

unable to pass the threshold to enter parliament as a party (p. 71).

The following chapters break down one by one the regional and national party systems of all the Western Balkan countries. These chapters analyze all of the factors that influence the system, such as national dilemmas, religions, minorities' influence, institutionalization, (de)centralization, freedom reports and the longevity or stability of governments. They conclude that the parties demonstrate different results, some of them showing a swing from a bipolar to a multi-polar system, except for Kosovo which is not still developed enough to be set into a pattern (p. 198).

Meanwhile, throughout the book, the authors note resemblances and make comparisons between countries and their counterparts

that share the same historical background, such as the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries. The authors explain how the CEE countries set a positive example to be followed for the ultimate goal of the democratization and integration of the Western Balkans.

Party Politics in the Western Balkans can be seen as a handbook for understanding the Western Balkans' policies and internal political activities. Considering the recent and somewhat complicated developments in the region, the swings of power in the internal politics of the Western Balkans and the efforts to settle and integrate better into European structures, this book provides new scholars, students and readers interested in Balkan politics with helpful insights into the above-mentioned issues and the region as a whole.

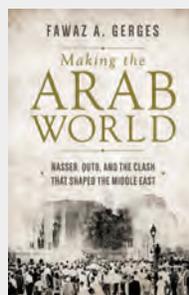
Making the Arab World: Nasser, Qutb, and the Clash that Shaped the Middle East

By Fawaz A. Gerges

New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2018, 483 pages, \$18.10, ISBN: 9780691167886

Reviewed by Ömer Şipal, Ibn Haldun University

The protests ignited by the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia in the final days of 2010 metamorphosed into, as it were, a huge conflagration swallowing the whole Middle East one way or another. Paeans accompanied the protests initially, but slowly anti-Arab Spring forces gained ground against the insurgent peoples and lastly they were able to quench these waves of protests and turn the paeans into elegies. The watershed moment for the termination of these



protests was the coup contrived against democratically-elected Mohamed Morsi in July 2013 in Egypt. It is the historical roots of the clash between the Islamists and the nationalists in Egypt, that culminated in the bloody coup in Egypt in 2013 and whose influences have been felt around the Middle East for more than a half century, that Fawaz A. Gerges attempts to trace in his new book, titled *Making the Arab World: Nasser, Qutb, and the Clash that Shaped the Middle East*. The main argu-

ment of the book is that the struggle between the Islamists under the leadership or guidance of Sayyid Qutb, and the nationalists under the leadership of Gamal Abdel Nasser, which has repercussions beyond Egypt, is not “cultural and civilizational,” as Syrian poet Adonis asserts, but instead about power (p. 45). “The confrontation between Arab nationalists and Islamists,” writes Gerges, “was more a struggle between two camps vying for influence and political supremacy than one about ideology per se” (p. 22). Ideology matters, Gerges adds, but secondarily. Perhaps more important than not being cultural or civilizational or ideological, Gerges argues, the struggle was not inevitable: “It emerged and was consolidated through a series of contingent events, personality clashes [especially Nasser vs. Qutb], and workaday political rivalries” (p. 5).

Chapter one addresses Egypt’s “Liberal Age.” Gerges gives a background of the path unfolding into the Free Officers coup. This background is of crucial importance in that it gives details about how the Officers and the Brothers found themselves in an alliance against the king and British colonization. The British forces suppressed the Urabi revolution in 1882 and thus ruled the country until 1922 when Egypt gained partial independence with the termination of WWI. The period from 1922 until 1953, the year when the Officers disbanded all political parties, is called the “liberal age” in modern Egyptian politics. Despite this lofty label, however, it is not possible to talk about a real independence. Contrary to expectations, this was just a nominal independence. “Egypt was not seen as a master of its own destiny, politically or economically,” says Gerges, pointing out this nominal independence; he adds, “the British residency kept a stranglehold on Egyptian politics by backing the Palace against legitimately elected

representative and parties, thus annulling the will of the people” (p. 55).

Chapters two, three and four concentrate on the anti-colonial struggle, the relationship between the Officers and the Brothers and the birth of the deep state and modern radical Islamism, respectively. These three chapters are interconnected because what these actors did in the 1940s and early 1950s against the palace and the British forces brought them close together. That would pave the way for their relatively intimate relations in the early 1950s. According to the author, the failure of the liberal age led to the rise of radical politics and thus Egyptian politics saw the emergence of paramilitary groups (p. 61). In parallel with the situation going wrong domestically, foreign affairs were not good. The Palestinian cause left a deep scar on the Egyptian psyche. These developments paved the way for the alliance between the Officers and the Brothers and thus for the 1952 coup. At the beginning stages of the coup, relations between the groups were good. But stage by stage Nasser made clear his intention not to share power with the Brothers. This led to the clash at the end of the day. “The confrontation was never truly ideological,” emphasizes Gerges; “rather, it was a political rivalry between two camps vying for influence and power” (p. 122). And thus “the die was thereby cast for a long war between the two most powerful social and political movements in the Arab world” (p. 123). This confrontation polarized and militarized Arab politics and increased “feelings of insecurity between rulers and ruled” which led to the consolidation of political authoritarianism (p. 127). This confrontation did not stop at Egypt’s borders and spread quickly across the region.

Chapters five and six give portraits of young Nasser and Qutb, respectively, while chapters

seven and eight concentrate on their mature lives, respectively. Gerges objects to the portrayal of Nasser “as a dyed-in-the wool secular Arab nationalist” (p. 173). According to Gerges, Nasser’s politics “were strongly informed by pragmatic calculations rather than a priori ideological principles” (ibid.). Added to that is the fact that Nasser’s ideological formation was “neither predetermined nor fixed,” meaning that his journey was “erratic and unpredictable” (p. 174). On the other side of the coin is Sayyid Qutb. Not unlike Nasser, his story was neither predetermined nor fixed. “The young Qutb was a postmodern man par excellence,” says Gerges, “exhibiting doubts and contradictions throughout most of his journey, and only later arriving at ideological certainty” (p. 185).

Chapter nine is the most important and original part of the book in my humble opinion. Here Gerges elaborates on the testimonies of Qutb’s living disciples. Through these testimonies, Gerges attempts to shed light on Qutb’s al-Tanzim al-Sirri and by extension on how Qutb’s oeuvre contributed to the emergence of radical groups among the disillusioned Muslim Brothers. Though Qutb was not the mastermind of this organization at the initial stages, Gerges relates testimonies that Qutb was accepted as the leader of the organization when the first founders came to Qutb to demand his leadership. This moment was beginning of the end for Qutb. In 1965, al-Tanzim was accidentally discovered by security forces and, at the end of the process, Qutb went to the gallows.

Chapters ten, eleven and twelve concentrate on the decline of Nasserist projects, Sadat and his Islamist openings and the Brothers in the Mubarak era, respectively. According to Gerges, the 1967 war with Israel that resulted in a rout was the last straw breaking Nasser’s

camel’s back. By the time the Nasserist regime experienced that rout, Gerges argues, it had already run out of steam. Chapter eleven concentrates on Sadat’s soft politics towards the Islamists as a counter-force against the Nasserists and other leftists. These politics contributed a lot, Gerges relates, to the rise of the Brothers in particular and other Islamists in general from their ashes. Chapter twelve deals with how the Brothers survived the suppression they were exposed to at the hands of Mubarak beginning in the early 1990s and continuing until his demise in 2011.

Concerning the problems catching my eyes in the book, I will talk briefly about two things. In the first place, I must dwell on how Gerges continuously links Qutbian “victimhood mentality” or “siege mentality” with the Muslim Brothers organization’s so-called sluggishness in terms of keeping up with changing circumstances. That is, Gerges makes references again and again to Qutb to explain the Brothers’ predicament. It is as if Qutb becomes a radical evil explaining everything happening within the organization. The second point I want to touch upon also involves the problem concerning agency. Gerges here again attempts to explain comprehensive transformations like the one happening after the 1967 debacle with reference almost exclusively to the state. Every important transformation happened only because the state wanted it to happen. This reading, it seems to me, underestimates the agency, say, of the Islamist movements. Needless to say, the state is important, for example, to understand the paradigm shift happening in Egyptian politics in the form of the transition from secular nationalism to Islamist politics. But if the agency of the Islamist movement is underestimated, it will be difficult to understand how the Islamist organizations rapidly hegemonized the Egyptian political arena. A few words will be

adequate about to whom this book appeals. The students of the field are, to a large extent, familiar with the information presented in the book. That is to say, the book does not present something new except two points. The first one is testimonies of Qutb's living disciples. These testimonies are important in that

they cast a new light upon the inner worlds of Qutb and his surroundings. The second point I will highlight is that reading the whole conflictual history of the Middle East from the angle of the clash of charismas of Nasser and Qutb may contribute a fresh interpretation of events happening since the 1950s.

Islam Beyond Borders: The *Umma* in World Politics

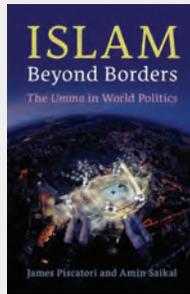
By James Piscatori and Amin Saikal

Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2019, \$34.10, ISBN: 9781108481250

Reviewed by Ravza Altuntaş-Çakır, İstanbul Sabahattin Zaim University

There are very few religious concepts that have enjoyed such a prominent place in modern political discourses as the *umma*, the global community of Muslim believers. With different meanings attached and without an overarching formal institution, the *umma* has nevertheless maintained strong symbolic, normative and political appeal in the world of nation states. However, as James Piscatori and Amin Saikal observe, with the structural fragmentation after the abolishment of the Sunni Caliphate and the absence of Shia Imamate, new forms of interconnectedness that embody “Muslim communalism today” are replacing old forms and bringing new theological and practical quandaries (p. 7).

In *Islam Beyond Borders: The Umma in World Politics*, Piscatori and Saikal “explore the dynamics by which the concept of the *umma* affects, and is affected by, Muslim politics” (p. vii). Based on an examination of Sunni and Shi'i political doctrines and case studies of actors such as Iran, ISIS and Saudi Arabia, they



present a comprehensive account of the *umma*'s relevance in the modern period. The main recurring theme of the book is that the concept of the *umma* has been constructed and reconstructed ideologically, politically, socially, strategically and theologically in different times and contexts. Piscatori and Saikal make

novel observations about these processes in their analysis. While the main focus of the book is on “intellectual and political elites,” the authors study these articulations in the context of real-world politics (p. 161). The book successfully combines modern articulations with discussions coming from medieval scholars such as Abu al-Hasan al-Mawardi, Ibn Qiba al-Razi, Taqi al-Din Ahmad ibn Taymiyya and Shahid al-Thani, as well as political developments such as the Küçük Kaynarca treaty, the Iranian Revolution and the establishment of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation [OIC].

In a generic sense, the *umma* “denotes a cluster of believers bounded by their faith and re-