

identity within the country? For a community with supranational ties like the Berbers, the challenge lies in affecting reforms within “country specific contexts” that accommodate their “cultural and political” rights and demands. According to Watanabe, the Berber community’s continuous rejection of an Arab-Islamic vision that has defined the post-colonial Algerian state may help to explain the apparent Algerian exception to the Arab Spring.

In the final chapters, Bouchra Bouyoub explores the paradoxical political entente between Hizbullah and the Free Patriotic Movement in Lebanon. By highlighting the intricacies of Lebanon’s political situation, the

author considers at length a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between both groups and highlights the “nuances and difficulties in the contested categorization of religion and ethnicity and state formation.”

It is worth noting that the Arab Spring has shaken “some of the foundational cores of the region’s democratic recalcitrance” and questions of religion, ethnicity, and identity have come to the fore. This book offers a collection of rich and in-depth analyses and explorations of a region that is known, yet still so difficult to grasp by many. This book aims to bring the state to the centre of debate, to “demytify” its role and question it in relation to religious and ethnic identities.

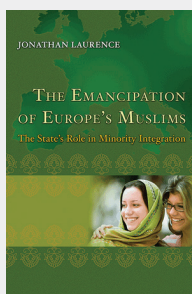
The Emancipation of Europe’s Muslims: The State’s Role in Minority Integration

By Jonathan Laurence

Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), 392 pages, \$30.95, ISBN: 9780691144221.

Reviewed by Brian Van Wyck Yegen

AS JONATHAN LAURENCE observes in the preface to *The Emancipation of Europe’s Muslims*, calling attention to the extent of European governments’ efforts to institutionally incorporate Muslims might seem Pollyannaish in a time of rising Islamophobia across the continent. Events subsequent to the book’s publication, particularly the Charlie Hebdo attacks in France and the PEGIDA demonstrations in Germany would seem to encourage such objections. Nevertheless, as Laurence argues in his compelling and rigorous overview of European policies toward Islam,



such instances of Islamophobia do not reflect any deeply rooted incompatibility of Islam with European liberal democracy. Instead, Islamophobia and restrictions on Islamic religious expression such as the Belgian burqa ban or the Swiss minaret referendum speak to anxieties about the growing incorporation and adaptation of Muslims in liberal European democracies.

Muslims, once conceived of as essentially and irreducibly foreign in European policies, are now being asked by the same governments

to adapt culturally in order to receive recognition and access to state resources as a recognized religious minority. Laurence argues throughout the book –most directly in chapter four– that precedent for incorporating an ostensibly alien religious minority exists in the form of Jewish emancipation in the 19th century. The specific mechanisms of Muslims’ incorporation –what Laurence deems neo-corporatism– were also developed in a response to a historical crisis of the liberal state: in this case, working-class radicalism.

When confronted with far-left worker activism in the 1960s and 1970s, European states sought to defuse potentially violent extra-parliamentary, transnational movements by bringing them within a democratic institutional framework. This was accomplished through the creation of intermediary, consultative bodies under the state’s patronage with a representative monopoly. Participation was incentivized through access to recognition and state resources. The state could thus play the role of a gatekeeper, barring extremists and admitting moderate elements.

Laurence draws parallels between this neo-corporatist response to working-class radicalism and the creation of Islam councils. These councils have formalized state-mosque relations, a step he argues has taken place in every European democracy with a substantial Muslim minority, though he draws the majority of his evidence from Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. In these councils, European governments bring together leaders of groups with conflicting claims to represent Muslims in the country: representatives of what Laurence calls Embassy Islam and Political Islam.

Chapters two and three are devoted to what Laurence terms “Embassy Islam” and “Politi-

cal Islam,” respectively. The former refers to the “outsourced” role in organizing Islamic religious practice in Europe of officials from labor-exporting states –Turkey, Morocco, and Algeria– as well as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, states aspiring to speak for all Muslims. European governments, particularly in the early period of labor importation from Muslim-majority countries in the 1960s and 1970s, preferred to maintain the fiction that most immigrants would eventually return to their countries of origin and thus required no permanent Islamic religious infrastructure in the destination country. In time, as Laurence describes in chapter 3, other groups outside of official, bilateral Embassy Islam agreements also sought to meet those religious needs of Muslims in Europe which European governments were unwilling to address. In the more liberal political environment of Western Europe, Islamist groups like the Muslim Brotherhood, *Jama’at-i Islami*, *Milli Görüş* organized Muslim religious life in competition with Embassy Islam, while cultivating transnational opposition networks aiming to affect change in the sending country. In these two chapters, Laurence adds a useful term to the scholarly lexicon – “Embassy Islam” – he also pays careful attention to changes overtime. For example, Laurence rightly calls attention to dramatic changes in the orientation of *Milli Görüş*, an organization which, as anthropologists Werner Schiffauer and Ahmet Yükleven have observed, has become less focused on politics in Turkey, less transnational and more differentiated by nation over time.

Just as the organizations Laurence defines as Political Islam have changed over time, European governments also changed policies and attitudes toward their Muslim populations. Starting in the 1990s, Laurence identifies an incipient “domestication of state-

mosque relations.” Chapters five and six describe tentative steps toward institutionalizing state-mosque relations in the form of Islamic councils, and chapter seven covers the initial response of European Muslims to these councils. Between 1992 and 2006, in each of the six countries covered, some form of consultative national council was established. Neither of these councils was identical, varying in responsibility and composition. Some were more weighted toward representatives of Embassy Islam and others toward Political Islam but in a striking piece of institutional parallelism, all of these councils bring together both groups to work together under the brokerage of the state. As Laurence argues, this is a familiar neo-corporatist strategy, which nonetheless represents a transformation in state-Islam relations. Though the achievements of Islam councils have been rather minor as of yet, the normalization of Muslims’ participation in political life, which the councils represent will only take further hold, as the volume’s final chapter argues. Future conflicts over Islamic religious practices that might previously have been expressed in the terms of an imagined clash of civilizations will be resolved through institutionalized, democratic accommodation.

As Laurence argues throughout *The Emancipation of Europe’s Muslims*, the ready availability to European democracies of strategies capable of incorporating Muslims speaks to the compatibility of Islam with European democracy. Laurence’s argument in this regard is neither theoretical nor normative and is all the more convincing for it. To support his claims about the incorporation of Europe’s Muslims, he draws on empirical evidence, interviews with religious, governmental and civil-society actors, and a close reading of government documents. Laurence describes his perspective in the book as a “30,000 foot view,” encompassing as it does such a variety of national contexts. This remove is justified, in that the theoretical scope of his argument requires a broad evidentiary base. With that said, the volume never feels sketched or schematic. Laurence successfully blends comparison with specificity and telling anecdotes with empirical evidence and further demonstrates an impressive command of languages and national contexts. Laurence’s book will be of interest to scholars of all disciplines and geographic foci interested in Islam, migration, religion and the state, or European democracy more broadly. *The Emancipation of Europe’s Muslims* is a major achievement and deserves a wide readership.