

## 1|The Great March of Return<sup>1</sup>

In January 2018 Ahmed Abu Artema, a Palestinian poet and journalist, posted on Facebook the idea of a non-violent march at the separation fence in the occupied Gaza Strip. Various military air and ground assaults over the last two decades have punctuated enduring forms of occupation and siege in the territory. Promises to lift the siege in place since 2005 have been repeatedly broken, and political deadlock and economic and social hardship have become the norm. Palestinians have marched many times for their freedom and dignity, but the U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as capital of Israel gave urgency to the idea of the Great March of Return (GMR). Beginning on 30 March 2018 and maintained against improbable odds until December 2019, the GMR was a sustained and cumulative struggle that saw a series of weekly demonstrations across the occupied Gaza Strip in which hundreds of thousands of Palestinians of all ages and various political and social groups demanded the end of the siege on Gaza and the right of return for Palestinian refugees. The March began on Land Day, which commemorates the 1976 killing of six unarmed Palestinians protesting land expropriation in the Galilee and would culminate on 15 May—*Nakba* day—the day that marks the beginning of formal Palestinian exile in 1948.

The March was met with a characteristic cocktail of force, including live-fire and high-velocity bullets. Sniper teams were pre-emptively deployed to berms and other vantage points along the separation fence. On the first day of the protests Israel shot and killed 15 protestors and injured over 1,400 others who, according to human rights attorney and legal scholar Noura Erakat (2019, p.784) “posted no imminent threat to Israeli troops, civilians, or military infrastructure”. On 14 May, when the protests coincided with the move of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, Israeli troops killed 58 Palestinians in what marked the highest daily death toll of the GMR. In a compelling critique of what she calls Israel’s shoot-to-kill policy, Erakat shows how the use of lethal force was juridically justified by the military and the Israel Supreme Court. Placing the sovereign right to kill in a settler colonial framework, Erakat concludes that the GMR is the latest instalment in a much longer history of lethal violence that has been designed specifically to *eliminate* Palestinians (see also: Salamanca et al., 2012; Wolfe, 2006). I am deeply sympathetic to Erakat’s argument and have written elsewhere of how the Israel military has rationalised the killing of Palestinians (Author). But the GMR is not only and perhaps not even primarily a space of killing. Far more often than shooting-to-kill, Israeli troops shot to *not* kill. By the end of 2019, Israeli forces had killed 322

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Mads Gilbert, Mark Griffiths, Anas Ismail, Emily Mayhew, and Nisha Shah and three anonymous reviewers for their enormously helpful comments on this paper.

Palestinians during the GMR, but it had also injured a staggering 33,141 others (WHO, 2020, p.2). Nearly a quarter of those injured—over 8,000—were shot with live ammunition (UN, 2020).

In this paper I argue that the GMR should be understood as a space of *enduring* violence and *wounding* and that these concepts can enrich political geography and cognate work on violence, war, and trauma. The paper makes two contributions. First, it offers the concept of enduring violence as a supplement to feminist political geographical work on slow violence (Cahill and Pain 2019; O’Lear 2021; Pain and Cahill 2021) and associated concepts such as ‘everyday’ (Cuomo 1996; Mustafa, Anwar, and Sawas 2019), ‘banal’ (Christian et al., 2016; Katz, 2007; Koch & Paasi, 2016), and ‘chronic’ violence (Pain 2019). Where this work has usefully distinguished between ‘acute’ and ‘chronic’ forms of violence (e.g. Pain, 2021a), it has also tended, conceptually and methodologically, to privilege the latter. While slow and chronic violence remain vital conceptual tools, they tend to be so temporally and spatially expansive that they can lose sight of any particular ‘event’ of wounding or ‘origin’ of harm. Chronicity and slowness lack a sense that alongside structural forms of violence, there might also be specific (initial) blows or traumas inflicted *in order to endure*. Where slow and chronic violence evoke repetitive or incremental acts of injury, endurational violence requires only a single blow which itself performs the re-injuring of the body and wider social relations and infrastructures. Enduring violence may involve (many) subsequent blows, and it intersects with slow and chronic violence, but analytically it offers feminist political geography a fresh way of understanding how some forms of violence are calibrated to have long-lasting effects even in the absence of future ‘blows’. The enduringness of violence, its potential chronicity, resides not only in the slow unfolding of time but also in the material contexts of ‘initial’ encounters and acute events. The argument is not that political geography return to the debunked ‘event’ of war (Cuomo 1996), but rather that we more carefully attend to the enduring forms of violence that are built in to specific and seemingly discreet happenings because this can contribute to a fuller understanding of how and violence why lives on long after the obvious or initial ‘blows’ have subsided or morphed. Violence is an unfolding process (Das 2006), a Möbius strip with no clear beginnings or ends, but the forgoing analysis suggests there is real value in attending to the acute phases – *the seemingly quick acts or blows that punctuate and ultimately constitute the chronic and the slow*. For the Möbius of violence is less a flat strip than a jagged terrain, and the concept of enduring violence advocates a methodology that not only locates the ‘peaks’ of violence within an everyday terrain, but also traces the material residues left in their irregular wake.

Adapting Rob Nixon's (2011) concept of slow violence, I suggest that enduring violence is: A violence that inflicts long-lasting harm through a potentially singular act, event, or 'blow', a specific materialisation of violence capacitated to re-injure even in the absence of any future contact, a violence of persisting harm and varying intensity, a violence that interrupts rehabilitative horizons, and a violence whose acute and chronic qualities persist in and through socio-spatial relations at a variety of scales of oppression from lived bodily experience to the to the geopolitics of occupation and siege and territorial systems of settler colonialism and apartheid.

The second contribution is the concept of wounding, which I suggest can enrich political geographical work on necropolitics and the 'right to kill', emphasising how a concomitant 'right to maim' troubles contemporary theorisations of biopower and necropolitics. Methodologically, my goal here is to reorient political geography toward the *wounded or injured* body and the biological and material infrastructures that carry them. Conceptually, and drawing from Jaspir K. Puar's (2017) notion of the "right to maim", wounding as both a means and ends of power, opens new ways of thinking about enduring forms of bodily, demographic, and territorial injury that are not reducible to life and death. My wager here is that political geographical work on violence, war, and trauma has productively employed the twin concepts of biopolitics and necropolitics to elucidate the governance of 'make live/make die' and 'let live/let die', but has failed to fully consider wounding as a constituent part of being (c.f. Joronen and Rose 2021) – a means and end of power less interested in killing than in inflicting injury by capitalising on the constitutive vulnerability of life. Said another way, we have too easily glossed over what Achille Mbembe (2003, 21) called the "*state of injury*", and my hope is that if political geographers (and others) can better attend to what we might call spaces of wounding, injured lifeworlds will reveal themselves in (in)capacitated textures we are yet to fully appreciate.

Mikko Joronen and Mitch Rose (2021) recently proposed a theory on the woundedness of power, arguing that life's vulnerability—or woundedness—precedes and exceeds power (woundedness is the origin of power and no power can solve woundedness). My argument too is about power, but the wounding and wounds that animate this paper are visceral rather than ontological, and alongside the metaphysical woundedness of power I draw attention to the power of wounds and wounding, indexing injured life to neither biopower nor necropolitics. By wounding, I mean the capacity to injure bodies—in this case human bodies—and the biological and material infrastructures that carry them. By wounds, I mean physical and mental injury, though this paper

foregrounds traumatic bodily harm to bring attention to its relative neglect in and beyond political geography (c.f. Gregory 2018).

The paper is organised as follows. It begins with a review of the literature on slow violence, paying special attention to critical engagements from—and cognate concepts within—feminist and Black scholarship on violence in geography. Drawing from this scholarship, the heuristic potential and limitations of slow violence are analysed to make space for a non-binary concept of violence that attends less to the speed of harm, and its lethal power, and more on its enduring and other-than-lethal qualities. Section 3 explores the acute phase of wounding as played out through Israel’s ‘shoot to maim’ policy during the GMR, arguing that physical bodily trauma and materialities of wounding remain not-well-understood in geographical accounts of violence and war. Section 4 turns attention to the longer temporalities of wounding in Gaza, arguing that political geographers and others should attend more explicitly to forms of ongoing harm that are embedded in seemingly discreet acts or events of violence. Section 5 concludes the paper by reflecting on the relation between enduring violence and wounding and their implications for geographical work on violence, war, and trauma.

## **2 | Slow violence?**

In his book *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, Rob Nixon makes a seminal contribution to the study of violence, suggesting that scholars urgently find ways of understanding “slow violence”. He defines slow violence as “a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all” (Nixon, 2011, p.2). The concept encourages us to think more imaginatively about what constitutes harm and to examine forms of violence that have, over time, become detached from their original causes and effects. Slow violence is as much a spatial as temporal concept. As Thom Davies (2022, 410) has suggested, it “invites us to include the gradual deaths, destructions, and layered deposits of uneven social brutalities” of the geographical past, present, and future. Slow violence, then, is a crucial counterweight to studies of violence that focus exclusively on “fast” violence—violence that is “immediate in time”, “explosive and spectacular in space”, instantly visible, and easily representable (Nixon, 2011, p.2).

Geographers have usefully employed the concept of slow violence to make sense of a variety of multi-scalar harms across many different contexts, with lively debates recently filling geography journal special issues and an edited collection (Cahill and Pain 2019; O’Lear 2021; Pain and Cahill

2021). These works do an excellent job of surveying geographical work on slow violence, so rather than reviewing the burgeoning literature, this section draws more narrowly on feminist and Black geographies scholarship to advance two critiques of slow violence in the spirit of making space for a concept of violence that pays specific attention to its enduring qualities. The first critique is that the concept of slow violence privileges the ‘velocity’ of violence and does so at the expense of duration and chronicity. The second critique is that slow violence focuses readily on lethality, death, and dying while tending to overlook forms of violence that are non-lethal. These are explored in turn.

By casting our attention to the speeds at which violence emerges or effects, slow violence forgets or eclipses its own enduring staying power and chronic qualities. There are two parts to this. First, the slow violence literature has introduced a slow/fast binary that obfuscates the fact that violence works at multiple and often overlapping velocities. Feminist approaches to violence have long eschewed the binaries that have come to dominate work on violence. The ‘hot’ and the ‘banal’, the ‘geopolitical’ and the ‘intimate’, ‘domestic’ and ‘international’ violence, and ‘war’ and ‘peace’ are more productively approached as co-constitutive (Brickell 2015; Brickell and Cuomo 2020; Christian, Dowler, and Cuomo 2016; Gregory 2010; Pain 2015). To this end, geographical scholarship on slow violence has recently suggested that fast and slow violence should be treated as a single complex (Cahill & Pain, 2019; Fluri, 2021). Christian and Dowler (2019, p.1072) have insisted that “[s]low forms of violence imbricate with the fast, and the fast inescapably shapes the slow.” Such interventions are shaping work on Palestine, with Joronen (2021) arguing that slow violence and slow colonisation in the West Bank should not be contrasted to modes of fast violence but should instead be seen as part of a wider strategy of violence where velocities are co-constituted.

The second part of this first critique concerns the lack of specific attention given to the chronic qualities of violence, which feminist and Black geographies scholarship have long argued is central to intersectional understandings of racialized and gendered violence (Daley, 2020; de Leeuw, 2016; Fluri & Piedalue, 2017). By drawing attention to the ways in which “disposability and racialized dispossession target particular people and places” (Pain and Cahill 2021, 1), this work exposes “sediments of violence” (Faria 2017, 584) that coalesce in space and endure in time. This is partly about historicizing violence, but it is also about spatializing ongoing violence or attending to what Mollett & Faria (2018, p. 573) aptly call “enduring spatialities”, such as but not limited to settler-

colonial residential schools (de Leeuw 2016), the plantation (McKittrick 2006; 2011), the prison (Gilmore 2007) and the military (Cowen 2008).

Feminist and Black scholarship in geography on violence in general, and slow violence in particular, has done much to bring to light the everyday and banal forms of violence that animate military invasions and practices of war (Fluri, 2014; Hyndman, 2007, 2019), domestic and gender-based violence and trauma (Brickell 2020; Pain 2019; 2021a; Rezwana and Pain 2021), displacement and asylum (Jennifer Hyndman 2019; Mountz 2020), and much more. These works have served as a vital corrective to dominant masculinist approaches to violence that for too long focused on the ‘hot’ or ‘spectacular’ moments of geopolitics (Christian et al., 2016) and which privileged the state and occluded the body as an actor and scale of analysis for approaching violence and war (Fluri & Piedalue, 2017; Hyndman, 2007).

While this work has emphasised the entanglements of multiple forms of violence, it often privileges ‘everyday’ or ‘chronic’ temporalities over and above acute temporalities of harm, leaving some of the specificities of acute violence unexamined. In her ground-breaking work on ‘geotrauma’, for example, Rachel Pain distinguishes between three forms of trauma: acute (a one-off experience), chronic (prolonged experience of harm), and complex (prolonged harm involving abuse in early in life). Pain points out that chronic and complex trauma are “longer lasting”, and on the basis that they are “more likely to be collectively experienced”, acute trauma is dropped from the analysis (Pain 2021a, 973). While these distinctions might have purchase in the modes of psychological trauma that animate Pain’s concept of geotrauma, and while it is imperative to move beyond the narrow medicalized and individualising scope of traditional trauma interventions (Pain 2021b), I suggest in section 4 that it is important to keep acute temporalities in view not only because they mix with chronic forms of harm in ways that geographic scholarship on violence and trauma have not yet fully appreciated, but also because acute harm can be engineered, precisely, to be *longer lasting*. Moreover, patterns of wounding in Gaza and other conflict zones demonstrate a collective experience of acute (as well as chronic) harm, suggesting that solidarities can be built across multiple temporalities of harm.

The second critique of slow violence is that it focuses readily on lethality, death, and killing while tending to overlook forms of violence that are non-lethal. One gets the sense that death is the ultimate expression of slow violence, that lethality is its inevitable—if deferred—destination. Nixon returns frequently to examples of lethality and neglects injury—both instant and delayed—

at the expense of what he calls “death by indirection” (Nixon, 2011, p.10). In a chapter on the First Gulf War, Nixon challenges the immediate and fixed timeframes within which bodies are counted, imploring us to think more carefully about the casualties that emerge outside of normative ‘war-time’. But as Nixon sets about righting the war casualty record, he remains fixated on lethality. He ponders: “Who is counting the belated *fatalities*...? Who is counting *deaths* from chemical residues...?”, before concluding that “[s]uch casualties may suffer slow, invisible *deaths* that don’t fit the news cycle at CNN or Fox, but they are war casualties nonetheless” (Nixon, 2011, p.201, emphasis added). These slow deaths should both count (matter) and be counted, but why should only *dead* bodies count? What about those who have been wounded or made sick by war, about which there is considerable and growing literature (Dewachi 2015; Dewachi et al. 2014; Gregory 2018; Hanne Edøy Heszlein-Lossius et al. 2019; Hanne Edøy Heszlein-Lossius et al. 2019; Lutz and Mazzarino 2019; Mayhew 2017)? In neglecting wounding, both instant and delayed, Nixon narrows and forecloses the definition of what counts as a war casualty at the very same time as he attempts to broaden the concept.

Scholarship in feminist political geography is again relevant here and supports my second critique of slow violence. This work has long centred the body as a key vector of a whole range of violence that is not reducible to death. Violence registers on bodies in a variety of different ways and at manifold and intersecting scales in ways that resemble what Lauren Berlant (2007, p.754) has called ‘slow death’—a form of death-in-life that entails “the physical wearing out of a population and the deterioration of people in that population”. This includes, *inter alia*, forms of psychological and bodily trauma associated with domestic violence, survivorship, and institutional racism (Brickell, 2015; Daley, 2020; Fluri & Piedalue, 2017; Rezwana & Pain, 2021). Work in this vein has also shown how border regimes, displacement, and failures of asylum trap bodies in constellations of non-lethal violence as they are detained, forcibly-separated, denied asylum, and made to wait (Jones 2016; Martin 2021; Mountz 2020). Closer to the case-study at hand, geographical work on Palestine has been attentive to the unspectacular aspects of everyday life that are caught up in but not completely defined by necropolitical modes of occupation and warfare, prominent examples being Chris Harker’s work on family, home, and debt (Harker 2009; 2020), Sandy Marshall’s work on childhood (Marshall 2014), and a suite of work on checkpoints, waiting, and spaces of hope (e.g. Griffiths & Repo, 2021; Joronen & Griffiths, 2019).

I build on this important work but argue that political geographers and others should pay more explicit attention to enduring violence and wounding. Although geographers have advanced their

own important critiques of slow violence and have attended amply to both biopolitical and necropolitical modes of harm, my suggestion is that slow violence cannot be thought about through conventional frames of life and death and living and dying that remain implicit in geographical work on violence. Important here is Puar's (2017) argument that theorisations of biopolitics are limited by the way they toggle between binaries of life and death. Contemporary forms of power, Puar argues, are invested not only in making live, making die, letting live, or letting die (as conventional bio- and necro-politics would have it); they are also invested in debilitation and deliberate maiming, or what she calls “the right to maim”. Puar insists that the right to maim “is not merely another version of slow death or of death-in-life or of a modulation on the spectrum of life to death. Rather, it is a status unto itself, a status that triangulates the hierarchies of living and dying that are standardly deployed in theorizations of biopolitics” (Puar, 2017, p.137). The right to maim as a particular biopolitical configuration is crucial in helping us to understand wounds and wounding and it intersects closely with my arguments about enduring violence. Maiming as a practice and end-game of power—*debilitation as means and ends*—bring the wounded into clearer view, presenting us with bodies, populations and infrastructures that have been injured but not (yet) killed or destroyed, who have been targeted but not fatally, who have been rendered *hors du combat* literally and symbolically, and who endure a crashing of temporalities in which it can be difficult to separate the acute from the chronic and those periods of pain and waiting, relief and escape, despair and hope that puncture the in-between. Maiming entails violence both fast and slow, but more importantly I suggest that the lives left to live and endure in the wake of maiming—the wounded survivors—are perhaps better characterised by presently undertheorized enduring forms of harm that are tied intimately to acute temporalities. This harming power inscribes *lasting* as well as life-ending wounds on bodies and the infrastructures that precariously carry them.

### **3 | Extremities of violence**

Having engaged some of the literature on slow violence, I now turn to the acute materialities of wounding in the GMR. This section details physical (rather than psychological) bodily trauma and drawing inspiration from Jo Sharp's (2021) ‘forensics’ of geopolitics, it begins to unpack some of the materialities of wounding in Gaza.

During the first Intifada (1987-1993), Minister of Defense Yitzhak Rabin infamously ordered Israeli soldiers to “break the bones” of Palestinian protestors in a bid to extinguish the mass uprising. In the GMR this extreme policy was radicalised even further. Médecines Sans Frontières (MSF) were on the ground in Gaza during the protests and reported that more than half of its 500



patients had “injuries where the bullet has literally destroyed tissue after having pulverised the bone” (MSF, 2018b). One medical doctors spoke of “multi-fragment fractures” and bone being “turned into dust” (MSF, 2018c). So severe and mangled were some wounds that surgeons were unable to recognise the normal anatomical order because so much bodily material was carried away by the bullet (MSF, 2018c, 2019). A young man who was shot just below his knee testified, “[t]he bullet was like a bomb that shattered my leg...” (UNHRC, 2019, p.160).

Israel claimed that the demonstrations were orchestrated by Hamas and saw the protests as a continuation of its war with Hamas (Leiblich 2018). Operationalising a mix of rules of engagement that borrowed from both a law-enforcement paradigm and the far less restrictive regime of International Humanitarian Law (Author), the Israeli military maximised the juridical space within which its forces could operate (Erakat 2019). This strategic legal flexibility meant, firstly, that the use of live-fire was authorised in advance against protestors (on the basis that the protests consisted both of members of Hamas and “central rioters” and “central inciters”), and, secondly, that lethal and non-lethal force could be used *even when there was no immediate or obvious threat to Israeli soldiers or civilians* (Murphy 2019). These legal technicalities matter because they help to calibrate the materialities of force, including the type of weapon and calibre and velocity of the ammunition used, which in-turn influenced the type and patterns of injuries.

The soldiers were armed with the Israel-made Tavor rifle, which uses 5.65x45mm. ammunition and the US-made SR25 and M24 sniper rifles, which use 7.62x51mm. ammunition, among other weapons. A UN Commission of Inquiry found that that the “catastrophic damage to tissue, organs and bone” was likely caused by the use of high-velocity munitions, such as the 5.65 and 7.62 calibre bullets, at close range (UNHCR, 2019, pp. 161–163). Arms calibrated by military powers to kill at high-velocity and long-distance, were repurposed for proximity maiming. The UN Commission considered these velocities to be the critical component of wounding:

[A] high-velocity bullet transfers much more kinetic energy to its target than a low-velocity bullet...This creates a much larger wound channel and exit wound, especially when the high-velocity bullet impacts bone at close range. In addition, high velocity bullets often fragment or tumble end over end upon entering their target, creating devastating injuries to tissue, organs and bone (UNHRC, 2019, p.162).

To realise its “wounding potential”, however, a bullet must encounter its target—the body—and it is the interface between anatomical structure and bullet determines wound severity. Velocity and yaw matter – but *where* on the body the bullet strikes is decisive.

This observation would play out with devastating deliberate effect during the GMR. On 31 March 2018, just one day after the first mass demonstration, the IDF Spokesperson announced on Twitter: “Yesterday we saw 30,000 people; we arrived prepared and with precise reinforcements. *Nothing was carried out uncontrolled; everything was accurate and measured, and we know where every bullet landed*” (IDF, 2018, emphasis added). By the end of 2019, nearly 8,000 Gazans had been shot, and the vast majority—an astonishing 90 percent—were shot in the limbs (WHO, 2020, p.2). This was no coincidence: time and again Israeli forces avoided the head, neck, chest, and back (because those are likely fatal shots) and instead aimed for bodily extremities. One doctor who treated those who were shot recalled the poignancy of seeing a “number of extremely similar injuries” (UNHRC, 2019, p.132). Legs being far more crucial for everyday mobility, the lower limbs bore the brunt of the bullets.

Some soldiers made a game out of targeting legs, and the anatomically complex knee became the inevitable ‘bullseye’. Reports of “kneecapping” were emerging in the West Bank in the years immediately preceding the GMR, with one Shin Bet security service officer reportedly telling Palestinians “all of you will end up on crutches” and “we’ll make you all disabled” (Hass 2016). In the GMR, the anatomical patterns were again unmistakable. “You are not meant to see massive bleeding, because in the region of the knee and bone there aren’t a lot of capillaries”, reported a sniper who was deployed to the Gaza fence: “If you see blood, that’s not a good sign because you probably hit too high” (quoted in Glazer, 2020). Another sniper boasted of how he kept the bullet casing for each Palestinian knee he hit: 52 in total. Asked whether he considered this a high number, the soldier replied, “I haven’t really thought about it. It’s not hundreds of liquidations like in the movie ‘American Sniper’: We’re talking about knees. I’m not making light of it, I shot a human being, but still ...”. After a day of maiming, members from his unit would ask him how many knees he had ‘chalked up’. The previous ‘record’ of the total number of knees targeted by any one sniper was eleven but this sniper boasted of how he, “brought in seven/eight knees in one day” and within a few hours almost broke the grim record. Another reported how “the best case” was to “break the kneecap” (quoted in Glazer, 2020).

Maiming trades in a perverse currency of restraint. As Puar insists, “this foundational biopolitical frame is a liberal fantasy that produces “let live” as an alibi for colonial rule and thus indeed facilitates the covert destruction of “will not let/make die” (Puar, 2017, p.140). But maiming is more than a masquerade for power. It is also a crucial and underappreciated component of all war machines, colonial or otherwise. Elaine Scarry (1985, p.1) argued that the “main purpose and outcome of war is injuring”, but there is also a seldom-acknowledged *economy* of injuring. Wounding is energy intensive for wounded communities, and especially women, in a way that killing might not always be. As well as the immediate infliction of injury, wounding is also injurious to the infrastructures required to care, and keep caring, for the long and permanently wounded.

Accounts of modern military causality evacuation and revitalised regimes of military care confirm the enduring and manifold burden of injury (Gregory 2018; MacLeish 2013; Mayhew 2017; Terry 2017; Wool 2015). Entire lifeworlds are enveloped by the burden of traumatic injury, and even the most powerful militaries and richest nations have been severely stretched by the number, cost, and complexity of the multidisciplinary resources that are required to care for their own soldiers, let alone the others they harm (Mayhew, 2017). But what is true for well-resourced state militaries can be far more severe in civilian healthcare settings during war, not only because they are seldom designed for mass-casualty trauma events, but also because war often has a catastrophic effect on healthcare infrastructures (Dewachi et al. 2014). In places where trauma cases surge when the healthcare system is already on the brink, the toll on the entire healthcare system can be crippling. In the wake of the GMR a doctor in Gaza explained how the extensive resources required for the reconstruction of injuries was “entirely beyond the capabilities of Gazan medical services already depleted by the 12-year Israeli siege” (Abu-Shaban 2018). Public health research corroborates these observations, a recent study finding, “war-related injuries are a significant burden on Palestinian health facilities” (Mosleh et al., 2018, p. 8; Heszlein-Lossius et al., 2019b, 2019a). The trauma pathway for civilians in Gaza is so lacking in resources because of the Israeli siege that acute mass-casualty events place a disproportionately chronic burden on civilian healthcare infrastructures.

#### **4 | Epidemics and endemics of trauma**

Having detailed the acute forms of bodily harm met-out by Israel, I now examine the traumatic legacies of the GMR, demonstrating how acute forms of wounding are carefully calibrated to inflict enduring harm.

In *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault makes an important distinction between the epidemic and the endemic that has become crucial for thinking about biopolitics. For Foucault, the epidemic was marked by “temporary disasters that caused multiple deaths”, whereas the endemic concerned “the form, nature, extension, duration and intensity of the illnesses prevalent in a population...permanent factors which...sapped the populations’ strength, shortened the work week, wasted energy, and cost money, both because they led to a fall in production and because treating them was expensive” (Foucault 2003, 233–34). Berlant draws on this passage to argue that slow death “occupies the temporalities of the endemic” (Berlant, 2007, p.756). Blending Foucault and Berlant, Puar has subsequently argued that maiming “functions as slow but simultaneously intensive death-making” (Puar, 2017, p.139). Attending to the enduring and underlying temporalities of the endemic is no doubt important but as the Covid-19 pandemic has so starkly revealed, the epidemic (or pandemic) prays upon, exploits, and exacerbates the endemic and vice versa. The two temporalities coexist in wounded and wounding entanglement. Feminist political geographers know this but have tended to focus more on endemic (chronic) than epidemic (acute) temporalities, missing opportunities to apprehend the fulness of their co-constitution and, importantly, failing to identify the ways in which epidemic or acute ‘blows’ are capacitated with the power to inflict long-term harm.

In Gaza, as in other places experiencing enduring violence and war, successive rounds of mass-maiming of the civilian population have placed insurmountable pressures not only on wounded bodies but also on the already overstretched local healthcare system. The Gaza health sector has been actively de-developed through Israeli occupation and siege, a process that Ron Smith (2015, p.334) characterises as “the intentional and continual weakening of any comprehensive, coordinated, and sovereign system of care.” The chronically de-developed healthcare system in Gaza struggles to meet the everyday needs of the population, but when mass casualties events are induced by bombs or bullets, the system quickly becomes overwhelmed (Mosleh et al. 2018). Jamie McGoldrick, the UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Aid and Development in the occupied Palestinian territories, characterised the influx of casualties in the GRM as “a crisis on top of a catastrophe”, but it is imperative not to forget that both the crisis and the catastrophe are politically induced conditions created and sustained by Israel (Giacaman 2018; Smith 2020).

On 14 May 2018 the Israeli military shot at least 1,162 people with live ammunition (UNHRC, 2019, p.121). There were five major protest sites that day and at just one of those sites in Gaza City Israeli soldiers were shooting an average of almost one person every minute from 9am to 5pm

(UNHRC, 2019, p.125). “[I]t was a slaughter that day”, recalled one doctor (UNHCR, 2019, p.132). Another told of how “the corridors were full; everyone was crying, shouting and bleeding...we could not cope with the huge number of injured” (UNHRC, 2019, p.133). The protesters ended the demonstrations early on 14 May, sending people home for fear of bringing the hospitals to a standstill.

The trauma burden was so intense during the GMR that it had repercussions for the entire healthcare system. Resources were diverted from ordinary medical needs, such as births, routine operations, cancer treatments and burn treatments, with far-reaching consequences. In 2018 alone approximately 8,000 elective surgeries were postponed or cancelled (WHO, 2019). The number of injuries was so acute that patients were prematurely discharged to make space in hospitals for each successive wave of incoming injuries. The protests took place each Friday and in grim anticipation the Ministry of Health would begin to accelerate discharges earlier in the week (WHO, 2019). Patients who were prematurely discharged would then seek treatment at primary healthcare clinics, which were under-resourced to cope with the high volume of complex injuries requiring long-term monitoring and care (UNHRC, 2019, p.168).

The trauma burden of mass-maiming can be extremely acute, but it does not diminish when the bombs stop falling or the bullets cease to be fired. Instead, the burden shifts from emergency to rehabilitative triage, from stemming the bleeding and emergency amputations to reconstructive surgery, prosthetics, and helping people to walk again. It is in the long temporalities of reconstruction and forever rehabilitation where maiming really does its work on wounded populations. In a 12-month period beginning 30 March 2018, 172 people became permanently disabled as a result of their injuries, over 20 percent were children (WHO, 2019, p.12). There were 156 amputations (126 lower limb and 30 upper limb) and as of the end of 2019 a further 24 patients, including three in a coma, were paralyzed due to spinal cord injuries, and yet another 21 people suffered permanent loss of vision because of injuries sustained during the protests (WHO, 2020, p.2). The WHO has calculated that damage caused by gunshot wounds has resulted in some 1,209—1,746 patients who will need some form of specialized tertiary treatment with a wide range of multidisciplinary services (WHO, 2019). Assessing the prognosis for this cohort, B’Tselem (2018) suggests that such “grave injuries” are “merely the first chapter in a prolonged ordeal”.

The healing of traumatic wounds is not linear. A high proportion of all GMR gunshot injuries to the limbs (around 45% or 2,686 patients) resulted in open fractures, making them particularly vulnerable to infection (WHO, 2019). Infection is a major concern with any open wound or

surgical intervention, but in Gaza proper wound management and infection control have become a “major issue”, according to Dr Maher Ayad, the Medical Director of Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza (quoted in WHO, 2019, p. 72). The problems are manifold and intersecting. Firstly, gunshot wounds have a high prevalence of infection. Secondly, the risk of nosocomial infection is exacerbated by overcrowding as well as a lack of basic medical supplies that are essential for appropriate environmental hygiene (WHO, 2019). Thirdly, the import of vital antibiotics and other medicines into Gaza is severely curtailed by the Israeli siege. Fourthly, the above factors have increased the rates of antimicrobial resistance, which dramatically increases the risk of amputation, sepsis, and death.

Osteomyelitis—chronic bone infection—has become a major source of concern in Gaza. It is associated with poor outcomes and high resource consumption, including an increased number of surgeries and length of hospital stay. The WHO has estimated that between 25 and 40 percent of patients with open fractures would develop some form of osteomyelitis, which would mean that 672—1,074 patients would need specialized forms of treatment before undergoing limb reconstructive surgery (WHO, 2019). The treatment of osteomyelitis and limb reconstruction requires an extensive array of services including microbiology laboratories, which can determine the exact type of bacteria causing an infection, as well as which antibiotics it is resistant to (MSF, 2019b). Until 2019, however, Gaza did not have a laboratory capable of analysing bone samples and so medics were forced to send each sample to labs in Israel for testing (MSF, 2019a). Even with the new microbiology lab now functioning, the capacity to manage the burgeoning cases is limited.

Wounds exact a painful physical and emotional toll on individual and family life in Gaza, attesting to Pain's (2021b) observation that trauma is often experienced collectively. Those who were shot during the demonstrations understandably have great difficulty coming to terms with their injury and many continue to experience pain and distress for a long time after being injured. Muhammad a-Za'im, owner of a stationery store, was 26 years old when he was shot in both legs in April 2018 near to the perimeter fence east of Gaza City. After receiving treatment in Gaza, he was transferred to Istishari Arab Hospital in Ramallah, where physicians were forced to amputate his left leg. a-Za'im recalls:

When I found out my leg had been amputated, I was in shock. I am young, at the beginning of my life. How could my leg be amputated? ... Now I am in a bad mental state. I spend the day sleeping or in front of the computer. I don't want to see people and don't get

together with my friends very much. I feel I'm a big burden on my family... At night I have a hard time sleeping because of the pain, and all I think about is my injury and treatments (B'Tselem 2020).

Time and again, the wounded return to many of the same central issues that mark wounded life: the inseparability of physical and mental trauma; the unrelenting exhaustion of pain and rehabilitation; the humiliation of injury and inability to perform what were once simple tasks; a palpable sense of the loss of independence and economic self-sufficiency, and associated dependence on family; and a retreat from some forms of public life as more time is spent in isolation at home (B'Tselem, 2020; MSF, 2019a; MAP, 2020; MAP et al., 2020; UNHRC, 2019; WHO, 2019). In these accounts there is a palpable longing for the body to return to its pre-injured state. Mohammed Abu Gaza was shot in April 2018 near Rafah: “Before I was injured, I sometimes sold vegetables from a cart in the market... [n]ow I just sit in the house – I can't do anything by myself, even washing” (quoted in MSF, 2018a). Another gunshot victim, a 39-year-old father of four, recalls: “Before the injury I was very active, working day and night. The bullet changed everything, leaving me paralyzed. I once was a productive person, but now I had become dependent on donations to support my family” (quoted in WHO, 2019, p.73). Dawlet Hamidiyyeh, 33, was one of the relatively few women who were shot in the GMR. She was so severely wounded that she lost consciousness and taken for dead, was put in the hospital morgue until a doctor eventually discovered a pulse. She told MSF: “I'm scared that I won't be like before, that I won't be able to walk”. As well as being a hairdresser Dawlet was also a caregiver for her sick father, and her injuries have had reverberating effects for her family: “It hurts me that I can't help my dad... Now I need care as well as him...” Speaking directly to the enduring nature of wounded life, Dawlet says, “[i]t's hard 24-hours a day” (quoted in MSF 2018a).

Part of what is targeted when the state maims is a people's capacity to resist. As Puar and Abu-Sittah (2019) have argued: “Maiming attempts to smother the spirit of resistance of protesting Palestinians while avoiding international criticism for mass killing.” Maiming also incapacitates through the spectre of overwhelming force and the simultaneous inducement of exhaustion and hopelessness—the affective and corporeal feeling that resistance is either futile or exacts too much of a toll for the individual and collective mind and body to bear. It remains to be seen what the medium to long term effects of the mass-maiming of the demonstrators will be, but after difficult deliberations the protestors decided “the strategy will be reformulated to minimise the number of casualties” (Baroud 2020). It is tempting to reference Palestinian *sumoud* (steadfastness), and

certainly there are incredible accounts of men and women who returned week after week to the Gaza fence even after being seriously injured (Baroud 2020). But we must also be careful not to romanticise forms of agency that face insurmountable berms atop which crouch a vast maiming power. As Rita Giacaman, (2020, pp.369–370) has powerfully articulated: “All too often, Palestinian ‘resilience’ is over-rated and sometimes used as a means of avoiding acknowledging and addressing the issue of injustice to Palestinians...”

Such is the devastating power of wounding, an enduring force that cannot be accurately described as less-than or better-than killing. As Puar points out, “Palestinians live in the temporal instability of the indefinite” (Medien & Puar, 2018, p.100). *Traumatically wounded* Palestinians live among them in a tortuous present and bounded spatiality from which there is not yet a meaningful escape. These endemic temporalities are pierced by epidemics and Israel’s habit of destruction ensures not only that they bleed into one another, but also that the pain endures even once the physical wounds seem to have been sutured. For settler colonialism, occupation and siege in and beyond Palestine not only prepare populations for wounding; these regimes of wounding also impair healing and rehabilitation, ‘minimising’ death while maximising the number of wounds and imbuing the acute ‘event’ with a processual power to inflict an enduring crippled afterlife. The violence of the bullets and bombs that have almost been forgotten by political geography still matters. It matters not because it is fast or acute, nor because it kills, but because as a material form of violence wounding exacts an enduring toll even with a single blow, exceeding the temporal boundaries of the acute and the chronic, the unimaginably fast and the agonizingly slow, and even life and death.

## **5 | Enduring violence and wounding**

Using the GMR as a case study, this paper has argued that enduring violence and wounding are important analytical categories for the study of violence. With its tens of thousands of injuries, the GMR powerfully demonstrates the importance of attending to non-lethal wounds, enduring violence, and the conditions that create and maintain them. In fact, wounding itself is an enduring feature of Israel’s settler colonial regime, one that has put increasing emphasis on the infliction of mass casualties and the incapacitation of healthcare infrastructures. Between the First intifada of 1987 and March 2017, some 250,000 Palestinians have been injured by Israeli forces, including 110,000 in the Gaza Strip (Middle East Monitor 2017). The strategy continues, with a further nearly 2,000 Palestinians injured during the most recent round of military violence, many of whom sustained severe crushing injuries from falling buildings and structures targeted by Israel (UNOCHA, 2021).



Political geography has a long-standing interest in violence and in recent years feminist and Black geographies approaches have been at the forefront of advancing understandings of ‘everyday’, ‘banal’ and ‘chronic’ violence. This work has been characterised by a careful unpacking of many of the binaries that animate work on violence, encouraging scholars to approach the velocities, scales, and temporalities of violence as co-constitutive. But as I argued in section 2, there remains a tendency in some feminist political geographical scholarship to privilege chronic and slow over and above acute temporalities. While I am deeply sympathetic to the need to attend to the long and slow temporalities of violence and harm, my argument has been that we need to work harder to understand how chronicity and acuteness relate, amplify, soften or otherwise interact with one another. In sections 3 and 4 I showed how wounding in Gaza proceeds through temporalities of harm that are at once acute and chronic, highlighting along the way what I have called the epidemics and endemics of trauma. As a supplicant to the concept of slow violence and its cognates, I have suggested that political geographers and others might benefit from attending more explicitly to the *endurational* aspects of violence that cut across questions of velocity, frequency, and lethality and that we might pay closer attention to the specific materialities of acute ‘events’ or ‘origins’ that are calibrated and capacitated to inflict enduring harm. Enduring violence as a concept seeks to move beyond current debates around velocity (slow/fast violence) and distinctions between acuteness and chronicity, which ultimately borrow from a medical paradigm, to think about assemblages of violence that have material configurations that impart long-term harm in or through specific moments or events. In this way, enduring violence seeks to discover the material specificities and points of origin of particular instances or patterns of wounding that are sometimes lost when violence is capaciously understood as ‘slow’ or ‘chronic’. More carefully attending to the enduring forms of violence that are built in to specific and seemingly discreet happenings can contribute to a fuller understanding of how and violence why lives on long after the obvious or initial ‘blows’ have subsided. This is in no way to privilege the event or the acute, nor is it to imply that violence has a single origin. Enduring violence is an intersectional concept, intersecting with non-binary concepts of violence in and beyond geography but paying new attention to what we might call, taking inspiration from Jo Sharp (2021), the ‘forensics’ of violence.

The forensics that I have begun to trace in this paper demonstrate a very literal and corporeal form of wounding that involves a carefully calibrated form of state violence designed and executed in order to inflict multi-scalar long-term harm, revealing a preference for imparting a particular—even *careful*—kind of wounding where the type of weapon and bullet matters and where biological

and social anatomy and the demographic of the ‘victim’ are anything but incidental to the pattern and severity of injury. Future geographical work on enduring violence need not necessarily take wounding so literally (the physical injuring of bodies), and certainly it need not focus only on spaces of armed conflict, the state, or events of mass-injury. Wounding happens close to home, *in* the home, at work, *en route* to work, and in all kinds of places that might appear quite different from the spaces of violence I have outlined here. Wherever and however wounding and enduring violence work, future scholarship might keep in view specific geo-materialities of harm done to particular bodies and populations that are defined by an acuteness that contains within its very intensity and apparent temporal closure, the capacity for future and enduring harm.

Enduring violence is nearly already named by feminist and Black geographical scholarship. Sarah de Leeuw (2016, p. 14) writes of colonialism as an “ongoing force” that touches the tender geographies of Indigenous life. Drawing on Black geographies and especially the work of Katherine McKittrick (2006), Mollett & Faria (2018, p. 573) actually employ the term “enduring spatialities” to describe the plantation and durable racialized formations like the prison, but they do not unpack its meaning or scope. Enduring violence, then, emphasises the ‘ongoingness’ of violence while also encouraging that attention be paid to particular moments and materialities where violence emerges or manifests. While enduring violence might appear overwhelming or difficult to resist or overcome, its emancipatory potential is located in its insistence on understanding concrete configurations of violence and actual bodily harm and its refusal of a concept of violence that is defined so expansively temporally and spatially that the singularity and authorship of any particular event of wounding is lost. Said another way, enduring violence begins *somewhere* and *sometime* and though it will take much epistemological work to understand and even greater activism and solidarity by and with those who live through it, violence need not endure indefinitely if as scholars and activists we are equipped and willing to understand and prevent its initial blows.

In addition to proposing the concept of enduring violence, this paper has also called for political geographers and others to pay greater attention to wounds and wounding. I have argued that the GMR should be understood not only as a space of killing but also as a space of wounding. In so doing I have sought not so much to privilege injury over death but rather to situate wounding in a particular biopolitical configuration in relation to the necropolitical work of war and the logic of elimination that marks settler-colonialism. Taking inspiration from Puar’s proposals on ‘the right to maim’, the paper has shown in visceral form the work that wounding does in relation to multiple

and interacting temporalities of violence. For all its interest in the body, feminist work in geography on trauma has largely neglected *physical* trauma and sometimes remains caught in a Cartesian mind/body dualism. For example, Pain goes so far as to announce: “Trauma, *as psychological rather than physical injury*, is the disease of our times” (Pain 2021a, 972 emphasis added). Much, of course, depends on what gets counted as trauma and whose traumas count, but the ‘trauma geographies’ (Gregory 2018) that have animated this paper attest first to the inseparability of physical and psychological trauma (or at least that the latter often accompanies the former), and, second, to place-times in which physical trauma is so widespread that medically and socially (to say nothing of the economics) it constitutes a significant burden – a disease of ‘*their*’ times often engineered by ‘our’ assemblages of war, colonial legacies, and ongoing settler colonialism.

All of this has salience far beyond Gaza and the GMR. Noting a dearth of media coverage and scholarship on civilians injured in war (most studies of war-related injuries focus on soldiers), disability-studies scholar Nirmalla Everelles, has observed: “War is one of the largest producers of disability in a world still inhospitable to disabled people and their predominantly female caregivers.” (Everelles 2011, 117). There are obvious affinities and intersections with feminist and Black geographies scholarship here and this paper has sought to unpack some of the gendered ways in which bodies are directly and indirectly incapacitated. In the GMR it was predominantly boys and young men who were shot, and disproportionately women who provide the long-term at-home care (the subject of research in-progress), but each military operation has its own gendered and racialized patterns of injury and regimes of care that require further study. Apt in this regard is anthropologist Omar Dewachi’s observation that across much of the Middle East “wounds constitute the interstitial tissue of the social” (Dewachi 2015, 61)—a formulation that speaks at once to the poignant prevalence of war-related wounds in some parts of the world as well as the social bonds and care that wounds engender.

It was collective action that brought together Palestinian bodies in alliance in the GMR, and it was through a collective and shared wounding that Palestinians once again (re)built the infrastructures and ethics of care necessary to sustain the movement for over a year. Aid and foreign humanitarianism drip into the besieged territory of Gaza, and it is no accident that at precisely the most acute periods of need, Israel ratchets up the pain by letting fewer people and goods across the border. This means that a sovereign healthcare infrastructure has been incapacitated, but it has by no means extinguished the improvisational strategies and tactics used by healthcare workers, families, women, and children to ‘get by’ as they navigate enduring violence and wounded life.

During the GMR and under conditions of ongoing violence, hope emerges in the form of bodies in alliance and defiance, in the creation of new trauma and rehabilitative pathways, trauma stabilization points that save lives and limbs, the rebuilding of bombed-out hospitals, services provided to the disabled, and the quiet and caring love of a family as it adjusts to the presence of another wound. In this way, bodies carry wounds, but they also constitute a form of under-appreciated “infrastructure” (Truelove and Ruszczyk 2022) that works tirelessly to care for the wounded (and sick). These ‘geographies of hope’ (Joronen and Griffiths 2019) and spaces of care that inexorably follow the wounded are the subject of my ongoing research and provide ample opportunities for political geographers and others to think through the dialectics of war-care, wounding, and enduring violence in and beyond Palestine.

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