Ordering life and land: agriculture, science, and environment in the West Bank

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**FINAL REPORT**

**Introduction**

Modern agricultural sciences aim to increase the efficiency and productivity of agricultural production. While these fields seek to apply scientific methods to agriculture, they are often also tied to a parallel interest in the social development of rural communities and farmers. It could be said, then, that today agricultural sciences take as their object of study the plants, animals and people involved in the practice of agriculture. Since their modern inception in Europe in the late nineteenth century, agricultural sciences have also inevitably articulated with state power and political projects. This is particularly evident in the state management of agroecological practices, re-organization of territory, and support for research.

In the Palestinian West Bank, agricultural science has figured centrally in the transformation of the area’s environment and sociality. In particular, the agricultural programs of state powers have sought to reshape Palestinian production methods with particular attention to cropping systems, irrigation, land tenure, farm implements, and agricultural inputs. As with other parts of the world, changes in practices precipitated societal shifts as rural Palestinian communities adapted to changes in production and ecology. My research seeks to follow this articulation of science, state and environment through the implementation of scientific programs in the West Bank. Specifically, I explore the effects of agricultural science on Palestinian communities, their responses, and its implications for how we understand state efforts to order life and land.

**Results**

I have conducted interviews with agricultural scientists and surveyed possible field sites in the West Bank. Next, I will begin oral histories with older farmers in order to understand their responses to agricultural policies. I am particularly interested in the practices that enabled small-scale farmers to retain some control over the means of production.

I have one paper, “Staged environments: food, agriculture, and aid in the West Bank” that has been submitted to *Geoforum* for review.

I gave academic presentations at Dar Al-Kalima College in May, the Palestinian American Research Center seminar in June, and at the DAAR art residency Summer program in July.
Future project plans
The Consortium funding has made possible a significant part of my dissertation field research in the Palestinian West Bank. This is part of my dissertation research looking at Palestinian adaptations to agronomic interventions. I will begin writing the dissertation in fall 2011. I will complete the dissertation by the end of 2012. The work completed during the Consortium award has opened the door to extensive research on the drastic agro-ecological shifts in the West Bank, where the area illustrates such processes taking place around the world. I will continue in this vein following the completion of my dissertation. More specifically, in the ways that agricultural practices both enable and foreclose social and political community.
1. Project Title
2. Your name and department or center
3. Introduction
   * Brief project summary
4. Results
   * Publications (planned, in press, or published)
   * Presentations (planned or completed)
   * Grant proposals (planned or submitted)
   * For curriculum development, course description and schedule
   * For conferences or lectures, agenda and example of publicity and/or handouts
5. Future project plans
   * If this project is part of a graduate student’s dissertation, include goal date for dissertation completion.
   * Describe how the work completed during the period of time funded by the Consortium will lead to further research, etc.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I look forward to receiving your report at your earliest convenience. Thank you.