

they were re-located in. The term "de-classment" itself cannot be used as an all-explanatory category for the fate of the Palestinian, especially since large groupings among the Palestinians, including a substantial segment of the landed elite, simply changed their status horizontally, and in a few cases, improved its standing. Others like the peasants of the West Bank, retained their land and social fabric intact. Some writers prefer to use the term in a more restrictive fashion, preferring to confine it to describe changes in Israel within its pre-1967 borders. Rosenfeld, for example, makes the following observation about the consequences of the 1948 war:

The main difference between today's Arab population in Israel and the mandatory period (in Palestine) is that the Arab population was stratified during the mandate; there were urban merchants, clerks, and landowners, as well as fallahin and labourers. Today these strata have been levelled; most of the first group is gone, and the population is, more or less, a single (declassed) class. The structure has become fragmented and the Arab village is not simply part of a new structure; it is a fragment of what it used to be. (Rosenfeld, 1972:70)

Using a different conceptual framework a Palestinian sociologist refers to Israeli 'internal colonialism' as having "managed to transform Palestinian Arab peasantry into a lumpen-proletariat with a 'declassed' status, while at the same time diminishing the likely emergence of a viable bourgeoisie" (Zureik, 1976:66).

This 'arrested' growth of an Arab bourgeois stratum among Israeli Arabs is seen as a distinguishing feature of Israeli dominance in contrast to British and Ottoman rule. In both the latter forms of colonialism Palestinian class differentiation emerged which contributed to the formation of both a nascent working-class and native bourgeoisie. Israeli rule on the other hand led not only to a lopsided class formation, but also a 'beheaded' one. Zureik goes further than Rosenfeld in characterizing the nature of Israeli rule.