

Seminario internazionale

Mining, Protest, Anthropology: Mozambique between environmental distress and political unrest

Mercoledì 9 aprile 2025, ore 16.00-18.00

Aula Milone, Palazzo Malcanton Marcorà

Discussant: **Linda Armano**, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

A (not-so) new extraction economy in Mozambique

Francesco Vacchiano

Ca' Foscari University of Venice

In Mozambique, growing awareness of the country's vast underground resources has, in recent years, shaped a new economic, social, and political dynamic. The extractive sector has emerged as the country's primary economic driver, fueling expectations of growth and hopes for widespread social benefits. However, clientelist power structures—where the historical core of the Frelimo party holds a privileged position—have facilitated a resource-capture process driven by extractivism. This has led to increasing local frustration, compounded by escalating environmental consequences. In this presentation, I analyze these dynamics and offer insights informed by the anthropology of extractive processes.

The form, field and order of environmental and political protests in Mozambique

Ruy Blanes

ISCTE-IUL, Lisbon

In this seminar I propose to map the dynamics of social mobilization in Mozambique, exploring the intersection of two concomitant processes: (1) the mobilizations – from NGOs to peasant associations, communal protests and platforms – around new extractive projects in

Mozambique, in the context of the current debates on the energy transition; and (2) the post-electoral recent uprisings in Maputo and across the country. Through examples taken from field research in Maputo, Cabo Delgado and online, I will seek to explore the specificity of the “field” of social mobilization in Mozambique, both in terms of the size, the directionality and the focus of protest. Also, based on previous and ongoing research on protests in Angola, this will also enable a speculation concerning the political landscape of former Portuguese colonies in Africa, in the framework of their upcoming celebration of 50 years of independence.

Reflections on field access and resonance of post-election mobilisations in Moatize, Tete

Margherita Vita, Niccolò Di Ruscio

Ca' Foscari University of Venice

The biased results of the October 9th presidential elections sparked an unprecedented wave of popular mobilization in Mozambique. Widespread contestation led to the partial suspension of daily activities across the country, significantly impacting research. Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork in the mining town of Moatize, this study explores the concept of ‘the field’ in the context of post-election conflict, focusing on the perspectives of miners and local activists.