of autoethnography, a response to missionaries' introduction of orientalist forms of knowledge" (p. 300). Becker ends his study in the World War I era and points out that after the 1920s the East Syrian community became fractured due to a variety of geopolitical, cultural, and theological reasons.

This book is highly recommend to anyone interested in Christianity in the Middle East, the development of modern identities, and the role of American missionaries in the 19th century. It is a valuable contribution to Middle East studies because of its focus on an understudied minority ethnoreligious population during a period of transition and how this community constructed a particular pattern of modernity that provided them with a distinct process of retrieving their past. Though Becker does not extensively interrogate possible imperialistic consequences of the American activities or how these missions fit more broadly in the geopolitical landscapes of the Ottoman Empire or Qajar Iran, his book is a thought-provoking and rigorous analysis of the effects of cross-cultural encounters and interactions in the modern age.

DAVID N. YAGHOUBIAN, *Ethnicity, Identity, and the Development of Nationalism in Iran* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2014). Pp. 462. $49.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780815633594

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This study contends that although Iran is an ethnically and religiously diverse society, historically its ethnic and religious minorities have been loyal to the government regardless of the nature of the political leadership in power. Yaghoubian employs a social biographical approach to examine how individual experiences contribute to the development of Iranian nationalism. He uses the social biographical approach as a methodological remedy to "the conflicted discourse on the development of nationalism" (p. xxvi). Contrary to the traditional, elite-oriented writing of history, the social biographical approach examines history and society through the biographic details of ordinary people.

Yaghoubian introduces the volume with an excellent summary of the major theories of nationalism and studies on Iranian national identity and nationalism. In contrast to scholars who accord a central place to the state in their analyses, Yaghoubian notes that those who situate the state in the context of culture, myths, and collective memory offer a more accurate assessment of modern nationalism. He asserts that a full understanding of nationalism in Iran requires a deeper exploration into the histories and cultures of minority communities and individuals. Through their articulations of identity and expressions of loyalty, they retain their sense of ethnic or national identity, on the one hand, and contribute to the strengthening of Iranian nationalism, on the other hand.

This study presents the biographies of five Iranian Armenians (Iskandar Khan Setkhanian, Hagob Hagobian, Sevak Saginian, Lucik Moradiance, and Nejde Hagobian) and is based in part on the author's interviews with the latter four conducted in California. The individual biographies sketched in this volume enrich social biography literature by giving voice to individuals whose lives would otherwise attract little attention from scholars engaged primarily in archival research. The author is successful in employing these individual biographies to explore different periods of Iranian history and various facets of Iranian society. The study advances the hypothesis that the greater the state's inclination toward inclusivity and accommodation of the interests of ethnic communities (their culture, language, religion), the greater the manifestations of loyalty by ethnic communities toward that regime.

This is the stuff of ethnic studies, however, and not necessarily nationalism, as demonstrated by the individual biographies. For example, the author claims that Lucik Moradiance acquired "a strong sense of Iranian nationalism" as a result of "the dialogic, collaborational nature of her relationship with the state and her fellow Iranians" (p. 277). Yet, nothing in the chapter suggests that Moradiance had acquired a sense of nationalism. Instead, in the author's words, she was "basically apolitical in her young adulthood" (p. 191) and became a career-oriented, ambitious Armenian woman who worked hard to advance her career. She acquired a "compound" Iranian Armenian identity, but had "infrequent" contact with Persians besides her colleagues (pp. 277–78). Her experience as a professional may be gainfully deployed as an example of ethnicity and gender, a successful hyphenated ethnic Iranian-Armenian, but hardly as an example of Iranian nationalism. Similarly, Sevak Saginian maintained a healthy balance between ethnic identity and national identity and as a community leader served as an intermediary between the Armenian community and the Iranian government. The reader wishes Yaghoubian would delve deeper into this analysis. Rather than dealing with nationalism, the volume under review in reality offers a study of ethnicity and hyphenated identities.

The volume thus contains two separate subjects—nationalism and biography —whose theoretical relationship remains rather ambiguous throughout the text. Clearly, the social biographical approach can gainfully explore various aspects of society; however, the biographies presented in this volume lack the data necessary to combine the individual experiences with theories of nationalism. An earlier version of the chapter on Hagob Hagobian, published in *Struggle and Survival in the Modern Middle East* (David N. Yaghoubian, "Hagop Hagopian: An Armenian Truck Driver in Iran," in *Struggle and Survival in the Modern Middle East*, ed. Edmund Burke III [Berkeley, Calif., and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993], pp. 224–33; David N. Yaghoubian, "Hagop Hagopian: An Armenian Truck Driver in Iran," in *Struggle and Survival in the Modern Middle East*, eds. Edmund Burke III and David N. Yaghoubian, 2nd ed. [Berkeley, Calif., Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2006], pp. 178–86), fits perfectly in that volume considering its objective was to "give voice" to nonelite voices. The chapter on Hagob Hagobian in the present volume under review has little to say about nationalism. In a word, nationalism looms larger in theory than in the execution of the volume.

The methodological pitfalls with respect to the relationship between data and generalizations become obvious as the narrative unfolds. Yaghoubian claims that among all of Iran's ethnic and religious groups, the Armenian community is best suited for the study of the development of Iranian nationalism because Armenians in Iran have maintained their "unique traditions, attachments, and loyalties that differ from those of the majority." "Armenians," he adds, "enable the widest applicability of the study's theoretical findings and best underscore the effectiveness of sustained social biographical investigation" (p. xxix). However, the biographical sketches fail to demonstrate how Armenians' "unique traditions, attachments, and loyalties . . . enable the widest applicability of the study's theoretical findings" (p. xxix). Largely descriptive in nature, they fail to document causation and the relationship between individual Armenian experiences and Iranian nationalism.

Further, according to the author, participation by Iranian-Armenian scouts in the Fourth of Aban Parade in 1953 in celebration of the Reza Pahlavi Shah's thirty-fourth birthday exemplified the "dialogic power relationship" between the Pahlavi regime and the Armenian community. The author asserts that "social biographical research reveals that Iranians in attendance were receptive to the event's symbolism for a variety of intermingling reasons" (p. 266). An accurate assessment of how "Iranians in attendance" perceived the symbolic significance of the parade would require a public opinion survey, a methodology considered inimical to the field of social biography.

The Islamic Revolution of 1979 clearly showed that not every ethnic or religious community had benefitted from the "dialogic, collaborative, negotiated relationship" between the state and the Armenian community. State–ethnic dialogic collaborations progressed concurrently with SAVAK's (Sazeman-e Attelaʿat va Amniyat-e Keshvar [Organization of Intelligence and National Security])

"purely monologic" (p. 272) imposition of state repression. The dialogic relationship between the Shah's regime and the Armenian community may have been the result of state recognition of that ethnic community and the latter's loyalty to the regime, but observers would be hard pressed to distinguish between ethnic fear and ethnic loyalty. The author suggests that the state and the Armenian community were equal partners: "exactly who rides whom in these various interactions is unclear because the power relationship is dialogic and collaborative" (p. 297). Yet the state and the Armenian community were not equal partners; the purportedly "dialogic power relationship" was and is predicated upon consistent, routine demonstrations of loyalty by the Armenian community to the state. To argue otherwise is to indulge in illusions.

A couple of corrections are worth mentioning. The Bolshevik Revolution occurred in October/November 1917, a year before the conclusion of World War I, not following the war (p. 81). Also, upon election and consecration as Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, Archbishop Aram Keshishian became Catholicos (supreme patriarch) and is thereafter referred to as Catholicos Aram I Keshishian, not Archbishop Keshishian (pp. 293–4).

This volume fails to elucidate the mechanics of the development of nationalism, and its approach does not lend itself easily to formulation of hypotheses and theories. The individual biographies do not address the issue of nationalism directly and do not challenge or elucidate the theories of nationalism. Despite the shortcomings of the volume, advanced undergraduate and graduate students as well as scholars would benefit from the individual chapters as separate case studies.

MELODY MOHEBI, *The Formation of Civil Society in Modern Iran: Public Intellectuals and the State* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014). Pp. 196. £57.50 cloth. ISBN: 9781137401106

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Melody Mohebi's *The Formation of Civil Society in Modern Iran: Public Intellectuals and the State* is a succinct yet informative read. Mohebi's goal is to analyze the role of "reformist public intellectuals" in amplifying the notion of "*jame'e-ye madanī*" (civil society) during the presidency of Mohammad Khatami (1997–2005). In constructing her narrative, Mohebi first broadly defines civil society as the process by which citizens monitor the state and the monopoly of power within the country, and then successfully summarizes both the theory behind the formation and specifications of civil society, as well as the civil society's nuanced and versatile presence in 20th-century Iran, in particular, after the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The book begins by outlining major themes and discussing methodology, and moves on to explore the theoretical underpinning of the concept of civil society and social movements. Mohebi then explores the "relevant historical context" (p. 45) of Iran as it relates to civil society, where she draws on social movements and organized activities that took place in Iran in the 20th century. She argues that the formation of a rentier state—where the state's income is obtained through means other than taxation, such as sale of oil—and the predominance of a religious welfare system through the practice of charity and taxation in Shi'i Islam effectively traded the function of the state with that of the religious establishment prior to the Islamic revolution. Support from the religious establishment was vital for the success of social movements in 20th-century Iran—from the success of the Tobacco Protest, reinforced by religious edicts, to the fractioning of the National Front, in parts, as a result of disagreement over religious law. Mohebi focuses further on the intellectual discourses such as those promoted by the Tudeh party, as well as public intellectuals such as Jalal Al-i Ahmad and Ali Shari'ati, which contributed to the maturing of civil society between the 1906 Constitutional Revolution and the 1979 Islamic Revolution.