

PALESTINE – A COLONIAL ENVIRONMENT

Politics, power and the environment in Palestine

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Impact of Israeli Segregation and Annexation Wall on Palestinian biodiversity

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The exploitation of natural resources in Area C of the West Bank as indicator of annexation

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Entrevista conduzida por Mohammad Najajrah

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ÁFRICA EM DEBATE

Integração tripartida entre SADC-EAC-COMESA: perspectivas e implicações para SADC

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L'adieu aux (l)armes

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Editorial

Palestine – Environment and Conflict

Several files published by *Africana Studia* included material about Arab speaking countries, from Northern Africa to the Middle East. Still, this is the first one to focus exclusively on a non-African reality and apparently one not framed within a comparative perspective. In fact, the comparative framework is clearly there. Palestine, like almost all African territories for about eight decades – and especially like South African apartheid between the 1950s and 1990’s – is a conflict area with key lessons for colonial studies, which remain a “classical” field of interest for *Africana Studia*.

Palestinian heritage is rather complex – this is a land of cultural convergences since Ancient times – but its current status is quite simple: a colonial power controls the land, the sea, the air and the people. Colonial systems touch every territorial dimension, whether it is visible (geographical) or invisible (culture). Their mastering of spaces implies changes in landscape and in the environment as well as in the minds of their inhabitants. This is the case of the Palestinian territories under foreign control with its obvious impact on populations, environments and culture.

In order to contribute to the understanding of the general colonization phenomena throughout its Palestinian variant, a research network including Palestinian Universities and CEAUP was organized. The goal of the network was limited. Many aspects of the Palestinian colonial conflict have been addressed in the scientific literature regarding Law studies, Human Rights, refugees, political violence and resistance, no to speak of other broad issues on history and sociology. This current number of *Africana Studia* intends just to focus on a rather neglected but much needed dimension: the impact of the conflict on the living environment and the landscape of the Palestinian people.

It is now consensual that the global environmental situation is dire and that humanity faces a critical human rights junction. Numerous international fora, official documents, and scientific events and publications discuss climate change, habitat destruction, pollution, overexploitation, invasive species. However, few of them have addressed these topics in the context of colonial Palestine under Israeli occupation. We wish that the current collection of papers in your hand will provide a new path and that it may raise significant questions about this hidden face of Palestinian reality.

This current issue includes researches’ results on:

- how Israel exploits natural resources in the geopolitical area C (60% of the West Bank);
- the impact of the apartheid/segregation wall on the Palestinian Environment;
- the special and temporal changes in Shufat refugee camp in Jerusalem;

- the changes in Nablus area landscape/land usage;
- the unexpected findings of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on biodiversity in Palestine.

It also includes analytic papers that also give future hope on:

- an urban self-development of a Palestinian Refugee Camp in Jerusalem, where Shufat refugee camp residents act on their own behalf (agency);
- the successful activity, against all odds, of by Palestinian institutions (Environment Quality Authority, NGOs, Academia) to research or protect the environment under the power imbalance between colonizers and colonized;
- an innovative model of education and awareness-raising in order to change behavioral change vis-à-vis climate change.

Two enlightening interviews with leading personalities with regards to research and action in favour of Palestinian Environment were added.

This collection of research papers provides building blocks in a highly demanding literature about the interplay between conflict and the environment. Still, much more research along the same genre is needed. We just hope to have accelerated its more than certain arrival in the upcoming years.

We thank the interest of the colleagues who responded to the open call and their contribution. We also thank Carla Delgado for her assistance in this special issue, which marks a special milestone in the geographical scope of *Africana Studia*.

After all, it may be not so exceptional: Palestine is located in the Sinai geologic microplate, which geologists mostly agree to be a subsection of the gigantic Nubian plate. Anyway, we are all Africans by origin. Plus: at least in the context of environmental issues we are – or we should be – all Palestinians.

Ahmad Abu Hammad*

Maciel Santos**

Mazin Qumsiyeh***

Mustapha El Hannani****

* Department of Geography and Geoinformatics Birzeit University Birzeit Palestine. Associate Professor.

** CEAUP.

*** Palestine Institute for Biodiversity and Sustainability, Bethlehem University. Professor and director.

**** ESO-Angers, UMR 6590 CNR, Université d'Angers. SFR Confluences, France.

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