

in Lebanon. In the Gulf, there are common interests in stability that limit tensions. The invitation to Ahmadenejad to attend the Hajj in 2008 was an effort to bridge the gap by the Saudis, especially when they feared the US might leave them exposed by making its own deal with Iran. While some Saudi sources speak of a nuclear Iran as an existential threat, the Saudis have also publicly rejected a US attack on it, fearing the resulting chaos more than Iran's possible acquisition of a bomb, but also taking care not to be seen encouraging such an attack before Arab opinion. The authors claim that the Saudis have not been unified on how to deal with Iran, with Prince Bandar bin Sultan leading the anti-Iran camp and trying to co-ordinate with the US to build a regional consensus against Iran, while Prince Turki bin Faysal resigned as US ambassador in protest at this; King Abdullah is seen as mediating on the issue. The Gulf Cooperation Council is not uniformly with Saudi Arabia and actually most of the Gulf states balance Saudi Arabia with ties to both Iran and the US, with Qatar and Oman even actively balancing against the Saudis.

The authors warn the US against think-

ing it can use Saudi Arabia as a proxy in its conflict with Iran and point out that Saudi policy is to hedge its bets; particularly, US attempts to get the Saudis to make access to their energy market a tool to pressure China and Europe to pull out of Iran are likely to fail. The authors urge the US to work toward a more cooperative Gulf security arrangement that includes Iran; yet they acknowledge that the Saudis and other Arab Gulf states prefer the outside US balancer/protector to a security arrangement in cooperation with larger regional states. Since much of their perception of threat from Iran is a mirror of their own domestic insecurity, the authors conclude that internal reform is also needed to enhance their security.

The only thing the authors appear to have got wrong was their belief that Saudi Arabia would continue to try to isolate Syria. All in all, this is a remarkably balanced and informed analysis and it would be nice to think that the policy-makers for whom it is intended will listen to its sensible recommendations.

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Muslim Laws, Politics and Society in Modern Nation States

By *Ihsan Yilmaz*

Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2005. 248 pp., ISBN 0754643891.

In this book, the author focuses on Muslim people's social and legal situation and their legal attitudes from various points of view. The book has eight chapters: "Law, Politics and Society in the Post-Modern Condition"; "Dynamic Legal Pluralism, Muslim Legal Pluralisms; Muslim Legal Pluralism in

England"; "Muslim Legal Pluralism in Turkey"; "Muslim Legal Pluralism in Pakistan"; "Post-Modern Muslim Legality and its Consequences"; and "Looking to the Future".

The author uses case studies from three different, but relevant, countries: the United Kingdom (UK), Turkey, and Pakistan. The

purpose of the book is to analyze the conflict between the assumptions of modern legal systems and the plural legal realities.

Actually, these three countries is a good selection. The UK is a Western state that has many religious minority communities in which Muslims occupy the greatest ratio. Currently, 3.1% of the population of the UK is Muslim. The Muslim population of the UK mainly comes from the Commonwealth countries (namely India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan), the Middle East and North African countries. These Muslim immigrant groups are generally from the upper middle classes and intellectuals, and undergraduate and graduate students of home countries. As the author says, in Britain, the Muslim minority has not abandoned its adherence to customary and religious laws and has developed new forms of traditional values. Consequently, Muslim groups in the UK, while on the one hand seem to go along well with the official set of laws, on the other hand try to apply traditional Islamic customs and principles in their daily life.

Turkey is a unique case as it is a modern secular state with no official state religion, although Muslims, the main religious group, officially account for 98% of the population. As Huntington claims, it as a *torn country* between the East and the West. Although many of the its Muslim population will not give up certain religious principles and customs, enormous and powerful parts of the political elites (including civil bureaucracy, military bureaucracy, politicians and intellectuals) insist on the adoption of Western social and cultural values. However, the general population of Turkey opposes this policy, since these elites try to impose only social and cultural values, but not democratic ones, which the country actually needs.

Pakistan, on the other hand, is a modern Islamic state with a population 97% Muslim, where the government is an officially Islamic one and it has introduced several judicial reforms on different social issues such as Muslim family law. However, these reform attempts are not welcome by the general public because these judicial reforms are far away from meeting the real needs of a modern Muslim society. Therefore, society prefers to develop its own unofficial Muslim laws.

The author claims that Muslim people in these countries have developed their own legal systems that are different from the states' official legal systems. Muslim people in these countries have applied interesting methods in order to solve their particular issues since they react against the frameworks of the official legal systems and do not want to move away from Muslim laws and their strong traditions. Sometimes even certain traditional values are more important than secular principles but even religious ones as well. In Turkey, for instance, the proverb "sometimes custom is more important than Quranic verses" (*Bazen, adet ayetten önemlidir*) is a clear example of this. Therefore, for example, some couples do not get divorced because of the reaction of their families and society, although religious and official laws permits it. Hence, they may even live separately, but they hide it from the society. Or, a common case in Turkey, since the judicial system legally prohibits polygamy, some people prefer *imam nikahı* (an unofficial, religious marriage ceremony) for the second wife and sometimes hide this marriage from their first wives and society.

The author implies that legal plurality is unavoidable because of the definition of the term of "law" which embraces three areas: the state, society, and religion. It is

quite normal that these areas compete and interact with each other. Moreover, the author claims that Muslim laws cover a legal pluralism within itself with well-developed hermeneutical techniques.

The plurality of Muslim laws is firstly due to the main schools of laws (*Madhabs*), and along with these four great schools (*Hanafee*, *Shaafi'ee*, *Hambelee*, *Maalikee*), other small sects all have somewhat different views on the non-fundamental principles and practices of Islam. The second reason for plurality, according to the author, is the differences between the written and customary rules of Islam. These don't always completely coincide with each other. The third reason for plurality is the differences between official Islam and folk Islam which means that the understanding of Islamic rules and principles is rather different between the population and official institutions. This fact can be clearly identified in

Turkey where large numbers of Muslims do not believe or follow the official view of Islam. For example, in Turkey, the government once obliged people to donate the leather from the sacrificial animal during the *Eid ul-Adha* only to the Turkish Aeronautical Association. However, people refused and continued to donate the leather, an enormous source of financial income, to the traditional institutions and to Muslim NGOs, such as mosques, orphanages, and *tareekat* (religious sect) associations.

It is clear that the author has referred to an enormous list of literature written on this issues and he has presented the main points of discussion about the subject matters. Therefore, this book is a significant contribution for researchers and academics who study legal plurality and alternative applications of the official legal systems.

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German Orientalism: The Study of the Middle East and Islam from 1800 to 1945

By *Ursula Wokoock*

London, New York, Routledge, 2009, 333 pp., ISBN 9780415464901.

Ursula Wokoock's book is a dissertation written at the School of History, Tel Aviv University. Known by her articles on Ibn Khaldun, Theodor Noeldeke, and Middle Eastern modernity, this historian researched the development of Middle Eastern studies as part of a wider discipline: Oriental studies, then still a minor discipline at the faculty of philosophy within the modern German university system.

After the introduction, she deals in eight chapters with how modern German

universities wrote on the Middle East and treated modern Oriental studies. Wokoock looked into differentiations in Sanskrit and Semitic languages and the emergence of Assyriologie and Islamic studies. She offers insights into political factors in the Third Reich and draws basic conclusions. The overviews with the names of scholars of universities are most valuable.

The author illuminates us on how the new discipline of Oriental studies and the institutional separation between faculties