

## DISMANTLING GREEN COLONIALISM: ENERGY AND CLIMATE JUSTICE IN THE ARAB REGION

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### ***Abstract***

*The concept of "green colonialism" has emerged as a critique of environmental policies and projects that perpetuate inequities and injustices, particularly in regions disproportionately affected by climate change. In the Arab region, efforts to transition to renewable energy sources and mitigate climate change have raised questions about environmental justice and the distribution of benefits and burdens. This article provides an analytical examination of the concept of green colonialism in the context of energy and climate justice in the Arab region. Through a comprehensive review of literature and analysis of case studies, this article explores the social, economic, and environmental implications of renewable energy projects and climate policies, and assesses their alignment with principles of justice, equity, and sustainability. The article argues that dismantling green colonialism requires a shift towards participatory decision-making processes, equitable distribution of resources, and recognition of the rights and priorities of marginalized communities, in order to ensure that energy and climate policies contribute to inclusive and sustainable development in the Arab region.*

***Keywords:*** *Green Colonialism, Energy Justice, Climate Justice, Arab Region, Renewable Energy.*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The transition to renewable energy sources and the mitigation of climate change have become urgent imperatives globally, driven by the recognition of the environmental, social, and economic risks posed by continued reliance on fossil fuels. However, in the Arab region, efforts to pursue renewable energy projects and climate policies have raised questions about equity, justice, and sustainability. This article examines the concept of "green colonialism" in the context of energy and climate justice in the Arab region, exploring the implications of renewable energy projects and climate policies for marginalized communities and vulnerable populations, Amr & Yu (2019).

## **2. UNDERSTANDING GREEN COLONIALISM**

Green colonialism refers to the perpetuation of colonial-era patterns of exploitation, domination, and marginalization through environmental policies and projects, particularly in the Global South. In the context of energy and climate justice, green colonialism manifests in various ways, including the imposition of top-down development models, unequal distribution of benefits and burdens, and disregard for the rights and priorities of marginalized communities. Renewable energy projects, such as solar and wind farms, hydroelectric dams, and biofuel plantations, often exacerbate existing inequalities and injustices, displacing communities, depleting natural resources, and undermining local livelihoods, Neil & Rees (2022).

### **Implications for Energy and Climate Justice in the Arab Region**

In the Arab region, efforts to transition to renewable energy sources and mitigate climate change have been driven by a combination of environmental imperatives, economic incentives, and geopolitical considerations. However, these efforts have raised concerns about their alignment with principles of justice, equity, and sustainability. Renewable energy projects in the Arab region, including large-scale solar and wind farms, have often been characterized by a lack of transparency, accountability, and meaningful consultation with affected communities. Moreover, the benefits of renewable energy projects have often accrued to elites and foreign investors, while marginalized communities bear the brunt of environmental degradation, social dislocation, and economic displacement, Yaakov (2018).

## **Challenges and Opportunities for Dismantling Green Colonialism**

Dismantling green colonialism in the Arab region requires a fundamental rethinking of energy and climate policies, towards more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable approaches. This entails shifting towards participatory decision-making processes that prioritize the voices and significances of affected communities, ensuring that energy projects are designed and implemented in accordance with principles of social and environmental justice. Additionally, it requires recognizing and addressing the historical legacies of colonialism, imperialism, and resource extraction that continue to shape patterns of inequality and injustice in the region, Saleh (2020).

## **The Intersection of Energy and Climate Justice**

At the heart of the concept of green colonialism lies the intersection of energy and climate justice. Energy justice entails ensuring that all individuals and communities have access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy services, while also addressing social, economic, and environmental inequities. Climate justice, on the other hand, focuses on the fair distribution of the costs and benefits of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, particularly for vulnerable populations and future generations. In the Arab region, where energy resources and climate impacts are unevenly distributed, the pursuit of energy and climate justice is essential for addressing socio-economic disparities, safeguarding human rights, and promoting sustainable development, Ayoub (2021).

## **Energy Transition and Just Transitions**

The transition to renewable energy sources is a key component of efforts to address climate change and promote sustainable development. However, the transition must be guided by principles of justice and equity to ensure that no one is left behind. This includes addressing the needs and priorities of workers and communities affected by the shift away from fossil fuels, as well as ensuring that the benefits of renewable energy projects are equitably distributed. In the Arab region, where fossil fuel extraction has long been a source of economic prosperity for some and environmental degradation for others, the transition to renewable energy presents both opportunities and challenges for advancing energy justice and climate justice, El-Fadel & Mohtar (2021).

### **3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT**

A critical aspect of dismantling green colonialism is empowering communities to participate in decision-making processes and shaping the trajectory of renewable energy projects and climate policies. Community engagement entails ensuring that affected communities have a voice in project planning, implementation, and monitoring, as well as access to information, resources, and support. Besides, community empowerment involves building the capacity of local organizations and institutions to advocate for their rights, negotiate with governments and developers, and hold decision-makers accountable. In the Arab region, where marginalized communities often bear the brunt of environmental degradation and socio-economic inequality, community engagement and empowerment are essential for promoting inclusive and sustainable development, Oliver (2012).

#### **Policy Reforms and Institutional Change**

Dismantling green colonialism also requires policy reforms and institutional changes to address the structural inequalities and power imbalances that underpin environmental injustice. This includes revising laws and regulations to enhance transparency, accountability, and participation in environmental decision-making, as well as strengthening institutions responsible for environmental governance and enforcement. It entails adopting policies and programs that prioritize the needs and rights of marginalized communities, promote renewable energy deployment, and facilitate the transition to a low-carbon economy. In the Arab region, where governance systems are sometimes afflicted by authoritarianism, corruption, and lack of accountability, policy reforms and institutional changes are essential for advancing energy and climate justice, Shomar et al (2020).

### **4. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, dismantling green colonialism and advancing energy and climate justice in the Arab region require a multi-faceted approach that addresses the root causes of environmental injustice and promotes inclusive and sustainable development. By centering principles of equity, participation, and accountability, stakeholders can work together to ensure that renewable energy projects and climate policies contribute to the well-being of all individuals and communities, while also protecting the planet for future generations. Through community engagement, policy reforms, and institutional changes, the Arab region can transition towards

a more just and sustainable energy future, where the benefits of renewable energy are shared equitably and environmental rights are respected.

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