



*The Power of Inclusive Exclusion:  
Anatomy of Israeli Rule in the Occupied  
Palestinian Territories*

Adi Ophir, Michal Givoni, and Sari Hanafi, Eds.

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In *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion*, editors Adi Ophir, Michal Givoni, and Sari Hanafi have set about to bring together the latest research on Israel's occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The editors seek to distance themselves from the larger perspective of history and the "conflicting positions" of the Jewish and Palestinian national movements and focus on the nature of the occupation as a "sui generis [i.e., of its own kind] regime or political system." This book is about the present, so the authors suggest, and the "genealogies of the technologies of power." Those who have focused on the past or future are not only guilty of having a "pragmatic problem solving set of mind" but are full of "blindness to the current state of affairs."

Without completely betraying their own political views from the outset, their introduction seems to want to situate this study in a unique category. The articles do not presuppose to examine the occupation as a "legal fetish . . . ; they are careful not to frame the occupation as a particular form of something known already . . . colonialism apartheid," but they forsake the idea that it is a "unique and incomparable phenomenon." The researchers are not as interested in what exactly has happened historically, but rather in "the deployment of the occupying forces and on the strategies that they promote."

The authors portray themselves as having written their studies "in an atmosphere that is generally hostile to the kind of political questions and theoretical perspective it strives to open." They further claim that despite efforts on their part to include Palestinian colleagues, "Israel's restrictions on movement, access to Jerusalem has been extremely difficult for Palestinian scholars," and therefore most of them could not participate, resulting in a "partial and inevitably biased portrait of the occupation." These two assertions deserve challenging. The work in question, as the editors mention several times, was due to the "generous support of the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute" and was supported by numerous organizations and individuals that make up a "who's who" list of human rights groups and left or peace camp activists in Israel. Most of the contributors are faculty at Israel's universities and some have received



extensive support from the Israel Academy of Sciences, hardly an example of a group whose views are being suppressed. The assertion that movement restrictions in Jerusalem prevented work with Palestinian academics at Bir Zeit or Al Quds University is hard to fathom. Most academic collaborative research today is carried out via email and telephone, neither of which is interdicted by Israel's security forces and barriers.

Studies of the occupation and many of its most minute facets are not rare in the academic world and may in fact constitute one of the most frequently studied and analyzed subjects to appear in academic journals from all disciplines. In monograph form, one might look to Tim Jon Simmerling's *Israeli and Palestinian Postcards: Presentations of National Self* (2004); *A Civilian Occupation: The Politics of Israeli Architecture* (2003) edited by Rafi Segal and Eyal Weizman; or *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation* (2007) by Eyal Weizman, who is also a contributor to *Inclusive Exclusion*. In fact, the cover photo from *Hollow Land* is the same one used to illustrate *Inclusive Exclusion*.

*Inclusive Exclusion* is composed of 16 articles with 17 contributors (Neve Gordon of Ben-Gurion University, Ariella Azoulay of Bar-Ilan University, and Ariel Handel, PhD, from Tel Aviv University contributed to two articles each). The most unique aspect of the volume is the existence of two special essays, one on the "Occupation's Paper Trail" by Michal Givoni of Ben-Gurion University and Ariella Azoulay's "The (In)Human Spatial Condition." This collection of documents pertaining to the occupation is an "effort to put together an anatomy of the current power structures of the occupation." The paper trail illustrates several aspects of the occupation. The first is the "seam" that is the area between the Green Line (the 1948 armistice line between Israel and Jordan) and the security fence/separation barrier that Israel has built in the last 5 years. Givoni claims, without a source or an explanation, that the seam "will supposedly contain, once the wall is built, 10 percent of the West Bank." This is probably an exaggeration. The second aspect examined is Israel's open fire regulations distributed to IDF soldiers. These regulations were adopted by Israel to prevent the mistaken killing of civilians and prohibit shooting "at a vehicle . . . in which women and children are seen" or shooting while driving. Riots and procedures for dispersing them are defined. The sixth "paper trail" includes a letter to "an Israeli attorney representing a Palestinian applying for a permit." The author does not inform the reader that the attorney is none other than Yael Berda, whose own essay with Yehouda Shenhav ("The Colonial Foundations of the State of Exception") appears in the volume. Other portions of paper trail involve the allowance of humanitarian aid through checkpoints, eviction notices, and investigation sheets for Palestinians illegally staying in Israel. The presentation of these documents with only short explanations allows the readers to draw their own conclusions about them and are a welcome addition to the numerous other essays that are, at times, ham-handed in their expectation that the reader be a convinced believer in the authors' perspective.



Azoulay's "Photo Dossier" is also a welcome addition but, unlike the paper trail, the photos are not nearly as stunning, an irony considering the oft-repeated mantra that "a picture is worth a thousand words." The first dossier should be the most shocking as it includes scenes of the "Architecture of Destruction." Azoulay includes small sketches of the photos next to them without an explanation of what they are supposed to represent. Are they an attempt to create a categorization scheme for the types of destruction caused by the IDF?

The photo essay's main problem is that it provides no context to the photos but does provide a great degree of philosophical analysis. One notes "the inversion of space relations between open and closed, solid and air, mobile and static seems to resonate with various postmodern theories." Another claims "the boy is familiar with these scenes of devastation—he has probably seen too many already and still does not seem willing to accept them or to recognize their movement as the embodiment of justice."

Azoulay paints a picture of a Palestinian society always in the midst of destruction and disaster and which is in a "constant state of emergency." In fact, this view is primarily the result of the author's own interaction with the occupation where the most destruction and conflict-ridden events are the ones important to the research. There are villages and even towns in the West Bank that are not the scenes of everyday destruction, but for the photographer following the conflict, the scene is one of everyday disaster and constant state of emergency. It is an inversion of the conflict whereby the viewer becomes convinced that Palestinian life is actually that of the Israeli researcher photographing the destruction. Azoulay might have contemplated this deeper question.

Photo dossier II reveals a systematic classification of "types of blockage" with six types identified: checkpoint searches, checkpoints, rocks, blocks, walls, and fences. This might have made for an interesting analysis, but it is presented without any comment on the types identified and instead with comments such as "improvisation is a provocation of the occupier."

The first essay in the book, authored by Orna Ben-Naftali, Aeyal M. Gross, and Keren Michaeli, examines the "illegality of the Occupational Regime." It details the development of international law and analyzes whether Israel is still in effective control of the Gaza Strip. They speak of the "potential power" of Israel to take over the Gaza Strip as one piece of evidence that Israel still occupies the area. This is an interesting examination, but it does not ask deeper questions. If potential power and effective control are definers of occupation, then South Africa "occupies" Lesotho, a state completely surrounded by South Africa, a definition that is not widely accepted. The authors' reliance on the supposed seamless development of international law does not question the degree to which international law is primarily a concept created by Europeans for Europeans and in the wake of European conflicts and problems specific to Europe.

The next article is Ariella Azoulay and Adi Ophir's "The Order of Violence," which examines "power and violence." They argue that "insinuated or withheld



violence does not differ from economic power, purchasing power, [or] the rhetorical power of persuasion.” They make the odd claim that Israel “changed the Palestinian habitat” as if the Palestinian is akin more to a beaver than a human being.

Ariel Handel examines the “geography of disaster” in the occupied territories. He shows that 41 percent of the West Bank is under Israeli settlement control and another 18 percent is under the control of the military and civilian Israeli authorities. The author argues that “West Bank inhabitants cannot drive their own cars or travel continuously beyond their immediate surroundings.” In a figure on page 186, Handel claims that an Israeli driver can travel 17 km in 11 min, while the same drive by a Palestinian takes some 3 h and 24 min. Handel disingenuously has factored in three 1-h stops at checkpoints. Handel does not give a source for his information and does not acknowledge that this is probably a worst-case scenario.

There are other articles by Neve Gordon on “colonization” and “separation.” Hilla Dayan writes an essay about the comparison between Israel and apartheid. She argues that “administratively” Israel acts much like the apartheid government in South Africa.

In the essay by Shenhav and Berda the reader is exposed to the “colonial foundations of the state of exception.” In it the authors claim to examine “colonial bureaucratic history” and compare it to Israel’s role in the territories. Leila Farsakh presents research on the “Palestinian economy under the Israeli occupation.” She too speaks about “colonialism [and its] relation of domination by which an invading foreign minority rules over an indigenous population.”

Caroline Abu Sada examines how Israel cultivated “dependence” through Palestinian agriculture under the occupation. She writes that “agriculture came to play an even more important role in the Palestinian economy” recently because of the occupation. In fact, the Palestinian economy was almost entirely agricultural (485,000 out of 784,000 Palestinian Arabs worked in agriculture in 1931) during the British Mandate, and it remained so under Jordanian control. Could it possibly have become more so? The concluding essays include Neve Gordon and Dani Filc examining the popularity of Hamas, Sari Hanafi on refugee camps, Gadi Algazi on Bil’in, Eyal Weizman on Israeli “targeted killings,” and Ronen Shamir researching what he calls the “impossibility of borders” because of the occupation.

*Inclusive Exclusion* has nuggets of interest in it. However, it does not follow through with what it sets out to do. It does not ignore history or prefer sui generis definitions to comparisons to colonialism and apartheid. Its authors usually have too much of an axe to grind with the state of Israel to present research that is meaningful and nuanced. They often hide behind the idea that what they are presenting is original. Gadi Algazi claims that the occupation as a “colonial process” has “often been overlooked.” Recent publications such as Gershom Gorenberg’s *Accidental Empire* and Idith Zertal and Akiva Eldar’s *Lords of the Land* would suggest otherwise.

