

the Algerian revolutionaries into forging their own path. Byrne finally concludes by showing how Ben Bella's outlook on international conduct and his great dream of engaging with external powers precipitated the formation of other factions in support of Boumedienne and Bouteflika, which overturned the government in the wake of the "Bandung II" meeting. Fearing that congressmen would grant Ben Bella a new mandate to rule, the conspirators staged a coup that put a stop to all foreign enterprise.

This book marks a new milestone in the historiography of the Maghreb and Algeria by demonstrating the connection between internal and external dynamics, and by more firmly embedding this region in Cold War historiography. Byrne's extensive documentary research, mostly in the Algerian archives, gives force to his arguments. He cannot avoid, however, certain difficulties involved in moving between various regions, from Cuba to Congo to Angola, and the need to gather all the elements necessary to clearly demonstrate the real impact of the Algerian authorities, their actions, and the nature of their influence on these external factors, but this minor criticism should not detract from the sound value provided by Byrne's book. ✂

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MARWA DAUDY. *The Origins of The Syrian Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020). Pp. 267. \$29.99 (paper). ISBN: 9781108567053.

In both the popular press and academic literature, the 2012 Syrian uprising became a symbol of the connection between climate change and conflict. After all, from 2006 until 2010 Syria was experiencing a consecutive drought that was a byproduct of climate change plaguing an already arid and water-stressed region of the world. According to this argument, the drought resulted in crop failure, poverty, internal migration, and displacement, which ultimately compelled people into the streets in social protest that resulted in political violence. In *The Origins of The Syrian Conflict*, Marwa Daoudy draws attention to the shortcomings and dangers of this climate-conflict thesis and introduces a new conceptual framework to explain the uprising. Her multidisciplinary framework is rooted in

critical environmental security, human security, and political ideology of the ruling elite.

The climate-conflict thesis cannot fully explain the 2012 uprising, according to Daoudy, because social protests began in urban centers, instead of the drought-stricken Jazira/Hassake rural province that is Syria's breadbasket. Urban protesters denounced political repression and corruption—not lack of water or food. In addition to the shortcomings of the climate-conflict thesis to account for these facts, Daoudy draws attention to the potentially dangerous consequences of its deterministic nature. Political elite in the Global South can use the climate-conflict thesis as an excuse for inaction or oppression of society, rather than as a driving force to implement effective and sustainable environmental policy to help adapt to climate change. In other words, the climate-conflict argument can be used to absolve policymakers and political elite of any agency to respond to climate change by building adaptive capacity, increasing efficiency, and fostering resilience.

Drawing on field research in Syria, Lebanon, and Turkey along with both publicly available and classified documents, Daoudy seeks to explain the rural origins of the urban uprising and to thereby demonstrate that climate change was not the independent variable leading to conflict and political violence in Syria. While climate change contributed to the drought-induced water insecurity in Syria's arid regions, the problem of water scarcity is and has been a byproduct of long-term pressures and mismanagement.

Professor Daoudy explains the structural long-term unsustainable pressures on water and food security produced by political elites' environmental ideology by providing a fuller understanding of the relationship between environmental security, human security, and political ideology. She does this by introducing the Human-Environment-Climate Security (HECS) framework, which can be applied to other cases across the world. The multidimensional framework combines an analysis of political factors, economic security, water and food security, and environmental security to demonstrate how they combine and interact to influence all aspects of human insecurity and population displacement. To better understand the influence on human insecurity, the framework also draws on three other factors: structural, vulnerability, and resilience.

Through a comparative analysis of two periods of droughts in Syria, 1998–2001 and 2006–2010, Daoudy effectively demonstrates that climate change was a “background condition,” whose impact could have been

averted by effective policy. But poor government policies significantly contributed to the vulnerability and lack of resilience confronting the rural population.

The political ideology of Hafez al-Assad (initially Ba'athism and later liberalization) and Bashar al-Assad (social market economy) had a direct impact on resource availability and on the vulnerability and resilience of farmers in Syria's northeast and eastern territory. While the earlier reforms by Hafez al-Assad enhanced living conditions in the urban areas, they were inherently unsustainable in their excessive use of water resources, large-scale irrigation projects, and dam construction. The result was an increase in human insecurity because of groundwater depletion and soil degradation. As Bashar al-Assad embraced neoliberal economic policies, he cut food and fuel subsidies and removed social safety nets from farmers. These cuts coincided with drought-induced crop failure along with water and food insecurity, which resulted in high levels of economic and social vulnerability for farmers. These pressures combined with the urban population's lack of resilience against disruptions to their livelihoods, which included access to food, water, and land for farmers. A history of poor governance and weak institutions meant that resilience was already relatively weak in Syria. As a result, government policies turned the drought into a national crisis that threatened farmers' food and water security along with their livelihoods. Under these conditions, Daoudy argues that popular protests and conflict were inevitable.

Concomitant with the structural pressures, vulnerabilities, and lack of resilience are the triggers that resulted in the uprising. For Daoudy, the triggers in the Syrian case included uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia and Bashar al-Assad's security service's torture of schoolchildren in Deraa. Together, the structural factors and triggers provide a better account of the uprising.

This is a well-researched and well-written book by a seasoned expert on Syria's water politics, hydropolitics, and domestic politics. It represents an important contribution to our understanding of the environmental security origins of the 2012 uprising along with the political and policy decisions that led to the conflict. Drawing on new and previously unpublished socioeconomic, political, and environmental data from the decades leading up to the uprising, Professor Daoudy uses the HECS framework to launch an important critique of the existing environmental security literature and the climate-conflict thesis for failing to account for how politics, governance, and political ideology intertwine to impact human insecurity. In the process, she integrates a broad range of

literature that has not been combined before to illustrate the HECS framework's ability to account for the uprising and to demonstrate how political factors were more important than climate change in explaining the uprising. This book is a must read for anyone interested in environmental security, water security, the Syrian uprising, hydropolitics, and Syrian water politics. ✂

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NEGAR MOTTAAHEDEH. *Whisper Tapes: Kate Millett in Iran* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019). Pp. 224. \$14.00 (paper). ISBN 9781503609860.

How do you write about an archive of recordings of background sounds – overheard conversations, rebellious chants, and obscure voices carrying elusive messages – the seeming ephemera and residue of a research archive, one that has already produced at least one book, the American second-wave feminist and scholar Kate Millett's *Going to Iran?* And what might such an archive add to an already well-trod historical event? Negar Mottahedeh's book on the soundscapes of the Iranian revolution, *Whisper Tapes: Kate Millet in Iran* (2019), tackles just how one might write about such sounds or *soundscapes*, the auditory landscape of Millett's two weeks in Tehran.

The book begins with a revolutionary timeline, which serves as a useful schedule of the days that Millett was in Iran and highlights the events that transpired there during that time. Entertaining QR scans offer the opportunity to enrich the archive and enhance the reader's learning experience. The book is organized in the order of the letters of the Persian alphabet, with each chapter addressing a term or concept signified by a word starting with that letter. In all, there are thirty-two chapters (corresponding to the number of letters in the Persian alphabet), with a rich introduction and a coda with Mottahedeh finally delivering the message Millett presented to Iranian women on March 8, 1979. That missive, a greeting on behalf of international feminists, embraced the *tiers-mondisme* of the women's movements for equal rights and decried patriarchy, "the oldest and most fundamental of human institutions of un-freedom" everywhere (184).