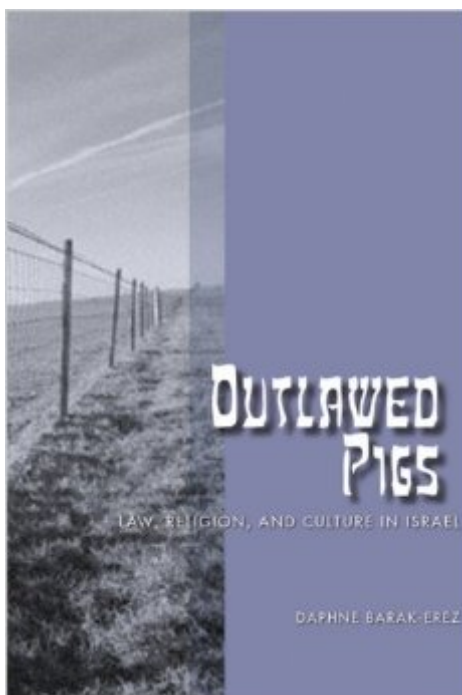


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Outlawed Pigs: Law, Religion, And Culture In Israel



Synopsis

The prohibition against pigs is one of the most powerful symbols of Jewish culture and collective memory. *Outlawed Pigs* explores how the historical sensitivity of Jews to the pig prohibition was incorporated into Israeli law and culture. Daphne Barak-Erez specifically traces the course of two laws, one that authorized municipalities to ban the possession and trading in pork within their jurisdiction and another law that forbids pig breeding throughout Israel, except for areas populated mainly by Christians. Her analysis offers a comprehensive, decade-by-decade discussion of the overall relationship between law and culture since the inception of the Israeli nation-state. By examining ever-fluctuating Israeli popular opinion on Israel's two laws outlawing the trade and possession of pigs, Barak-Erez finds an interesting and accessible way to explore the complex interplay of law, religion, and culture in modern Israel, and more specifically a microcosm for the larger question of which lies more at the foundation of Israeli state law: religion or cultural tradition.

Book Information

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Although Jewish law prohibits many foods other than pig meat, pork has had a special symbolic value for Jews over the centuries- perhaps because in past centuries, Greco-Roman pagans and Christians had insulted Jews for refusing to eat pork or even forced them to do so, This book uses Israeli regulation of pig farming as an example of Israel's mounting polarization. In the 1950s, many secular Zionists were happy to support limits on pig-breeding; these Israelis viewed pork consumption as a symbol of Christian oppression and restrictions on pork as a symbol of Jewish

nationhood. As a result, the Knesset allowed municipalities to ban the sale of pork, and pig-breeding was restricted in a variety of ways. In the 1990s, pork-eating secular Russian immigrants streamed into Israel, and so Israel's religious parties sought additional restrictions. But this time, a liberal-minded Supreme Court threw out many of the existing restrictions; unless the Knesset overrides the Supreme Court, pork can be prohibited only in neighborhoods where most residents would be offended by the sale of pork (i.e. areas where no one would sell it anyhow). What changed? Today's secularists have adopted the West's emphasis on individual rights. And because they were born in Israel and not exposed to Christian oppression, they are less likely to see pork as a symbolic issue.

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