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Book Review

Israelis and Palestinians in the Shadows of the Wall: Spaces of Separation and Occupation

Stéphanie Latte Abdallah & Cédric Parizot, (eds). Surrey, BC, Canada: Ashgate, 2015. 276pp., £70.00 (h/b), ISBN 9781472448880

This edited volume questions the dominant narratives of occupation through a Foucauldian-inspired analysis based on the characteristics, consequences and implications of the renewed Israeli separation policy for both sides of the Israeli–Palestinian divide.

The authors suggest that although the West Bank Wall embodies such policy, since it is the most visible sign of separation and an iconic representation of the conflict, its physical and mediatised impact obscures more than it reveals. Accepting the illusion that the separation is complete invisibilises the changes in the occupation regime on the ground and the differentiated technologies of power that have arisen. Thus, the book aims at exploring how the occupation regime operates, shedding light on the asymmetrical interdependence and power relations deployed by its control mechanisms.

Moving beyond the existing trends in the field, its main argument is that the developments of the separation policy have paradoxically tended to strengthen the interconnectedness of people's lives and spaces, thus creating new forms of governmentality and territoriality. The authors bring an important contribution to the established scholarship by proposing an alternative interpretation of the functioning and changes in the occupation regime over the last 20 years as a way to proportionate a better understanding of their consequences for the future of the conflict and its challenges in the recent future.

Grounded on extensive fieldwork developed by a multidisciplinary team of scholars, the book is structured into four parts that approach the transformation of interactions

between Israelis, Palestinians and international actors through geographic, economic, social and political perspectives.

The book's only weakness is perhaps the asymmetric view it presents due to the lack of analyses over the very unique systems of control that operate in the Gaza Strip. Yet, it is important to stress that this is neither a sign of neglect or disregard, as the situation of blockade on the ground makes it impossible to conduct field research there.

Israelis and Palestinians in the Shadows of the Wall will be considered relevant for both scholars and students working with the Middle East and also for anyone interested in a complete overview of the politics of the region. Although it definitely engages with the contemporary debates and advances from the already established literature with conceptual and theoretical contributions to such scholarship, its richness and diversity of topics covered can also place it as the perfect introduction for a critical view over the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

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