important for a properly functioning civil society (p. 157).

In Chapter 8, Eva Schubert develops a compelling model of citizenship and pluralist identity. Drawing on the recent scholarship of the economist Amartya Sen, she emphasizes that all human actors have multiple and overlapping identities, and ideals of citizenship that attempt to highlight one to the exclusion of all others, not least of those religious, "will merely reinforce social fragmentation and disable civic participation" (p. 182). In an especially versatile chapter, Kevin McDonald in Chapter 9 argues that, when speaking of contemporary global landscapes, it is imperative to break free of the opposition of global vs. local and East vs. West. He demonstrates that even the more radical of modern Islamists, like Sayyid Qutb, blend Islamic notions of politics and ethics with European political theory. Taking exception to many Western policy' commentaries on Islamic movements, McDonald emphasizes the need to recognize the "religious dimension at the centre of practices not based on a claim to autonomy" (p. 205).

In a thoughtful conclusion to the volume, Sajoo calls for a "middle ground" (p. 211) analysis of contemporary Muslim social imaginaries, one that steers clear of the simple polarity of "rule-centric" fundamentalism and relativistic cosmopolitanism. "To perceive ethics in Islamic contexts as no more than a shari`a centric code," he writes, "is to privilege the narrowest of interpretations." More important, such an approach fails to do justice to the contemporary variety of Muslim ethical praxis. Growing numbers of believers look to "the institutions of civil society as a central tenet of democratic culture" (p. 224). Efforts to scale up such a pluralist Muslim ethics have certainly not been helped by the "clash-of-civilization" claims of some Western commentators. But these hybridic social imaginaries, drawing on modern democratic as well as Muslim ethics, are alive and growing. Their efflorescence is the result, not of any "Western" derivation, but of the fact that they respond to yearning of many Muslim moderns for a modern, civic, and pluralist profession of the faith.

Robert W. Hefner, *Boston University*

The Politics of Chaos in the Middle East

By *Olivier Roy*
New York: Columbia University Press, 2008,160 pp., ISBN 9780231700337.

Political developments in the Middle East have recently received a great deal of attention by journalists, editors, and academics, in addition to government policy makers. It seems that everyone has become a stakeholder in the future of this region, where crises have unexpectedly worsened

with the invasion of Iraq. Crises in the Middle East are commonly explained by the supposed 'geo-strategy' of Islam, along with theories about the clash of civilizations, which mainly assert that the Muslim world wages war on the West by using terrorism. For many, conflicts ranging from Palestine,

to riots in the Paris suburbs, to Bin Laden, show the dramatic influence of the geo-strategy of Islam. On the other hand, some researchers prefer to deepen their questioning and investigate the broader structural causes behind the conflicts. While the former approach suffers from reductionism, the latter requires an intellectual enterprise which takes into account historical, sociological, and political factors. It pays attention to the Middle Eastern context as well as the influence of larger international developments. Examining Middle East politics and Islam by focusing on different dimensions from his earlier studies, Olivier Roy takes a stand in favor of the second approach. His recently published book, *The Politics of Chaos in the Middle East*, advances his arguments presented in *Failure of Political Islam* (1994), *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (2004), and *Secularism Confronts Islam* (2007).

The Politics of Chaos in the Middle East seeks to discuss Middle Eastern conflicts in their own context as well as in reference to Western society's internal debates, including the problem of immigration and Islam in the West. Olivier Roy argues that there is no "geo-strategy of Islam," a position which is opposed to the idea of Islam itself as a fundamental cause of conflict. Thus, rather than pointing to Islam as a root of contemporary chaos, Roy emphasizes historical developments: for example, the collapse of the project to create an Arab Kingdom in 1918, the establishment of the state of Israel, and the destruction of the balance between Shi'ism and Sunnism. In light of these fundamental developments, nationalism, i.e. pan-Arabism, and Islamism survived and maintained their power, while other ideologies and political projects failed in the course of time.

Four chapters of the book are framed around two discussions: the failure of the U.S. military intervention in Iraq that has worsened the present chaos, and the emergence of Iran as a significant actor, an actor which has benefited largely from the U.S.'s failure. Roy states that the U.S. invasion and the subsequent developments in Iraq have led to a demolition of the strategic balance in the Middle East, the previous balance between Sunni and Shia, which could not be ameliorated by external major powers. The book provides evidence supporting the idea that neither the desire to control oil nor the impulse to act on behalf of Israel's wishes significantly influenced the U.S. decision to intervene in the region. Rather, the invasion was driven by the ideological concerns of a neoconservative team within the Bush administration's tenure, whose aim was the Greater Middle East Reform Project. Building on the basic premises of development theory, Roy notes, this project aimed at top-down democratization and social engineering through enhancing externally funded civil society organizations. However, the project underestimated the issue of political legitimacy and anthropological realities of societies. The role of nationalism and political Islam, called Islamo-nationalism, which were rooted in the country's history, tradition, and its social fabric, were rarely acknowledged, although they might be valuable instruments and interlocutors for any democratization policy, superseding community loyalties and overcoming the tribal and clan segmentation of the region.

After pointing to the significance of Islamo-nationalism, Roy moves on to identify

actors who did and do take the power of Islamo-nationalism into account, such as the Islamists themselves. Building on his arguments in *Failure of Political Islam*, Roy asserts that the conceptual framework the Islamists developed in the 1970s and 1980s remained inadequate to create an Islamic state. Thus, some Islamist movements opted for political integration, as in the Turkish model with respect to the AK Party. Adopting a Muslim version of Christian democracy, they began to consider that the problem of instability was more likely related to good governance and the need to fight against corruption. They suggested tools that may more effective in addressing these issues than the secularist ones. Meanwhile, the more radical, neo-fundamentalist Islamist movements showed no interest in creating either state or nation, but are more concerned with the strict application of *sharia* in order to create *ummah*, such as in the Afghan Taliban, Al-Qaeda, and Sunni Wahhabism.

Among these neo-fundamentalist movements, Roy explains the characteristics of Al-Qaeda as well as its role in the evolution of the conflict in the final chapter by referring to his previous book, *Globalized Islam*. He gives less credit to Al-Qaeda than many other political analysts do because he considers other loyalties, including local, national, tribal or sectarian to be more important, and argues that they endure longer than the ideological or organizational loyalties that Al-Qaeda embodies. The entire chapter is devoted to Al-Qaeda in order to convince the reader that the prevailing overemphasis on Al-Qaeda obscures the more pressing realities of the region. According to Roy, given the existence of negative examples, in contrast to rooting out Al-Qaeda it would be better to incorporate moderate Islamists in the political system in order to bring about a democratization of the Muslim world as well as to halt crises. Similar to the line of thinking he presented in *Globalized Islam* (2004), Roy's argument is that the suppression of Islamists by the Muslim world's secular authoritarian states, which are supported by the West, would cause severe consequences. Secularists have no option but to accept the moderate Islamists' presence. It is noteworthy that the tension between secularists and Islamists is overlooked to a great extent and is not viewed as one of the possible fault lines in Roy's study.

Interestingly, the other actor taking the power of Islamo-nationalism into account is Iran. Roy spends a great deal of time discussing the conflict between the Shias and Sunnis and the position of Iran in the region. However, the root issue of the Shia-Sunni division is merely summarized, leaving many parts untouched. Thus, a reader who is less familiar with the region may experience a difficult time understanding the point. Although Roy uses analogies, for example, comparing the Shia/Sunni and Protestants/Catholics in the Northern Ireland, they do not serve to fill this gap. On the other hand, Roy precisely maintains the importance of the Iranian factor in the evolution of the crises. Iran is the only country that has simultaneously valued the power of Arab nationalism and pan-Islamism since the 1980s. Iran has also attempted to defuse the Shia-Sunni tension, showing strong opposition to Israel, in order that the country might be seen as the leader of both the Arab cause and pan-Islamism. The American military interventions after 9/11 eased the way for Iran by eliminating its two enemies:

Saddam Hussein and the Taliban. Roy presents a number of propositions regarding Iran's future policies: Iran will continue its nuclear program, will avoid an open military confrontation, and will seek further rapprochement with Sunni radicals.

By asserting Iran's central role, Roy raises the real and immediate problem that Europe and the U.S. have found on the table: should their focus be on the regime or on Iran's nuclear program? Roy begins his analysis of this issue by exploring the Ahmedinejad phenomenon. This remains an important component in assessing Iran's political game, since Ahmedinejad chose confrontation rather than cooperation over issues of its nuclear program and with respect to Israel. As Roy notes, Ahmedinejad's power grew out of the conservative networks that were enhanced by the Islamic Revolution, the Iran-Iraq War, and anti-imperialist ideology. Roy goes on to speculate about a scenario wherein America would bomb Iran. The point of this scenario is to show how Iran would be able to activate the refusal front. Given this risky possibility, the best solution would be to weaken the refusal front by including Hezbollah in regional negotiations, opening a dialogue with Hamas, and starting negotiations with Iran. All these attempts would be worthwhile if the global war on terror were ended as soon as possible. However, the Israel-Palestine problem is examined in the context of Iran's refusal front. It seems that the problem is not viewed as a fault line.

Several fundamental questions relevant to Middle East politics are raised by Roy's book. For example: is Islam compatible with Western values? Is the real goal of the Islamists to launch *sharia*? What is the geo-strategic impact of the establishment of Islam in Europe? Why did the U.S. fail in the war against terror? The goal is to identify the desirable and undesirable actors, which would support Roy's argument that there is no geostrategy of Islam. Ultimately, *Chaos in the Middle East* seems to be more of a policy proposal drawing on the findings of Roy's previous studies. He points out the fault lines of present projects and proposes some alternative policies. Taking Islamonationalism into account, discarding Iran without bombing, supporting Islamism, and focusing on al-Qaeda's networks all comprise the blueprint of his project.

Although Roy deals with many political problems in the Middle East, the book has some weaknesses that were not observed in his previous studies. Like many scholars, Roy engages in clarifying Islamic conceptual issues, including *sharia*, and the division between Sunni and Shia theology. However, his conceptual clarification suffers from some simplification and from an underestimation of the many nuances and variations. A similar problem appears in his categorization of neo-Islamists and neo-fundamentalists. Like many other scholars, he ends up by presenting a desirable type of Muslim – in other words, good guys – and undesirable others, bad guys. The last two chapters of the book detail a policy package developed to respond to the Iranian nuclear question and to Al-Qaeda. Rather than existing as a formal academic study, the book more closely resembles policy briefings or think tank policy reports, usually presented in Washington D.C. It is hard to determine in this presentation whether this was the aim of author or the result of the translation.

Zeynep Şahin,
University of Southern California