
This book is an excellent, well-documented sociological study about the Palestinians in Israel. Social scientists As’ad Ghanem and Mohanad Mustafa focus on the demographic, religious, and social changes Palestinians in Israel have experienced since the Oslo Accords in 2003. The book comprises six chapters with an introduction and a conclusion, and 14 informative tables that shed light on the results of surveys. The surveys were conducted by the authors about the political and cultural life of Palestinians in Israel. The introduction lays out the historical background and the theoretical framework for the study. This brief review will highlight the main strands of the writers’ findings.

Chapter 1 explores the Palestinian aspirations as a minority group living in the majority Jewish state. Palestinians’ demands have challenged the hegemony of what is referred to as “Hegemonic Ethnocracy.” This designation implies inequality whereby minority groups such as the Palestinians, among others, are treated as “separate and unequal” in all domains—politics, economics, academics, and culture (p. 30). Israel’s policy is diametrically opposed to the state’s liberal democracy, a claim that has caused tensions among its minorities of Muslims, Christians, Druze, and Mizrahi Jews. Had the authors addressed the fallacious designation of democratic ethnocracy, the reader would have gained more insight into this contradictory designation of Israel.

Chapter 2 addresses the question of Palestinian leadership since 1948. With about 160,000 Palestinians remaining in what became Israel, an “enemy state,” the authors explain the hardships the Palestinians faced under Israel’s military rule. The military rule was officially lifted in 1966. But according to Adalah’s “The Discriminatory Laws Database,” Israeli discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel persists; listed are over 65 Israeli laws that discriminate against Palestinians in Israel and in the Occupied Territories. Ghanem and Mustafa, however, point out three major shifts regarding Palestinians’ status as inferior “second-class citizens”: in the 1970s, in 1984, and after the 1993 Oslo Accords. The signing of the Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA) has had the most major impact on Palestinians in Israel. The almost 2 million Palestinians in Israel were absent from the negotiations at Oslo. This double exclusion caused an ideological shift. As a distinct group, Palestinians in Israel have aspired to integrate into the state and its institutions, sought equality with
the Jewish majority, and simultaneously desired institutional autonomy—a type of bi-nationalism (p. 49). The following the chapters discuss the various means Palestinians have attempted to achieve their goals.

Chapter 3 focuses on the empowerment of Palestinian civil society through the formation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Discussed are three types of NGOs, their functions, and contributions to the well-being of Palestinians in all social sectors. From the 1980s and despite their political delimitations, NGOs became more actively organized and worked on empowering civil collectivity among Palestinians.

Chapter 4 discusses the emergence of Muslim organizations and their internal conflicts. The writers rightly assert that any discussion of activism in Palestine must be with Israel as the backdrop. They base their analysis of Muslim movements on four factors: the broad political context; the public’s political orientation; the leadership preferences; and the meanings of the religious texts (pp. 105-106).

Chapter 5 relates a historic event in the life of Palestinians in 2006: the publication of “Future Vision of the Palestinian-Arabs in Israel,” the resulting document of the collaboration of all sectors of Palestinian society. This document defines several questions concerning the Palestinian minority in Israel: the relationship between the Palestinian minority and the Jewish majority; the legal status of Palestinians; land and housing; social and economic development; Arab education; Arab Palestinian culture; and institutions and political work. In a nutshell, the vision challenges Israel’s Jewish national symbols and the Law of the Return; and it blames Israel for the Nakba and the state’s history of discrimination against Palestinians in Israel. Furthermore, an emphatic demand is articulated for recognition of the Palestinians “as a minority in their homeland” with equal rights, justice, and democratic citizenship, in a consensual democracy rather than the existing ethnocracy (pp. 133-134). Ghanem and Mustafa rightly emphasize that the document is a major step, but that it needs serious action and organization on the part of the Palestinians to keep it alive.

Chapter 6 highlights the election victory of the national Palestinian “Joint List” for the 2015 Knesset elections as a step in the right direction. However, in addition to the List’s lack of articulation of a realistic action plan, it also faced “Israeli right’s control of the government” (p. 165), both of which resulted in weakening the List’s effect.

The conclusion restates the basic weakness of Palestinians in Israel—their divisiveness and double marginalization by both Israel and the PA. Their future is correlated with how and when the Palestine question will be resolved and with how the Israeli state deals with their status.

*Palestinians in Israel* updates our knowledge about the status of Palestinians in Israel since the early 1990s, and underscores their struggle against the settler

Focusing on art productions between 2010 and 2018, Caroline Seymour-Jorn discusses new creative works by al-jil al-jadid (the new generation) in music, theater production, and public art. The surge in new art since the 2011 revolution attempts to redefine the relationship between people, their bodies, and space. Since the ascendancy of Abd al-Fatah al-Sisi in 2014, it seems that Cairo’s creative spaces have gone underground so to speak, given the “heightened surveillance” of young activists and artists (p. 2) by the authoritarian regime. Seymour-Jorn’s publication thus is an important revelation about artistic and resistant creativity in Egypt. The book attempts to answer a few questions: How do different types of art productions respond personally and artistically to the situation after January 2011? In what ways do artists engage public issues toward specific events? How does art generate public discourse about the recent historical periods, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, Mubarak’s rule, and President Sisi?

Creating Spaces of Hope comprises four chapters with an introduction and final thoughts, in addition to many illustrations of the art discussed. Of note are the artistic innovations in form and style to craft diverse and complex objects, such as musical collaborations, studio art, writing, and murals and graffiti. To contextualize the discussion about art, the introduction presents a brief background of the revolutionary and post-revolutionary cultural milieu. Tapping into recent scholarship, Seymour-Jorn adds her theorization about creativity and its role in the making of culture. Her study draws on contemporary scholarly interests, offering multiple aesthetic approaches, as well as the artists’ comments about their sociopolitical and aesthetic landscapes.

Chapter 1 looks at the emergence and establishment of Egypt’s Choir Project in 2010 through its development, up to 2018. Inspired by the Finnish International Complaints Choir, it was founded in Egypt in 2005. Its approach is unconventional: it was launched by an electronic invitation to gather for a workshop at a specific venue for a week. With the aid of director Salam Yousry and musician Motaz Atallah, the participants collaboratively created and performed the first act, “Gamahir Khafiyah” (Invisible Publics). The production was also accompanied by