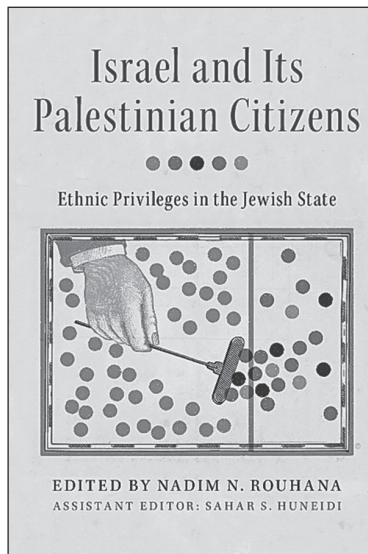


## Recent Books



***Israel and Its Palestinian Citizens: Ethnic Privileges in the Jewish State***, edited by Nadim N. Rouhana, assisted by Sahar S. Huneidi. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017. 462 pages. \$99.99 cloth, \$34.99 paper, \$28.00 e-book.

### REVIEWED BY MAZEN MASRI

A new book on the topic of Palestinian citizens of Israel gets published every few years. Many of these regurgitate old and discredited theories developed by the Israeli establishment and academia about “modernization,” “majority-minority relations,” “Israelization,” or “radicalization,” and few manage to challenge the official narrative. In *Israel and Its Palestinian Citizens: Ethnic Privileges in the Jewish State*, Nadim N. Rouhana, one of the leading figures in challenging the dominant (Israeli) ways of thinking about Palestinians in Israel, brings together an impressive range of scholars to

produce a volume that critically approaches the topic from various disciplinary perspectives, which include history, political psychology, law, geography, surveillance, and political, economic, and social movement theory.

*Israel and Its Palestinian Citizens* tackles one of the more puzzling issues about Palestinians in Israel and, by extension, the nature of the Israeli regime: Palestinians are considered citizens with nominally equal rights, and at the same time they are subordinated legally, politically, and economically by the regime that granted their citizenship. To tackle this question, the book is framed in terms of ethnic privileges, which “extend to all areas of political, legal, constitutional, urban, and economic power structures” (p. 5). These privileges do not arise from nowhere, but are inherently related to settler colonialism, or as Rouhana puts it in the introduction: “The substance of the Arabs’ citizenship rights are emptied not by simple discriminatory policies that can be remedied, but by the settler-colonial structure from which these policies are derived” (p. 7).

The chapters in the volume adhere largely to the ethnic privilege framework discussed in the introduction, though the discussion of settler colonialism is not uniform. Some chapters

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do not even mention it, others allude to it in passing, and some, like the chapter on surveillance by Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, the chapter on law by Nimer Sultany, and the chapter on memory and history by Rouhana and Areej Sabbagh-Khoury, provide a more sophisticated analysis informed by theories of settler colonialism. Nevertheless, the book is coherent and each chapter provides a piece of the puzzle that contributes to the big picture. At times the chapters seem to be in conversation with each other, providing different perspectives on the same issue. For example, in his chapter on the equality discourse of the Israeli governments in the first decade of the state, Hillel Cohen seems to take official statements about commitment to equality at face value, despite the environment that prevailed then, while Ian S. Lustick and Matthew Berkman take a more critical stance that highlights continuity with the Zionist movement's past practice of audience-specific messaging and tactics of dissimulation.

While most of the chapters provide a good overview of ethnic privilege and its dynamics, and how it developed and changed over the years, some provide novel contributions to the existing body of research. But the main contribution of this volume as a whole is in the diversity of areas covered: it goes beyond the classic issues discussed in the context of the Palestinians in Israel, such as land policy, to cover new areas such as economic development, education, and surveillance. Having a chapter dedicated to social movements and resistance (written by Ahmad H. Sa'di) helps complete the picture by showing that this group, despite the tremendous challenges, was not a passive community even if the relative success of the struggle is debatable. This diversity of topics and the balance between the breadth of scope and the depth of analysis makes the volume ideal for use in postgraduate teaching.

Another important contribution of this volume is that its authors discuss matters, trends, and policies relevant beyond the Palestinians in Israel. The analyses they provide elucidate Israeli policies in general with respect to other segments of the Palestinian people. Indeed, they are helpful for discerning the nature of the Israeli regime and Zionist ideology. The chapter by Lustick and Berkman on Israel's double discourse—one discourse for external consumption to satisfy foreign nations and audiences, and another, which reflects the material policies adopted—is relevant for understanding current Israeli policies toward Palestinians in general and Israel's approach to the negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Similarly, Sultany's analysis of the Supreme Court of Israel and the different techniques used to create the impression of objective engagement while at the same time upholding the status quo applies to the court's attitude toward the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Yosef Jabareen's discussion of territorial and demographic dominance can also inform studies about Israeli policies in the West Bank.

*Israel and Its Palestinian Citizens* is a welcome contribution to the literature about the Palestinians in Israel. Its focus on the foundational underpinnings of ethnic privilege means that it will be relevant for years to come, as these foundational underpinnings are not likely to change anytime soon.

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Mazen Masri, senior lecturer at City University of London, is the author of *The Dynamics of Exclusionary Constitutionalism: Israel as a Jewish and Democratic State* (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2017).

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