

Attempting to reconcile faith and modern praxis is not merely a revisionist intellectual undertaking on the part of liberal Muslim scholars today. On a more empirical level, the desire to reconcile religious beliefs with modernity has been documented over and over again on the part of populations in Muslim-majority societies. Consistent polling in Muslim-majority societies shows that overwhelming majorities want democratic forms of government along with *shari'a*, seeing no disjunction between the two; especially when it is understood that *shari'a* is a many-splendored thing and can be understood in multiple ways—and yes, even in very liberal ways—by different groups of people. The recent so-called Arab Spring has spectacularly confirmed these demographic trends in recent times. Bringing these more potent indices of popular and intellectual trends into the discussion—perhaps in the next updated edition—will confer a greater aura of plausibility on the otherwise compelling narrative of this book.

Finally, an urgent question has to be asked: What will happen to the whole concept of “political liberalism” when in an increasing number of Western societies today there is a progressive attrition of civil rights and religious freedom for targeted minority groups under various pieces of illiberal legislation—such as Muslims in France and Holland subject to the burqa ban or in the United States under certain provisions of the Patriot Act? If those described as liberal democracies are ultimately willing to betray an overarching commitment to equal rights and the rule of law in the name of security or cultural “authenticity” or mere political convenience, what will be the fate of the liberal experiment itself and the overlapping consensus that was meant to sustain it? Unfortunately, given the times we live in, this is a question that will very likely be increasingly posed in the public sphere; the answers may not bode well for our collective future.

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STIGMATIZED STATES

Ayşe Zarakol: *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pp. xii, 291. \$90.00. \$32.00, paper.)

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After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West is a genealogical study of how Turkey, Japan, and Russia have joined the international system, and of the ways in which, as a result of the peculiar nature of their membership,

their state identity, is in existential distress. At the core of the text lies one theory: in the socially constructed international system, which assumes an ontological rift between the East and the West, “stigmas” are imposed on and internalized by the Turkish, Japanese, and Russian states. Despite their efforts (e.g., Turkey has endeavored to cleanse itself of Islam by being secular, Japan has become pacifist, and Russia has periodically acted democratically), they have become neither Western nor welcomed by the West. They have been viewed as inferior outsiders (e.g., as being barbaric, backward, childlike, warlike, and undeveloped, rather than industrialized, civilized, secular, democratic, and Christian), which is something worse than being “others.”

Zarakol argues that a stigma can be embraced, ignored, or fixed, even though fixing a stigma is not the same as never having experienced a stigma by which the socialization of the states, and therefore their identities, are heavily affected. Moreover, socialization, when utilized as a means to escape stigmatization, not only perpetuates the “established-outsider figuration,” but also forms an enduring national “habitus” through which Eastern states have involved with the international system. By juxtaposing Turkey (1918–1938), Japan (1945–1974), and Russia (1990–2007), the author seeks to define their behavior in terms of their attempts to join the modern international system.

Succinctly put, modernity has created ontological insecurity (i.e., a lack of prestige, or a sense of inferiority) for states such as Turkey, Japan, and Russia, and therefore these “states are motivated by considerations of self-esteem, status, and prestige” (37). The feeling of being inferior is not only imposed on these states, but is also promulgated by native elites, regardless of being for or against Europe, owing to their belief in the linear notion of historical progress—that is, one is either modern or backward with nothing in between (55).

It is repeatedly and confidently stated through the book that “*everything* these states have done since joining the international system ... is best explained by the ambiguous ‘insider but outsider’ status. ... This common ailment of Turkey, Japan, and Russia is *the only thing* that explains why the similarities between the political choices of these otherwise very different countries are so striking”; “*There is no explanation* besides Turkey’s obsession with joining the community of civilized states that explains the lengths Turkey went to in transforming its domestic system. ... *Every* domestic reform was undertaken with this goal”; “The evidence permits *no other interpretation* besides strategic socialization to overcome stigmatization within an international system” (30, 151, 153; my italics). However, the evidence does allow for other interpretations. Zarakol’s failure to discuss well-known counter-narratives by leading scholars such as Kemal H. Karpat, a prominent historian of the late Ottoman Empire, or M. Hakan Yavuz, who has examined the origin of Turkey’s multiple identities (*Secularism and*

Democracy in Turkey, 2009), does undermine the author's claims. In short, Zarakol's account of Turkey appears to be lopsided and even subjective.

Putting too much emphasis on "prestige" seems to me exaggerative and reductionist. International prestige is certainly a decisive factor, particularly in the case of Turkey, which is continuously trying to join the EU; its effort to be a model for other Muslim countries, in Zarakol's interpretation, "echoes Turkey's earlier attempts to regain its lost status" (157). But I doubt that "prestige" is the primary cause and the final end in itself. Would the problem be over if Turkey, for instance, were given a certificate indicating that it is "modern"? Or is it that Turkey wishes to exploit opportunities available only to the modern nation-states? It seems to me that defining policies in terms of prestige is a byproduct of a primordialist approach, in which Turkey is viewed as a conscious entity, something alive, with its "nation's habitus ... shaped by an imperial past" (149). Of course, Turks have historical memory, but stressing Turkey's structure of mind (i.e., "nation's habitus") is a primordialist argument. In addition, although the author says "states are not people," in practice, she proceeds to treat a given state "as an individual person as far as their international actions are concerned" (99). Such actions are subsequently viewed as mere manifestations of some underlying psychological issues. When the attempt is made to understand social phenomena psychologically, for example, when the Holocaust is reduced to Hitler's mentality, or international policies are equated to prestige, the outcome inclines toward primordialism; that is, X committed Y because of a belief in Z—prestige.

In *After Defeat* states are reduced to individuals and individuals to their psychology. Besides this, along with a few less important points that do not damage the overall argument (e.g., the uncritical embrace of Berlin's concepts of negative and positive freedom), the text is lucid and informative. The author's use of Hegel's master-slave dilemma in showing the dialectical process of gaining recognition by the inferior and superior states is a quite smart choice, if it is considered metaphorically rather than as a reduction of states, using Hegel's language, to subjective spirit. The most engaging part of the text, I think, is the last chapter on Russia, at the end of which the reader might wish that the author had also included contrary cases, such as the Chinese, Indian, and Persian empires and dynasties that experienced a similar defeat by the West—but learned to live with it differently.

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