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VEDI R. HADIZ

Islamic Populism in Indonesia and the Middle East. Cambridge University Press, 2016.

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In his most recent book, Hadiz wants to explain the different trajectories of Islamic populism in Indonesia, Turkey and Egypt. All three countries have in common that politics in recent years have seen “the mobilisation and homogenisation of a range of disparate grievances of the ‘masses’ against identified ‘elites’” (p. 3) couched in Islamic terms.

The three countries differ, however, to the degree this Islamic populism has gained access to formal politics. Unlike in Turkey, “representatives of Islamic politics” have remained confined to the margins of the political arena in Indonesia. In Egypt, meanwhile, politicians pushing an “Islamic agenda” have been vocal and visible in society for decades but failed to maintain power after they had gained access to the state in the context of the Arab Spring.

Hadiz puts forward two interrelated arguments for why this is the case: One, Islamic populism is a reaction by certain groups to their political and economic marginalization as a result of capitalist advancement. Two, Islamic populism has followed different political trajectories because cross-class alliances underpinning it vary in both degree and composition from one country to another.

These arguments are discussed in more detail throughout the book, which is structured as follows: In Chapter 2 Hadiz argues that Islamic populism is no different from other forms of populism to the extent that it is “very much connected to social contradictions intimately related to participation in the processes of neoliberal globalisation” (p. 4). In other words, the spread of capitalism triggers different class alliances, which subsequently shape political trajectories of Islamic populism. Chapter 3 examines the roots of Islamic populism in Indonesia, Turkey and Egypt. In Chapter 4, the main argument is presented in more detail, comparing the social bases of Islamic populism in the three countries. Chapter 5 looks at the different strategies and political vehicles employed by Islamic populists, including political parties, mass movements and “terrorism.” Chapter 6 provides a description of the Darul Islam, which is one of the oldest Islamic movements in Indonesia. How the Darul Islam movement has adapted to changing political contexts since it emerged in 1945 over time therefore contributes to our understanding of how Islamist populism is shaped by social forces, Hadiz argues. Chapter 7 examines the relationship between Islamic populism and electoral democracy while Chapter 8 wants to identify the circumstances under which Islamic populism accepts and rejects market forces. Chapter 9 discusses avenues for future research on Islamic populism.

Hadiz reaches three main conclusions: One, Islamic populism is a *modern* phenomenon, despite its portrayal in popular media and some of the academic literature as a backward-looking, inward-oriented political force. Two, the political trajectories of Islamic populism vary to a great degree between countries. Hadiz therefore disagrees with works on post-Islamism, “which is

generally presented as political adaptation in a single direction: towards ‘a more rights-centred and inclusive outlook that favors a civil/ secular state operating within a pious society’” (Bayat 2013: 29 cited in Hadiz 2016, p. 5). Three, economic structures are important determinants of Islamic populism and should therefore be given more prominence in analyses of Islamic politics around the world.

Mainstream political science based on quantitative data analyses has failed to predict populist revolts as diverse as Donald J. Trump’s victoryⁱ in the presidential elections in the USA in 2016 and the Arab Spring in 2011.ⁱⁱ

Quantitative studies’ weak explanatory power has shown the need for theoretically innovative, qualitative in-depth research on the conditions that facilitate political populism. While Hadiz’ research is therefore timely, the book unfortunately offers neither a sound theoretical framework nor much in terms of empirical insights that would help readers to better understand Islamic populism. The first two findings of the book are not particularly original or profound while the evidence presented in support of the third finding is rather confusing. One, scholars have shown some time ago for both Indonesiaⁱⁱⁱ and other Muslim-majority countries^{iv} that Islamic politics are a modern, forward-looking phenomenon. Two, scholars have also pointed out before that Islamic politics do not necessarily move in the direction of support for a secular nation state^v and that variance in Islamic politics exists both *between*^{vi} and *within* countries^{vii}. Three, and most problematic about the book under review here, the Marxist theoretical framework on which Hadiz relies does not align with most of the empirical evidence presented throughout the book.

Remember that Hadiz’s first argument said that Islamic populism is triggered by “advances of capitalist economies,” and “contradictions intimately related to participation in the process of globalization” (p. 4), while his second argument was that trajectories of Islamic populism are shaped by different cross-class alliances. Hadiz’ book provides ample evidence that “the exclusion of the ummah from taking part in the process [of capitalist accumulation] on a larger scale” (p.38) and a “perpetual inability to make use of the formal institutions of politics and the market as effective arenas of contestation” (p. 116) triggered populist movements under the banner of Islam in Indonesia, Egypt and Turkey.

While this is in line with Hadiz’ theoretical framework, Hadiz then presents evidence for his second argument that seems to be more in line with classic movement theory and its core argument about how states, that is, *political* conditions, shape movements, not anonymous social processes associated with *economic* change identified by Hadiz as the main reason for different trajectories of Islamic activism around the globe.

For instance, Hadiz shows how in Indonesia, Egypt and Turkey “modernization” and “state-building” was led by “states under the control of secular nationalist elites that sometimes made room for but at other times resolutely peripheralised social interests claiming to represent the ummah” (p. 79). Furthermore, Hadiz explains that a revolution under the banner of Islam did not occur in Indonesia, Egypt and Turkey due to the fact that there are no powerful clergies in any of these three countries. In addition, the state was able to prevent alliances between leftist and Islamist forces (p. 80). The state, in other words, has been “a major impediment to the advancement of the ummah [in Indonesia]” (p. 110). At the same time, “when repression against

the social agents of Islamic politics reached its height in the 1980s, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt was starting to immerse itself in the Mubarak-era system of electoral politics. At the same time, some of the political precursors of the AKP in Turkey were starting to benefit from the 'highly controlled opening to religious groups' that was then being initiated by a state controlled by military Kemalists and some of their technocratic allies..." (p. 110).^{viii} Similarly, Hadiz writes that the variety in Islamic activism in Indonesia is "...partly attributable to the social effects of New Order suppression – leading to the requirement that its activists develop strategies, sometimes highly localised, to cope with a harshly authoritarian regime..." (p. 117). In a similar vein, explaining the absence of a central command structure in many Islamic movements, Hadiz states: "The reason is simple: these organisations developed in relation to nationally defined battles..." (p. 144). There are numerous other passages in the book that suggest the importance of *political*, not *economic* conditions as the decisive factor in shaping the contours of Islamic populism.

In contrast, Hadiz presents insufficient empirical material in support of his claim that economic conditions account for the variance in Islamic populism. For instance, claims that the Islamization of former Communist areas in Central Java was made possible by "profound changes in the conditions of material life in the locality" (p. 129) or that Islamic populism is shaped by "the specific kinds of social interests that have converged, albeit with inevitably varying levels of internal coherence, within the multi-class alliances that sociologically enable the new Islamic populism" (p. 138) are not supported by empirical evidence.

In short, while Hadiz claims that *economic conditions* matter for our understanding of variance in Islamic populism, the evidence he presents throughout his book suggest that *political factors* determine why and how Islamic populism gains political salience and influence. Rather than relying on Marx to explain variance in Islamic activism in the context of neoliberal globalization, Hadiz' argument seems to be closer to scholars such as Kimmeldorf, who, in his account of why labour unionists in the United States of America became fierce ideologues on the West Coast while labour unions on the East Coast became politically conservative rackets, has shown that the *political environment* explains for differences in social mobilization triggered by capitalist advancement.^{ix}

ⁱ Hailed as the "most influential political-science book in recent memory" by The Economist in 2016 (The Economist, "Pushback" 5th March 2016), Martin Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel and John Zaller's *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations before and after Reform* (Chicago: Chicago Studies in American Politics, 2008) claimed that political parties guide voters away from populist politicians and towards "acceptable nominees."

ⁱⁱ Jeff Goodwin. "Why we were surprised (again) by the Arab Spring," *Swiss Political Science Review* 17, 4 (2011): 452-6.

ⁱⁱⁱ R. Michael Feener. *Shari'a and Social Engineering: The Implementation of Islamic Law in Contemporary Aceh, Indonesia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

^{iv} Charles Tripp. *Islam and the Moral Economy: The Challenge of Capitalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

^v For Indonesia, see, for instance, Masdar Hilmy. *Islamism and Democracy in Indonesia: Piety and Pragmatism* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2010). A similar argument has been made more recently by Jeremy Menchik. *Islam and Democracy in Indonesia: Tolerance without Liberalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016). For other Muslim-majority countries, see Gunes M. Tezcur, "The moderation theory revisited: The case of Islamic political actors," *Party Politics* 16 (2010): 69-88.

vi Alison Pargeter "Localism and Radicalization in North Africa," *International Affairs* 85 (September 2009): 1031-44.

vii Christine Fair "Islamic Militancy in Pakistan," (July 2009) Available at <http://tinyurl.com/coeyqu6> (Accessed 21 June 2017).

viii For other empirical evidence in Hadiz book that suggests the importance of political, not economic conditions, for our understanding of varying trajectories of Islamic populism, see, for instance, pp. 64, 117, 139, 144.

ix Howard Kimmeldorf. *Reds or Rackets? The Making of Radical and Conservative Unions on the Waterfront* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988).

ROSS KING

Heritage and Identity in Contemporary Thailand: Memory, Place and Power

Singapore: NUS Press, 2017

Xiii+319pp. ISBN 978-981-4722-27-8, SGD \$38.00

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The intersection of memory, power and heritage is assuredly fertile, though no means untrodden, ground for a monograph on contemporary Thailand. Nidhi Eoseewong, Maurizio Pellegi, Thongchai Winichakul and Craig Reynolds have demonstrated the importance of these elements in understanding contemporary Thai identities in their historical analyses. *Heritage and Identity in Contemporary Thailand* approaches this vast subject from the perspective of architecture and tourism studies, bringing together a diverse collection of case studies ranging from the economics of an Isaan village handicraft market to the entirety of the Bangkok khlong system. The book is divided into four parts; an introduction, a section of six chapters on heritage and memory, a section entitled heritage, memory and inequality (also six chapters) and a conclusion. The majority of the book comprises the 12 case studies found in the "internal chapters" of the book. Often containing, great hunks of evocative descriptive writing, they validate King's assertion that 'heritage is not always about grand monuments and national treasures' (p. 3).

A standout chapter about the Japanese colonization of Thailand concisely brings together several themes central to the entire volume. The role of memory, and of course forgetting, are explored in relation to the sites of WWII. The vexed question of heritage ownership is also discussed. Whose heritage is the death railway of Kanchanburi, or the bridge over the river Kwai? Thailand's, Japan's, Australia's, the *romusha* of Java's? Can adventurer Yamada Nagamasa be considered a *lieux de mémoire*? How has Japan's modernization affected the physical and cultural landscape of Bangkok? Some wonderful description is also to be found. A thought provoking chapter about the changing character of Sukhumvit has a wonderful digression on the informalisation of formal places. Describing a now-'slum building' on Sukhumvit 71; 'clearly this is "formal" in that its developers would have had some form of development approval (however obtained and from what "authority"), it is owned and it pays taxes and enjoys municipal connections. It is also *informal* as poor occupants have adapted its space and extended outwards from its façade in a *mélange* of new screens, residual wreckage, old signboards of either surviving or departed enterprises and other tactics to seize on a modicum of privacy and additional space' (pp. 167-8).

However, this chapter—like others in the collection—have a tendency to romanticize anterior aspects of Thai life over modernized forms. After a snuffy account of the gentrification of Phra Khanong, the author remarks that the market sells 'clothing better and cheaper than anywhere