of it based on present needs, interests, and political possibilities. These dis- 
sentions, however, should not detract from what is otherwise a complex, 
subtle, and richly argued book.


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Memory studies have emerged as a flourishing field of inquiry in the last decades in both the social sciences and the humanities. Underlying this trend since the 1980s is the idea that exploring the complex relationship between the past and the present can greatly aid us in understanding the formation of collective and individual identity. This trend has given us a wide body of work, from studies of commemoration, nationalism, and national identity, to the Holocaust, cultural trauma, and retrospective justice. In sociology, much work has traced the contours of political and cultural memory in diverse times, places, and sites, to shed light on how past legacies shape and are shaped by ongoing processes of negotiation that forge social solidarity and societal continuity.

This new book by Tamir Sorek, a Jewish Israeli scholar teaching in the United States, arrives with good timing as a welcome contribution to a field that is broadening its horizons beyond the confines of the West. *Palestinian Commemoration in Israel* is a thoughtful publication on memory studies that illuminates the precarious search for identity and solidarity in the case of a “trapped minority” in Israel: the Palestinian-Israeli citizens (as distinguished from the Palestinians residing in the West Bank and Gaza, and nearly a million Palestinian refugees who left Palestine in 1948). The study illustrates the perilous challenges these devalued, subjugated minority citizens in Israel face to memorialize, internalize, and institutionalize the events that created Israel and simultaneously destroyed the Palestine that had existed prior to 1948.

The study is organized around the commemorative calendar of critical events that gained social, political and cultural traction for the “trapped minority” over the last 67 years: the Kafr Qasim Massacre (1956), Land Day (1976), al-Aqsa Day (October 2000), and Nakba (1948). In the course of 11 chapters, the book traces the moorings of these commemorative dates and events, their sociopolitical significance, and mobilizing power over time. The book applies this “commemorative calendar” framework to demonstrate how the complex political identity of Palestinian Israelis has been shaped, constrained by the conditions of remembering the creation of Israel of which they are today legal citizens. This is a story of how the subjugated, discriminated minority cautiously forges a counterhegemonic narrative.
against foundation myths of the majority in a state that has made them politically dependent on the majority for its existence.

Unlike many studies of memory making in postconflict society, this case study is not about former adversaries seeking reconciliation and social integration through commemorative events. The commemorative processes described in this book are not about writing a new common national history as a means of accommodating conflict or of seeking international recognition as a people, but they are about commemorating massacres and suppression inflicted by the state on marginalized inhabitants who remain unintegrated and unassimilated. Because “the creation of the state of Israel is the direct cause for the destruction of Palestine” (p. 15), the meaning of being Palestinian Israeli is vastly complicated. Under these conditions, remembering the four pivotal events have evolved through intricate negotiations of (1) protest and defiance, (2) fear, and (3) desire for dialogue (p. 3). Sorek argues that these negotiations ultimately lead to “cautious commemoration” (p. 234) and seek a nonviolent form of popular struggle and political mobilization (p. 57), while carefully excluding noncitizen Palestinians (p. 235). Ideological fissures among nationalists, communists, secularists and Islamicists also further complicate the claims and goals for equal citizenship in Israel.

The study makes clear that these counterhegemonic commemorative actions come at the very high risk of antagonizing Jewish Israelis and are highly scrutinized by state surveillance. After all, they are directed to remembering and reminding the Israeli public of events in which Palestinian villagers were killed or injured by Israeli state authorities—47 Palestinian villagers who unknowingly violated curfew (Kafr Quasim Massacre, p. 43); 76 Palestinian demonstrators who protested a plan to confiscate land from Arab owners (Land Day, p. 49), 13 Palestinians in a wave of uprising (October 2000, p. 80) and the Nakba itself. The key to understanding the commemorative narratives is in identifying how people had to surmount the fear of danger, expulsion, and arbitrary violence and how they transformed the narrative of victims into narrative of heroes and martyrs that have now become the focus of solidarity (p. 43).

As with all books that delve into underexplored territory, Sorek’s study raises questions that leave the reader wishing for more. It would have been interesting, for example, to see the mnemonic arguments extended to a broader sociological process such as cultural trauma. Likewise, the scope of empirical analysis might be widened beyond the discourses surrounding commemoration and political teaching material, to everyday perceptions of belonging and self-identity. The author’s positionality as a Jewish Israeli points to obvious limitations in carrying out ethnographic fieldwork, and as a result the reader is left wishing to hear more voices from the grassroots. Finally, the story and history of Palestinian Israelis described in this book could have been made more fully accessible to those who are not area specialists by adding broader brush strokes throughout the book to help the reader visualize the larger picture; it was sometimes easy to get lost in the myriad details.
These quibbles aside, this is a book that should be valuable reading for courses on Middle Eastern studies and collective memory. I recommend this book to readers in sociology, history, cultural studies, anthropology, and Middle Eastern and Islamic studies, as well as Israeli studies.

*Nations under God: How Churches Use Moral Authority to Influence Policy.*


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How nation-states and religion relate is complex, particularly so if by this we also mean how and under what circumstances churches might influence moral values and national policies on controversial issues like abortion, gay rights, stem-cell research, and the like. Anna Grzymala-Busse tackles this difficult issue within democratic societies where typically religion operates more freely, but in order to exert significant influence, she argues, religious authorities must find entry into, and navigate skillfully within, political systems. A political scientist, she explores this possibility by comparing six Christian democracies paired carefully as follows: Ireland and Italy (Catholic monopoles), Poland and Croatia (postcommunist divergence), and the United States and Canada (religious pluralism).

In all these situations, the influence of organized religion on policy depends less on the population’s religiosity than on the moral authority religious communities gain by working with the political order. While religious belief and observance correlate with religion’s efforts to influence politics, it is not because voters necessarily insist upon it; indeed, Grzymala-Busse’s evidence suggests that churches often have their greatest political advantage by appearing to be above “petty politics,” with their leaders working covertly in the “back rooms” of parliament, Congress, or another political assemblies. Without strategic politicking of this sort, religion’s influence politically would be far less visible. The name of the game for religious leaders then is not just gaining institutional access but also cultivating the skills necessary for working with, and within, political structures and especially with influential leaders at all levels.

The author goes further: “A church’s ability to enter these quiet corridors of power depends on its historical record of defending the nation—and thus gaining moral authority within society and among politicians” (p. 2). Religious identification with the nation-state is crucial, as is sorting out particular policy domains where influence is most likely and then channeling the authority that has been gained into those policy domains. Favorable demographics and cultural similarities facilitate the process, but like-minded religious and political figures, often working together, must take advantage of political opportunities. It is important that religious and politi-