

101) may be invisible to Western eyes because they are usually informal and often run by community or religious groups. However, in private spaces, such as gatherings in people's home (*majalis*, 424; *diwaniyyat*, 385), opinions are voiced, sociopolitical problems are discussed, and networks are built. Transnational networks and cyberspace are important elements in the virtual dynamics of today's civil society, and the ways in which they are formed are quite interesting. For example, Kuwaiti family and kinship organizations use modern technology to maintain communication and build common identity by developing their own websites (359).

While most Middle East regimes are authoritarian, "dictatorship takes more than one form in the area" (7). These regimes seem to be keeping democracy and social justice out of reach, but even so, most of the countries are not exclusively authoritarian. For example, Egypt has "a highly centralized, authoritarian, and slightly liberalized system" (220). Iran is governed by "one of the growing number of 'hybrid regimes' that combine democracy and authoritarianism, in which the state "is not accountable to its citizens, although it can be responsive" (262).

The book is ideal for upper level undergraduate and graduate courses in the social sciences and humanities or for individuals interested in understanding the complex intersection of politics and society in the Middle East. It would also be an invaluable resource for readers seeking a more comprehensive and contextualized elucidation of current political events and uprisings in the Middle East. It is one of the most lucidly written, highly objective surveys on the politics of the Middle East that is available today. ✨

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Elhum Haghghat

Lehman College, City University of New York

FREDERICK F. ANSCOMBE. *State, Faith, and Nation in Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Lands.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014. xix + 323 pages, acknowledgments, maps, bibliography, index. Cloth US\$85.00 ISBN 978-1-107-04216-2; Paper US\$30.99 ISBN 978-1-107-61523-6.

This important book bridges a geographical divide by comparatively analyzing the nexus between political and religious history for the three chief parts of the Ottoman Empire (Anatolia, the Balkans, and the Arab lands), while also transcending the historiographical boundary between Ottoman and post-Ottoman history. The work broadly concentrates on the role of religion in forming political legitimacy with regard to "the practice of

politics and state policy making, the relationship between state and society, the nature and role of identity, and the influence of international affairs” (14). Detailed coverage chronologically spans the eighteenth century to the suppression of the Arab Spring in the 2010s, thereby tracing the historical origins of the contemporary Middle East and Balkans.

Frederick Anscombe sees religious legitimacy and political pragmatism as key factors in the successes of the Ottoman Empire. The limited role of the state extended to non-Muslims, who had no unusual degree of autonomy. A flexible interpretation of Hanafi law and close supervision of provincial notables helped create acceptance of Ottoman rule. In the eighteenth century a sense of religious legitimacy among Sunni Muslims, political households, the *malikane* tax system, Janissaries, and local military figures maintained the state and dynasty, but the period of 1768–1839 marked the near collapse of the Ottoman Empire. According to the author, ineffectual despotic reforms, a failure to supervise local administrators, and disastrous wars led to an existential crisis. The rulers, especially Mahmud II, sabotaged religious law and justice, thereby threatening their own legitimacy.

Between 1839 and 1909, the Ottoman ruling elite sought modernization and justice, not Westernization and secularism, and increased state power and legitimacy among Sunni Muslims, while European imperialists grabbed extensive territories for themselves and for Balkan Christians. The inept and ruthless military officers of the Committee of Union and Progress in 1908–1918 led the Ottoman Empire to destruction by weakening Islamic principles, aligning with Germany in World War I, and perpetrating mass murder against Ottoman subjects.

In chapters 6, 7, and 8, Anscombe examines the post-Ottoman states, finding them brittle and weak. They lacked a broad base of support, able leaders, and legitimacy. Religion and local identity remained prevalent despite the surface patina of nationalism. First in the Christian Balkan states, then in the Turkish Republic, and later among the Arab countries a pattern emerged: armies gained strength, ruling groups ignored the peasants, educators tried to indoctrinate young people with an imagined national history, literacy rates remained low, and political parties were weak. Turkey was a partial exception to this dismal pattern, gaining independence as a result of a war of national liberation. Arabs were relatively slow to adhere to new identities because of the British and French opposition to nationalism, strong attachment to Islam, and the uncertainties posed by pan-Arabism versus existing small Arab countries. Islam remained a strong force among the masses even while elites turned to secularizing nationalism.

In the author's view, during the contemporary age—roughly since the collapse of the Soviet Union—the enduring weakness and fundamentally unjust governance of the nation-states has led to a general questioning of identity, leadership, and borders in the Balkans, Turkey, and the Arab lands. Examples could be found in the collapse of Yugoslavia and Syria, and in criticism of the role of the Turkish military in politics. Religion remained a prop for state identity in much of the post-Communist Balkans, played an increasingly positive role in Turkey, and was a source of opposition to corrupt nationalist and military governments in the Arab lands. The outrage felt by Arab Muslims toward their incompetent and brutal governments and a desire for justice and law led protestors toward the Arab Spring.

A brief review cannot do justice to the sweeping arguments and careful comparisons that enliven this book. The author's witty, ironic, and incisive style is both engaging and provocative. He uses the latest detailed scholarship but retains a broad analytical scope that might well be of interest to the general public. This work would also be of considerable value for graduate students. More space is devoted to the Balkans than to Turkey or to the post-Ottoman Arab countries, thereby enhancing the usefulness of this book for courses on the late Ottoman era but somewhat diminishing its usefulness for modern Middle East courses. ✂

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William Ochsenwald
Virginia Tech

NURULLAH ARDIÇ. *Islam and the Politics of Secularism: The Caliphate and Middle Eastern Modernization in the Early Twentieth Century.* New York: Routledge, 2012. 394 pages, preface, acknowledgments, figures and tables, abbreviations, notes, references, index. Hardback US\$155.00 ISBN 978-0-415-67166-8.

For students of the Middle East, the Islamic caliphate in the early twentieth century offers a versatile object of study. The traces of virtually all major political and cultural developments in the region can be observed in the challenges to and eventual dissolution of this religio-political institution: last-ditch attempts to save the disintegrating Ottoman Empire, the Great Powers' policies concerning their Muslim colonies, rising Arab nationalism, and the secularization of political institutions by Turkish political elites. As a result, the implications of the abolition of the caliphate in 1924 were felt not only in the newly founded Turkish polity but also in the rest of the Muslim world and Europe. It is this central position of the institution that