

**CAMELIA SULEIMAN. *The Politics of Arabic in Israel: A Sociolinguistic Analysis* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017). Pp. 240. \$84.61 cloth. ISBN: 978-1474420860.**

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In her ethnography, *The Politics of Arabic in Israel*, Camelia Suleiman discusses the Arabic language within the State of Israel, exploring the implications of its status in terms of various sociolinguistic processes and identity formation. Suleiman provides a sweepingly comprehensive overview of substantiated sociolinguistics as well as socio-poetic and legal research conducted on Arabic. *The Politics of Arabic in Israel* also sheds light on the sociolinguistic ramifications of ethnography, which impacts both the Arabic language and its speakers.

Suleiman offers extensive explanations for her research methodology, defines important terminology, and provides information concerning the research group, their identities, and their positionality within Israel. Key among this information is the demographic scale she provides: Arabs in Israel are an ethnic minority constituting 20% of its total population. The demographic is made up of various religious and ethnic subgroups and is concentrated in three main areas: Galilee, the Triangle, and the Center of Israel.

Suleiman launches into historical and geographical contextualization of Arab identity. Chapter one outlines a historical timeline of events following the establishment of Israel in 1948 as documented by Palestinian, Jordanian, and Israeli historiographies. It also highlights the discourse of “Arabness” and the creation of modern Arab nation-state and identity during “*an-nahḍa*” (19) or Renaissance in the late 19th century, which parallels the emergence of Zionism in Eastern Europe and the actualization of the Jewish sense in a Jewish state and later the question of the Arab population and the status of Arabic within a Hebrew majority.

Suleiman unveils the orientalizing, minoritizing and securitizing of Arabic language in academic institutions as well as its development over time. Chapter two frames this discourse in terms of scholarly study of Arabic within Israel. Suleiman identifies three generations of scholars responsible for these processes: the orientalist who knew Arabic and other Semitic languages (47-8) those heavily influenced by “the European notion of the orient;” (53) the students of Arabic, who were engaged in Hebrew and Arabic” (53) and “abstained from any explicit political or social loyalties; the third generation of “trained Arabic and/or Hebrew linguists” (58) who “did not fully participate in the discursive turn of linguistics and social sciences” (60-1).

Notwithstanding the scholarship of subordination, Arabic instruction in Academic institutions was part of a securitization plan where graduates of Arabic were in large part employed to enhance the security of Israel in defense against its Arab minority. The securitization and denigration of Arabic meant the marginalization of Arabs from many aspects of life, hence the politicization of language. For instance, Ahmed Tibi, the Knesset member who alternates between Arabic and Hebrew does so “to create a dramatic rhetoric [sic] effect” (64).

Moreover, Suleiman explores the (in)visibility of Arabic within the linguistic landscape (LL) in some Israeli cities. Chapter three includes a plethora of visuals emphasizing the inconsistency of linguistic representation of Israel’s three official languages: Arabic, Hebrew, and English on street signs. Arabic is either absent or present but misspelled, transliterated, vandalized, or politicized, all of which signifies the ongoing marginalization of Arabic and its speakers. Suleiman references Trina Trumper-Hecht to point out the street signage appurtenance. Trumper-Hecht distinguishes between “LL as an empirical visual sign that can be observed, and LL as perceived by the community” (83).

To evaluate the role of globalization and modernization on Arabs and Arabic, Suleiman details its effects on Arab citizens concentrated in the Galilee and the Triangle. Chapter four explores how Israel viewed the modernization process as exclusively Jewish, and how the presence of Arabs obstructs it. Attempts to eliminate Arab voices from the political scene are apparent too. Azmi Bishara evidences this truth: a self-imposed exile in Qatar, Bishara publicly denounces Israelization of Arabs and emphasizes the importance of political activism. Bishara “sees Arabic as integral to Arab identity” (119), and also espouses that “the collective rights of Palestinian Arabs and as an indigenous ethnic minority in Israel be recognized” (135).

In chapter five, Suleiman exhibits the biographies, backgrounds, and language choices of native Arabic-speaking Sasson Somekh, Anton Shammas and Sayed Kashua, who write in Hebrew to target Hebrew speakers (148). Sasson is of Jewish faith and used to publish in Arabic prior to moving to Israel. Per Suleiman, “his life project portrays a remarkable love and admiration for Arabic language” (149) and his Jewishness enabled him to be part of “the Zionist project” (160). Activities and writings of Iraqi-Arab-Jew intellectuals, including Sasson Somekh were extensively examined by Nancy Breg and Orit Bashkin.

Shammas is a Christian Arab who became known for his “widely acclaimed autobiography, *Arabesque*” (150). Among the many notable qualities of *Arabesque* is Shammas’s sociolinguistic choice to publish in Hebrew as well as to highlight his Palestinian, Arab, and Christian identity. As for language choice, Shammas publishes in Arabic, Hebrew, and English, differing significantly from Kashua’s sole preference for Hebrew. Kashua is a Muslim-Arab born in *Tira* and educated in Hebrew-speaking Jewish schools. His writings reflect on “the Arab protagonist trying to join the Ashkenazi circle.” (153). Despite Kashua’s Muslim identity, his writing “has no traces of it” (156).

To expand more on the effect of globalization, Suleiman discusses Arabic in Jordan and Palestine and its relationship to nationalism. Chapter six

investigates the status of Arabic in Jordan and the Palestinian Territories along with the effect of globalization. In the past two decades, Jordan has “witnessed a move toward [a] neo-liberal economy and the creation of consumer society” (178-9). A consequence of that is evident in the increasing presence of multi-lingualism. Sulieman also surveys the development of scholarship concerning national discourse and dialects. “Both Jordanians and Palestinians have forged for themselves historic narratives that are separate from each other, resulting in “us” and “them” (182).

Overall, it is impossible to overstate the importance of this book. It provides a clear, insightful perspective into the complex sociolinguistic scene of Arabic use in Israel. The book is rich, informative, and is exceptionally valuable for amateur readers and scholars alike who are interested in gaining more knowledge about this understudied group.

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**WALEED ZIAD. *Hidden Caliphate: Sufi Saints beyond the Oxus and Indus* (New York: Harvard University Press, 2021). 368pp. \$45.00 hardcover. ISBN: 9780674248816.**

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Borrowing a term from Joseph Fletcher, Waleed Ziad has described his new book on the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Naqshbandi Mujaddidi Sufi network as an “inquiry into the nature of a fibre” threading together different parts of Eurasia. While Fletcher’s fiber solely concerned horizontal continuity, Ziad uses multiple fibers of varying length, texture, and color to weave together a tapestry displaying the complex patterns of a world not stained by the dull hues of colonial and nationalistic thought. This tapestry ignores these inorganic and anachronistic boundaries and provokes the modern reader to reimagine space, institutions, and mystic knowledge across South, Central, and Inner Asia. With this vivid revisualization, *Hidden Caliphate: Sufi Saints beyond the Oxus and Indus* patches together concepts torn apart in more dated historiography to reveal a network of Sufis that was simultaneously political and spiritual, hallowed and mundane, scholastic and popular, and, finally, both Central Asian and South Asian.

Revealing the connections and the functions of a vast *tariqa* or Sufi order, *Hidden Caliphate* focuses on the movements of Sufis through the nodal points