

Settler Colonialism as a Reinforcement of Patriarchy: A Focus on Palestine

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Abstract

This study examines the interplay between settler colonialism and patriarchy, more specifically; how settler colonial processes are reinforcing patriarchal ideologies and gender dynamics. We analyze historical contexts, theoretical frameworks and mechanisms, empirical evidence, and take Palestine as a case study, to help deepen the understanding of the complex correlation between the two vital social systems. In this article, we break down the mechanisms by which patriarchy has shaped settler colonialism, such mechanisms include control over land and resources, subjugation, control over reproduction, gendered divisions of labour, and cultural assimilation. Moreover, based on the experiences of Indigenous women, this study emphasizes how different forms of oppression and violence intersect under the umbrella of settler colonialism. Additionally, this study acknowledges counterarguments and critiques, for instance, we recognize the importance of individual and communal agency, the common neglect of resistance movements and the role of intersectionality. The findings of this study contribute to scholarly conversations by illuminating the intricate dynamics between settler colonialism and patriarchy, furthermore, the article sheds light on the significance and need for inclusive and intersectional approaches in understanding and addressing the interlocking systems of power and oppression. The article concludes with policy suggestions and implications, future research directions, and the potential for transformative justice with settler colonized societies.

Keywords: Settler Colonialism, Patriarchy, Reproduction, Control, Agency.

INTRODUCTION

Settler colonialism and patriarchy stand as two formidable social systems that have left indelible imprints on the course of human history and the construction of contemporary societies. Settler colonialism, in its essence, is the establishment of new societies by colonizers on Indigenous lands. This process entails the dispossession and marginalization of Indigenous peoples¹. Whereas patriarchy is a social system characterized by male dominance it works to perpetuate gendered hierarchies by upholding male dominance, and suppressing the agency of women². While both settler colonialism and patriarchy have been studied extensively, the complex interplay between the social systems remains underexplored.

The recognition of the interconnectedness of settler colonialism and patriarchy, as social systems, is crucial, as it can aid in the formulation of more inclusive and emancipatory approaches to address the legacies of settler colonialism, as well as aid to work towards dismantling patriarchal structures in the pursuit of a more just and equitable world. Thus this is the objective of this article; by illuminating the intersections of these systems, we aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms that perpetuate patriarchal ideologies within settler colonial projects and hence offer insights into the nuanced manifestations of power and control. To effectively do this, the article specifically focuses on the Palestinian context as a compelling case study. Palestine serves as an illustrative example of how settler colonialism and patriarchy interact, more particularly how the intersection between the two shapes the experiences of Indigenous communities³.

In the following sections, we will embark on a comprehensive exploration of the literature on settler colonialism and patriarchy. Additionally, we will lay the groundwork by examining historical perspectives that elucidate the gendered divisions of labour, the control over reproduction, and gendered violence. Each one of these mechanisms has bolstered the reinforcement of patriarchal norms, behind the mask of the rhetoric of male dominance; as it has been utilized to legitimize settler colonialism and assert the supposed superiority of colonizers over Indigenous peoples⁴. This examination will help us lay out the theoretical foundations of settler colonialism, and thus allow us to acknowledge the relevance of intersectionality in understanding how patriarchy influences settler colonialism. Moreover, we will investigate the role of power and control within

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both systems, exploring how colonial violence shapes gender roles and power dynamics. Here, the control over land, resources, and production will be examined as pivotal patriarchal mechanisms, while cultural assimilation will be explored as a means to reinforce patriarchal norms within settler colonial societies.

Our study will subsequently transition into a potent case study focused on Palestine, critically analyzing historical settler colonialism through a feminist lens. The article will explore empirical evidence, supported by quantitative data and qualitative narratives which will reveal the experiences of Palestinian women within the settler colonial context. This will include an examination of the impact of settler violence, as well as the significance of patrilineal inheritance in shaping power dynamics and land ownership patterns.

Addressing counterarguments and critiques will be integral to our investigation, as we acknowledge the multifaceted nature of these historical processes. We will underscore the significance of recognizing Indigenous agency and resistance in challenging patriarchal norms, considering the role of religion, neoliberalism, and right-wing politics in perpetuating passive acceptance of patriarchal ideologies.

Ultimately, our study will culminate in a reflection on the broader implications of settler colonialism on gender justice and offer policy recommendations to address patriarchal structures within settler colonial societies. We will underscore the transformative potential of understanding and challenging the intersectionality of settler colonialism and patriarchy, advocating for interdisciplinary collaborations to advance social change and transformative justice. By engaging in this exploration, we hope to contribute meaningfully to the ongoing dialogue on settler colonialism and patriarchy, advocating for an equitable and just future that dismantles the oppressive structures that have endured for centuries.

Exposition and Theoretical Foundations

The intersection between patriarchy and settler colonialism constitutes a significant and multifaceted area of inquiry that exposes the complex dynamics at play in the practice of colonizing Indigenous lands and the reinforcement of patriarchal ideologies. As colonizers establish new societies, patriarchal norms become deeply intertwined with the mechanisms of control, dispossession, and violence⁵. As aforementioned, the mechanisms encompass control over reproduction, gendered violence, the rhetoric of male dominance, cultural assimilation, and gendered divisions of labour. These mechanisms operate in tandem and result in the underlying structures that perpetuate gender inequalities within colonized societies.

Control Over Reproduction

Firstly, control over reproduction emerges as a potent and ultimate rudiment that reinforces patriarchal ideologies within settler colonialism. Settler colonial societies seek to exert power over Indigenous women's bodies and reproductive capacities, by perceiving them as vessels for reproduction that could potentially expand Indigenous populations which would outnumber settler populations. Controlling reproduction is often deployed through various tactics which assert settler colonialism, for instance, settler colonial governments would deny pregnant women rights to healthcare and entry to hospitals, threaten to deny their unborn child(ren) legal status, or exercise uses of force and violence, e.g. tear gas bombs, use of weapons, and often forced sterilization⁶. This was highlighted by Nadera Shalhoub- Kevorkian in her article "The Politics of Birth and the Intimacies of Violence Against Palestinian Women in Occupied East Jerusalem" and Mark Griffiths and Jemima Repo's article "Women and Checkpoints in Palestine" ⁷. This form of violence and control reinforces the narrative of settler superiority and seeks to undermine Indigenous birth rates in their native lands, hence solidifying the perception of Indigenous women as passive objects subject to settler colonial authority. This mechanism not only upholds settler dominance but also accentuates the marginalization of Indigenous women, underscoring the deeply rooted gender disparities.

Gendered Violence

Secondly, gendered violence serves to assert settler dominance, further exacerbating power imbalances, and positioning settler masculinity as a means of control, whereby patriarchal ideologies are reinforced within the context of settler colonialism. As Nabila Espanioly in her article "Violence Against Women: A Palestinian Women's Perspective: Personal is Political" at the individual level, Indigenous women become targets of

physical, sexual, and psychological abuse perpetrated by settler or colonial authorities⁸. By subjecting Indigenous women to such pervasive violence, settler communities seek to assert a sense of power and superiority, thus reinforcing patriarchal norms whereby settler men are positioned as dominant figures and Indigenous women as subordinate and vulnerable. Furthermore, the impact of gendered violence can also take the form of structural violence; through which systemic inequalities are perpetuated to shape the broader socio-political landscape⁹. Structural violence is a concept that encompasses how economic, social, and political structures systematically marginalize and oppress minority groups¹⁰. Hence, within the context of settler colonialism, gendered violence operates as a structural tool that contributes to the disempowerment of Indigenous communities, particularly women, thus furthering the objectives of settler colonialism, i.e. state attribution, as Mais Qandeel discusses in her article “Violence and State Attribution: The Case of Occupied Palestine”¹¹. Overall, violence against Indigenous women not only normalizes the subjugation of Indigenous women but also fosters an environment in which settler dominance is upheld through violent means.

Rhetoric of Male Dominance

The rhetoric of male dominance manifests itself as a discursive and powerful ideological mechanism that buttresses settler colonialism’s patriarchal underpinnings and constructs a binary framework between Indigenous communities and settler societies. Establishing this framework is of essence to the embedding of the rhetoric of male dominance in the practice of settler colonialism. This binary is founded on positioning settler communities as ‘civilized’ and ‘superior,’ while Indigenous communities are cast as ‘uncivilized’ and ‘inferior’¹². Subsequently, this establishes a dichotomy that justifies the colonization of Indigenous lands and resources, as it portrays settler communities as the rightful agents of progress, while Indigenous communities are relegated to the margins. Through this dichotomy, patriarchal ideologies are invoked, as highlighted by Lentia Freidenvall and Vasileois Petrogiannis in their article “Political Rhetoric, Identities, and Dominant Gender Representations: Hegemonic Masculinity in Service of Pro-Austerity Rhetoric in Greek Political Discourse”¹³. Patriarchy inherently thrives on the subjugation and marginalization of women, and in the context of settler colonialism, this extends to the portrayal of Indigenous men as inherently weak and incapable, thus potentially making resistance and opposition appear futile. The construction of this binary bolsters the notion that the settler colonial project is not only justified but necessary for the advancement of society, with settler communities assuming the role of the rightful architects of progress¹⁴. Thus, the rhetoric of male dominance perpetuates and amplifies patriarchal power structures within settler colonial societies. The intertwining of the patriarchy with this rhetoric underscores the complexities of how gendered ideologies contribute to the perpetuation of settler colonial systems of control and dominance.

Cultural Assimilation

Cultural assimilation is an auxiliary mechanism intricately woven into the fabric of settler colonialism, further reinforcing patriarchal ideologies and perpetuating power imbalances. Cultural assimilation operates through settler societies seeking to establish their dominance by imposing patriarchal norms and values, settlers aim to weaken the agency and influence of Indigenous communities, specifically women, hence reinforcing the broader patriarchal framework that underpins settler colonialism¹⁵. Cultural assimilation was often manifested through educational systems, where Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families and placed in residential schools; which were designed to impart settler values and beliefs¹⁶. These institutions not only separated Indigenous children from their cultural heritage but also enforced patriarchal ideals by promoting Western gender norms and roles. Furthermore, the process of cultural assimilation extends beyond formal education, infiltrating various aspects of Indigenous life. Missionaries and colonial administrators actively seek to undermine Indigenous cultural practices, including those that may uphold more balanced and egalitarian gender dynamics. Thus it becomes worth mentioning, that the role of cultural assimilation in reinforcing patriarchal ideologies within settler colonialism is two-fold. This was demonstrated in Elisa Pharaon’s article “Gendered Experiences of Violence in Canadian Residential Schools” and Elisa Novic’s chapter in “The Concept of Cultural Genocide: An International Law Perspective.” From the two texts, we can understand that cultural assimilation erodes Indigenous gender systems that may challenge patriarchal norms, by effectively disempowering Indigenous women and curtailing their roles as leaders and decision-makers¹⁷. Furthermore, cultural assimilation upholds settler patriarchal ideals as the norms; positioning settler communities and their

culture as superior in contrast with the “uncivilized” Indigenous communities and cultures¹⁸. This dual impact further entrenches patriarchal power dynamics, rendering resistance to settler colonialism and patriarchal norms all the more challenging.

Gendered Divisions of Labour

Finally, the convoluted web of gendered divisions of labour within settler colonial contexts is a crucial lens through which the reinforcement of patriarchal ideologies is magnified.

Settler colonialism engendered a deliberate and systematic allocation of roles that reinforce per-existing patriarchal norms while also facilitating processes of colonization. For instance, Indigenous women were often consigned to the realms of reproductive labour, a decision rooted in settler perceptions of women as passive and confined to the private sphere. This relegated Indigenous women to the confines of the household, eroding their visibility, voice, and agency in public life¹⁹. It is crucial to note that the mechanisms discussed previously serve as a foundation for this mechanism to effectively promote settler colonialism, as they aid in disempowering women and hence relegating them to reproductive labours only²⁰. Thus, this mechanism is a part of a broader objective of weakening Indigenous economies, as examined by Kyle Whyte in his article “Settler Colonialism, Ecology, and Environmental Injustice”²¹. Hence, due to women being barred from participating in decision-making processes and leadership roles, a significant sway throughout their communities’ potential destinies becomes the outcome, as well as implicitly dismissing Indigenous ways of governance and life. Simultaneously, settler men assumed positions of power in resource extraction, governance, and public affairs. Therefore, an evident unequal distribution of labour is occurring and bolstering the patriarchal framework; as settler men are occupying the positions of dominant figures in the socio-political landscape, and Indigenous communities are forced to become subservient²². The compounding impact of these gendered divisions of labour reverberates through generations, this is due to Indigenous women’s relegation to reproductive labour curtailing their opportunities for education and professional development, entrenching cycles of limited access to economic and social mobility. Overall, the exclusion of Indigenous women from decision-making perpetuated a systemic disempowerment, stifling their voices in matters that affected their communities’ trajectories.

Settler Colonialism as Patriarchy: Conceptual Framework

Settler colonialism, an intricate tapestry of ambition and dispossession, transcends the realm of conventional colonial endeavours. It encompasses territorial conquest, and the calculated intent to supplant Indigenous populations with an alien presence, fashioning a new order that asserts settler sovereignty. The essence of settler colonialism lies between the abrupt dichotomy between settlers and natives; a dynamic driven by the displacement of Indigenous communities from their ancestral lands. This transmutation also goes beyond retrieving land and resource exploitation, it also establishes new societal norms and governance structures, which often are stitched with discrimination and apartheid, whereby settler dominance is crystalized, hence perpetuating an audacious legacy of power and control.

Subsequently, patriarchy, an antiquated sentinel of dominance, takes on a more pernicious form within the realms of settler colonialism. From dissecting the patriarchy, as a concept, we learn that it manifests a mosaic of suppression and privilege. Within the context of settler colonialism, Indigenous women are ensnared within the intricate web of patriarchy, as they are systematically relegated to the private, and their agency as decision-makers and leaders is muffled by the crescendo of control by settlers. This unearths the seamlessness with which patriarchy intertwines with the overarching ambitions of settler colonialism.

Theoretical Connections Between Settler Colonialism and Patriarchy

The Role of Power and Control

In the labyrinth of both settler colonialism and patriarchy, power and control serve as the navigational stars. Power and control forge a path for settler colonialism by appropriating Indigenous lands, and often reducing them to mere commodities for the settler conquest. In tandem, patriarchy wields its scepter of control to position men as the arbiters of authority. Similarly, the intersecting dynamics of power and control within the

settler colonial context result in settler men wielding dominion over both Indigenous women and men and their ancestral territories, hence solidifying their grip on power and reinforcing the patriarchal agenda. For example, as previously discussed, settler societies and governance exerts power over Indigenous women's bodies, particularly their reproductive capacities. This has broader consequences than to simply exercise structural violence over Indigenous women; firstly, it creates a binary between settler women and Indigenous women. As settler women are able to acquire the healthcare needed in all stages of pregnancy and childbirth, hence reflecting the settler society's objectives in pursuing settler colonialism. This binary potentially develops into somewhat of a battle between two nations, whereby two nations- the settler and the oppressed- are fighting to preserve their nations, and the victor is the nation with the higher birth rate. From this perspective, we can understand why settler societies and governments have the incentives to exercise violence towards Indigenous women; they perceive them as vessels for reproduction that could expand Indigenous populations, which can potentially outnumber the settler society. This is precisely where settler colonialism enacts the patriarchy.

Colonial Violence and Its Impacts

Colonial violence is employed as akin to an insidious contagion that courses through the veins of both settler colonialism and patriarchy. It is the sword of disinheritance, mercilessly disposing Indigenous communities of their lands to aid in perpetuating settler dominance. In the realm of patriarchy, gendered violence is the main weapon of subjugation utilized, as it desecrates the autonomy of Indigenous women's bodies and legitimizes settler authority²³. This dual violence; one spatial and the other gendered, generates seismic tremors that continue to reverberate, hence sustaining both settler control and patriarchal hierarchies.

Control Over Land and Resources

In the tapestry of settler ambitions, the usurpation of Indigenous lands mirrors the power dynamics inherent in patriarchal systems. The appropriation of Indigenous lands echoes the patriarchal paradigm of exerting control over women's bodies. This dual conquest reinforces narratives of entitlement and ascendancy, positioning settler men as architects of progress while relegating Indigenous communities to subservience. Resource control perpetuates gender hierarchies, mirroring the patriarchal appropriation of power over both nature and women. This amalgamation extends to production roles, where patriarchal principles amplify settler men's dominance while marginalizing Indigenous women. This interconnected dominion not only advances settler colonial objectives but enshrines patriarchal norms within the structures they shape, necessitating a comprehensive analysis of these overlapping systems to dismantle their persistent inequalities.

Reinforcing Patriarchal Norms Through Cultural Assimilation

Cultural assimilation is a weapon of choice in the settler's arsenal, emerging as a conduit for the propagation of patriarchal norms. The imposition of settler gender paradigms casts a shadow on Indigenous societies, erasing traditional gender frameworks and with them, Indigenous women's roles as leaders and decision-makers, and replaces these norms and frameworks with those of settlers. The purpose of this is to suppress the agency of women within their communities and limit their capacities. Thus this orchestrated assimilation strengthens settler hegemony while muffling Indigenous voices, erecting a monument to settler patriarchal ideals and the erasure of Indigenous agency.

Overall, in the crucible of this conceptual framework, the interplay between settler colonialism and patriarchy unfolds with a symphonic resonance. The shared cadence of power dynamics, violence, control, and cultural imposition fuses these systems into seamless orchestration, culminating in the perpetuation of gender inequalities and the relentless reinforcement of settler dominance. To comprehend this interlocking web is to wield a torch that illuminates the pathways of resistance and justice, ushering in an era of dismantling oppression at its core.

Case Study and Empirical Evidence: Palestine

The profound resonance of the 'Conceptual Framework' finds poignant embodiment within the harrowing realities of Palestine. The incursion of settler colonialism into the Palestinian Territories manifests patriarchal

norms, further restricting the agency of Palestinian lands, an eerie parallel to the patriarchal paradigm, relegating women's voices to the periphery, and only accentuating settler dominance.

Within the context of power and control, Israel's control over Palestinians is marked by a systemic imbalance of power and authority. For instance, there are over 700 checkpoints across the Palestinian Territories and Israel, these checkpoints are physical barriers that curtail the access of Palestinians to essential healthcare services, resources, and more importantly, their ancestral lands²⁴. These checkpoints, along with road closures are used to determine the movements of Palestinians at all times. The structural violence inherent in the checkpoint system exacerbates health risks fostering a distressing environment that endangers the well-being of Palestinians. This form of subjugation enforces oppressive senses of entitlement for settler governments, as they are the ones asserting supremacy while Palestinian communities grapple with disempowerment.

Pregnant Palestinian women are the primary victims, as the control Israeli settler authorities have over their movement causes delayed medical attention, childbirths and other emergencies. "Between 2000 to 2007, 10% of pregnant Palestinian women faced delays at checkpoints, with 69 births occurring at checkpoints, 35 infant deaths, and 5 maternal deaths"²⁵. A 29-year-old Jerusalemite woman expressed:

"The past three days were the worst days of my life... having the baby under such stress, needing to catch a bus while experiencing the pain of severe contractions, knowing that I might have the baby on the bus... I had contractions, bad ones; I was dying of fear, pain, ruo'b [terror]... real terror... holding on to my bag... as if the bag can carry the pain, crying my body in silence, wanting to go back to my house... to have the baby there... but then, the baby would end up without an ID, undocumented, unsecured, displaced... throughout her life... I really had the worst days of my life... I was giving birth, but living death at the same time... and I stopped myself from giving birth... hanging onto my bag, squeezing it, promising my unborn to reach the hospital, and have her in Jerusalem."

Furthermore, this form of structural violence at checkpoints leads Palestinian women to develop fears of violence or delays at checkpoints, thus ushering in acceptance of at-home births, despite the high risks associated with such methods²⁶. From this, we can understand that the emblematic of the Israeli occupation underscores the intersection of gender-based oppression and the broader context of occupation.

Additionally, the Israeli occupation's stranglehold over Palestinian resources exemplifies patriarchal power dynamics in practice. The systemic extraction of Palestinian resources parallels the objectives of settler colonialism, amplifying power imbalances and echoing the patriarchal notions of control. This is because settler communities exploit resources to assert dominance, inadvertently intensifying patriarchal ideals, hence further subduing the stewardship of Indigenous women over land and resources, and strengthening their marginalized agency.

The Palestinian landscape acts as a heart-wrenching testimony to the concepts outlined previously. By examining these mechanisms in the context of Palestine, we confront the unignorable impacts of these twin systems, galvanizing an imperative to rectify their effects and dismantle the deep-rooted disparities they propagate.

Challenges and Critiques

Counter Arguments and Alternative Perspectives

Navigating through counterarguments and alternative perspectives unlocks the complexities that define the interplay between settler colonialism and patriarchy. By delving into the dimensions of Indigenous agency and its interactions with dominant ideologies, and acknowledging the shortcomings of current research paradigms.

Limitations of Existing Research

It is crucial to recognize and address the limitations of existing research on the relationship between settler colonialism and patriarchy. Much of the existing literature tends to oversimplify the connection and neglect how the role of gender intersects with the multiple forms of structural violence within colonized societies. By recognizing these limitations, researchers can provide a more holistic assessment that uncovers hidden facets

and unravels the complex dynamics underpinning the reinforcement of patriarchal ideologies within settler colonial contexts. This introspective examination paves the way for more rigorous and encompassing analyses.

Indigenous Agency and Resistance

It is critical to consider the tendency to overlook Indigenous agency and resistance movements when examining the impacts of settler colonialism. Generally, narratives often focus on settler dominance, however, understanding the multifaceted ways in which Indigenous communities assert their sovereignty and resist oppressive structures is vital. Resistance movements challenge the pervasive narrative of victimhood and highlight the indomitable spirit of Indigenous peoples in navigating and combating the effects of settler colonialism. In the case of Palestine, for instance, there is a strong network of Non-Governmental Organizations and Civil Society Organizations that research, collect data, report, and publish all the impacts of the occupation across the West Bank and Gaza Strip²⁷. This form of resistance raises awareness to international audiences, and Palestinians- to aid in informing them about current events and thus protect them²⁸. Failing to acknowledge the potency of such resistance movements risks perpetuating a narrative of passive victimization and hence undermines the resilience that defines Indigenous populations' struggles against patriarchal and colonial forces.

Individual Agency and Passive Internalizations

It is worth noting that patriarchal ideologies are frequently absorbed passively and internalized within settler-colonized societies. It is not simply the reinforcement of patriarchal ideologies that heavily impacts the divisions of labour, and the dichotomy between power and control amongst women and men, but also the internalization and passive acceptance of patriarchal ideologies. This is due to the role of religion, neoliberalism, and the prevalence of right-wing politics. For example, in the case of Palestine, as of 2022, Palestinians across the West Bank and Gaza Strip are predominantly Muslims²⁹. While Islam does not restrict the mobility and freedom of women, it is often translated to include the female being subservient to her husband, or any male figure in her life. This in itself disempowers women and therefore forces them to accept reproductive labour as their only duty. This aligns with neoliberal ideals; whereby the male aims to achieve economic and social objectives, and the female adopts the role of the homemaker. Thus, the influence of religion and neoliberalism leads individuals to perpetuate patriarchal norms without active awareness, thereby cementing power imbalances and entrenching gender disparities³⁰. It is crucial to recognize this as the Palestinian Authority's Basic Law maintains a balance between left-wing and right-wing politics by empowering and supporting women to take leadership and decision-making roles in workforces, and thus contribute to the Palestinian economy³¹. Yet, it is the adaptation of neoliberal ideals, and misinterpretation of religion that restricts this from occurring. Overall, scrutinizing the internalization is essential in acknowledging the subtler ways in which patriarchal ideologies are propagated within settler colonial contexts, and illustrating the complexity of dismantling such deeply ingrained systems.

Gender Inequality within the Palestinian Authority: (Case of Palestine)

The State of Palestine National Policy Agenda 2017-2022, clearly states that it is the vision of Palestine is to promote gender equality. It further outlines concrete examples of areas in which this needs to be developed. Additionally, the Palestinian National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325 concludes that women's participation in official institutions needs to be strengthened, and highlights the importance of including women's experiences and perspectives in official discussions on the occupation and its consequences³². However, in practice, Palestinian women view those statements as lip service for civilized rhetoric that does not exist nor is seriously implemented, despite their ability to challenge the patriarchal culture.

For instance, as many studies have shown, peace processes experience more dedication and resilience when women are involved; however, women's political participation is still scarce, even 23 after UN Resolution 1325 was published³³. More light is yet to be shed on women playing major roles around the world, especially in the Middle East. Women's participation in politics in the Middle East is very rare; participation is primitive, particularly in senior positions, as the glass ceiling is relatively low. It is worth noting that the participation of women does not correspond to their efficiency. For example, in the Palestinian National Council women's

representation in the ministers' Council accounts for 14%, in the diplomatic corps for 11%, only one Palestinian governor out of 16 is a woman, and only 3 ministers out of 23 are women³⁴. Moreover, among ambassadors and heads of missions who represent Palestine in foreign countries, there are 11 women out of 100³⁵. Lastly, within the PLO Executive Committee, the most important executive authority of the Palestinian people, the representation of women is non-existent following the resignation of Dr. Hanan Ashrwai- who was the only female representative in external negotiations, in internal reconciliation, women's participation is scarce.

Theory of Change

Although women numerically constitute a large part of several key institutions in Palestine, in some cases- even the majority-, they have remained largely absent from the higher levels of leadership and decision-making and from the fora shaping the country's future as well as its external relations. It is important to recognize that many women in Palestine are highly educated, professional and competent, yet they tend to be excluded from important processes related to both governance and conflict resolution. The issue is therefore not predominantly related to 'women's lack of ability,' as contradicted by high rates of education amongst women, but rather to structural and multi-layered challenges that hinder their meaningful participation.

Implications and Future Directions

A comprehensive grasp of the broader implications of settler colonialism on gender justice is paramount for advancing transformative societal change. The inseparable nexus between settler colonialism and the perpetuation of patriarchal norms offers insights into how these intertwined systems reify gender-based inequalities. By illuminating how settler colonialism perpetuates and amplifies gender disparities, this inquiry fuels advocacy for multifaceted reforms that not only challenge patriarchal norms but also disrupt the systemic foundations of settler colonial power.

Policy Recommendations for Addressing Patriarchal Structures within Settler Colonial Societies

Strategic policy proposals emerge as catalysts for transformative development in the attempt to unravel the web of patriarchal systems ingrained in settler colonial civilizations. Policy initiatives must give voice to underrepresented groups and highlight Indigenous agencies. This entails including educational programs run by Indigenous people that question patriarchal narratives and support Indigenous women's economic empowerment to make up for historical inequalities³⁶. To address the nexus of settler colonialism and patriarchy, it is crucial to put in place culturally aware support networks for persons impacted by structural violence, particularly in the legal and healthcare systems. Settler colonial countries can take a path that sees gender justice as intrinsically linked to tearing down the oppressive systems that support settler colonialism by infusing policy frameworks with intersectional feminist viewpoints.

The pursuit of a more equitable future necessitates an unwavering commitment to unraveling the intricate dynamics of these interconnected systems as we navigate them, as well as advocating for inclusive policies that move us closer to a world free from the shackles of colonial and patriarchal dominance.

CONCLUSION

The interplay of settler colonialism and patriarchy has illuminated a complex tapestry of power dynamics and resistance. The fusion of these two systems becomes vivid in the experiences of marginalized individuals, notably Indigenous women, further underscored by the exploration of Palestinian narratives. From the appropriation of land, to the dominance over resources, and the exercise of structural violence, each facet underscores the reinforcement of patriarchal norms.

The counterarguments shed light on the resilience of Indigenous agency, the passive acceptance of patriarchal ideologies, and research limitations. The insights emphasize the need for a nuanced and intersectional approach, to acknowledge the multifaceted forces shaping the relationship between settler colonialism and patriarchy. Subsequently, the implications are profound. Understanding the impact of settler colonialism on gender justice

lays the foundation for dismantling patriarchal structures. Informed policy recommendations, rooted in inclusivity and intersectional feminism; signaling a transformative scope for the future.

Conclusively, this exploration, enriched by the Palestinian context, accentuates the enduring resonance of settler colonialism and patriarchy. By dissecting their intricate dynamics, we pave a path toward justice, inclusivity, and liberation for marginalized voices, beckoning a commitment to rewriting narratives, dismantling oppression, and shaping a more equitable world.

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