

2008, 16). For many Iranians the shah was not “authentic.” He was irrelevant. He was not one of them. His values and vision of Iran’s future did not coincide with theirs. He could impress foreign journalists and lecture foreign political leaders, but he could speak only with difficulty to his own people.

The shah was also seen—rightly or wrongly—as serving foreign interests before those of his own country. The events of 1953, when a CIA-backed coup removed the nationalist prime minister Mohammad Mosaddegh and established the shah’s supremacy, were of course central to this view, but subsequent events reinforced it. The shah did not protest in 1963, when the United States made its ill-advised request to alter the existing Status of Forces Agreement. He also did not object in 1973, when President Nixon proposed sending Richard Helms, former head of the CIA, as ambassador. The shah must have known that appointment would publicly confirm his dependence on America and its CIA. Why did he not stand up for himself and his country? Was this widespread view of the shah wrong? It may not have been entirely so. Although most people did not know about this incident, Asadollah Alam provides a telling account of it in his book, *The Shah and I: Confidential Diary of Iran’s Royal Court, 1969–77* ([London: I. B. Tauris, 1991], 233). According to Alam, President Nixon apparently asked the shah to contribute cash to his infamous Committee to Re-elect the President organization during the 1972 presidential campaign. The shah felt obliged to pay up—hardly the act of the self-confident and sovereign ruler he wanted to appear to be.

Afkhami’s book has one major gap. There is little or no discussion of the shah’s fatal illness—first diagnosed in 1974—and its effect on his ability to rule. Does the illness explain his failure to react decisively to the revolutionary uprisings in 1978? What about his searching for ways to end the uprisings from foreign friends? Does knowledge of his illness contribute to an image of a weak shah sitting behind his façade of power and self-confidence? In an Iranian political context, where foreign enemies and internal centrifugal forces have always been ready to tear the country apart, weakness is perhaps the unforgivable sin of a ruler. People will tolerate many shortcomings, but weakness never.

Although Afkhami’s book leaves some questions unanswered, it is still a well-researched and very readable account of what remains a very controversial figure and very controversial times. The general reader will find much to enjoy and the specialist will find much to learn.

ARANG KESHAVARZIAN, *Bazaar and State in Iran: The Politics of the Tehran Marketplace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Pp. 324. \$103.99 cloth, \$39.99 paper.

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Bazaar and State in Iran is a novel and masterfully argued study of economics and politics in contemporary Iran. With the Tehran bazaar as its focus, the book invites a close and engaged reading by social scientists interested in the Middle East and the effects of modernity on the marketplace. This is significant, for it has mass appeal beyond the political science field, for anthropologists, sociologists, economists, and historians. Arang Keshavarzian has framed his study in a very accessible and thought-provoking manner. The book makes a wonderful contribution to the study of markets and represents a model approach for understanding post-colonial Iran. *Bazaar and State in Iran* takes an in-depth look at the debates, ideologies, and political and social legacies that have animated and shaped Iran’s economy since the 1960s.

The significance of Keshavarzian’s seminal text is twofold: it offers a nuanced view of how the Tehran bazaar functions and a genealogy of how to study this social space’s complex

network of relations. Bazaars in Iran have evolved from being the “cornerstone” of each town and the “pulse of the city” to become embedded in the modern machinations of the national and global economy. Following Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, one can postulate that the bazaar is a stark reminder of a quintessentially “Oriental” space from the European perspective, identifiable as chaotic, irrational, bustling, and exotic. As Keshavarzian points out, the bazaar “is a concept that can be used to depict a place, an economy, a way of life, and a class, and even to embody Iran, the Middle East, or the Islamic world” (p. 44). Contemporary scholars concerned with such issues as Islam and modernity are naturally uneasy with the bazaar as being somehow emblematic of the Middle East in the European imagination. The bazaar is represented in literature on Iran as nostalgic, traditional, and a remnant of the colonial era. Keshavarzian remains alert to the field and uses care and sensitivity in writing about a time and place that exist in both the imagination and the lived experiences of those who are defined by the bazaar and continually draw and redraw its dynamic boundaries.

Bazaar and State in Iran focuses in depth on the social actors who are part and parcel of this institution. Through textual analysis and fine-grained ethnographic fieldwork in the bazaar, Keshavarzian painstakingly paints a complicated and layered depiction of his interlocutors, who have been citizens of two very distinct regimes. Yet Keshavarzian does not treat the Islamic revolution of 1978–79 as a bifurcation in the history of the bazaar. Rather, he expertly traces a transformation of this social space without focusing on the identity fixities that come with studies of pre and postrevolutionary Iran. In this vein, *Bazaar and State in Iran* argues for “relational factors” that mark the transformational powers of the bazaar and its social world despite regime change. The strength and freshness of Keshavarzian’s analysis comes from a sustained engagement with bazaars as a system of networks crisscrossing Iranian society at large. This approach affords a view of the bazaar that reaches beyond the actual physical space it occupies. Moreover, Keshavarzian not only documents the inner workings of these economic networks but also delves into the relationships between government agents and nongovernment actors that define the contours of these economic modalities.

From the perspective of globalization and macroeconomic movements, the local bazaar is no longer seen as an important institution commercially, no longer the major entrepôt for commercial activities. The bazaar is *a priori* defined as “traditional” in contradistinction to the “modern” commercial activities of urban spaces such as arcades, malls, and business offices. Thus the bazaar is rendered irrelevant as an economic venue from the modernist standpoint. *Bazaar and the State in Iran* moves beyond such tried and tired categories of “modern” and “traditional” that reify the bazaar as a static space in order to portray its important role in Iran’s political and cultural milieu. Each of the six chapters and the conclusion defines and refines the reader’s knowledge of the bazaar. Chapters 1 and 2 define and contextualize the very concept of the bazaar within the ideological and theoretical framework of Middle Eastern economies and markets in general. Chapters 3 and 4 offer nuanced and historical depictions of how bazaars are networks with “transformative agendas.” Chapter 5 provides rich ethnographic studies of three commodities (carpets, tea, and chinaware), which depict these very networks at the interstitials of state and economy. Finally, Chapter 6 uncorks the mystery of the bazaar–state and bazaar–mosque relationships, which have been formulated and accepted as alliances that alter Iranian politics without ever having been detailed and analyzed in such a perceptive manner. The focus of this last important chapter is the organization of bazaars, which enabled them to function as forms of political protest against state policies. What must be clarified further are the subtle yet crucial differences between political and social protests organized in the bazaar.

Arang Keshavarzian’s text is a benchmark work in the study of Iranian society. Through the Tehran bazaar we are presented with a fine-tuned and well-honed analysis of social relations

in contemporary Iran. *Bazaar and the State in Iran* offers readers a view into the everyday lives of Iranian citizens and their subjectivities through their interactions with each other, the state, and the clerical class. The book is cleverly argued and exemplifies an innovative use of sources; Keshavarzian taps into Persian sources and literature from the bazaar and is the first scholar working on this subject to incorporate the literature produced by *bazaaris* themselves. This terrific book will be a vital addition to undergraduate classes and graduate seminars and will serve as a general reference guide to the study of Iranian society, economy, and politics.