anity in the West and Western political systems do differ dramatically from Islamic states. Consequently, explanations such as the role of the environment and culture need to be taken into account as well. The emergence of Islam in Arabia took place in the context of centralized rule due to the lack of irrigation (p.133), the comparison to Europe is especially interesting in this case since it shows that the rich and fertile land in Europe allowed the existence of many different centers of political power. A centralization of power almost automatically leads to less competition, less ideas or innovations and thus could have indeed proven fatal for the "formative developments" (p.128) in Islam. Another example for the influence of the environment could be seen in American political thought. The fertile, open, and vast country led to the ideology of a 'Manifest Destiny', influencing the belief in progress and advancement. Why then, could the arid environment and the tribal culture not have had the same effect on Islamic thought, just in the opposite direction? Akyol acknowledges that such an argument may be seen as racist (p.132), but he convincingly refutes that this is the case since our environments do shape and influence us, sometimes in obvious and sometimes in less tangible ways.

Overall, Akyol presents several convincing explanations for the stagnation of Islam and the authoritarianism that is taking place in the name of Islam. Especially his use of Qur'anic verses and the history of the creation of Hadiths were excellent supplementations to his reasoning; they also explained many misperceptions that are dominant in the Western media. As always in the course of history and arguments, there is no singular reason why Islam has developed the way it has and why authoritarian rulers are so often found in Islamic countries. Yet this is also because of the diverse nature of Islam, of Muslim countries and of the different cultural contexts that accompanied the evolution of (political) Islam. Whether or not Akyol presents *all* these reasons does not truly matter, the important aspect of his work in my opinion is that he offers a novice viewpoint of Islam and Islamic history. Finally, he puts forth several convincing reasons *outside* of the nature of the religion that explain the current political situation.

Sarah Wagner

Islam in Europa: Religiöses Leben heute. Ein Portrait ausgewählter islamischer Gruppen und Institutionen. (Islam in Europe. Religious Life Today: A Portrayal of Select Islamic Groups and Institutions)

Edited by **Dietrich Reetz**

Münster: Waxmann, 2010, 247 pages, ISBN 9783830923817.

This book presents the results of the collaborative research project "Muslims in Europe and their Societies of Origin in Asia and Africa" which was funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research as part of the "Social

sciences in societal dialogue" initiative. The project, which received a total of €1.3 million in funding over a three-year period, was concluded in 2009. The book, which was edited by senior researcher Dietrich Reetz, summarizes the results of a series of subprojects that were presented to the public during the conference "Living Islam in Europe: Muslim Traditions in European Contexts" which took place between May 5 and 7, 2009, in Berlin. Some of the most important results of these subprojects were subsequently published in a single volume by the Waxmann publishing house. Numerous academics from the Centre for Modern Oriental Studies (ZMA) in Berlin, Hamburg University, the Europa-University Viadrina, and the Martin-Luther University Halle-Wittenberg actively participated in the project. The subprojects investigated a) Muslim groups with roots in Asia and Africa in Europe, and b) the role of Islamic educational institutions in European countries.

The handbook is structured as follows: After a general introduction by the spokesperson of the collaborative project, Dietrich Reetz (from theZMA), each of the subprojects is briefly summarized in 25-35 pages. In the first of these chapters, Dietrich Reetz examines aspects of the "Strategies of adaption and dissociation: Islamic missionary groups from South Asia in the European diaspora – the Tablīghī Jamā'at and the Da'wat-i Islāmī" subproject in the article "Public piety among European diversity: The lay preachers of the Tablighi Jamaat" (pp.19-52). Thomas K.Gugler (also from the ZMA), who was jointly responsible for the subproject "Strategies of adaption and dissociation", subsequently focuses on the Da'wat Islami movement in the article "The standardization of modern life and traditional religiousness. The Pakistani missionary movement Da'wat-e Islami" (pp.53-78). In the following chapter, Andrea Lathan (Martin-Luther University Halle-Wittenberg) briefly summarizes the subproject "The Ahmadiya in Germany. Reforms, Faith and Development: The challenges for the Ahmadiya community in Germany" (pp.79-108). This is followed by an article from Shirin Amir-Moazami (Europa University Viadrina) in which the author, who directed the subproject "Pioneers of Euro-Islam? The role of Muslim women in the Milli Görüs. Crossed views: Germany-Turkey", examines elements of the Milli Görüs movement in her article "The Islamic community Milli Görüs in an area of tension between transnational dynamics and German policies towards Islam" (pp.109-144). In the following chapter, Frank Peter (Europa University Viadrina), who directed the subproject "Islamism, the Reform of Islam, and Civil Religion in France", briefly describes the Union of Islamic Organizations of France (UOIF) in "The Union of the Islamic Organizations of France and the tradition of the Muslim Brothers in an era of increasing integration measures" (pp.145-170). These portrayals of Muslim communities in Europe are followed by two articles examining Islamic educational institutes in Germany and in Europe as a whole. The first of these articles, "Islamic training institutes in Germany and Europe" (pp.171-190), was written by Melanie Kamp (from the ZMO), who carried out research as part of the subproject "Islamic training institutes in Germany. Links to training institutes in the Middle East and Europe". The final chapter was written by Inga Niehaus (Hamburg University), who led the

subproject "Between participation and disengagement: The Muslim minority and its schools in South Africa and Europe" in the article of the same name (pp.191-212).

The handbook aims at making information about the structures and organizational forms of Muslim organizations and Islamic training institutions in Europe available in an easily understandable fashion to wide sections of the general public. In order to do this, the contributions are usually structured in a similar fashion, and the following five issues are examined (in the following order): 1) formation and history, 2) the type and structure of the organization(s) in question, 3) teachings and philosophy, 4) the movement in Europe, and 5) appraisal and further information. The articles are made even easier to read as they contain the views and opinions of people actively involved in the organizations under consideration as well as a large number of charts and tables. Further information on the groups and organizations in question can be obtained from the relevant websites. In addition, many of the Islamic terms employed by the authors are also defined and explained in more detail in the glossary located at the end of the volume.

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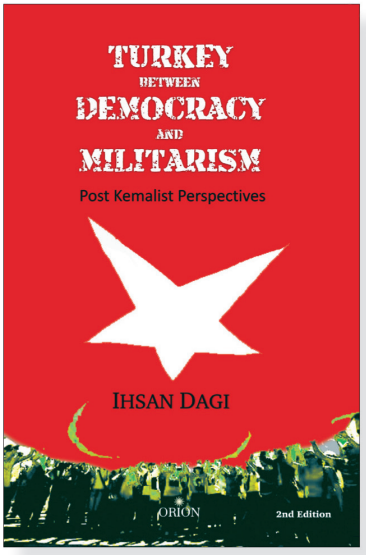

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