



# Islamist Social Movement of Hamas Regarding Israel's Attack on Gaza from the Perspective of Critical Theory

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## Abstract

*This study aims to analyze how Hamas as Islamist Social Movement reviewed from the perspective of Critical Theory of International Relations Studies. The theories used in this study are the concept of Critical Theory and Social Movement Theory. The research method is a descriptive qualitative method, with a case study approach model. Data collection techniques are carried out through literature reviews from various online news, documents, books and journals related to the research topic. The results indicate that Hamas movement is formed by historical structures, consist of material capabilities with organizational capabilities. Ideas by the desire to fight against Israel occupation and institutionalized by supporting of Palestinian. So, social forces with Hamas' ideology and response to Fatah's approach, made Hamas takes different way in responding to the Israeli occupation. In addition, Western media coverage of Hamas has created a negative image of it so creating biased facts.*

## Keywords

Hamas; Critical Theory; Israel; Gaza

## Abstrak

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana Hamas sebagai Gerakan Sosial Islam ditinjau dari perspektif Teori Kritis dalam Studi Hubungan Internasional. Teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah Teori Kritis dan Teori Gerakan Sosial. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan model pendekatan studi kasus. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui kajian pustaka dari berbagai berita daring, dokumen, buku, dan jurnal yang terkait dengan topik penelitian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa gerakan Hamas terbentuk oleh struktur historis, terdiri dari kemampuan material dengan kemampuan organisasi. Ide dengan keinginan untuk melawan pendudukan Israel dan dilembagakan dengan dukungan terhadap Palestina. Jadi, kekuatan sosial dengan ideologi Hamas dan tanggapan terhadap pendekatan Fatah, membuat Hamas mengambil cara yang berbeda*

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*dalam menanggapi pendudukan Israel. Selain itu, liputan media Barat tentang Hamas telah menciptakan citra negatif terhadapnya sehingga menciptakan fakta yang bias.*

## **Kata Kunci**

*Hamas; Teori Kritis; Israel; Gaza*

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## **Introduction**

Critical Theory is one perspective in the study of international relations that emphasizes the elimination of a threat by analyzing social structures, understanding historical and social developments, and pathological structures in the form of domination. This theory is supported by several experts such as Andrew Linklater, Robert W. Cox and Ken Booth who focus their studies on the need for human emancipation (freedom) from countries (Prayuda et al., 2021). In Critical Theory knowledge is not neutral either morally, politically or ideologically, rather tends to reflect the interests of a particular group, and biased because it is produced solely from the analyst's social perspective. In short, existing knowledge tends to focus on interests, values, groups, classes, classes, nations, and other specific subjects (Sudiar & Arti, 2017).

In addition, Critical Theory in international relations views the global configuration of power relations as its object, questioning how this configuration is formed through injustice and inequality on a global scale. It criticizes established "mainstream" thinking that tends to only focus on the state (state-centric), which aim to improve human existence by eliminating injustice, making society a focus that is able to show various forms of justice and domination in society (Prayuda et al., 2021). Robert Cox, using the concept of hegemony of the Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci, attempts to understand - in relation to the study of international relations - how relations of production and power have formed patterns of hegemony of strong groups over weak groups (Hadiwinata, 2017).

As Cox argues, Critical Theory in international relations is not limited to analyzing relations between countries, but must expand its scope to consider the full impact of modernity, as a structure that is formed and maintained in the process of globalization (Prayuda et al., 2021). Critical theory is theory of history in the sense of being concerned not just with the past but with a continuing process of historical change. Because it deals with a changing reality, critical theory must continually adjust its concepts to the changing object it seeks to understand and

explain (Thompson, 1978). Considering the dynamics of power, social relationship, and governing institutions, the perspective also have a goal to make institutions and interactions works effectively, to against potential sources of problem. Also, to investigate the origin of international system, the people whose interest they serve, and potential alternatives to them (Jundana, 2024).

Observing the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the longest-running conflicts involving two entities in modern human history. Historically, the conflict involving Israel and Palestine began with the migration of European Jews to the Palestinian territories after the approval of the Balfour Declaration in 1922 by the League of Nations which had been included in the British Mandate, and supported by the allied countries and the United States (Ramadhan, 2024). The Balfour Declaration was based on the ideas of Arthur Balfour who promoted the idea that the British Government fully supported the Zionist movement and considered the land of Palestine to be the ancestral land of the Jews (Jumhana, 2024; Ramadhan, 2024).

Zionism can be interpreted in two ways. First, it is interpreted as a political movement based on Zionist thought raised in the creed of the Torah and Talmud, along with its life related to Jewish thought, and its ties to religion and groups. Second, it is interpreted as a belief in the importance of forming a Jewish society that has its own government in the Land of Palestine, and realizing the ideals of the Jews to return to that land (Junaedi & Hasaruddin, 2024). The conflict that occurred became even worse towards the end of World War II, signaling the end of the British Mandate over Palestine, so that Israel declared its independence in 1948 (Jumhana, 2024). After Israel's independence, hundreds of thousands of Palestinian civilians were expelled from their own territory.

Before Israel's independence was declared, Arab residents living in Palestine had also shown their disapproval of the Jewish occupation of Palestine. As a result, after the British mandate over Palestine ended, and Britain left Palestine, the conflict became even more turbulent after the independence (Jumhana, 2024), where the Palestinian people claim that they have been on Palestinian land since the time of Umar bin Khatab (Romadhony et al., 2024; Delia et al., 2024). In addition, major wars also occurred, namely the Six Day War in 1967 and the Yom Kippur War in 1973 (Azhami et al., 2024). Israel's actions also caused around 70,000 Palestinians to flee, even their descendants who are estimated to have reached 7 million people are still considered refugees. The occupation also caused around 400 Palestinian villages to be erased from the map during 1948-1949, the rights of Palestinian civil society were controlled by Jews, and they were only given a place in the Gaza Strip (Fitria & Putra, 2022).

In this conflict, it is realized that both actors involved (Israel and Palestine) are supported by several actors who have interests in it, both because of state interests and in upholding human rights. Hamas, as one of the actors involved in the conflict, certainly has an important role in the conflict that occurs. Hamas (*Harakat al Muwaqqamatul Islamiyah*/Islamic Resistance Movement) is one of the

resistance movements that exist in Palestine that aims to fight the Israeli occupation of Palestine, and to restoring the rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with the Quran, Sunnah, and the traditions of previous Muslim rulers and scholars who were renowned for their piety and dedication (Faeq & Jahnata, 2020). Hamas is the most popular faction and would prefer them to return to rule Gaza (Bruchmann et al., 2024).

Hamas was founded by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, a Palestinian cleric and activist, where this organization has ruled over two million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, and is known for its resistance against Israel using weapons. As a result, Hamas was labeled as a terrorist organization (Setiawan & Nainggolan, 2024). The movement was founded in 1987 during the First Intifada. The Intifada movement was the forerunner of the emergence of a more organised resistance movement, Hamas (Khumairoh 2019). Hamas originated from the branch of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt which established a military wing to fight against Israel with the aim of liberating Palestine, providing social welfare programs for affected residents, rejecting the Oslo agreement, and committing to establishing a Palestinian state with borders as in 1967 (Kaslam, 2024).

In this context, Robert Cox's critical theory is valuable for analyzing the Islamist social movement of Hamas, particularly in the context of Israel's attacks on Gaza, because it provides a framework to understand the interplay of social forces, state power, and global structures. The framework of Robert Cox's critical theory includes historical structures as a picture of particular configuration of forces. There are three categories of forces interact in a structure: material capabilities, ideas, and institutions (Cox, 1981).

1. Material capabilities, Material capabilities can be productive and destructive potentials, which the instruments include technological and organizational capabilities, or categorized as accumulated forms from natural resources which technology can transform, stocks of equipment, and the wealth can command it.
2. Ideas, broadly of two kinds. First, consists of intersubjective meanings/ shared notions of the nature of social relations which tend to perpetuate habits and expectations of behavior (Berger 1971). Second, consist of an historical structure as collective images of social order held by different groups of people (Cox, 1981).
3. Institutionalization, means of stabilizing and perpetuating a particular order. It reflect the power relations prevailing at their point of origin and tend, to encourage collective images consistent with these power relations. Institutions are particular amalgams of ideas and material power which in turn influence the development of ideas and material capabilities (Cox, 1981).

Related with the categories of configuration of forces, historical structures also applied to the three levels of activity which interrelated each others, including (Cox, 1981).

1. The organization of production: particularly with regard to the social forces engendered by the production process;
2. Forms of states: derived from a study of state/society complexes;
3. World orders: the particular configurations of forces which successively define the problematic of war or peace for the ensemble of states.

The relationship among the three levels simply unilinear. Social forces, forms of state and world orders can be represented as particular configurations of material capabilities, ideas and institutions.

The similarities in the relationship between Social Movements and Critical Theory can be observed in how both are emancipatory discourses about the conditions of injustice experienced by society. Critical Theory, as an emancipatory discourse can provides a comprehensive framework for a theory of social mobilization. The most important legacy in Critical Theory is its attention to the individual and the structural, and the mediation processes between the two. Its related to social movements, which most social movement theories place the problem in structural or individual factors, and emphasize either agency or structure; rational agents that frame reality and recruit followers, or mobilization structures as political systems that provide opportunities or constraints for social movement organizations to grow or decline (Langman, 2005). In short, the problems that faced by both Social Movement Theory and Critical Theory can provide a framework for understanding how social movements occur through the perspective of Critical Theory.

Social movements are movements carried out by a number of people that are planned and organized with the aim of achieving a certain goal in accordance with the mission of the movement (Haris et al., 2019). There are three characteristics of social movements, namely they are organized, require a long period of time, and are deliberately formed (Locer, 2002). Critical Theory also has a long history of dealing with the multiple levels of analysis, media, and crises of legitimacy that inform contemporary social movements (Langman, 2005), so it influence the social movement as Muzakkar, noted that there are four stages in the formation of a social movement, namely: incipient stage, popular stage, organizational stage, and institutional stage (Muzakar, 2017).

In the context of Islamist social movements, Islamist social movements have long led struggles for meaning and values within the Muslim world, and It consist of formal organizations and informal groups that lead and participate in Islamic activism. Islamic activism can be understood as individuals and groups that engage with their society on various levels with the objective of a societal transformation according to their imagination of an ideal 'Islamic' society (Laanani et al., 2023). The correlation between the conditions experienced by the Palestinian people and the injustice they experience can be observed in how both are emancipatory discourses about the conditions of injustice experienced by society.

Previous studies shown several key related to Hamas as Social Movement. First, Sari (2020) study "*Hamas, the Islamic Wing of Palestinian Resistance: Its Roots,*

*Characteristics, and way of Politics*” identified that Hamas has been one of the most significant non-state actors in the region, middle east. The study also addresses the Ikhwan past of Hamas, the sui generis living conditions of Palestine, and clarifies the organizational structure and main features of Hamas by paying attention to its rivalry with Fatah. Second, Alsoos (2021) study “*From Jihad to Resistance: the Evolution of Hamas’s discourse in the Framework of Mobilization*” identified that the reasons how and why the master frames of Hamas’s political discourse were changed from religious terms, such as jihad, in favor of muqawama, was driven by Hamas’s increased mobilization needs and its evolving worldview. In short, *Muqawama* has a history of giving meaning and value to the formation of Hamas discourse, which resonates with the wider Palestinian population and thereby lends legitimacy to the movement. Third, Schlembach (2015) study “*Negation, Refusal and Co-Optation: The Frankfurt School and Social Movement Theory*” identified that the article provides a comprehensive theoretical overview of the multiple ways of how critical theory has made sense of social movements and argues that its concerns can be brought into a rewarding dialogue with contemporary social movement studies. This research aim to analyze what kind of model of Islamist Social Movement of Hamas, and why Hamas could exist based on Cox’s Critical theory.

In Critical Theory perspective, there is an overview of how Hamas as one of the Islamist social movements in Gaza can occur, and analyze the reason why Hamas must be formed, and is required to carry out resistance for the good of the Palestinian people. The use of the Social Movements Theory is carried out to describe the pattern formed by the Hamas social movement as an Islamist social movement formed in Gaza. it is necessary to understand how Critical Theory - as one of the theory that emphasizes the elimination of a threat by analyzing social structures, understanding historical and social developments, and pathological structures in the form of domination, and views the global configuration of power relations as its object, questioning how this configuration is formed through injustice and inequality on a global scale – in observing the development of Hamas as an organization that was born as a result of the injustice experienced by the Palestinian people, especially Gaza, in obtaining justice and independence.

## Method

In order to facilitate the researcher's analysis in this study, the researcher used a descriptive qualitative design. The qualitative technique is concerned focuses on how something can happen as well as what is kept secret from a phenomenon or participant (Ayu et al., 2024). Descriptive research design will provide a detailed description of its significance to the phenomenon being studied so that it can produce a description of the phenomenon based on the researcher's perspective (Hunter et al., 2019). Independent variable in this research is the adaptation of perspective of Critical Theory by Robert Cox, and dependent variable is the reason of the existance of social movement of Hamas.

The operationalization of Independent and dependent variable in this research by using Critical Theory from Robert Cox perspective and social movement theory is the researcher will describe how Critical Theory from Robert Cox's perspective is applied to the researcher's observations in observing the existence of the Hamas social movement. In analysis, the researcher will identify historical structures as a framework of Cox's Critical Theory as a picture of particular configuration of forces, with three categories of forces interact in a structure: material capabilities, ideas, and institutions. Then, it will applied to the three levels of activity which interrelated each others: social foces, form of states, and world orders, in seeing the existence of Hamas. Next, the researcher will describe the form of Hamas as Islamist Social Movement. By applying these two theories, the researcher will identify the model of Islamist Social Movement of Hamas, and explaine why Hamas could exist based on Cox's Critical theory.

The use of a qualitative approach is certainly different from a quantitative approach, where in the qualitative approach used by the researcher is a case study. Case study is a study design in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, program, event, activity, process, with respect to one or more individuals/people, limited by time and activity, and using a variety of data collection procedures over a continuous period of time (Radianto, 2023). This is because case study research involves detailed descriptions of a particular background or individual, followed by analysis of a particular issue, namely that related to the Hamas organization. Therefore, by using this approach, researchers can describe comprehensively the phenomenon being studied – referring to the Islamist Social Movement in the Hamas organization – which is analyzed according to the researcher's perspective, namely the Critical Theory perspective.

In relation to the data obtained in this study, the researcher used data collection techniques through literature review obtained from online news, various documents, books and journals that discuss the history and development of the Hamas organization, as well as theoretical explanations regarding the theories and concepts used, namely regarding Islamist social movements and Critical Theory perspectives. The process of data analysis is carried out in several stages. First, the raw data were collected, then summarized and clustered. Simply, the collected raw data will be reduced by the researcher based on the topic to be researched. Second, the data was analyzed, and carried out it in the form of narrative text, matrices, graphs, networks, and charts. Third, preparation of research reports by outlining the findings that have been obtained and then summarizing the findings which are carried out continuously starting from data collection to completion of the proposal (Sofwatillah et al., 2024).

## Discussion

Hamas (*Harakat al Muwaqqamatul Islamiyah*/Islamic Resistance Movement) is one of the resistance movements that exist in Palestine that aims to fight the Isra-

eli occupation of Palestine. The movement was founded in 1987 during the First Intifada. It originated from the branch of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt which established a military wing to fight against Israel with the aim of liberating Palestine, providing social welfare programs for affected residents, rejecting the Oslo agreement, and committing to establishing a Palestinian state with borders as in 1967, also has been in power in the Gaza Strip since 2007 (Kaslam, 2024). Observing the efforts made by Israel towards Palestine, it refers to what was proclaimed by Josef Weitz, senior director of the Jewish National Fund during the Mandate period, and one of the initiators of the ethnic cleansing efforts of Palestine, as follows:

*“Among ourselves it must be clear that there is no place in the country for both peoples together... With the Arabs we shall not achieve our aim of being independent people in this country. The only solution is Eretz Israel [i.e. Palestine] ... without the Arabs... and there is no other way but to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighbouring countries, transfer all of them, not one village or tribe should remain. ... Only with this transfer could the country absorb millions of our brothers. There is no other alternative” (Davis, 1987).*

Based on the statement, the expulsion of the Palestinian people from the land of Palestine is the only solution for Israel to become a whole country, presenting a country without the presence of the Palestinian people (Arabs) in it. Requires structured and consistent efforts from Israel to realize this, including by utilizing Jewish influence, partners, and sporadic in other countries. In addition, there have been various efforts made to free Palestine from the grip of Israel, including negotiation efforts, diplomacy, and many negotiations and agreements that have been carried out internationally. In addition, Israel's actions in claiming territory in Palestine are also not in accordance with the regulations agreed upon by the UN, where the UN has determined that Palestine will be divided into three regions. Israel is intended for Jews, Arabs for Palestine, and Jerusalem, a special international zone because the region is a holy city for Jews and Muslims (Fitria & Putra, 2022). In resolving the existing problems, various negotiations emerged, including the emergence of factions such as Yaseer Arafat, the PLO, and the Fatah faction (Jumhana, 2024; Ramadhan, 2024).

Departing from UN Partition Plan where The UN General Assembly passes Resolution 181, calling for the partition of the Palestinian territories into two states, for Jewish and Arab; The UN Security Council that passes Resolution 242, calling for Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied and concept of land of peace; declared of The Madrid Peace Conference, sponsored jointly by the US and the Soviet Union, that aimed to establish a framework for peace in the Middle East through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, and Arab countries (Council on Foreign Relations, 2024). The negotiations were betrayed by Israel and only resulted in a temporary ceasefire, without being able to resolve fundamental



issues such as the status of Jerusalem, the status of refugees and internationally recognized borders (Jumhana, 2024; Azhami et al., 2024).

The failures that were often experienced in the negotiation process that was carried out, were accompanied by aggression carried out by Israel against the Palestinian people. By 1987, The Palestinian people had been frustrated by the Israeli occupation of Palestine for 20 years until December 8, 1987, when an Israeli vehicle delivered four Palestinians. In response, this led to the First Intifada starting (Hawaleshka, 2023). The First Intifada was a movement of Palestinian Muslims who rose up and united to free and defend themselves from Israel which took place from 1980 to 1993, which began in remote areas in Gaza and the West Bank, where the movement gave rise to a more organized resistance movement called Hamas (Khumairoh, 2019).

On the other hand, the United States often supports Israel and its actions. The involvement of the United States in the conflict can be seen in several specific incidents. Among them in responding to the intifada movement in 1987 which forced both parties to negotiate. The Middle East Peace Conference under Secretary James Baker which successfully brought together Israeli officials with PLO (Palestine Liberation Front) officials to discuss the conflict in 1991, as well as its role as a mediator in several negotiations such as the Oslo Accords, Camp David, and Annapolis. Even, United States unilaterally announced that the United States recognized Israel as the capital of Jerusalem (Qonita et al., 2022). In 2023, there was an operation called “Operation Al-Aqsa Flood” where Hamas and other Palestinian factions attacked Israel along the Gaza-Southern Israel border which resulted in around 1,139 civilians being declared dead and around 240 people being captured as prisoners (Sen, 2023). They believe that their actions are correct and one of their goals is to pressure the Israeli authorities to release thousands of Gazans held in Israeli prisons (Al Jazeera, 2024).

Observing the actions taken by Hamas against Israel, as a social movement aimed at freeing Palestine from Israeli occupation, the western media often labels Hamas as a terrorist organization (Setiawan & Nainggolan, 2024; Ramadhan, 2024). Therefore, it is necessary to observe in depth the background of how and the reasons for the formation of the Hamas social movement in Palestine. In this regard, Hamas aimed to fight the Israeli occupation of Palestine. This goal is an ideal picture of the ideals expected by the Palestinian people in responding to Israeli aggression against them. Therefore, this is one of the reasons for Hamas to carry out resistance actions using weapons, instead of through diplomacy and negotiation which have not found significant success points for Palestinian independence. Related with Islamist social movements that lead and participate in Islamic activism, known as individuals and groups that engage with their society on various levels with the objective of a societal transformation according to their imagination of an ideal ‘Islamic’ society (Laanani et al., 2023).

Looking further into how Hamas was formed, as is known, Hamas is one of the Islamist social movements that was formed due to an unsupportive environment.

It is known that social movements are movements carried out by a number of people that are planned and organized with the aim of achieving a certain goal in accordance with the mission of the movement (Haris et al., 2019). It is known that since its founding of Hamas, It is a Palestinian Islamic national liberation and resistance movement which its goal is to liberate Palestine and confront the Zionist project. Hamas rejects the persecution of any human being or the undermining of his or her rights on nationalist, religious or sectarian grounds. Even, according to international laws and norms, Hamas is a national liberation movement that has clear goals and mission (Hamas Media Office, 2024). It is related with the characteristics of social movements, namely they are organized, require a long period of time, and are deliberately formed (Locer, 2002). Hamas, established in 1987, and clearly has a clear goal, namely to confront the Zionist project in Palestine, especially Gaza. Also, it was formed when the First Intifadah took place (Hamas Media Office, 2024).

According to Muzakkar (2017), there are four stages in the formation of a social movement, namely incipient stage, popular stage, organizational stage, and institutional stage.

1. *Incipient stage*, a condition in which society experiences unsatisfactory conditions which give rise to anxiety which leads to violent action. Hamas, It can be observed that the formation of Hamas started from unsatisfactory conditions that occurred in Palestine, especially Gaza. Starting from the Balfour Declaration, a mass exodus of Jews from mainland Europe came to Palestine, until the formation of the state of Israel. The occupation of Israel gave birth to the formation of armed group in Palestine, Hamas. Starting from the unpleasant experiences and difficult conditions experienced by the Palestinian people, it has indirectly formed the desire of civilians to fight against existing conditions (Budiman & Hannase, 2021).
2. *Popular stage*, a condition where a group of people begin to get to know each other and is marked by clarification of a particular problem, and focus their activities to achieve the goals in the focus of these activities. Starting from the formation of Hamas by Ahmed Yassin, a Palestinian imam and activist, the Palestinian people gathered and formed a joint movement to confront the Zionist project in Palestine, and argued that Israel had occupied Palestinian land and that this was illegal and unacceptable (Asangau-sung et al., 2024). The movement started after the start of the First Intifada, an uprising against Israel's occupation. The movement is also an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt which created the Izz al-Din Al-Qassam Brigades which aims to liberate Palestine (Jazeera, 2023). After Intifada, Hamas gives great social contribution and to help the Palestinian such as build a schools, hospitals, clinics, etc. It also praised for doing open resistance against Israeli occupation. Although they often criticized because it is too rigid in dealing with Palestinian peace project (Hannase, 2020).

In 1988, Hamas published its charter, calling for the destruction of Israel and the establishment of an Islamic society in Palestine (Robinson, 2023).

3. *Organizational stage*, a condition where a community group has mobilized action, its behavior is structured, it has targets and strategies, and the group has developed. Departing from the founding of Hamas in 1987 after the First Intifada incident occurred. Also, ruled over two million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Several years later, Hamas opposed the deal and carried violent and suicide attacks against Israelis in 1993 when the Oslo accords took place (Asangausung et al., 2024). In its operationalization, Hamas has a number of leadership bodies that carry out various political, military, and social functions, where general policy is set by *Politburo*, a consultative body in Hamas. There are several structural positions in Hamas's Governing, namely *Politburo*, Delegations abroad, *Shura* Council, West Bank affairs, Imprisoned members' affairs, Gazan affairs, Palestinian diasporic affairs, Social welfare system, Izz ad-Dine al-Qassam Brigades, Independently operating cells, and Hamas government, with its Ministries, Local authorities, and Security forces (Robinson, 2023). Hamas has originally a rigid doctrine. The view of Hamas seems to be more political and not lead to ideological issues, raised issues of civil society, political participation and used modern democracy terminology. However, since 2006 Hamas transformed into the practical politics and participated in the election of 2006. Hamas uses the slogan of "*al-Islāh wa al-tagyīr*" and requires for reformation and changes. In its regard, military approach and jihad is the most effective choice to encounter the Israel army (Hannase, 2020).
4. *Institutional stage*, the condition where the movement begins to be integrated into a number of social and community structures, until the movement is institutionalized and becomes permanent. This can be seen from how Hamas has become a political party in Palestine, alongside Fatah. Hamas has political and military wings, and has controlled Gaza since 2007. Hamas sought to create an Islamic State in Palestine (Ebrahim, 2023). In addition, Hamas has improved the healthcare system, schools, pipe-borne water, electricity, food, and many other social services which make them popular among Gazans (Asangausung et al., 2024).

Critical Theory in international relations views the global configuration of power relations as its object, questioning how the configuration is formed through injustice and inequality on a global scale. Critical Theory can also be referred to as theory of history in the sense of being concerned not just with the past but with a continuing process of historical change, because it deals with a changing reality, continually adjust its concepts to the changing object it seeks to understand and explain (Thompson, 1978). Cox's Critical Theory framework includes historical structures as a picture of particular configuration of forces. There are three categories of forces interact in a structure: material capabilities, ideas, and institutions (Cox, 1981).

Material capabilities means the instruments include technological and organizational capabilities, or categorized as accumulated forms from natural resources. In Hamas context, Hamas is an Islamist militant movement, and one of the Palestinian territories' two major political parties. Hamas is supported by Iran and Turkey which Iran provides it with material and financial support, while Turkey harbors some of its top leaders (Robinson, 2023). In funding scheme, some Islamic charities in the West have channeled their money to Hamas. For years after the blockade began from the West, Hamas collected revenue by imposing taxes on goods moving through tunnels that circumvented the Egypt's crossing into Gaza (Robinson, 2023). Even, Hamas collected upward of \$12 million per month from Egyptian goods taxes imported into Gaza in 2021. Also, about 135 million shekels (\$4.16 million) per month go to the Hamas treasury from fuel revenues (The Economic Times, 2023).

In organizational capabilities, Hamas has several leadership body that perform various political, military, and social functions, such as *Politburo*, Delegations abroad, *Shura Council*, West Bank affairs, Imprisoned members' affairs, Gazan affairs, Palestinian diasporic affairs, Social welfare system, Izz ad-Dine al-Qassam Brigades, Independently operating cells, and Hamas government, with its Ministries, Local authorities, and Security forces, then local committee of Hamas managed grass-roots issues in Gaza and the West Bank (Robinson, 2023). In military support, Hamas accepted military support through the transfer of Iranian technology, consist of providing expertise in producing drones and modifying civilian drones into military drones (Mounier, 2023). Iran and several countries also providing training and weapons to Hamas (The Economic Times, 2023).

Ideas, consists of intersubjective meanings / shared notions of the nature of social relations which tend to perpetuate habits and expectations of behavior, or consist of an historical structure as collective images of social order held by different groups of people (Cox, 1981; Berger 1971). In Hamas context, ideas is contextualized by historical structural as collective images of social order from groups of people. Hamas formed a joint movement to confront the Zionist project in Palestine, and also an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt which created the Izz al-Din Al-Qassam Brigades. Hamas has ambition to give great social contribution and to help the Palestinian. Starting from the unpleasant experiences and difficult conditions experienced by the Palestinian people, because of the occupation of Israel. Indirectly it has formed the desire of civilians to fight against existing conditions. It also supported by the using of "*al-Islāh wa al-tagayir*" as slogan of Hamas which underlies the Hamas movement.

Institutionalization means of stabilizing and perpetuating a particular order. It reflect the power relations prevailing at their point of origin and tend, to encourage collective images consistent with these power relations (Cox, 1981). In Hamas context, institutionalization can be identified by the existence of Hamas itself which supported by Palestinians. The same pool found that more than half of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank would vote for Hamas's Haniyeh then PA

President Mahmoud Abbas in a presidential election (Robinson, 2023). Even, Hamas managed to control Gaza after winning the election (The Economic Times, 2023).

These instrument interconnected with each other to form a structure in social forces in Palestinian society. Related with the categories of configuration of forces, historical structures also applied to the three levels of activity which interrelated each others, including social forces by the organization of production, forms of state, and world orders (Cox, 1981).

The organization of production particularly with regard to the social forces engendered by the production process. In this regard, the Palestinian people have experienced unpleasant conditions, war, and the harsh conditions they experience in Palestine due to the Israeli occupation of Palestine since 1948. Starting from the conditions, indirectly its formed the desire of civilians to fight against existing conditions. The movement started, and there are several factions that aimed to fight against the Israeli occupation forces. There are several major players regarding Israeli occupation in Palestine, such as Hamas, Fatah, PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization), and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (Sharp, 2023). The resistance carried out by several factions, including Hamas, has become the reason that the occupation carried out by Israel in Palestine has become a causal relationship to what happened in Palestine. Understanding the history of the formation of Hamas in Palestine, the existence of Hamas is a form of dissatisfaction of a portion of Palestinian society with the struggle that has been carried out through diplomatic channels, as has been done by the PLO and Fatah (Rahman, 2020). The occupation carried out has triggered a prolonged conflict between Israel and Palestine that has been going on since 1948 until now. The conditions faced by the Palestinian people due to the occupation have triggered a structured social movement. Not only Hamas but there are also other actors. In fact, Hamas as one of the factions that exists in Gaza has become a non-state actor that has succeeded in collecting funds for their operations so far which have been obtained from the assistance of their partners.

Forms of states derived from a study of state/society complexes. In this context, due to the instability of economic, social, and political conditions in Palestine, the existence of Palestine as a country is still unclear. Several countries have recognized Palestine as a country, although some others still consider Palestine not to be a sovereign country. Until 2006, Hamas has been the de facto authority in Gaza since Israel withdrew from the territory in 2005, then Hamas won a majority of seats in the PA's legislature and formed a government (Robinson, 2023). There are two dominant parties in Palestine, namely Fatah and Hamas. Both parties can also be indirectly called social movements/resistance movements and political parties (Rahman, 2020). The two parties (as representatives of the Palestinian Government) have different views on liberating Palestine from Israeli occupation, but still have the same goal, namely to liberate Palestine from Israeli occupation and form an Islamic state (Dewi et al., 2008). However, the two parties were involved in a conflict caused by their differences in achieving common goals. The con-

flict began since the death of Yasser Arafat in 2004 and the victory of Hamas in the 2006 election. Previously, Fatah led the government in Palestine, especially the Gaza Strip, so after Hamas' victory, the Gaza Strip was taken over again by Hamas and transferred the PA (Palestinian Authorities) controlled by Fatah from the Gaza Strip (Ferry, 2017). In defending Palestine, Hamas uses a military approach, and does not recognize the existence of the state of Israel at all. While Fatah uses a diplomatic approach, and recognizes the existence of the state of Israel. However, both reconciled in 2010 where they negotiated their control over Palestine which had been divided into two regions. As a result, the Gaza Strip is controlled by Hamas and the West Bank is controlled by Fatah (Rahman, 2020).

World orders, the particular configurations of forces which successively define the problematic of war or peace for the ensemble of states. In this context, global power such as US and its alliance has a dominant influence to inform to the international society about Hamas. By international media, global power could maintain their influence through the media they own in reporting the Hamas organization with negative news and Israel with news that tends to be positive (pro-Israel), such as CNN, New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Washington Post. In fact, there are other media outlets - Al Jazeera - which also report on Hamas but from a different perspective compared to Western media (Johnson & Ali, 2024; Rinaldy, 2023). In this formulation, state power ceases to be the sole explanatory factor and become part of what is to be explained. Dominance by a powerful state could be a necessary to understand the holistic view about Hamas.

## Conclusion

Based on the previous discussion, Critical Theory is a perspective that emphasizes the elimination of a threat by analyzing social structures, understanding historical and social developments, and pathological structures in the form of domination. The framework of Cox's critical theory includes historical structures as a picture of particular configuration of forces, with three categories of forces interact in a structure: material capabilities, ideas, and institutions. Material capabilities identified from Hamas' organizational capabilities such as military support, funding scheme, and its relationship from several countries; Ideas identified from the historical structural as collective images of social order in from groups of people. Based on the unpleasant experiences and difficult conditions experienced by the Palestinian people indirectly formed the desire of civilians to fight against existing conditions. Moreover, Hamas using of "*al-Islāḥ wa al-tagyīr*" as slogan of Hamas which underlies the Hamas movement. Institutionalization identified from the existence of Hamas itself which supported by Palestinians. Material capabilities owned by Hamas, supported by ideas that underlie Hamas' actions, these two instruments (material capabilities & ideas) will then be supported by institutionalization, namely the existence of Hamas itself which is based on the hopes, support and percep-

tions of the Palestinian people, especially the Gaza Strip, regarding Hamas's ability to help them in facing the Israeli occupation.

The relationship formed from social forces, forms of state, to world orders that are interrelated with each other finally formed the existence of Hamas as an Islamist Social Movement in Palestine. Starting from the social forces engendered by the production process from unpleasant conditions, war, and the harsh conditions experienced by Palestinian people due to the Israeli occupation of Palestine since 1948, indirectly it formed the desire of civilians to fight against existing conditions, so Hamas established. Then, due to the instability of economic, social, and political conditions in Palestine, the existence of Palestine as a country is still unclear. Hamas and Fatah as dominant parties in Palestine have different views on liberating Palestine from Israeli occupation. The existence of Hamas is a form of dissatisfaction of a portion of Palestinian society with the struggle that has been carried out through diplomatic channels, as has been done by the PLO and Fatah, so Hamas using a military approach, and does not recognize the existence of the state of Israel at all. In global context, using international media, global power could maintain their influence through the media they own in reporting the Hamas organization with negative news such as CNN, New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Washington Post. In fact, there are other media outlets - Al Jazeera - which also report on Hamas but from a different perspective compared to Western media.

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Muh Rizky Hikmatullah Idrus: *Writing-original Draft, article full draft.*

Chandra Purnama: *Writing – review & editing.*

Yulius Purwadi Hermawan: *Writing – review & editing.*

### **Authenticity Statement**

We declare that this writing is purely the original work of the author, and the article is free from plagiarism. This article has not been published and is not being submitted to any other journal.

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