

Fragments of Breath: The Ethics of Endurance under Erasure

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01

Presentation Outline

Comprehensive overview of research structure and key sections

Research Agenda

- ★ Introduction to genocide definition challenges and conceptual instability
- ★ Comparative philosophical analysis of bureaucratic systems across historical contexts
- ★ Methodology combining hermeneutic analysis with case study examination
- ★ Results on mechanisms of procedural absolution and ontological violence
- ★ Conclusion on structural erasure and ethical implications for institutional discourse

02

Research Context

Problem domain, current state, and research gap addressed

Current State of Genocide Discourse

- ★ Legal and moral definitions of genocide remain contested and politically manipulated
- ★ Palestinian case exemplifies definitional instability between categorization and contestation
- ★ Institutional discourse creates hyper-visibility through media while enabling legal deniability
- ★ Academic discourse divided between emphasizing contestability vs. demanding rigid definitions
- ★ Ambiguity in genocide discourse becomes tool for deferring ethical judgment rather than prompting vigilance

Research Gap & Challenge

Current Limitations

- ★ Focus on legal definitions overlooks bureaucratic mechanisms of erasure
- ★ Institutional frameworks treat genocide as exceptional rather than structural
- ★ Procedural requirements create impossible standards of proof for recognition
- ★ Comparative analysis often lacks philosophical depth across historical contexts

Research Challenge

- ★ How bureaucratic classification transforms into grammar of erasure
- ★ Mechanisms through which procedural absolution enables systematic violence
- ★ Continuities between historical and contemporary bureaucratic rationalization
- ★ Developing framework to analyze ontological violence beyond legal categorization

Motivation & Objectives

1

Research Importance

Addresses how institutional ambiguity enables systematic violence against Palestinian populations in Gaza through bureaucratic mechanisms

2

Key Questions

How does procedural absolutism create communicative double binds? What continuities exist between historical and contemporary bureaucratic erasure?

3

Expected Impact

Develops new theoretical framework for analyzing bureaucratic violence and challenges institutional complicity in systematic erasure

03

Theoretical Framework

Building on Lemkin, Bauman, Butler and comparative philosophical analysis

Key Theoretical Frameworks

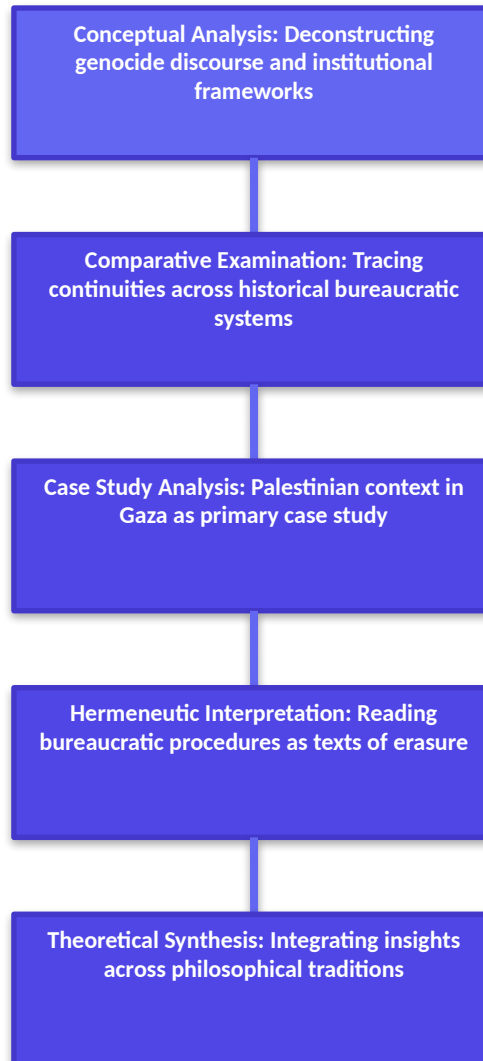
- ★ **Lemkin (1944):** Genocide as destruction of national patterns of life beyond physical extermination
- ★ **Bauman (1989):** Modernity's capacity to create moral distance through bureaucratic rationality
- ★ **Butler (2004):** Precarious life and differential grievability in contemporary political frameworks
- ★ **Meiches (2017):** Double bind where speaking of genocide is either polemical or procedurally impossible
- ★ Comparative analysis tracing Nazi Ordnungspolitik to contemporary occupation bureaucracy

04

Methodological Approach

Combining hermeneutic analysis with comparative philosophical examination

Research Design & Approach



Methodological Details - Part 1

- ★ Focuses primarily on Palestinian case in Gaza as paradigmatic example of bureaucratic erasure
- ★ Relies on comparative philosophical analysis rather than empirical quantitative data
- ★ Assumes institutional discourse inherently manipulates ambiguity for political ends
- ★ **Examines bureaucratic mechanisms:** labeling systems, permit regimes, population management
- ★ Analyzes how administrative procedures transform into mechanisms of ontological violence

Methodological Details - Part 2

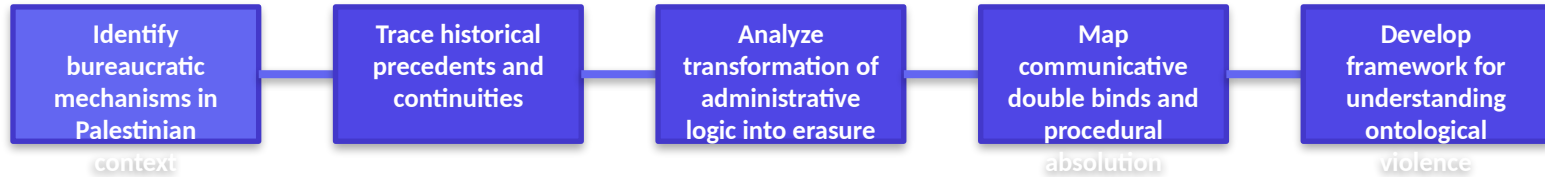
Analytical Framework

- ★ Textual analysis of institutional documents and legal frameworks
- ★ Discourse analysis of political and bureaucratic language
- ★ Conceptual mapping of procedural mechanisms and their effects
- ★ Historical comparison across different bureaucratic regimes

Validation Approach

- ★ Triangulation across multiple theoretical perspectives
- ★ Comparative validation through historical case studies
- ★ Conceptual coherence testing across different contexts
- ★ Peer review within critical genocide studies community

Analytical Process



05

Key Findings

Mechanisms of procedural absolution and bureaucratic erasure identified

Primary Findings: Mechanisms of Erasure

1

Labeling Systems

Palestinian subjects become visible only as security threats, enabling rationalized erasure through bureaucratic categorization

2

Permit Regimes

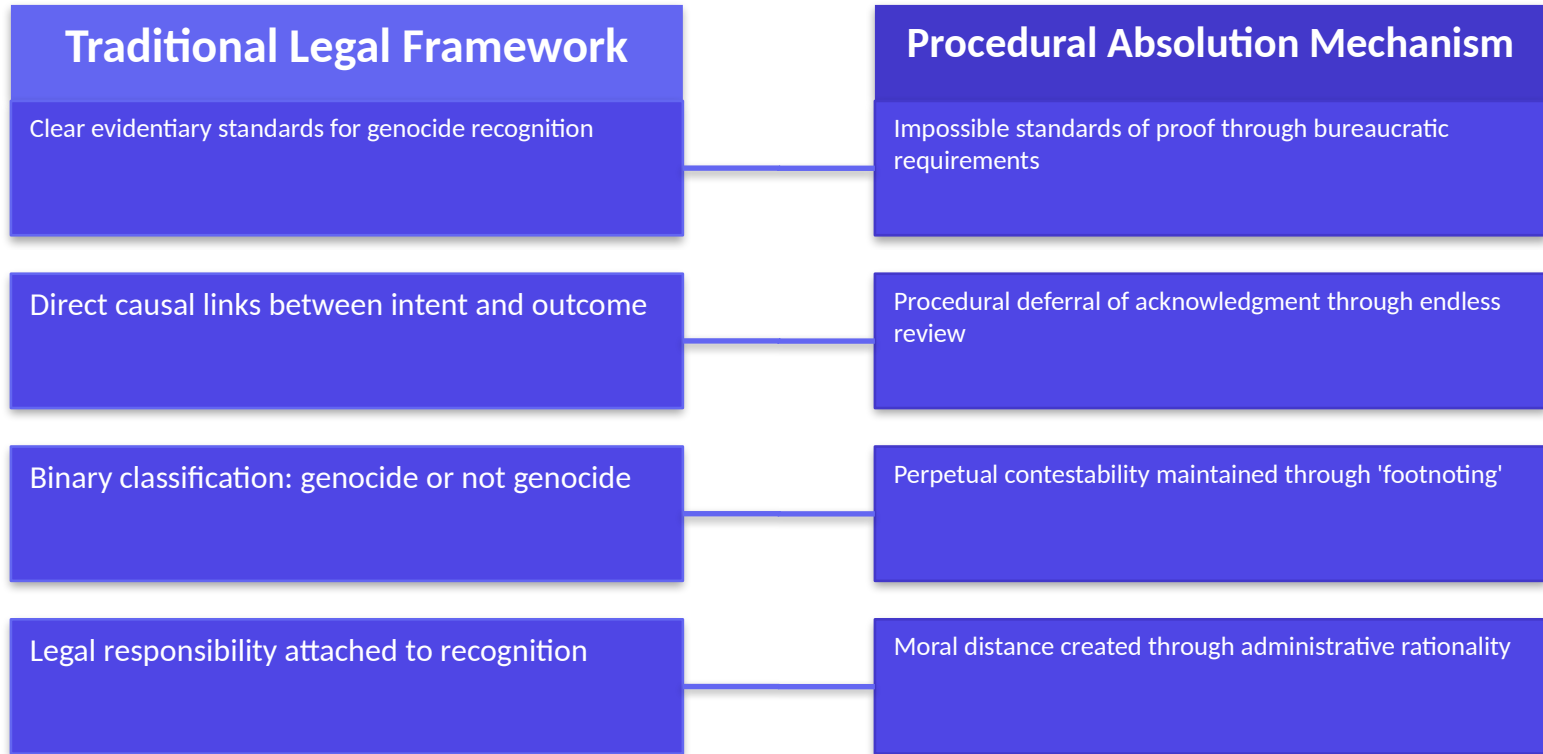
Administrative procedures create perpetual deferral of recognition while enabling systematic control and restriction

3

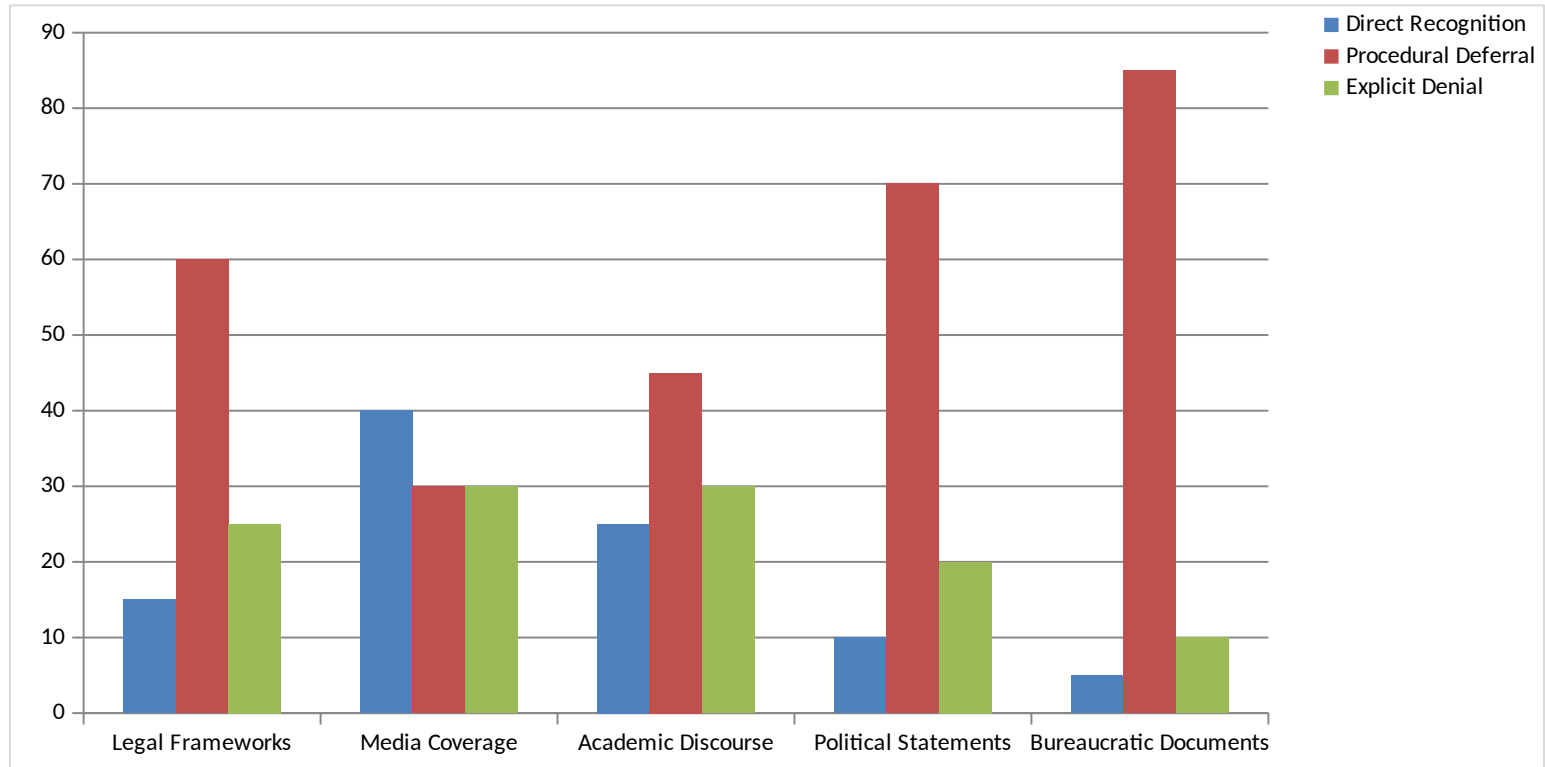
Population Management

Bureaucratic systems produce ontology where Palestinian existence is managed as demographic problem rather than human reality

Procedural Absolution in Action



Quantitative Analysis of Discursive Patterns



Case Study: The 'Footnoting' Mechanism

- ★ Identified as key mechanism where institutional discourse acknowledges contestability only to re-impose closure
- ★ Creates appearance of engagement while maintaining structural denial
- ★ **Example:** UN reports include footnotes about 'ongoing debate' while procedurally deferring action
- ★ Transforms ethical urgency into academic debate through procedural requirements
- ★ Enables institutions to claim thoroughness while avoiding substantive recognition of violence

Historical Continuities Analysis

Bureaucratic Mechanism	Nazi Ordnungspolitik	Israeli Occupation	Functional Similarity
Population Registration	Detailed racial categorization	Comprehensive ID and permit systems	Creating administrable categories for control
Spatial Management	Ghettoization and zoning laws	Checkpoints, walls, and Area divisions	Controlling movement and isolating populations
Economic Control	Aryanization and property seizure	Movement restrictions and economic blockade	Systematic deprivation and dependency creation
Legal Justification	Nuremberg Laws and legal frameworks	Military orders and emergency regulations	Bureaucratic rationalization of violence

Key Contributions Summary

1

Ontological Visibility

Demonstrates how labeling, permits, and population management produce ontology where Palestinian subjects become visible only as security threats

2

Procedural Absolution

Identifies 'procedural absolution' as mechanism enabling rationalized erasure through bureaucratic deferral

3

Historical Continuities

Traces continuities from Nazi Ordnungspolitik to contemporary Israeli occupation bureaucracy

4

Footnoting Mechanism

Introduces 'footnoting' as key mechanism rendering suffering perpetually debatable yet unrecognized

Limitations & Future Work

Current Limitations

- ★ Focus primarily on Palestinian case limits comparative scope
- ★ Reliance on philosophical analysis rather than empirical data
- ★ Limited examination of specific bureaucratic mechanisms in detail
- ★ Need for more interdisciplinary integration with legal studies

Future Research Directions

- ★ Further examination of specific bureaucratic mechanisms like permits and labeling
- ★ Expansion of comparative analysis to other contexts of systematic violence
- ★ Development of ethical frameworks to counter procedural absolution
- ★ Integration with empirical studies of bureaucratic violence

Conclusions

- ★ Difficulty defining genocide is structural feature enabling bureaucratic erasure rather than semantic issue
- ★ Procedural absolution creates communicative double binds that defer ethical recognition indefinitely
- ★ Historical continuities reveal bureaucratic rationality as consistent mechanism for enabling violence
- ★ Institutional 'footnoting' maintains appearance of engagement while avoiding substantive action
- ★ Palestinian suffering exemplifies how modernity's bureaucratic systems enable systematic erasure

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Thank You!

For questions: research@criticalstudies.edu
Project Archive: archive.org/fragmentsofbreath