

Crime and Punishment in Istanbul, 1700-1800

By *Fariba Zarinebaf*

California: University of California Press, 2010, 287 pages, ISBN 9780520262218, \$22.95.

Revisionist history is “in.” Indeed, there is no other history these days. This is the case for Ottoman history as well. This appears to be the trend for early modern history, which has received the bulk of the attention of the revisionists ever since we have re-oriented the “classical age” to the early modern age. The scholarship over the past two decades, brilliantly illustrated with the work of Daniel Goffman as well other scholars, have resituated the Ottoman Empire in its role in world history, as countries made the transition to the modern state. Fariba Zarinebaf puts crime and punishment at the center of this history of the global making of the modern state.

Putting together such an analysis is not an easy task. The ever more increasing accessibility of the Ottoman archival material provides an excellent ground for undertaking the writing of a “new history” of the Ottoman Empire. And the writing about the history of crime is a novel intellectual exercise for Ottomanists. Today, literary and semantic tools are also accessible and widely used in the ever-intensifying global approach to history. But is placing the Ottomans in the early modern age that doable? Or put differently do we have the methodological tools to do so? The correct starting point of this new methodological approach is the transformation of the state, which Rifat Abou El-Hajj has studied in his seminal work on the formation of the modern state. Perhaps, in an attempt to further this methodology, Zarinebaf instead offers a view of the making of urban society through migration, which brings forth crime. As unsurprising as that may

sound, the view of 18th century Istanbul in this prism is genuinely innovative and hence promising.

The scene is Istanbul and the period the 18th century. The book opens with a detailed description of life in Istanbul in the 18th century – immediately demonstrating how challenging writing revisionist history can be. For all the desire to move away from conventional periodization as one of the goals of this book is obviously an attempt at understanding 18th century as the age of emergent modern cities, we are continuously reminded of the so-called Tulip Age with all the stereotyping it encompasses.

The book’s first three introductory chapters describe the political and social milieu of 18th century Istanbul. They delineate the districts of the city, namely Eyüp, intramural İstanbul, Galata and Üsküdar, based upon social division and polarization that are seen as part of the decadence of the Tulip Age. Hence, the discussion of phenomena like migration, plague, social conflict that, even in this early part of the volume, inform crime, does not comprehensively revolve around the emergence of the modern city. Instead, the context still remains the central state apparatus that ‘fails’ to control urban life although it is also the main force behind its embellishments that are all the more visible in the “Tulip Age.” So much so that the main force behind the transformation of the city is discussed as one such failure: “During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, long wars, economic pressures, and political instability in the countryside led to waves of rural migration to towns and to cities like Istanbul

and changed their ethnic and social makeup.” (p. 49)

The tone of describing the Tulip Age as decadent continues through the analysis of the two rebellions: “The frivolities of some members of the Ottoman ruling class and their public display of grandeur, wealth, and pleasure during the Tulip Age about the most violent rebellion in the history of Istanbul, one that led to the overthrow of Sultan Ahmed III in October 1730 and the destruction of many of the recently built royal mansions.”

Nevertheless, the bulk of the book is on crime and punishment as promised in the title. Most crimes are taken from police records and perhaps that is why they are categorized rather crudely without much analysis of the social and urban meanings of petty crime: from theft to counterfeiting, from prostitution to vice trade, from violence to homicide. The intensity of the crimes varies based on the neighborhoods where they take place. The neighborhoods with migrant settlement have more criminal activity than the others. However, that still does not mean we have a clear understanding of the demarcations and why the crimes take place. The same can be said of the brief discussion of prostitution in Islam, which is illustrated by the following statement: “In the official Ottoman Islamic court and police records, it is almost impossible to distinguish between women who committed fornication and those who were involved in prostitution.” (p. 105) Then what do we learn from this discussion about the emergent urban life?

All this would be greatly remedied with a final discussion of law. After all, if change in a city means different and new crimes, that change can only be meaningfully discussed through the legal system that define and punishes crime. So, we turn to the last

part of the book, entitled “Law and Order” with the hope of learning more about the law as applied instead of the prescriptions we have so far heard much about: “The existence of multiple legal systems in the Ottoman Empire allowed for the flexibility of the legal process. The penal law itself was a combination of the sharia, custom, and sultanic edicts.” (p. 156) This well-known and well-established description continues, however, with the concluding remark of Farinebaf on the increasing involvement of the imperial council in law and order: “The Imperial Council functioned as a higher court of appeals and was open to all subjects-Muslims and non-Muslims, men and women.” (ibid) The way in which this function is different in 18th century Istanbul than previously and elsewhere would be a most important analysis in developing our understanding of law making and the rule of law. But alas, this must be a discussion Zarinebaf leaves to another work! Change in punishment also receives a similar description, as we are to be satisfied to learn that corporal punishment increasingly becomes a matter of political crime.

It is a great effort to place Istanbul in the category of imperial cities of Europe à la Braudel, Zarinebaf’s research certainly opens up new questions. Perhaps these questions could be better contextualized by re-setting 18th century Istanbul in urban and legal change than the descriptive tone adopted here. Certainly, *Naima Tarihi* and *Cevdet Zaptiye* are good places to start such a research but one finishes the manuscript wanting more, both in terms of material and understanding when it comes to early modern urbanization and the rule of law. Otherwise what is revised remains quite unclear.

Meltem Toksöz, *Boğaziçi University*

The Cyprus Issue: The Four Freedoms in a Member State under Siege

By *Nikos Skoutaris*

Oxford and Portland: Hart Publishing, 2011, 224 pages, ISBN 9781849460958.

Nikos Skoutaris has written a timely book on the European Union's (EU) handling of the legal issues, pertaining in particular to the freedom of movement, in the divided Cyprus after the 'Republic of Cyprus' (according to Turkey, 'the Greek Cypriot Administration') became a member of the EU in 2004.

The book at hand deals with a potentially very boring subject on account of the technical nature of the issues, which it covers. Besides, the complexity and the intractability of the 'Cyprus problem' call for a multidisciplinary approach in order to make sense of the legal dimensions of the Cyprus dispute. This book successfully takes up this challenge, as the multitude of issues is competently analysed and tied together with the aim of tracing the 'law in action' in the context of the partial implementation of the EU *acquis communautaire* in the north of Cyprus. In fairness, one has to add that the author succeeds in turning this 'difficult' subject into a readable 'text' by virtue of the breadth of issues covered in the book, the inter-disciplinary method of investigation, and competent legal analyses that permeates the whole work. This is, then, a detailed analysis of a "major" problem over a "minor" piece of territory.

Following an Introduction, Chapter II of *The Cyprus Issue* addresses the Cyprus issue by beginning with an inquiry into the history of Cyprus from its independence in 1960, through the Turkish military intervention in 1974, to the accession

of Cyprus to the EU in 2004. The author manages to provide a reasonably balanced historical and political background to the Cyprus enigma. Chapter III looks into the subject of EU citizenship and the accompanying rights such as human rights, right to property, and freedom of movement. The author draws the readers' attention to the restrictive implementation of these rights in Northern Cyprus. He also compares and contrasts the degree of compatibility between four freedoms in the EU (i.e. freedom of movement for goods, services, capital and persons) and the derogations, which a permanent agreement (possibly based on a modified Annan Plan) for the unification of Cyprus is likely to contain. Chapter IV examines the specific issue of the free movement of goods in Cyprus. The author points out the economic isolation of the political entity in Northern Cyprus by reference, *inter alia*, to a number of landmark rulings by the European Court of Justice. The author notes that, in the absence of a comprehensive settlement between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, inhabitants of the northern section of Cyprus can only partially penetrate into the markets of the EU member states. Chapter V, preceding the Conclusion, seeks to find out whether the EU can replace the United Nations as the actor that can successfully mediate between the Turkish and Greek Cypriots for a lasting settlement in Cyprus.

One of the main assertions made in *The Cyprus Issue* is that although the existing legal situation in Cyprus seems reasonably

stable, the “Cyprus Gordian knot,” as Skoutaris calls it, can only be untied through a comprehensive peaceful settlement between the Greek and Turkish communities in Cyprus. The author relates the solid rejection of the Annan Plan by the Greek Cypriots to their disappointment about the Plan’s failure to bring to an end Turkey’s troop presence in Northern Cyprus at an early stage and to provide a satisfactory solution to the issue of the lost properties of the internally displaced Greek Cypriots. (p. 44)

It is difficult to disagree with Skoutaris when he raises doubts about greater EU involvement in the Cyprus problem. This is because, first, the ‘Republic of Cyprus’ and Greece are members of the EU, which means that the EU cannot possibly act as an ‘impartial mediator.’ Secondly, in the words of Skoutaris, “there are possible tensions between the Union legal order and the principles upon which the two communities have agreed that any future settlement should be used.” (p.162) Thirdly, the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) does not necessarily endow the Union with the competence to act as the principal mediator in Cyprus. Such an initiative on the part of the Union, would, in the words of Skoutaris, be an “*ultra vires* act since a CFSP device cannot be used for an area that is part of the Union.” (p.171) Therefore, the EU should not attempt to replace the UN as the principal mediator in the Cyprus problem.

It is known that Cyprus has been a divided country since the Turkish military intervention in Cyprus in 1974, if not even earlier, which brought nearly forty per cent of the Cypriot territory under the Turkish control. This suggests that the internationally recognized state of the ‘Republic of Cyprus,’ founded in 1960, has not been

able to exercise internal sovereignty in the northern side of Cyprus. When the ‘Republic of Cyprus’ joined the European Union as a member state in 2004, the Accession Treaty recognized that the EU *acquis* would partially apply in Cyprus. The author remarks that, after accession, the Republic of Cyprus has tried its utmost to undermine the smoothening of economic relations between the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and the EU. He observes that, should the TRNC establish direct trade ties with the EU, this “may lead to the ‘normalisation’ of EU relations with the authorities in northern Cyprus or the ‘Taiwanisation’ of the regime in the North.” The author sees this as a threatening prospect for the ‘Republic of Cyprus’: “such a framework may upgrade the status of the Turkish Cypriot entity to such an extent that the quest for a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue will become a chimera.” (p.91)

While Skoutaris apparently supports a political solution that will untie the ‘Gordian Knot’ in Cyprus, he endeavours to find legal pretexts against allowing TRNC to trade directly with the EU member states. One could equally argue, however, that, contrary to his exaggerated worries, direct trade could bring about a more positive climate and goodwill towards Greek Cypriots among the inhabitants of Northern Cyprus. A feeling of economic deprivation is likely to undermine the willingness of Turkish Cypriots to support a union with Greek Cypriots. Indeed the failure of the EU to deliver its promises of economic aid and the ending the economic isolation (in spite of the Green Line Regulation, which the European Council of Ministers adopted in 2004, allowing greater freedom of movement in the north of Cyprus) should the Turkish Cypriots endorse the Annan

Plan, has undercut the latter's appetite for a peaceful settlement in Cyprus.

Finally, Skoutaris reckons, I think rightly, that an eventual settlement of the Cyprus problem based on a bi-communal and bi-zonal federation is not going to see the full implementation of freedom of movement and property rights in Cyprus, because of "the legitimate concerns of the two communities." (p.119) These concerns are based on the delicate issues, in particular, of the composition of inhabitants and land ownership in each of the federated states. For the author, the strong possibility of derogations which suggest a partial implementation of EU law in the two parts of Cyprus even after unification should not be seen as a unique case. There have been similar arrangements in the history of the EU when, for instance, small member states like Malta and Finland

secured derogations to property rights and free movement of persons and capital.

Overall, Skoutaris' book fills an important gap in the literature by mapping out the implementation of the European Union law in Cyprus with particular reference to the four freedoms. It is also a valuable contribution to our understanding of the interaction between the Union legal order and the Cyprus dispute. This book also highlights the inherent legal constraints which the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy encounters in delicate situations marked by a fragmented sovereignty and deep social and political divisions in a member state (Cyprus). This, then, is a valuable study that enhances our understanding of the Union law 'in action'.

Berdal Aral, Fatih University

Turkish Foreign Policy, Islam Nationalism and Globalization

By *Hasan Kösebalaban*

New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, 226 pages, ISBN 9780230109537, \$68.

Although it is widely accepted that there have been important elements of continuity as well as changes in Turkish foreign policy (henceforth TFP) since the late Ottoman era, attempts to look into the Ottoman origins of modern TFP are rare in literature. Hasan Kösebalaban is one of those rare writers, who trace the roots of TFP back to the mid-19th century threats posed by Russian expansionism and ethnic disintegration. Throughout the book, the author keeps focused on assessing the effects of the discourses of the Ottoman-Turkish identity groups and domestic political changes on the evolution of TFP.

For Kösebalaban, an understanding of TFP requires a careful analysis of the burning issues in Turkey's domestic politics as well as the changing international structure (pp.xiv). To support his point, the author makes a number of original observations; one of which is using İdris Küçükömer's classical right-left description and the classification of political identities in Turkish politics. According to Kösebalaban, the four ideological perspectives, namely secularist nationalism (Kemalism), Islamic nationalism, secularist liberalism, and Islamic liberalism, have been the major agents in shaping foreign policy in recent Turkish

history. The author argues that the sources of foreign policy decisions are generally rooted in the ideational battle among domestic political identity groups. He frames foreign policy from a perspective that includes ideational variables and the politics of identity in the broader context. Each of the above-cited ideological perspectives has a unique foreign policy position competing and conflicting with the others, as each group held specific foreign policy positions during their respective tenure in government, including the Kemalist single party regime, the Democrat Party rule - between 1960 and 1980, the post 1980 period and finally the AKP government rule since 2002. In addition, the four military interventions - in 1960, 1971, 1980, and finally in 1997- were not only rooted in Turkey's ideological conflicts but also had a powerful impact on TFP (pp. 4-9).

The book surveys TFP from the late Ottoman period to the beginning of the twenty-first century in seven chapters. Chapter I consists of a theoretical outline for the study, applying the conceptual tools of the constructivist approach to domestic politics for the purpose of exploring foreign policy perspectives of social identity groups.

Chapter 2 explores the historical sources of Turkish identity groups. In it, the author argues that during the period of Ottoman decline, three basic formulas for a solution-emerged: "Ottoman liberalism," Islamism, and Turkish nationalism. The author claims that the ideological positions of these identities also influenced the Republican era. Chapter 3 studies the foreign policy challenges faced by secularist nationalists under the one-party rule of the CHP, with a focus on how international and domestic contexts such as Italian and Russian expansionist desires and Kurdish and Alevis revolts shaped foreign policy decisions.

Chapter 4 analyzes the period of Turkey's first elected government by the Democrat Party, namely the rule of the "secularist liberals," whose liberal government pursued a dynamic and assertive strategy for establishing the alliance with the West and enhancing Turkey's sphere of influence in the region. In domestic politics it also aimed at modernization by transforming Turkey's socioeconomic face.

In Chapter 5, the author examines the 1960s and 1970s, when Turkey witnessed three military interventions that effectively restored TFP back to its traditional, singular pro-American orientation like it was during the Democrat Party term. During this time, three identity groups, secularist nationalist, Islamic nationalist and secularist liberals, all contributed to the making of TFP.

Chapter 6 explores the foreign policy of the post-1980 period, which carried out Turgut Özal's "secularist liberal" and multi dimensional vision. According to Özal, Turkey's statist/authoritarian foreign policy was not prepared to face the challenges posed by the approaching post-Cold War international system. Turkish elites struggled to redefine their identity that would fit the material structural changes in the post-Cold War system. Like the 1960-70 period, three identity groups continued to shape the TFP. Political leaders developed four different strategic responses to the post-Cold War system. First, Özal's secular liberalism aimed to pursue a Western-friendly leadership role in the new geo-cultural sphere of influence from the Adriatic to the Great Wall of China. Second, the military and some secular politicians (or secular nationalists) pursued a regional security role in close partnership with Israel. Third, "Islamic nationalist" Necmettin Erbakan attempted to present Turkey as the leader of the Islamic world; and finally "secularist

liberal” İsmail Cem pursued a pro-European diplomacy and articulated a new role for Turkey as a bridge between Europe and the Islamic world. This chapter also focuses on both the domestic and international politics of the Islamic nationalist–secularist nationalist conflict between 1995 and 2002, exploring how foreign policy was both influenced by and utilized as a tool for domestic identity conflicts.

The last chapter discusses a new approach, “Islamic liberalism,” which is distinct from these four post-Cold war responses. It has redefined Turkish foreign policy, by focusing on the “strategic depth” doctrine developed and implemented by Ahmet Davutoğlu during the AKP period. In discussing its various dimensions including the relations with the West, the Middle East, and Russia, this chapter tries to situate Turkish foreign policy during this period within the contexts of the domestic identity debates and globalization.

Kösebalaban’s book is an important contribution to the growing literature on Turkish foreign policy (TFP) in the post-Cold War era. Intellectuals, scholars, and graduate students will find it useful. But it is not really intended for undergraduate

students in international relations. It is a detailed narrative, which requires exhaustive knowledge and familiarity with modern Turkish history and TFP. In addition, the analysis clearly shows how various ideological groups have shaped comprehensively TFP since the late Ottoman era. One of the chief mainstays of this book is its clear focus on the relationship between TFP and identity, domestic power politics, and ideological struggles. The value of this approach lies in the scarcity of studies that have undertaken an analysis of TFP from this much-needed interactive perspective. Related to its interactive character, the book also fills an important gap in the literature by paying attention to the interplay of historical and ideational factors in the process of making TFP. Another important virtue of the book is that the author uses tables effectively throughout it. For all these reasons, Kösebalaban’s work is one of the most refreshing and complete studies undertaken to date by placing TFP at the intersection of historical and ideological forces.

Harun Küçükcaladağlı
İstanbul Şehir University

The Caucasus Under Soviet Rule

By *Alex Marshall*

New York: Routledge, 2010, 387 pages, ISBN 9780415410120, £100.

In *The Caucasus Under Soviet Rule*, Alex Marshall examines the complexities of internal politics in the Caucasus with its pre and post-Soviet episodes. By relying on a wide range of Russian and Soviet sources, in addition to others, Marshall demonstrates the need for an alternative approach

to the prevailing anti-Soviet discourse and shows his skillfulness in using a wide range of archival material. Vociferous Western or British scholarship on the Soviet Union, Marshall points out, has been colored by ideological convictions and geopolitical interests. This work should be seen in re-

lation to a different and more nuanced interpretation of the history of the region in that it introduces an honest tinge of admiration for Marxism and the Soviet project. Although many would find this problematic, and there are occasional excesses, this work nevertheless fills an obvious gap in Western scholarship.

The book starts with a chapter on the politics of modernization under the Tsarist Empire, followed by two chapters addressing the turbulence of the pre-1917 revolution enmeshed, as he describes it, with inter-ethnic upheavals. The next chapter examines the diffusion of the British Empire's influence over Iran and Azerbaijan between 1919 and 1920. From these early chapters, we learn fascinating details about the Tsarist attempts to re-organize the borders and peoples in the Caucasus, the birth of the early nationalist modernization movements, and the rise of Bolshevik power. Tumultuous upheavals, interethnic and ideological clashes sweep through, one after the other. Many efforts at forming unity get crushed under uncompromising divergences and invariably violent counter offensives. In the backdrop of these troubles, Marshall provides detailed analyses of a number of leading personalities, who shaped the nationalist movements and later either joined the communists or faded away in the course of history.

The head of an Azeri national modernist party, *Musavat*, Mehmet Rasul-Zade, was one such sophisticated personality, who established the party as a religiously oriented movement in 1912. Samurskii, born as Nazhmutdin Efendiev into a Lesgin community of Dagestan, was another example of a national-Islamist modernist, who later joined the communist cadres but could not escape execution during the Stalin era purges. *Dashnaktsutsiun*, the Arme-

nian party founded in 1890, was one of the oldest nationalist movements that aimed to unite Armenians within both the Ottoman and Tsarist Empires. However, it was Kamo, Semon Ter-Petrosian, who played a leading role in the formation of a revolutionary group prior to 1917. He collaborated with two Georgians, Sergo, G. K. Ordzhonikidze, and Stalin, IosebJughashvili. The trio's influence in the course of early Soviet history would go well beyond their initial base in Georgia.

The efforts of the modernist intelligentsia and their competing ethnic dreams were finally silenced while Stalin pursues his brutal political purges and gigantic Soviet industrialization projects throughout the 1930s and 1940s. The Soviets emerge triumphant from the Second World War with the almost total elimination of any political opposition. Tragic human loss under Stalin's economic and social re-engineering garners some attention in the following three chapters. These are devoted to the collectivization, diaspora politics, and purges.

Marshall devotes six chapters to the period beginning with the Soviet power consolidation in the 1920s to the end of the Second World War (1945). However, for some inexplicable reason, there is only one chapter covering the period described as 'the crisis of the Soviet state' (1953-91). This chapter points out that economic stagnation in the Union was a direct result of the lack of comprehensive industrial policies in the aftermath of Stalin. Gorbachev's attempts to modernize the economy were ineffective and ill formed. The process only deepened already existing tendencies of irredentism, laxity, and national or ethnic separatism. The tone of the analysis shifts towards a broader set of generalizations rather than dwelling on the specifics of the situation in the Caucasus. The final chapter

on the post-Soviet Caucasus (1991-2008) outlines the political conflicts within the Russian Federation and the Chechen wars, emphasizing the need for Russia's continuing power in the region.

The final arguments of the book express pessimism for the future of the Caucasus. In his concluding remark, as already signaled in the introduction, Marshall asserts that some western scholars and Jihadists alike have undeservedly glorified the Chechen independence wars. According to him, the USA and the EU aim to establish their agenda in the Caucasus and Central Asia through energy politics, democratization agendas, and other such means. Marshall's conviction that an assertive Russia remains the best hope for the successor states of the Soviet Union in the Caucasus and Central Asia is hard to justify on economic grounds. Moreover, the claim that the post Second World War formation of Japanese single party politics is a successful regional example for Russia to emulate is unsubstantiated. Based on my work on oligarchic markets, I would suggest that Russian capitalism, guided by the state ownership in the energy sector along with polar-

ized private market structures, has little or no resemblance to Japan's post-war industrial policy build up. The nature of the Russian political class and their counterparts in oligarchic market structures resembles Kazakhstan more than Japan. Therefore, to what extent Russia, alone, can be a reforming force or inspiration for the region remains to be seen.

Overall, this is an important book but should not be mistaken for a relaxing summer read! Marshall keeps the reader on her/his toes with a bewildering number of names, overly detailed accounts and takes the reader slowly through the tumultuous years of the modern Caucasus. It is better to digest it chapter by chapter. *The Caucasus Under Soviet Rule* could have been more reader friendly if it had had a better-organized chapter format. Having no introduction and conclusion to each chapter makes it hard to follow the main purpose and argument of each chapter and the link among them. The real challenge for the reader is to avoid getting lost in the details.

Gul Berna Ozcan

Royal Holloway, University of London

The Kurds and US Foreign Policy: International Relations in the Middle East since 1945

By *Marianna Charountaki*

London: Routledge, 2011, 320 pages, ISBN 9780415587532.

Through this thoughtful and carefully researched account of US relations with the Kurds, Marianna Charountaki seeks to place a superpower's relations with a non-state entity in context. She succeeds admirably. US relations with the Kurds might

seem at first glance incompatible due to the lack of an independent Kurdish state, but Charountaki in her book suggests otherwise.

In this respect, the book is something of a landmark, as it deals with and explores

the nature of engagement between the US (the sole superpower) and a weaker non-state political entity. US foreign policy towards the Kurds is a fascinating subject for two reasons. First, it shows that a superpower needs other agents to advance its interests. Second, it shatters the Realist notion that the international system is state-centric and that international relations are largely restricted to state actors. Charountaki also criticizes the current deficiency in contemporary scholarship towards political non-state entities, an area she argues should be addressed. Kurds were once largely neglected in International Relations scholarship, but their increasing proactivity and presence in the international relations of the Middle East makes this option no longer viable.

The Kurds in the Middle East arguably were the greatest losers in the aftermath of the Ottoman Empire's collapse in the early 20th century - the largest ethnicity in the region denied a state of their own after WWI. With their fragmentation into sizable minorities among major regional countries - Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria - Charountaki illustrates at great length the complex nature of the Kurdish Issue, which she eloquently describes as "multifaceted." The book describes the fragmentation of the Kurdish Issue, leading to the rise of several "Kurdish Issues," as opposed to one, each encompassing differing characteristics, and dependent on differing variables. The division of the Kurds among several nations, disunity and conflicts between the Kurds themselves, the hostile non-liberal nationalist character of the states they reside in and international powers' interests in maintaining regional stability are all contributing factors to this fragmentation. The author demonstrates that US foreign policy towards the Kurds is not mono-

lithic, varying in time and space. US policy towards the various Kurdish movements is different due to the non-state nature of the Kurdish issue and lack of a united US policy towards regional states. Thus, she explains it is impossible to describe a general US policy towards the Kurds.

The author also offers a critique of the available theories in International Relations for their lack of attention to the role, influence, and impact of non-state actors on international relations. The book starts with an excellent critique of all theories, challenging their neglect of the relations between state and non-state actors. Liberalism claims attention to non-state actors, yet fails to consider the role of political non-state actors and limits its focus mostly to transnational corporations and international institutions. State actors are no longer the only agents of the foreign policy making process.

Charountaki takes as her focus the years from 1945 to 2010. She persuasively demonstrates that US policy towards the Kurds has evolved through five distinct phases during this period. The final stage of which is an overt and official policy towards the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq, albeit it is unpronounced and within the framework of Iraq. The author narrates the transition of US Kurdish policy through these five stages, starting initially with "contacts" to a covert "relationship" and finally to an overt "institutionalized relationship" embodied in an official but undeclared US Kurdish policy. She illustrates the evolution from a Kurdish "thing" to a Kurdish "cause" and finally to a Kurdish "Issue," demonstrating the gradual and increasing sophistication of US foreign policy. The change of US interaction with the Kurds from humanitarian assistance to strategic partnership as a non-state ally

and an asset is testimony to the enhanced role of the Kurds in the international relations of the Middle East. Charountaki also illustrates that these five phases correspond to five changes in US foreign policy since World War II.

In doing so, Charountaki examines this intricate web of interdependency through two models. The first, demonstrating the complex relationships amongst the Kurds themselves on the one hand, and between regional powers and the US and the Kurds on the other. In the second, she uses a pivot diagram to demonstrate the Kurdish role in international relations through the position of the Kurdish Issue in inter-regional interactions and the role it plays between the latter and an external power like the US.

The book complicates its opening question on whether “the Kurds have influenced foreign policy,” as it distracts attention from the main thesis and subsequently does not deliver. The author rightly highlights the influence Kurds have had on the international relations of the Middle East, though it maybe an overstatement to propose that the Kurds have influenced US foreign policy. A more accurate assertion would be the role Kurds have played in advancing US policy through the changes of US strategy.

There is a lack of great depth with regard to US relations with the Kurds of Turkey, Iran, and Syria because her sources are scarce and somewhat elusive, as she has had to take a wide range of diverse material under consideration. Charountaki convincingly shows that International Relations theories are not sufficiently comprehensive and do not reflect the evolving nature of international affairs. However, she does not successfully establish a theoretical framework from which to examine the relations between state and non-state actors. There is also some confusion between George Bush senior and junior as well as in some of the dates provided.

Nevertheless, this work is an extensively researched and well written monograph, the author has made tremendous use of governmental archives and interviews. This is a remarkably useful book on a subject that demands attention. It fills a major gap in scholarship and is a necessary read for Middle East studies’ students, especially those dedicated to Kurdish studies. For students and scholars of US foreign policy it also provides fascinating insight into the consistency of US interests in the region.

Mohammed Shareef, *Durham University*

The Militant Kurds: A Dual Strategy for Freedom

By *Vera Eccarius-Kelly*

Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2011, 259 pages. ISBN 9780313364686, \$49.95.

This is not just another book criticizing Turkey for its well-known Kurdish problem. Rather it is an ably crafted analysis full of useful insights regarding the Kurds within the context of Turkish politics. Its

main contribution is a very insightful analysis of the “politicizing [of] the Kurdish question in Europe by encouraging the formation of Kurdish special interest groups and intensifying political lobbying efforts”

(p. 184). “Germany is at the epicenter of this transnational web because the majority of politically engaged ethnic Kurds reside there” (p. 181). The Netherlands, Belgium, France, the United Kingdom, Austria, and Denmark, among others, also serve as homes for these “Euro-Kurds” (p. 173). “The PKK [Kurdistan Workers Party] has created a broadly supportive and legitimized network of legal experts, human rights activists, and environmental specialists, along with connections to scholars, media professionals, and technologically skilled members of the Kurdish diaspora” (p. 20). The phrase “dual strategy” in the book’s subtitle refers to “the transformation of the PKK from an organization that predominantly pursued a guerrilla strategy in Turkey [and still does] to one that established parallel political structures in Europe” (p. 4).

Important Kurdish-supportive organizations in Europe include YEK-KOM, “the umbrella organization that manages the tightly structured Kurdish political and cultural clubs across Germany” (p. 169); KON-KURD, “a Confederation of Kurdish Associations in Europe” (p. 186); the KHRP (Kurdish Human Rights Project), which “in London ... focuses on fact-finding missions and the dissemination of information to human rights groups” (pp. 98-99); and the EUTCC (EU Turkey Civic Commission), “which was established ... [for] formalizing and legitimizing interactions between MEPs, Kurdish civil society organizations in Europe and Turkey, and international academics” (p. 187), and with the ultimate goal of achieving a democratic Turkey’s EU accession as a way to help solve its Kurdish problem. The author also presents a detailed analysis of the popular, young ethnic Kurdish rapper “Azad.” His band “called themselves ‘Warheit,’ a clever

play on the German word *Wahrheit*, or truth. By eliminating one letter, the band invented the term ‘wardom’ or ‘state of war,’ but also implied that their cause was justified and truthful” (p. 175).

Cem Ozdemir and Feleknaş Uca are respectively an ethnic Turk and ethnic Kurd, who have been elected to the EU parliament where they were able to promote the Kurdish cause. Ozdemir “proceeded to encourage Turkish society to pursue a political solution to the Kurdish conflict, and then described the Turkish military’s approach to the southeastern provinces as highly ineffective and even counterproductive” (p. 185). Sivan Perwer, the famous Kurdish *dengbej* (Kurdish for a bard and troubadour) “has lived in exile in Germany for 40 years and ... has been called the ‘Voice of Kurdistan’ by his political supporters” (p. 179). His “story-telling through music is considered extremely important among Kurdish activists who support preserving Kurdish culture and history” (p. 234-33).

The author, Vera Eccarius-Kelly, was born in Germany and grew up in Düsseldorf, but now teaches comparative politics at Siena College in Loudonville, New York in the United States. Thus, she is in a rare but excellent position to analyze the important Kurdish political campaign in Europe for an English-speaking audience. In addition, her knowledge of revolutionary movements, particularly in Latin America, enable her to draw interesting and useful comparisons between the Kurds and situations in Columbia, Mexico, Peru, Pakistan, Spain and Ireland, among others. For example, “the PKK shared organizational similarities with the Peruvian Maoist organization *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path). ... Both groups relied on the ideological inspiration of an omnipotent leader... . Both organizations appealed to ethnically

marginalized populations and relied on profoundly impoverished recruits to carry out their missions” (p. 111).

On the other hand, “Latin American militaries have had a pattern of remaining in power for extended periods, which stands in contrast to the conduct of the more professionalized Turkish military” (p. 132). In a pointed message to Turkey, Eccarius-Kelly points out how “Spain succeeded in undermining popular support for *Terre Lluire* (Free Land), a separatist organization in Catalonia, as well as the Catalan Red Liberation Army by reducing centralized state controls and employing policing strategies rather than relying on the military” (p. 70). The now banned pro-Kurdish DTP in Turkey “modeled itself after *Sinn Fein*, the former political wing of the Irish Republican Army... . While the British government initially refused to recognize *Sinn Fein* as a bona fide representative because of its close links to the IRA, it eventually recognized the significant role *Sinn Fein* could play in moving the peace process forward” (p. 122). The new pro-Kurdish BDP in Turkey currently could play the same role.

The author correctly maintains that “the Kurdish question continues to emerge at the core of nearly all unresolved conflicts in Turkey” (p. 78), but space does not permit further numerous examples of her additional insights other than briefly to mention her excellent analysis of “the Erdogan [AKP’s] government’s uninspired Kurdish initiative” (p. 166) in 2009. “While the AKP emphasized a reduction of the regional influence of the PKK by excluding and emasculating its leadership as illegitimate and irrelevant, the PKK sought to undermine this tactic and instead assert itself” (p. 194). “The Kurdish Initiative became a mere monologue as the AKP attempted

to identify limited concessions without involving Kurdish representatives” (p. 197).

Throughout her book the author refers to the PKK as the “Kurdish Workers Party” (for example, p. 2) when, of course, Kurdistan Workers Party is its correct name to emphasize that the party claims to represent all people who live in Kurdistan, not just the Kurds. The same problem occurs when she refers incorrectly to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in northern Iraq as the “Kurdish Regional Government” (p. 153). With the brief exception in her list of “Terms and Abbreviations” (p. xii) and “Appendix D: Profiles of PKK Leaders” (pp. 211-12), the author also fails even to mention the existence of the KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union), which has become the umbrella organization bringing together the PKK and many of the other related Kurdish organizations. However, many Kurdish activists themselves continue to use the term PKK instead of KCK.

This book is a balanced, jargon-free account that neither demonizes nor glorifies Turkey or the PKK, but rather proffers a valuable analysis of the often-successful Kurdish transnational civic web in Europe. The study concludes with four appendices regarding Kurdish population totals in various countries, two maps, a timeline, and profiles of PKK leaders. It also is well documented, contains a bibliography, and a good index. It should be read by all those interested in the future of Turkey and its continuing Kurdish problem for its insights into how the Kurds have begun successfully to pursue a civic-political strategy while the PKK morphs into the vehicle for accomplishing this end.

Michael M. Gunter
Tennessee Technological University

In the Shadow of Sectarianism: Law, Shi'ism and the Making of Modern Lebanon

By *Max Weiss*

Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2010, 356 pages, ISBN 9780674052987, \$39.95.

An observer of contemporary Lebanon may be struck by two interrelated aspects of Lebanese politics: 1) the continuing predominance of sectarian identity as an essential and deeply ingrained aspect of Lebanese society, to the extent that it is the defining feature of the Lebanese political system to this day, and 2) the rise to political prominence of the Shi'i sect, and its political organizations, namely *Hizbollah*. The latter point is particularly interesting given that historically, the Shi'i community was marginalized and neglected, a fact that has been reflected in the major historical accounts of Lebanon, which tend to focus on the role of other communities, such as the Maronites and Sunni while downplaying or even ignoring the significance of the Shi'i.

Enter Max Weiss' "In the Shadow of Sectarianism," an important book, which goes some way to correcting this anomaly by bringing back the Shi'i community to the centre of Lebanese history and providing what amounts to a fascinating study of the evolution of Shi'i sectarianism in the making of modern Lebanon. His conceptual handling of sectarianism, which he addresses in his detailed prologue is relevant and sophisticated, and has comparative value for understanding how the processes of sectarianism evolve (whether in Lebanon or elsewhere).

His conclusions on the future of sectarianism in Lebanon are equally relevant, and those scholars, advocates, politicians and

others who believe that sectarianism in the Lebanese political social environment can be undone or should be eliminated because of its obviously many drawbacks, would do well to closely read Weiss' conclusions. In fact, it is worth including here a somewhat detailed extract from his epilogue: (p. 236)

If Modern Lebanese sectarianism has been made, it can certainly also be unmade. Like the making of Lebanese sectarianism, though, the unmaking would inevitably hinge on complex institutional and discursive transformations as well as profound reconceptualizations and reformulations of deeply entrenched systems of law, ideology, and culture. This most difficult task of imagining and building an alternative, non-or trans-sectarian social and political framework would work against many of the inertial forces now hegemonic in Lebanese political, cultural, and civil life. Such an agenda, moreover, would have to be addressed to restructuring educational, media, political and legal institutions, all the while showing respect for alternative modes of identification and associational life.

The body of the book provides a case study on the evolution of Shi'i sectarianism through the lens of social, legal, and religious history during French mandate (1920s-1940s), a period in which much of

the territories inhabited by the Shi'i community came under Lebanese territory. Weiss' findings are based on field research conducted in Lebanon during 2005-2006 in which he made use of primary sources previously ignored, namely documents from the Ja'farishari'a courts. As he explains, "despite its controversial position as part of the colonial state bureaucracy, the Ja'fari court was the most important Shi'i institution in Lebanon prior to the establishment to the Supreme Shi'i Islamic Council in 1969." (p.35) The Ja'fari court was empowered to adjudicate matters of personal status – marriage, divorce, inheritance, property, etc. - and was the key institution linking the Shi'i community and the State. It is, apparently, the first book to rely on the records of the Ja'fari courts, and this point alone makes the book well worth reading.

Through his readings of the Ja'fari court documents, as well as other sources, Weiss explains the critical processes that helped to shape Shi'i sectarian identity. An excellent example of how this dynamic worked follows: (pgs. 3-4)

Shi'i sectarian identity was fundamentally, albeit gradually, being transformed and reimagined during this period. Through administrative techniques reliant upon formal recognition – namely, the sanctioned public performance of hitherto forbidden religious practice as well as the establishment of new jurisdictions of Shi'i "personal status" which would subsequently be developed into the broader category and practice of family law – the French colonial state contributed to rendering the Shi'i community in South Lebanon and Beirut more visible, more empow-

ered, but also more sectarian, in ways that it had never quite been before.

In fact, as Weiss saw it, the process was "so gradual, so subtle" that most historians simply missed it. Rather, they appeared to have looked to the second half of the 20th century and the rise of a movement led by the charismatic Musa Sadr as the departure point of Shi'i sectarian identity, political mobilization, and empowerment. Weiss' account corrects this view arguing that the gradual historical process of transformation of Shi'i sectarian identity had gone on for much longer than was previously recognized, and was particularly active during the French mandate period.

Weiss' treatment of the mandate period, and, in particular, the interaction between the colonial power, and the Shi'i community that lived within Lebanon's borders is particularly well done. He develops a complex picture of this interaction in which both parties are willing participants in the development of Lebanese institutions, and the overall political process; in fact, one could say that the Shi'i community was willingly co-opted. Weiss refers to this process as "sectarianization from above," colonial or elite strategies of divide and rule, and "sectarianization from below," simultaneous Shi'i demands for sectarian rights and religious recognition.(pgs.11 and 231).

As Weiss explains, the "Shi'i community was actively seeking to find a way to integrate into the national leadership and the state structure," (p. 210) during the mandate period. He argues, for example, that the Shi'i leadership was trying to gain greater political power, and felt left out of the National Pact, the unwritten agreement between the leaderships of the Sunni and Maronite communities that effectively

carved out post-independence political power in Lebanon between them to the detriment of other communities including the Shi'i. Weiss' argument helps to break certain myths regarding Shi'i passivity or indifference to the Lebanese state during the mandate period.

With respect to the organization of the book, it is not a long or difficult read – a prologue, epilogue and six chapters over 236 pages, and also includes a pre-mandate historical account of the Shi'i community in its traditional geographical homeland Jabal 'Amil. The book is, however, designed for the specialist in Lebanese history/

politics, although the wider community of historians and social scientists who are interested in 1) the relationship between the colonial power and the colonized, and 2) the complex processes involved in the formation of identity including sectarian identity, would also benefit from this study. We are, after all, seeing a resurgence of latent communal identities throughout the Arab world, and are entering a period of strong sectarian tensions, so a book that provides some context for understanding sectarianism is a welcome read.

Tom Najem, *University of Windsor*

Are Muslims Distinctive? A Look at the Evidence

By *Steven Fish*

New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, 385 pages, ISBN 9780199769209.

Are Muslims Distinctive? is an exceptionally objective book that examines the highly subjective and controversial issue of Muslim 'exceptionalism.' Steven Fish employs numerical (mostly survey) data and statistical methods in analyzing whether and to what extent Muslim-majority societies are distinct from the rest of the world. His references to Indonesia, where he recently resided, enrich the book. Examining numerous socio-political issues, the book reveals that on some issues Muslim-majority societies are not different from others (e.g., personal piety and the relations between religion and politics), on some others they are better (e.g., socioeconomic inequality and homicide), while on others they are in worse conditions (e.g., terrorism, gender inequality, and democracy).

This is a very well written book, in which the author explores each issue by documenting the data, summarizing alternative explanations, and then analyzing both. One particularly thought-provoking aspect of the book is its brief discussions on religious texts. The author's ability to discuss the Qur'an and the *hadith* in comparison to the Bible is very impressive. On some issues, such as homosexuality, Fish elaborates that different views of Muslims (less favorable) and Christians are based on their various interpretations of essentially not so different religious texts. For example, he notes, "We would expect much higher support for the justifiability of divorce among Muslims than among Christians if holy writ determined opinion. Yet, Muslims exhibit less tolerance for divorce than Christians" (p. 108). The author's textual comparisons

and his emphasis on the diverse interpretations of religious sources prevent the book from being trapped by the essentialist depiction of Muslim attitudes as simple and unchangeable results of texts.

Another way of relatively limiting overgeneralizations on Muslims (as if they constitute a monolithic body worldwide) is the Durkheimian notion of society that Fish employs, but infrequently emphasizes: “society has a life of its own that is distinct from the individuals who compose it” (p. 260). Thus, a society may promote certain perspectives by cross-cutting religious affiliations: “As we saw when analyzing individuals’ responses on whether men should receive preference in employment when jobs are scarce, living in a country with a proportionally larger Muslim population substantially boosted the predicted probability of respondents *across faith groups* agreeing that men should receive preferential treatment” (261; emphasis original). I found this out in my own research—Muslims’ weekly religious attendance exactly reflects the national average ratio of church attendance in France (10%) and the United States (40%).

Weekly religious attendance is an issue where Fish finds Muslims only minimally different from Christians. This result seems to depend on controlling the data with socio-economic factors, and more importantly the low ratio of Muslim women: “56 percent of Muslim men attend religious services weekly compared to 29 percent of Muslim women. Thirty-three percent of Christian men attend religious services weekly compared to 40 percent of Christian women” (p. 35). In many Muslim-majority countries women do not attend mosques on Fridays but still pray at home; therefore this data may present them less religious than they actually are. A more

counterintuitive result of Fish’s analysis is that Muslims are not more favorable to mixing religious leadership and political authority than the rest of the world: “while conventional thinking (among Muslims and non-Muslims alike) holds that Muslims are particularly inclined to regard the separation of religious and political authority as illegitimate, we did not find support for this idea” (p. 258).

Muslims, on average, appear to have lower rates of socioeconomic inequality and homicide. To explain the former, Fish emphasizes the importance of specifically prescribed *zakat* (annual almsgiving) in Islam. He also compares Muslim-majority societies with Christian-majority societies, where some evangelicals, especially in the United States, have promoted the “prosperity gospel,” which implies that “material wealth is God’s way of blessing people” (p. 223). Fish notes the possible links between lower socioeconomic inequality and homicide rates since socioeconomic equality is correlated with social integration, which may limit homicides (p. 130).

On mass political violence, Fish reveals that Muslims are neither better nor worse than non-Muslims. Yet, on the issue of terrorism, he finds out that “Islamists were responsible for 125 of 204...of the high-casualty terrorist bombings that took place between late 1994 and late 2008” (p. 151). Even if “we focus exclusively on attacks on civilians, Islamists were responsible for 74 of 136...of the incidents” (p. 152). According to Fish, Islamic texts should not be blamed for that. He compares the Old Testament with the Quran: “In terms of prolixity, gory detail, ferocity, and divine enthusiasm for the slaughter of innocents, the Qur’an contains nothing analogous to the account in Joshua 10-11” (p. 163). Instead, Fish tries to make sense of the connection between

terrorism and some Muslims through the global balance of power; he spends about four pages for a hypothetical scenario in which Muslims allied with China replace the West in terms of dominating the world, which may lead some Christians to commit, or at least not condemn, terrorism (pp. 166-9).

I have two reservations about this counterfactual scenario. First, it does not explain why Muslims are the major victims of terrorism. In the same chapter Fish notes, "Fifteen of the twenty-five countries in which Islamists committed terrorist bombings are predominantly Muslim. Seventy-seven of the 125 attacks...were carried out in these lands.... [I]f we exclude the attack of September 11, 2001...most of the victims of Islamist attacks have been Muslims" (p. 155). Second, Fish depends too much on Indonesia in terms of both a) the lack of sufficient condemnation of 9/11 by Muslim political leaders and b) a public survey in 2003 in which 58 percent of Indonesians expressed "a lot of confidence" or "some confidence" for "Osama bin Laden to do the right thing regarding world affairs" (p. 157). Later, Fish acknowledges that "[m]ost Muslims may oppose terrorism and regard it as incompatible with their religion" (p. 258); but still argues that "political leaders in Muslim countries find advantage in backing, or at least not strongly condemning, Islamist terrorism" (p. 163) without sufficient data.

On the issue of patriarchy, the book shows that Muslims have a much higher percentage of expressing opinions that favor men over women on occupational and educational opportunities. It stresses the exceptionally higher gender gaps in income, literacy, and political positions in Muslim societies. Gender inequality is a deep problem that all societies, especially Muslim-

majority societies, should take seriously. Yet, one variable Fish employs—the level of healthy life expectation—makes me extra curious, because providing "inferior health care" for females (p. 203) is much worse than patriarchy. Fish notes that females in Muslim countries have a substantially smaller healthy life expectancy advantage than they do in Christian countries—the average difference between female healthy life expectancy minus male healthy life expectancy in the 20 most populated Muslim countries is 1.6 years, whereas in the 20 most populated Christian countries (excluding Russia) it is 4.2 years (p. 199). I have three concerns about this particular data. First, if we take this data as explaining gender inequality, we should accept that Saudi Arabia (3.1) and Iran (3.0) are more egalitarian toward women than Indonesia (1.5) and Turkey (1.6) (p. 198). Second, when I combined Muslim and Christian countries based on Fish's data, geographical differences seemed to be more important than religious differences. The average ratios of South Asian (-2.0) and Sub-Saharan African (1.8) countries are much lower than the Post-Soviet countries (7.7). Fish also stresses the exceptionally high ratios in the Post-Soviet cases. Last but not least, Fish employs World Health Organization (WHO)'s data on healthy life expectancy. The WHO has various reports in its website. When I use the most updated (2009) data on life expectancy (which is probably not adjusted on health criteria), I found the average of the same 20 Muslim countries as 4.0 and that of same eighteen Christian countries as 5.1 (excluding Russia [12] and Ukraine [12]) <http://apps.who.int/ghodata/?vid=710>).

Fish does not criticize Islam in general for gender inequality; instead, he holds particular interpretations of Islamic law

(*fiqh*) accountable. He cites Muslims who interpret Islam in a more sexually egalitarian way and stresses, “The prophet mixed with women other than his wives openly and regularly. He heeded women’s requests and even obeyed their orders (p. 207).” Fish quotes some *hadiths* to elaborate this issue: “a woman was mentally ill. Once she came to the Holy Prophet S.A.W. and said: Verily I have got some work to be done by you. The Holy Prophet S.A.W. said: ‘O Mother of so and so! Tell me where you want me to go with you and I will finish your work.’ Then the Holy Prophet S.A.W. went with her and completed the work she gave to him” (quoted on p. 207). Fish again makes some comparisons: “parts of the Bible and the Qur’an address topics regarding women in parallel, and the Qur’an’s injunctions are sometimes more liberal, in the contemporary sense, than their counterparts in the Bible” (p. 208). He explains it with quotations from the New Testament such as the following: “Paul states:...‘If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off....A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of man’ (1 Cor. 11:6-7)” (p. 209).

On democracy, this book concurs with the idea of the “Muslim gap.” The book challenges the thesis promoted by Alfred Stepan that the democracy deficit exists in Arab but not in non-Arab Muslim countries. It uses the Voice and Accountability scores of Kauffman et. al. while calculating the average scores of Arab (30.2), non-Arab Muslim (34.6), and non-Muslim (51.9) countries (p. 248). Another finding of Fish that counters some earlier publications is that Muslims do not express a higher ratio of pro-democratic views in World Value Surveys; instead he finds even a lower ratio—but not a statistically significant one:

“being a Muslim has no meaningful substantive effect on attitudes toward democracy” (p. 245). As a critic of Fish’s earlier article on Islam and democracy, I welcome his statement in this book: “I used other indicators of female status and did not find a stable relationship between them and political openness. This finding represents a departure from an article I published in 2002, in which I argued that predominantly Muslim countries may suffer a shortage of open politics due in part to disparities between the genders (p. 239).” Instead, Fish now takes some alternative variables more seriously: “Relatively low levels of economic development and high endowments of hydrocarbons...may explain part of the correlation between Muslims and authoritarianism” (p. 249). Given his expertise on democracy, I would expect the author to provide a much deeper analysis on this issue, particularly on the relationship between the rentier states and authoritarianism in Muslim-majority countries.

Fish’s book is an original, significant, and timely contribution to a broad range of disciplines, such as comparative politics, political sociology, and Islamic studies, as well as particular research agendas on religion and politics, religion and gender, and religion and conflict resolution. It should also be taught to graduate students for its exemplary research design, rigorous methods, and intellectual depth. It breaks several prejudices around the so-called Muslim ‘exceptionalism,’ which not only promoted Islamophobia in the West but also provided justification to authoritarian regimes in North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia. Thus, this is a rare book that serves both scholarly and moral purposes.

Ahmet T. Kuru
San Diego State University

Power, Islam, and Political Elite in Iran: A Study of the Iranian Political Elite from Khomeini to Ahmadinejad

By *Eva Patricia Rakel*

Leiden: Brill, 2009, 291 pages, ISBN 9789004171763, \$142.

The problem with this book is that it does not deliver what the title promises. In a study of any country's political elite one expects biographic data and discussions of geographic origins, educational achievements, socio-cultural characteristics, and career patterns of a set of individuals identified as constituting a country's political elite, followed by analyses of how certain members of society are recruited into the elite and socialized into its *modus operandi*. Very little of that can be found in this book – elite recruitment, for instance, is addressed in less than a page. Instead, we have a narrative of how domestic and foreign policy in Iran have evolved over three decades, analyzed through the prism of factional rivalries.

In the first two chapters, the author approaches the political system of Iran from the perspective of political science. She identifies the three main factions that have been competing for power in Iran and traces their evolution and changing fortunes over the last three decades.

The book is ambitious in that it attempts to cover all policy areas that matter: economics (chapter 3), culture (chapter 4), and foreign policy (chapters 5-7). While very little in these chapters is new, the information they contain has been painstakingly assembled, logically presented, and dispassionately explained. The book is thus very useful as a reference work: if one wants to know, for instance, what relations with the Middle East were like while Khomeini was alive, how the press was

treated under President Khatami, or what efforts Europeans have made to diffuse the nuclear crisis. Because one can quickly locate the sections that contain competently written summaries of relevant data, events, and statements.

The book's last two chapters are its most original. In chapter 6, the author discusses Iran's policy towards Europe, and in chapter 7, she examines the policies of the member countries of the European Union toward Iran. In this last chapter, the author gives us a fascinating overview of the different policies pursued by the major players, Italy, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom, and provides useful and hard-to-find data about trade flows. She also explains how these national strategies interact with policy initiatives of the European Union.

The best that can be said about this very expensive book is that an awful lot of work went into it. The bibliography of secondary sources, all of whose items are dutifully cited in the book and have therefore been read by the author, is 18 pages long. Anybody looking for an article or book about any subject relating to politics in the Islamic Republic of Iran is likely to find something useful in this bibliography.

There is nothing objectionable about this book, aside flagrant mistakes when it comes to transliteration and translation. For example, there are enough English-language books about Iran for everyone to know that *Showra-ye Negahban* is commonly translated as "Council of Guardians," not "Council of the Guardian" – a

quick perusal of Iran's constitution, official translations of which are available on the Internet, would have yielded that information too. The author apologizes for "inconsistencies" in the transliteration of Persian

words and names; the problem is not inconsistency but the fact that too many transliterations are just plainly wrong.

Houchang Chehabi, *Boston University*

Hold on to Your Veil Fatima! And Other Snapshots of Life in Contemporary Egypt

By *Sana Negus*

Reading: Garnet Publishing Company, 2010, 371 pages, ISBN 9781859642382.

"Hold on to Your Veil Fatima!" takes the reader on a journey into 21st century Egypt. The book provides an overview of the forces on the ground, which animate social and political life in the streets of Cairo today. While the issue of veiling is central to at least two chapters of the book, and is sometimes addressed with an Orientalist twist, the issues of rights, citizenship, political participation, social protests, gender and sexual identities, are tackled through a variety of methods including interviews, participant observation, as well as the author's immersion into Egyptian society and exposure to street politics at the aftermath of the American-led invasion of Iraq and the ongoing Palestinian struggle for statehood.

Thus, Negus offers a nice overview of the types of debates taking place among Egypt middle classes and the social forms of organization of protest and gender dynamics in Egypt's metropolitan city, Cairo. The journalistic style of the book makes it very accessible to a general reader, and to anyone looking for a quick glimpse on Egypt's recent history, and economic transformation under the "revolutionary" era of Gamel Abdel Nacer's and the liberal and neoliberal eras of Presidents Anouar Sadat and Housni Mubarak.

Because of the descriptive style of the book, the book lacks an organizing argument, which diminishes its appeal to an academic audience. However, since the book nicely weaves stories, news, and events with historical snapshots it offers a nice intrusion into Egyptian daily life, social struggles, and gender dynamics as observed, experienced, and interpreted by a western female journalist.

The first chapter provides a historical overview about the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood under British colonialism, their appeal to the revolutionary zeal of the Free Officers, and their tension with the regime of Gamel Abdel Nasser. It also details the internal divisions among the various jihadis and non-jihadi groups, and the centrality of the Palestinian struggle, which led to the assassination of President Sadat in 1981. The chapter provides also an overview of the struggles by various jihadi groups against the state power under Mubarak's regime, as well as their splits around issues of violence and armed response to foreign intervention.

The next two chapters are devoted to gender dynamics and the question of women's rights. The author describes her own exposure to questions of gender transgres-

sions in Cairo's streets. Sexual harassment, attire, and gender morality are discussed in relation to women's presence in the public space, and the grounding of this debate in the context of over a century of Egyptian feminism.

In fact, that chapter offers an introduction to the early debates about women's emancipation in the context of the reformist Salafi movement at the end of the 19th Century, as well as in the post-independence era. It exposes the differences and similarities among the various secular and Islamic tendencies of the early 20th Century, as represented by the two emblematic figures of Huda Sha'araoui and Zaynab al-Ghazali. Negus bases her discussion of women's rights in her meetings with major Islamist and feminist activists, such as Hiba Rauf Izzet and Nawalal-Sadawi. She shows the similarities between the Islamist and the secular feminist claims for women's right to political participation as well as their understanding of the patriarchal causes of women's marginalization in the public sphere.

The chapter records some of the most important moments of feminist struggles for gender equality, in respect to their successes and shortcomings. As it is expected in this kind of writing, the book focuses on issues that are very dear to western liberal feminism, such as the veil, the Niqab, female circumcision, and honor killing. These are some of the topics viewed through an Egyptian feminist lenses which allows the reader to understand the form of oppression women face both in the Muslim and the Coptic communities. Negus is very aware of the impact that Israeli and American policies have on the Middle East and subsequently on religiosity and veiling. But the most important contribution of this section remains its focus on forms of agency and resistance by veiled women

to state and non-state sanctions, and the importance of the judiciary as recourse for claiming rights for women. While these issues are widely covered by a literature on the Middle East and from which the book remains completely alienated, the next sections are most appealing to readers interested in knowing about Egypt's political life from the stand point of 'dissident' groups, individual players, and pop culture.

These last sections record Egypt's most publicized stories of divisions among the Coptic and the Muslim communities, and the less known stories of the advertised trials of heavy metal rockers in the 1990s, as well as the struggles of individuals to affirm their sexual orientation, and homosexual identities. The centrality of the media for both Islamist and secular politics is highlighted as well as the growing importance of bloggers in Egyptian political life and young people mobilization under the state of emergency. The narrative is straightforward and offers details supported by the authors' immersion in Egyptian middle class homes, bars, and her personal exposure to the major street protests that broke out around the issues of Iraq and Palestine. Negus records street life from the lens of rebellion, resistance, civil disobedience, and also by high profile individuals, academics, human rights organizations, bloggers, and singers.

While the book does not bring anything new to an informed audience, it does offer a nice exposure to Egypt from the stand-point of a western journalist, living in Cairo and in touch with Cairo's middle class. The book could benefit anyone interested in knowing the recent dynamics animating political life and social dynamics in Egyptian cities.

Zakia Salime, Rutgers University

Europe's Promise, Why the European Way is the Best Hope in an Insecure Age

By *Steven Hill*

Berkeley: University of California Press 2010, 472 pages, ISBN 9780520261372.

The key argument behind Steven Hill's comprehensive analysis of the European way is that Europe is fatally misunderstood by the American public. Hill wants to correct this and makes a comprehensive journey from the European economic and social model, through its global role and power to the European way of maintaining an intra-European consensus.

Hill goes beyond showing how the European model of economic and political power differs from the American one. Throughout the book he takes also the strong normative view that the European way of living is better than the one in the US. Steven Hill's praise of Europeans is explicitly generous for everything that they have achieved. For it has only been sixty years since the two world wars mangled the entire continent to ruins. Hill treats the European journey from the devastation of the war into one of the leading global players – if not the leading one – as nothing less than a miracle. The secret lies according to him in the European model.

For a European, Hill's view about the European model appears fairly credible. What comes to the economic and social system Hill makes the point that the European system, which he calls European social capitalism, is first of all based on a more equal division of wealth than its American counterpart. It forms a more sustainable base for societal development, as it puts a stronger emphasis on family values and the environment. In Europe, Hill argues, the products of economic surplus are used in

a more sustainable manner as they make a good education, functioning health system, and other social benefits possible for the entire population. Moreover, Hill questions the argument according to which higher levels of welfare in Europe would imply higher levels of taxes. However, this section of the book would have required a more careful analysis with the support of stronger data taking into account the key role it takes in the discourse.

Also the firmly criticized European ability to exert power in global politics must - according to Steven Hill - be understood in its own terms. Europe being essentially a different type of actor, its achievements cannot be assessed mainly in terms of military capabilities. This critique of the American might is overwhelming in Hill's analysis, as he makes the argument that US military spending is one of the main reasons for its incapacity to achieve a more inclusive social system. Instead of basing itself on hard power, Europe is above all a "smart power," whose powers are based on its own attractive example of economic and social stability and wealth reached through a unique system of cooperation between former enemies. When the US uses high-risk military operations to implement its values in volatile regions, the European model is based on the incentive of membership in the EU. The successful change of first southern European states like Greece, Portugal, and Spain from dictatorship into stable democracies and subsequently a similar development in the former com-

minist countries reflect the EU's unique transformative power.

Although it is easy to agree with Hill that the EU's potential to be among the strongest powers tends all too often to be forgotten, it would be fair to recognize the role that the candidate countries themselves have played in this transformation. With its system of law and rules, the EU provides the model of change to the countries that are in the process of accession in the same way as its multidimensional political leadership pushes the applicants to make the necessary changes. But still there is an important role to play by the political leadership of each applicant country, as the changes demanded must be transformed into a functioning legislation and social and political practices of those very countries as well.

The most complex and perhaps the most vulnerable position for the EU is its role as a global actor because of its relations with big powers like Russia, China, the Middle East and even the US. Here, Hill's view of the potential of the European model starts to appear more controversial. The author pays tribute to the European strategy of patience and to its policy of long-term engagement with partners like Russia and China. This approach, according to the author, is not only more efficient than the US' model geared towards a more rapid change but is also more appreciated by the partners

themselves. In a world where many of the new powers appear to operate on an international scene that resembles the multipolar order of the 19th Century, as their primary source of inspiration, it is difficult to find evidence to Hill's argument according to which it is the European order of multilateralism and international arbitration that draws their main attention.

Europe's Promise is in many ways a provocative and exuberant book. Its narrative is consistent and well-structured and its presentation is clear. The purpose of the book – to correct the misunderstanding of Europe among the American people – appears well justified. Europe is too often assessed on the basis of the state-centric model represented by the US itself. Europe should be understood more in terms of its own unique type of international actor, a role that is undoubtedly different. However, going to the other extreme of portraying Europe as a perfect model should also be avoided. And this is what the book does on too many occasions. The European model also has its own weaknesses and there are areas where Europe could do well to learn from the US. A slightly more balanced approach to Europe's exemplariness would have increased the credibility of the argument.

Teija Tiilikainen

The Finnish Institute of International Affairs

The Biography of Muhammad: Nature and Authenticity

By *Gregor Schoeler*

New York and London: Routledge, 2011, 200 pages, ISBN 9780415567176, \$138.

Gregor Schoeler's *The Biography of Muhammad: Nature and authenticity* was first published in German in 1996, which the

author claims was an attempt "to demonstrate that we could reconstruct, on the basis of the sources available, reports which

go back to persons in very close contact with Muhammad.” The author’s current book is an extension of the same thesis that has now been published as a part of *Routledge Studies in Classical Islam*.

In addition to three lengthy chapters, the book has an introduction and a short note on “truth and historical tradition” in which the author justifies his research mainly based on information gathered from oral history. In the introduction, Gregor Schoeler gives a short review of books published on the subject since the 19th century. However, he doesn’t seem to make any distinction between serious scholarships evidenced, for example, in Fuat Sezgin and dull polemics found in Ibn Warraq. Nevertheless, in the next three chapters the author skillfully demonstrates the validity of oral traditions related to the Prophet. According to the author, “the oral transmission practiced *until* the first systematic collectors (e.g. from ‘Aisah to ‘Urwah) was supplanted by a kind of lecture system, in which the use of writing as a mnemonic aid for students and teachers played an increasingly important role (115-116).”

The theme of the book is very important, particularly in the context of growing pseudo-scholarship challenging Ernest Renan’s famous assertion that, “Islam was born in full light of history.” For Muslims there is nothing new in Renan’s statement. But at the end of the 19th century, when Islam was under threat from all directions, this assertion and recognition by Renan enhanced Muslim confidence in their faith and history. The new attack on Muslim historiography by Wansbrough and others like him during the latter half of the 20th century has little impact on Muslims. Muslims hold the Qur’an as God’s word revealed through Muhammad (peace be on him), as guidance for governing life in this world

for which we would be accountable in the hereafter. Because of such revered positions both the Qur’an and the person of Muhammad are highly regarded by Muslims. For Muslims, their faith is not just spiritual; it is based on history and rationalism. This is why Gregor Schoeler’s work is a significant contribution from the Muslim perspective, for it establishes the validity of some source materials about the Prophet’s life story.

Emphasizing the importance of the subject and information of this period, the author claims that, “Some scholars reject them entirely, seeing in them products of the Muslim community’s idealization of its history, while others accept them at face value, reasoning that, if not exact versions of events, the events could not have differed too much from their descriptions.” This poses a serious challenge to Muslim historians such as the present reviewer. Are the sources for biographical information about the Prophet so weak that idealization of the Prophet’s life and character would appear irrational? Is irrational idealization capable of creating inspiration? Or should one totally separate faith from rationalism?

Historiography on the compilation and preservation of the Qur’an and the life of the Prophet is very important for Muslims because it establishes their faith on the basis of history and rationalism. In other words this affirms the faith on the criteria developed by the Enlightenment tradition. One could take the example demonstrated in *surah* or chapter 93, which was revealed during the very early days of the Prophet’s life in Makkah, assuring him that his future was going to be better than his past and he would be satisfied with what was going to happen in the future (4,5). Muslim historiography firmly establishes the positive changes that the Prophet experienced during his early days of prophethood in

Makkah and his last days in Madinah. This, in turn, establishes the Divine origin of the Qur'an through evidences from history. In fact, this part of Muslim historiography has the potential to take up the question that the 18th century enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), raised about the possible correlation between what he called the *noumenal* and phenomenal worlds.

In our opinion, such reconciliation is possible. One needs to understand the general nature of preservation of information during this period. The culture was mainly based on oral and there was a heavy reliance on memory, although a weak written practice existed in the society. The written culture was promoted by the Prophet. But then the community was very careful not to confuse the text of the Qur'an and what came to be known as *hadith*. Since both came to the community through the speech of the Prophet, this caution was necessary.

Gregor Schoeler has highlighted this. But then with the passage of time sayings of the Prophet or *hadith* were corrupted and attempts were made to attribute false ideas to the Prophet. This led scholars to determine a methodology to distinguish between the true and false sayings of the Prophet. However, because of heavy reliance on oral tradition on the one hand, and self-interested motivation by some others, the problem of the authenticity about the Prophet's life and sayings persists. And many Muslims are taking the serious interest on the subject. Israr Ahmad Khan's *Authentication of Hadith: Redefining the Criteria*. (London: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2010) is a manifestation of this. Gregor Schoeler's work on the subject, in my opinion, is a welcome contribution in this renewed interest in the subject.

Abdullah al-Ahsan

International Islamic University Malaysia