

disaffected teachers, and to various “experts” all of whom were critical of the “communalism” of Islam. Communalism was, moreover, attributed entirely to Muslims; there was little talk of the ways in which discrimination and a long history of colonial racism might have been factors in immigrants’ (or more typically the children of immigrants’) self-identification as members of a Muslim community.

The role of the media was even more one-sided. I was particularly impressed by Bowen’s long account of several television programs (pp. 232–41) during which those trying to explain why they wore a headscarf or why others might wear one were repeatedly interrupted and finally silenced by the anger and scorn of those supporting the law. The smugness and arrogance of defenders of the republic is stunning to contemplate; they not only refused to listen to views that might contradict their own but also treated those who held opposing ideas as dupes of imams, pawns of terrorists, and victims of their own naïveté. In Bowen’s pages, despite his own stated commitment to impartiality, the racist face of those pushing integration is revealed and one wonders if there is not more complexity to the process than either he or Laurence and Vaisse are willing to admit.

In fact, Bowen does take a position at the very end of the book when he suggests it might be wiser to acknowledge and recognize difference (ethnic, religious, racial) than to suppress it. Something other than integration as assimilation is needed, he suggests: “To take this policy route would be to make France’s visible public differences into ‘speaking’ differences, characteristics of citizens and residents of which the state should take account” (p. 248). Having shown throughout the book the extent to which French Muslims want to insist on both of those words (French and Muslim) to describe themselves, he concludes this way: Muslims who demand the right to be visibly different defy older cultural notions of France, not the political and legal framework of the Republic. When Muslim women in headscarves say that it is with *these* clothes and *this* religion that they choose to abide by the rule of the Republic . . . they are challenging the conditions for belonging to the nation. This challenge creates anxieties about sociability and allegiance, but anxieties can lead to new self-understanding. The Republic is based not on a shared faith, but on a faith in the possibilities of living a shared life together, despite vast differences in appearance, history, and religious ideas. That faith is worth retaining. Properly understood, it liberates citizens to explore their differences, not to conceal them (p. 249).

These two books at once complement each other in the sheer range and variety of information about France that they present, and they reproduce different positions in the ongoing debate about Muslims in France. Laurence and Vaisse take integration (understood as assimilation) to be a desirable goal, and they do not question the premises on

which it is based, premises that duplicate mainstream French republican belief. Bowen, in contrast, shows us what underlies the republican insistence on assimilation: a belief in the inferiority of those (Muslims) who are different, rooted in colonialist attitudes about the superiority of French civilization, its equation with modernity, enlightenment, and secularism. If, as Laurence and Vaisse suggest, integration is an inevitable process, well underway, we can ask, with Bowen, what its costs are and whether they are desirable, not only for those whose difference is being erased but also for those insisting on its erasure.

Memories of State: Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq. By Eric Davis. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005. 385p. \$60.00 cloth, \$27.50 paper.

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— Jillian Schwedler, *University of Massachusetts–Amherst*

What is the relationship between state power and historical memory? Eric Davis argues that the focus on overt state repression that has dominated studies of Iraq overlooks the state’s use of historical memory as a mechanism of control. Employing a Gramscian model, he examines how successive Iraqi regimes have sought to use historical memory to claim legitimacy and authenticity and thus undermine political challengers. Yet these state-initiated projects remain incomplete, and Davis concludes that the political and social instability of Iraq is in large part due to “the inability of Iraqis to construct a viable model for political community” through a shared vision of historical memory (p. 2). His two main themes—the efforts of successive regimes to put historical memories to political use and the diverse ways in which the intelligentsia support or challenge these projects—are documented in impressive detail. After an introductory theoretical chapter, the argument unfolds largely in chronological fashion, beginning with the formation of the Iraqi intelligentsia and competing visions of modern Iraqi historical memory. The majority of the book is then devoted to a systematic examination of these themes from the early twentieth century through fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003.

The first central thesis is that states seek to utilize historical memory to bolster their power, which, Davis argues, can “assume causal properties. For example, historical memory helped legitimate existing hierarchies of power by providing justifications for the continued domination of the Iraqi state by a tribally based minority of the Sunni Arab community through invalidating the history and culture of non-elite groups” (p. 10). This example does not necessarily demonstrate causality, however, as questions of justification and legitimacy depend on whether the proffered arguments are embraced by the populace. The author asserts that the state’s narrative bolstered its power, but he does not demonstrate it. Nevertheless, the book does illustrate beyond doubt that regimes do engage in a range of

projects that seek to reconstruct historical memory, and the details of these projects are fascinating.

The second central thesis is that the intelligentsia directly engages with state-sanctioned historical memory, but in diverse ways. Davis advocates a “trichotomous distinction between support, accommodation, and resistance” (p. 22). He is particularly interested in the middle category, which has received little systematic scholarly attention: “[M]any intellectuals inside Iraq chose to ostensibly cooperate with the Ba’thist regime while simultaneously struggling in subtle ways to nurture forms of historical memory and consciousness that subverted the state’s goals by pointing to a more participatory society” (p. 22). He further demonstrates that Iraqi society has experienced active intellectual production, as well as several periods of vibrant civil society activity. Numerous instances of cross-sectarian and cross-ideological cooperation also undermine the now-conventional argument that sectarian conflict has always characterized Iraqi politics.

Memories of State is extraordinarily rich in new empirical material and succeeds in unpacking the complex means by which successive Iraqi regimes have sought to exercise power. The book advances our understanding of Iraqi politics by leaps and bounds, but is less successful on the theoretical level. Davis’s argument revolves around the Gramscian idea that states engage in hegemonic projects in order to rule more efficiently. He views historical memory as part of “the state’s efforts to use culture and mass psychology to elicit consent. Only when citizens have internalized both fear of a regime and a level of self-discipline that results in obedience to its dictates can the regime hope to exercise meaningful control over society” (p. 3). Questions of consent become central to his argument: “[N]o regime can rule for long without the consent of the governed” (p. 16). Yet he also argues that “it is not important whether Ba’thists, or candidates for party membership, actually believed the historical narratives of state-sponsored texts. Acceptance of these narratives, and the values they promote, constituted symbolic support for the Ba’thist world view” (p. 8). But what constitutes consent, if citizens need not “actually believe” so long as they “accept” the state’s “narratives and the values they promote” (p. 8)?

Davis defines consent as involving the internalization of the ruling elite’s norms and values (p. 2), and he begins both his introduction (p. 1) and conclusion (p. 271) with a detailed statement about consent. States invest in hegemonic projects (such as the political use of historical memory), he argues, for three reasons: first, to “elicit consent and ensure more efficient rule” and to “convince large segments of the population that elite and mass interest coincide” so that “the state’s policies will be widely accepted”; second, to “convince the populace that its definition of political community and the public good constitutes the ‘natural order of things’”; and third, “to reduce

the cost of social control by maximizing consent based on self-imposed norms of behavior” (p. 271).

While this focus on consent may capture what state elites hope to accomplish through their use of historical memory, it provides little analytic utility for understanding how intellectuals have long sought to accommodate the official state narrative while finding ways of challenging it. Indeed, Davis emphasizes that many intellectuals were not at all convinced by these state projects, and instead “chose to ostensibly cooperate with the Ba’thist regime while simultaneously struggling in subtle ways to nurture forms of historical memory and consciousness that subverted the state’s goals” (p. 22). He critiques the “republic of fear” characterization of Iraq as inaccurate precisely because it does not “capture the complexity of this realm of political discourse and its numerous ‘hidden texts’” (p. 17). But he does not offer a unified theoretical model reconciling the aims of state hegemonic projects with their apparent failure to produce the sort of consent that would bolster state legitimacy and power.

It is surprising that Davis’s model is not robust enough to handle the complexities he emphasizes in his empirical material. Indeed, the nexus of his two central themes fundamentally questions the very notion of “consent” so that the distinctions among “the internalization of norms,” “consent,” “obedience,” “acceptance,” “accommodation,” and “dissent”—all terms Davis employs—become crucial. In *Ambiguities of Domination* (1999), Lisa Wedeen provides one means of resolving this puzzle. She argues that Syrians living under the repressive regime of Hafez al-Assad routinely acted *as if* they supported the regime by displaying images of the president and publicly extolling his extraordinary qualities. This outward compliance did not necessarily entail consent in Davis’s sense of internalized norms or belief, but it served the regime nonetheless. Like the Iraqis in Davis’s account, Syrians found numerous ways of combining outward compliance with expressions of dissent. Surprisingly, Davis does not engage Wedeen’s work.

An additional theoretical question emerges around Davis’s repeated assertion that his model applies only to nondemocratic states. In authoritarian contexts, “political elites use state-sponsored historical memory to foster feelings of paranoia, xenophobia, and distrust” (p. 6). Unlike in democracies, where a pluralist vision is promoted, “where authoritarian rule prevails, historical memory is invariably manipulated to vilify nation-states perceived as threatening and to sharpen the cultural boundaries between domestic populace and the ‘Other’ for purposes of social control” (p. 9). Considering the rhetoric of the Bush administration, it is not clear that the political use of historical memory functions that differently in democratic as compared to authoritarian contexts.

Despite these weaknesses, *Memories of State* is a must-read not only for those interested in Iraq and the Middle East but particularly for scholars studying sectarian and

ethnic conflict elsewhere. Davis beautifully illuminates how sectarian identities are historically constructed through microprocesses, and how various actors seek to use historical memory for political gain. He also offers a message of hope for Iraq, but one demanding of both political elites and intellectuals (in Iraq as well as in other countries) that they recognize their role in producing the narratives that can either open—or foreclose—promising political outcomes.

After the Fall of the Wall: Life Courses in the Transformation of East Germany. Edited by Martin Diewald, Anne Goedicke, and Karl Ulrich Mayer. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006. 408p. \$65.00.
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— Benjamin Robinson, *Indiana University Bloomington*

This volume is an empirical analysis of “life courses”—individual trajectories through major rights of passage—in the transition of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) into an enlarged Federal Republic (FRG) in the period from 1989 to 2003. The published study draws on survey and interview data collected in 1991–92 and again in 1996–97, from three birth cohorts (1939–41, 1951–53, and 1959–61) in the East German Life History Study (EGLHS). This remarkable data set allows areas of impact to be distinguished and separately evaluated, rather than making disaggregated claims about how individuals raised in socialism fared under rapid privatization and the liberalization of society. The study offers a differentiated picture of the way an abrupt—even “radical” (p. 46)—social transformation affects different cohorts in various life phases. The underlying data is comprehensive enough to allow these lives to be understood across a broad spectrum of institutionalizations—structures, moreover, that exhibit a greater range of formalization than those captured by census data or other aggregate statistics. Thus, the data allow finer distinctions between phases in labor market adjustment, job mobility, and the lateral or vertical shifts involved with such changes. It addresses the relationship between different social systems, including intimate and instrumental networks of family and acquaintances, class status, ideological conviction, familial status, and gender.

This rich trove of data is analyzed in 13 chapters by nine contributors, allowing readers to focus on findings in their specific areas of interest. The utility of *After the Fall of the Wall* lies in its empirical basis and convincing formulation of what stories the data tell and how these stories stand with respect to hypothetical narratives based on macroeconomic, historical, and sociological assumptions.

Regardless of the specific nature of the “abrupt social transition” involved, the volume represents a substantial achievement in data collection and presentation about life histories under social stress, justifying its scholarly worth for a range of disciplines from anthropology to cultural

studies that might avail themselves of its findings. As Karl Ulrich Mayer emphasizes in his synoptic chapter, the transition of East Germany to capitalism presents a case of sharp social discontinuity in which individual capacities, experiences, and expectations are subject to sudden requalification. This case is unique in the almost experimental delimitation of the time and scope of the transition, the clear distinction between the “departure” and “destination” societies (p. 2), the population affected, and the parameters of the change.

The reunification of Germany in 1989 was a case in which a single national group, divided for 40 years on the basis of social system, was suddenly reintegrated on the model of the larger of the two divisions. How did this transformation, in a sense “controlled” for the single largest imponderable—national cultural history—affect the institutional biographies of those generations that lived through it? This is a momentous question to which the book supplies some interesting answers, albeit answers that are not fully spelled out in terms of their political significance. The empirical precision and interpretative openness of the conclusions, however, are merits of a volume that offers itself as a basis for further work on the significance of the data. For example, contrary to many assumptions, the data show that “downward mobility was much more frequent than upward mobility” (p. 71) in the economic transformation of East Germany. At the same time, “many East Germans were proactive in their job search” (p. 73), a finding that also runs against assumptions that blame East Germans’ supposed lack of initiative for their downward mobility.

Several distinctions of the methodology should be noted. In both the design of their data and their analyses, the authors focus on what they call “life courses.” This term needs to be distinguished from the notion of “everyday life” used in works like Alf Lüdtke and Peter Becker’s (1997) *Akten, Eingaben, Schaufenster: Die DDR und ihre Texte. Erkundungen zu Herrschaft und Alltag*, as well as from the notion of lived experience used in the cultural study of narrative and visual representation (e.g., Jonathan Grix and Paul Cooke, eds., *East German Distinctiveness in a Unified Germany*, 2002). In both of these alternative approaches, the experiential—the subjectively perceived, recognized, and assessed—aspects of life in the GDR and FRG are chronicled and analyzed. Expressive communication media, ranging from intimate diaries and formal poetry to commercial décor, are examined with respect to what they reveal about life experiences, identities, and communities.

As used in this volume, “life courses” is a very different sort of term: “By the term *life course* sociologists denote the sequence of activities or states and events in various life domains spanning from birth to death . . . embedding . . . individual lives into social structures . . . and institutional settings” (p. 11). Life is understood in generic