



Olive Insurrections: Palestinian Survival in a Vanishing Landscape

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Photo Credit: Mazem Qumsiyeh

For centuries, Palestinian livelihoods have been sustained through olive cultivation and olive oil production. A crop indigenous to the Holy Land, olives have become both symbolically and materially significant to the survival of Palestinian land, people, and lifeways. As Palestinians olive trees are razed due to Israeli settler-colonialism, the consumption of Palestinian olive oil has become increasingly popularized through global fair trade, with Palestinian olive oils, soaps, and tapenades appearing on shelves from London to California. Using a global perspective, Professor Sharif traces the olive from the moment it is picked after the first rainfall in October, to its circulation to the U.S. and Europe, in order to explore the ways in which indigenous lifeways are commodified, branded and circulated through alternative food movements. Based on a cumulative twelve months of fine-grained, multi-sited ethnography, Professor Sharif argues that indigeneity has been coopted by global market inclusion in a way that elides, and even enables, settler colonialism. Drawing from this data set, this presentation explores the following set of questions: How do indigenous lifeways become consumed transnationally through fair trade, organic, and other alternative food movement circuits? What are the impacts of these evolving consumption practices on native producers, and how can this contribute to what we know about indigenous struggles for life, culture, and land, and the entanglements between settler colonialism and global capitalism?

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