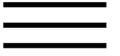


Towards a bio-territorial conception of power: Territory, population, and environmental narratives in Palestine and Israel.

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Towards a bio-territorial conception of power: Territory, population, and environmental narratives in Palestine and Israel

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Abstract

In this paper, I investigate recent Palestinian and Israeli environmental narratives as effects of power. I also read differences between both styles of narration as differences in conceptions and experiences of power. While Palestinian environmental narratives for the most part build on a Weberian perception of power (sovereign-territorial), their Israeli counterparts subscribe to what could be described as a Foucaultian perspective of power (bio-power). These underlying perceptions of power lead to forms of resistance that are focused on property rights and questions of sovereignty in Palestine and on concerns over quality of life of the population in Israel. By constructing theoretical distinctions between territory and population, Palestinian and Israeli environmental narratives continue a strongly entrenched tradition in theories of state, power, and

governmentality. In this paper, I provide a critique of this ontological distinction between territory and population and argue that the distinction itself should be recognized as an effect of power: by attending to its territorial forms, power's exercise on the level of population (gender, class, color) is rendered benign; and, by focusing on quality of life of the population, power's expression in territorial forms is often deemed irrelevant for environmental knowledge and action. This critique of power calls for further research on and discusses implications of a bio-territorial conceptualization of power, as well as attendant forms of resistance.



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Keywords

Environment; Power; State theory; Governmentality; Palestine; Israel

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