

The Awakening of Muslim Democracy: A Dialogue

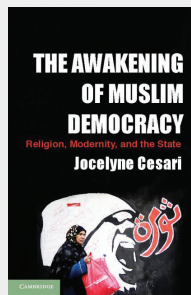
By Jocelyne Cesari

NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014, 423 pages, \$34.99, ISBN: 978-1107044180.

Reviewed by Muhammet Fatih Özkan, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University

The governmental experience of Islamic-oriented parties in Tunisia and Egypt drew attention to the trajectory of political Islam by the time of the Arab Spring. The main objective of the book under review is to examine the neglected aspect of the politicization of Islam in the light of the Arab Spring. In her preface to the book, the author, Jocelyne Cesari, explains that the book aims to analyze the political mechanisms which fueled the conversion of Islam into a modern religion.

The book consists of three main parts, and a general conclusion. Interestingly, there is no introduction, but two appendixes which comprise almost one quarter of the book. The first part, “The Making of Islam as a Modern Religion,” is divided neatly into six chapters. In the first chapter, some criteria are defined for the understanding of the religion’s hegemonic status in the process of its modernization and politicization. These are, the nationalization of a single religion’s institutions, clerics, and places of worship; including only this religion’s doctrine in the public school curriculum; legal discrimination against minorities and women; and legal restrictions on freedom of expression. The author elaborates these issues in the countries of the case study: Egypt, Iraq, Pakistan, Tunisia, and Turkey. Cesari’s presuppositions could be critiqued here, for instance, the labelling of Turkey and Egypt as authoritarian regimes, although they



have different backgrounds. The process of nation-state building and the development of Muslim polities within the Westphalian order are included in other chapter for all five countries. Their resistance against the West is analyzed inclusively, but a wrong causality is depicted among some events. For example, the establishment of modern Turkey is directly correlated with the Young Turks, and there is no reference to Turkey’s War of Independence, which is one of the most significant events in Turkish history.

Chapter three, “Islam in the Constitution,” examines the role of Islam in the constitutional texts of the countries in question. All of these countries’ suspended constitutions, the constitution-making processes, the draft texts and the current constitutions are viewed descriptively within the context of their inclusion of Islamic principles. However, although the chapter is related to the constitutional dimension of the issue, the author mostly deals with the state implementations, especially in the Pakistani case. Instead of focusing on the rights of religious minorities in the constitution, she discusses state and non-state actors’ discriminatory approaches towards one of the minority groups, the Ahmadis in Pakistan. One of the most salient chapters of the book involves the issue of the nationalization of Islamic institutions and clerics. Every stage of this process for each country can be learnt in

this chapter, but there is a lack of information about Iraqi policies since only Shia groups are highlighted. Therefore, the text fails to provide adequate information about the strategies of the Iraqi Ba'athist government towards Sunni Islamic institutions, clerics, or the Sunni community in general.

"Islam in the Legal System" is the central chapter of the first part, because it examines the relations between Sharia and civil law, issues of conversion and proselytization, blasphemy, and heresy in the case study countries. The teaching of Islam in public schools has also been a very controversial issue in the Islamic world, because the new generations could learn "the idea that national identity and Islamic identity are two sides of the same coin" from their textbooks. Cesari's extensive research is admirable, but marred by a lack of contemporary references, particularly in Turkish case. For instance, comprehensive educational reforms were performed in Turkey after the 2011 elections, but the date of author's main reference essays are respectively 2003 and 2007.

The second part of the book focuses on Islamism as the preeminent political force pre- and post-Arab Spring. The embodiment of political opposition through Islamic institutions like the mosque is analyzed in the first chapter of this part. Very complicated historical periods are clarified smartly, and even Pakistan's complex political landscape is explained clearly. The Arab Spring is depicted as a turning point for the political orbit of the opposition movements, but this process brought about regime change only in Tunisia and Egypt. There are no direct relations between the Arab Spring and political opposition in the other case study countries. The ideological strength of Islamic opposition, one of the strongest points of the book, comes not only

from the pan-Islamist and revivalist movements, but also from the adjustment of their political discourse to the national framework in which the stress on social justice and the fight against corruption are important strategies. The experience of each country is also analyzed in detail. However, in the Egyptian case, there is a problem in that the Salafi and Muslim Brotherhood movements are evaluated, but the projections turn on their activities after the fall of Hosni Mubarak. There is too little reference to their ideological background and their using Islamic institutions through oppositional approach. Therefore, their ideology is seen reactive in the face of an event or a government policy.

The third part of the book is shorter than other two parts, and contains only two chapters. Here, the author uses a conceptual framework for the determination of the nature of democracy in the five case study countries. For example, Turkey and Iraq are termed 'competitive authoritarianism,' which is characterized by open, free, and fair elections; freedom of the press and expression; and superiority of elected authorities, but Cesari notes that these domains could be violated frequently in these regimes. As different from competitive authoritarianism, Pakistan and Egypt are identified as "praetorian regimes in which military rulers overturn the legal and political rule of elected institutions through the application of emergency laws." Tunisia is categorized between the competitive authoritarianism and an "unsecular democracy"; even though it promotes the free elections, the independent bureaucracy, and the freedom of press, it conserves some Islamic principles. This categorization is favorable according to the author's criteria, but when we take a glance at the report of Freedom House in 2013, which was declared a year before the publication date of book, it is possible to see some contradictions

in this classification. At the last chapter of this part, Senegal and Indonesia are presented as possible examples for these case study countries because these two states have adopted an equidistance approach towards the state and religion, namely secularism, which is one of the most significant paths to the democracy for the author's evaluation criteria.

The lack of a foreign policy dimension, which could have an impact on the fate of the case study countries, is a last point of criticism towards the book. There is too little reference

to these countries' foreign policy choices and other powers' strategies toward them. Aside from the aforementioned drawbacks, *The Awakening of Muslim Democracy* is very beneficial for understanding the political trajectories of each country. The main assertion of the book, the nationalization of Islamic elements and Islam's transformation to a modern religion in Muslim-majority countries, is very strong and original. The details and practice aspect of this claim could be found in every part of the book while analyzing the case studies from a comparative perspective.

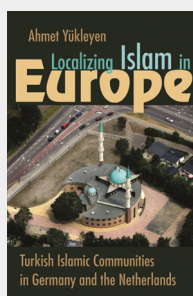
Localizing Islam in Europe: Turkish Islamic Communities in Germany and the Netherlands

By Ahmet Yükleven

Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2012, 280 pages, \$39.95 ISBN: 9780815632627.

Reviewed by Irina Engelman, University of Münster

Does the presence of Muslim immigrants in Europe change Islam? How is their identity shaped by the European context and do the social, political and economic conditions influence their understanding of Islam? Political and academic debates about the need for a so called "Euro-Islam" often center around the compatibility of Islam and European liberal democratic institutions and view it as a precondition of the successful integration of Muslim immigrants. Indeed, Turkish Muslim communities in Europe and their interpretations of Islam have changed as much as Europe has transformed through the interaction with immigrant groups. Deepening an understanding of this mutually constitutive process can help to acknowledge the successes and identify the future challenges of a pluralistic society.



In *Localizing Islam in Europe: Turkish Islamic Communities in Germany and the Netherlands*, anthropologist Ahmet Yükleven attempts to shed light on these identity construction processes by explaining the diversification of Islamic interpretation in Europe. Published in 2012, it takes an institutional approach to analyzing the production of local Islamic knowledge by Islamic communities in Europe, and the effects of this knowledge on the integration of Turkish Muslim immigrants. In his ethnographic comparative study, Yükleven focuses on how Islamic communities in Germany and the Netherlands authorize moderate to pro-violent interpretations of Islam.

In the introduction, Yükleven offers a general outline and conceptualization of Islam,