‘Unsettling’ International Relations: Knowing and Unknowing the Settler Colonial Present
Working Group
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Coordinators:
James Eastwood (Queen Mary/University of London)
Email address: jeastwood35@gmail.com
Sharri Plonski (SOAS/University of London)
Email address: sp46@soas.ac.uk
Magid Shihade (Birzeit University)
Email address: mshihade@gmail.com
Elian Weizman (Kenyon Institute/Council for British Research)
Email address: deputydirector@kenyon-institute.org.uk

Objectives:

1) To develop and refine new, more acute analytical and theoretical tools for understanding contemporary settler colonial relations, across and between different cases
2) To bring different cases and communities of researchers into conversation with one another – particularly those often left out of these discussions – using a range of disciplinary, empirical and methodological approaches to unravel how settler colonialism continues to operate in and define the contemporary world
3) To develop a long-term research network, with the aim of developing collective outputs, shared public/online platforms and the capacity to reach across disciplines and share our work with a range of academic and non-academic audiences

Overview:

In the field of International Relations, the settler-colonial present is often muted in quests to unravel contemporary crises. Yet, its core logics persist in ongoing movements of territorial conquest, capital accumulation and dispossession of peoples, often under the guise of development, state-building, and good governance. We argue that the obfuscation of settler-colonial relations is derived from its ability to transform and translate its constitutive hierarchies and erasures into something ‘natural’; writing its ‘rules’ into cultural, economic and ideological activities that articulate and entrench its legitimacy, locally and globally. This working group aims to interrogate the mechanisms through which settler-colonial logics are normalised and hidden, through a range of cases and contexts. Its particular focus is on the way knowledge is harnessed to control narrations of past and present, as well as the relations between colonialists, natives and the different populations that have been made subordinate to, and yet essential producers of this project. We contend that it is the elasticity of settler-colonial knowledge that makes it so difficult to challenge, particularly given the multiple interstices between settler colonial logics and other current projects of erasure and replacement (i.e. neoliberalism). This working group will bring together scholars studying a range of settler colonial movements/states, from a variety of disciplinary lenses to discuss in comparative context, the ways in which settler colonial knowledge production becomes ambiguous, resilient and incontestable, in order to work towards its negation, disruption and transformation.