determination are put second to new security balances and economic alliances. These dynamics are discussed in this paper in terms of a two-theorist model based on Postcolonial Theory and Settler-Colonial Theory, which together elucidate how the Accords reproduce colonial structures of domination, justify practices of continued dispossession, and affirm an asymmetrical regional order. The analysis of the study suggests that the Abraham Accords have weakened the Palestinian side, reduced international pressure on Israel, further fragmented the Palestinian community internally, and finally, diminished the chances of a just and lasting peace in the region.

Palestinian Reactions: A Postcolonial and Settler-Colonial Reading

This massive Palestinian rejection of the Abraham Accords cannot be seen solely as a political protest but as a reaction to a structural process that can be traced through postcolonial and settler-colonial theories, which make the deeper process visible. This is where normalisation instead of decolonisation takes place among the Palestinians as a solidification of an unequal order where political subjectivity is subordinated and where dispossession has become institutionalised.

Official Responses: Rejecting the Reproduction of Colonial Structures

The Palestinian Authority (PA) and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) denounced this move to sign the Accords as a betrayal of the Arab consensus between normalisation and the creation of an independent Palestinian state. The characterisation of the Accords as an effort to liquidate the Palestinian cause by President Mahmoud Abbas is a classic postcolonial critique: the marginalisation of Palestinian rights is being felt as the further suppression of a colonised nation in a global order historically dominated by orientalist hierarchies (France24 2021).

Another postcolonial issue highlighted by the UAE-Israel deal, through Saeb Erekat, is the co-optation of local elites. The observations of Fanon on the development of compliant indigenous elites by colonialists can be used to understand why Palestinians see the Accords as a component of a greater overall geopolitical order that praises Arab states in attending to their security and economic interests and not Palestinian self-determination.

The attempts to oppose the so-called discursive re-inscription of Palestinian marginality in the diplomatic boycotts and the lack of attendance at events organised by normalisation countries indicate an effort to oppose what Bhabha would denote as a hybrid peace that affirms their refusal to accept one that ignores Palestinian marginality (Staff 2023).

Societal and Political Responses: Resistance from the Subaltern

Along with formal institutions, Palestinian responses also serve to enhance the structural critique. The reaction of the protests by the population, the media, and the words of resistance movements shows that there is a general insight that the effect of normalisation reinforces the Israeli settler-colonial power by increasing its legitimacy on an international level.

Widespread demonstrations in the West Bank and Gaza (which are often met with Israeli violence) demonstrate that normalisation is seen as the continuation of what Wolfe calls the structure of elimination: a political arrangement that aims to ensure the dominance of the state of Israel and weaken the rights of the Palestinians. The criticism of the Accords by civil society organisations as the normalisation of the violation of international law (Marshal and Marshal 2021) indicates the wider postcolonial demand to deny the discursive obliteration of Palestinian suffering.

In this regard, Palestinian refusal to accept the Accords is to be interpreted as a subaltern mode of rebellion against a regional power that strengthens their displacement and makes a celebration of a peace that is not theirs.

Erosion of International Support: A Postcolonial Dynamic of Silencing

This shift in the international oppression against Israel after normalisation is consistent with the argument by Said that explains that Western political systems tend to favour the Israeli accounts at the expense of the Palestinian view. As some of the Arab states start to redefine their foreign policy priorities, the Palestinian cause loses both the symbolic and material support, which translates to a shrinking diplomatic leverage. Some of them are amplified withholding of clearance revenues, enhanced Israeli military activity, and diminished international accountability systems (Albawaba 2021; Asaad 2023). This de-pressurising reflects the postcolonial arguments of the repetition of power asymmetries of global institutions that disenfranchise colonised communities.

Legitimising Israeli Settler-Colonial Policies

Palestinians and critical scholars have largely understood normalisation as an approval of Israeli expansion into settler-colonies. The Accords were succeeding with additional settlement approvals, demolitions of houses and forced evictions in East Jerusalem (Human Rights 2025). These changes are in line with the settlement of colonialism as a structure rather than an occurrence, as Wolfe described it, resulting from territory acquisition and demographic engineering.

The Accords make the reasoning of elimination territorial by not connecting the sense of normalisation and the interruption of settlement expansion, which internationalises and, in turn, normalises the logic of elimination.

Decline of the Two-State Solution: Colonial Time and Foreclosure

Such undermining of the two-state paradigm through the Accords is both postcolonial and settler-colonial. Postcolonial theory illuminates how powerful players play games with peace discourses to avoid or preclude substantive political transformation. Settler-colonial theory demonstrates how the further growth of settlements makes Palestinian sovereignty impossible geographically. The loss of confidence in diplomacy by Palestinians and the increasing disbelief in the two-state paradigm by Israeli political elites (Dabgi 2020; IDI 2021) is an example of the establishment of a political reality based on structural inequality instead of negotiated compromise.

Internal Palestinian Fragmentation: Colonial Strategies of Division

Normalisation has increased the current divisions in Palestinian politics. The diplomacy of the PA and the militarised reaction of Hamas is an indication of a different interpretation of the process of resisting or manoeuvring in the regional order that marginalises the Palestinian agency. The information Fanon provided about colonial tactics of disintegration helps us understand how foreign forces strain the relationships between groups of colonised people and speaks in favour of cohesion. What it has created is a disjunctive political space where Palestinians are finding it difficult to find a common strategy in a condition characterised, in large part, by foreign powers.

Impact on Regional Peace: A Colonial Peace Without Decolonisation

The regional implications of the Abraham Accords have to be viewed through the prism of postcolonialism and settler-colonialism as well. Although supporters depict the normalisation process as a route to stability in the region, critical theoretical approaches offer a more complex picture, as normalisation is a process in which peace is sought without confronting the domination systems.

Regional Polarisation and the Persistence of Structural Injustice

Those who criticise the normalisation claim that it strengthens the polarisation of the region, specifically, between pro-Israeli and pro-Iranian blocs, and marginalises the Palestinian cause in regional politics. The settler-colonial theory underscores that peace that overlooks the root causes of injustice cannot sustain long-term stability, since structural violence persists even under the guise of cooperation. The current war in Gaza and the intensification in Lebanon highlight how fragile a colonial peace is, which fails to address the causes of conflict.

Prospects: Navigating the Future of the Abraham Accords

It is still unclear what the future of the Abraham Accords could be. Their greatest implication is the restructuring of the Palestinian issue. The Accords have also helped it lose its status in Arab and international diplomacy. However, it is a tendency that is not irreversible. A new conflict, a change in Washington's politics, or a fresh Palestinian campaign may put the matter back on the regional agenda.

The Accords can either help to create a more stable and integrated Middle East or increase divisions. The exclusion of Palestinians contributes to the further radicalisation and resentment in society, as well as the formation of alignments that will make confrontations between Iran and Israel more acute.

Outside forces will influence these trajectories. Further US involvement could reinforce the Accords, whereas a more limited role or a re-stratification could create space for China, Russia, and the European Union to gain greater influence. The issue of public opinion remains critical; this has been predominantly a top-down approach, without involving society in buying into the concept of normalisation.

Finally, the Abraham Accords resulted from meeting security needs, geopolitical realignments, and economic calculations. They represent a significant change of course in Middle Eastern diplomacy, but they will last only as long as they can address the root causes of conflict, in particular the Palestinian question, which remains unresolved.

The Abraham Accords are a radical departure from previous Arab-Israeli peace accords, unlike frameworks such as Camp David, Oslo, and Wadi Araba, which focused on direct bilateral conflict or directly involved Palestinian statehood in the centre of talks. The Abraham Accords formalised relations by pursuing strategic alignment, mutual security interests, and economic collaboration. This change represents a wider rebalancing of the regional agenda and a reevaluation of Arab foreign policies that is more of a rebalancing of national interests at the expense of personal political stances.

The future of the Abraham Accords in terms of the durability of regional stability is still unclear. The success of their enterprise will not necessarily be determined by geopolitics alone, but also by their capacity or incapacity to include the Palestinian issue in a viable regional order. Without such integration, the Accords can create stability in relations between states, with more fundamental conflicts remaining unresolved.

Conclusion

A lasting peace in the region entails serious measures towards Palestinian sovereignty, responsibility for acts of international law violations, and regional dialogue. This study, based on the theoretical framework, confirms that peace that is not accompanied by decolonisation is unstable.

An analysis of the Abraham Accords through the lens of postcolonial and settler-colonial theory shows that a form of normalisation that does not include Palestinians does not help to solve the conflict; it only institutionalises it. The Accords undermine Palestinian political bargaining, justify Israeli settler-colonialism, make Palestinians increasingly divided, and polarise the region. They do not eradicate but may in fact strengthen the structural inequities that are fuelling the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and therefore, even as they open up new possibilities of elite cooperation, they leave untouched many structural aspects of this conflict.

In this way, the regional order created by the Accords is only stable for the strong, yet violent and exclusionary to the colonised. Normalisation that

marginalises the Palestinian question cannot make the Middle East a sustainable peace; it must go on to challenge the colonial forms of the conflict and proceed to an authentic decolonial vision of regional order.

Participant Consent: The author confirms that no participants were involved in this study.

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