



Arnold-  
Bergstraesser-  
Institut

Working Paper

No. 19

Freiburg, Germany  
February 2022

Citizenship in Syria and Iraq after 2011:  
Neo-Sectarianism or “Citizenship of Want”?

Tilman Lüdke



|   |    |
|---|----|
| Abstract  | 3  |
| Introduction  | 4  |
| Citizenship and the Modern State in the Middle East   | 5  |
| Citizenship: An Alien Concept in the Middle East?   | 9  |
| The Evolution of Citizenship in the Middle East from the Late Ottoman to the Present Period | 10 |
| Post-Ottoman Citizenship  | 13 |
| Dominant Minorities and Continuous Warfare as Impediments to Democratic Citizenship         | 15 |
| The Case Studies: Syria and Iraq  | 16 |
| Iraq  | 17 |
| Syria   | 19 |
| Coexistence: Citizenship Before and After Cataclysms  | 21 |
| The Salience of Sectarianism  | 22 |
| Psychological Citizenship   | 23 |
| Conclusion: The Excluded  | 24 |
| Bibliography  | 26 |
| ABI Working paper series: Already published issues  | 27 |



## **Abstract**

Both Syria and Iraq have experienced partial state disintegration over the last two decades. Power is not only contested between regimes and their opponents, but also by various sectarian actors united only in their opposition to incumbent regimes. At first glance this seems to suggest that decades of independent statehood have not sufficed to bond Syrians and Iraqis together as citizens, but rather that sectarian and other sub-state identities reign supreme and can be instrumentalised to feed violent conflicts. “Sectarianism” is an Ottoman legacy that was prolonged and expanded by the colonial regimes. After independence both Syria and Iraq came to be ruled by regimes dominated by a single sectarian group (Alawis in Syria, Sunni Arab Muslims in Iraq). Sectarian conflicts are by no means limited to Syria and Iraq, but manifest problems in almost all states of the Middle East; reference will thus be made to other states where appropriate.

The central question is whether sectarianism – or rather, sectarian violence – is the outcome of societal upheaval in times of crisis or a historically grown phenomenon that can only be controlled by authoritarian regimes. A historical analysis would suggest the former as an answer; one might observe a non-politicised “everyday citizenship” involving citizens of diverse ethno-religious backgrounds in all Middle Eastern states. Rather than “popular sectarianism” it is the subversive actions of various stakeholders – indigenous as well as exogenous – that foment said violence. Furthermore, there is evidence that the increasingly exclusive regimes in both countries have produced a new social alliance between the traditional “poor” and the excluded middle classes, thus creating a new alliance that is seemingly capable of and willing to challenge the sectarian syndrome.

## Introduction

Much of the violence that has occurred in Iraq and Syria since 2003/ 2011 has had a sectarian character. There are two predominant schools of interpretation of this phenomenon. “Primordialists” see Syria and Iraq as colonial constructs that forced multi-ethnic and multi-religious populations into artificially created borders. For a variety of reasons these populations have not grown together as an Iraqi or Syrian citizenry, but have retained sectarian identities marked by loyalty towards their own and aloofness or hostility towards others. Regimes in the past have laboured hard to keep the ensuing tensions and potentially violent conflicts at bay by employing highly authoritarian measures. Once these regimes were gone or greatly reduced in power, either through outside interference or a credibly strong challenge from within, sectarian violence followed an innate logic; in other words, the chickens came home to roost.

“Constructionists”, for want of a better term, employ a more sophisticated method of interpretation. In line with the works of Benedict Anderson, they regard “sects” as imagined communities, which can be fabricated, un-fabricated and re-fabricated.<sup>1</sup> Sectarian regimes thus manufacture sectarian identities in order to curry favour with their own sect and keep at bay members of other sects. In times of need, sectarian identities may be based on the idea of seeking protection and support from one’s own group when (supposedly) threatened by others. In both cases, these schools of thought employ a “self/we – other” dichotomy that bodes ill for the future of a Syrian or Iraqi society based on notions of common citizenship. The events of the early 21st century have thus destroyed or greatly weakened societal cohesion.

These two schools of sectarian thought have been countered by those who ascribe societal division and conflict less to identity-related issues than to (relative) economic deprivation. This deprivation in the past affected only the “poor”, denigrated by the middle classes as backwards, gullible and religious. In recent times, however, the hardship caused by the adoption of neo-liberal economic policies and the disappearance or destabilisation of patrimonial regimes has contributed to the emergence of an alliance of the needy and the excluded, creating a group perhaps to be termed “citizens of want”. Shared economic and social deprivation unites members of different sects, or at least greatly reduces sectarian tensions. According to proponents of this theory, economic betterment and a higher level of social justice and mobility could be effective tools to heal societal rifts. This paper intends to

---

<sup>1</sup> In the context of this working paper “sect” refers to ethnic as well as religious groups. See Simon Mabon/ Lucia Ardovini, *Sectarianism in the Contemporary Middle East*, (London: Routledge, 2018), 2–3. See also Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 1983).

analyse modern-day Iraq and Syria according to these two approaches in order to determine whether sectarian conflict has rendered a future unified Iraqi and Syrian society impossible, or whether it is merely the outcome of economic and social deprivation attributable to the policies of authoritarian regimes.

It does so by examining the transformation of these societies from an Ottoman social order characterised by sectarianism as a socio-political administrative tool to a “modernity” shaped by independent, supposedly national states. It argues that the challenges posed first by colonial rule, and later by authoritarian regimes, have indeed hardened sectarian identities. It also contends that these identities resulted in part from systematic discrimination and oppression by these regimes, although they attempted to dilute and erase sectarian differences out of fear of societal disintegration. It thus arrives at the conclusion that Syrian and Iraqi society in the 20th and early 21st centuries have been characterised by the systematic exclusion of large groups from power and wealth, and that the reduction of such exclusion could go a long way toward alleviating sectarian tensions.

### **Citizenship and the Modern State in the Middle East**

In spite of its venerable age, T.H. Marshall’s definition of democratic citizenship as composed of civic, political and social rights has never been refuted; yet it has been extensively refined and extended in more recent literature.<sup>2</sup> Criticism of the model focused first on the limited number of rights (recent authors have noted that Marshall’s catalogue of rights does not cover sexual, religious or “racial” rights – in other words, rights involving “diversity”).<sup>3</sup> A second critique is based on the question of whether rights truly form the basis of citizenship. Thym has convincingly demonstrated that rights certainly represent the foundation of modern citizenship in the European Union, but it is questionable whether this notion holds true for all times and particularly all areas.<sup>4</sup> Thirdly, Marshall’s choice of example – modern Britain – has been challenged on the grounds of being excessively Eurocentric. This leads to the question of whether Marshall’s concepts are also applicable to non-European societies.

Roel Meijer noted that citizenship has been an understudied issue with regard to the Middle East until recently.<sup>5</sup> Once scholars around Nils Butenschøn<sup>6</sup> began to fill this gap, the

---

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Humphrey Marshall, “Citizenship and Social Class”, in *Thomas Humphrey Marshall, Citizenship and Social Class: And Other Essays*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 1–85.

<sup>3</sup> Roel Meijer, “Political Citizenship and Social Movements in the Arab World”, in Hein-Anton van der Heijden (ed.), *Handbook of Political Citizenship and Social Movements*, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2014), 631.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Thym, “Frontiers of EU Citizenship: Three Trajectories and their Methodological Foundation”, in Dimitry Kochenov (ed.), *EU Citizenship and Federalism: The Role of Rights*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 705–730.

<sup>5</sup> Meijer, *Political Citizenship and Social Movements in the Arab World*, 629.

main focus of citizenship research was less on relations between citizens and the state, but on citizenship as a polity-creating community: questions of membership and belonging – first connected with citizenship by William Rogers Brewbaker – figured prominently.<sup>7</sup> In the scarce literature on citizenship in the Middle East, one perspective seems to prevail: “citizenship”, in a proactive sense, is interpreted as a struggle of citizens for their rights, and of marginalized citizens or non-citizens for recognition and integration. However, given the socio-political realities in many Middle Eastern countries, lateral relations between different groups are only rarely mentioned: whom do citizens, who feel fully integrated, recognize as fellow-citizens? Which other groups are they prepared to accept as entitled to the same rights as themselves? And what are the criteria that lead to the exclusion of such “eligibility for citizenship”? Has “citizenship” – the forceful assembly of different ethnic and religious groups within artificially drawn boundaries of (supposed) nation states – managed to create a sense of community transcending ethno-religious boundaries, or not? And, if so, is this citizenship a positively charged concept, or is it rather a negative, exclusionary concept that mainly defines itself through what it is not?

In the Middle East two historical factors lie behind these issues: first, the background of the Ottoman Empire and its millet system; then, the empire’s demise and replacement by initially colonised, later independent (so-called) nation states. The qualifier “so-called” appears necessary, as these constructs continued to contain multi-ethnic and multi-religious populations, but did not develop effective and successful political and economic systems to accommodate this diversity. This manifested itself in two interconnected ways: first, the nation-building policies pursued by the various regimes alienated those considered not to belong to the national community (non-Arabs, Jews after 1948); second, among those alienated sub-state groups (or, in the case of the Kurds, even trans-state, given the Kurdish presence across Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran and Azerbaijan) many survived and were even strengthened. There is, to this day, no Middle Eastern state that has arrived at a successful democratic citizenship regime in which all citizens, regardless of faith or ethnic group, share equal civic, political and social rights.<sup>8</sup>

Post-colonial scholars such as Homi Bhabha have problematised the issue of “non-Western” and “non-European” societies. In their view Europe has exported not only colonial

---

<sup>6</sup> Nils A. Butenschon/ Uri Davis/ Manuel Hassounian, (eds.), *Citizenship and the State in the Middle East: Approaches and Applications*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000).

<sup>7</sup> William Rogers Brewbaker (ed.), *Immigration and the Politics of Citizenship in Europe and North America*, (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1989).

<sup>8</sup> See Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship, Inequality and Difference: Historical Perspectives*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

domination, but also – in the shape of the modern nation state – forms of social organisation that are “quasi-Western”, thus fulfilling Bhabha’s definition as “almost (equal), but not quite”. Bhabha’s definition introduces another important aspect: “non-European” or “non-Western” seems an unwarranted subsuming of a great number of states all over the globe without paying sufficient attention to their specificities. Deringil has applied Bhabha’s concept to the Middle East: in his view, the “almost (equal), but not quite” refers to the fact of the Ottoman Empire being a Muslim power and its Islam-inspired culture retaining great relevance for the post-Ottoman successor states.<sup>9</sup>

In the Middle East, as elsewhere, the imperative of secular, democratic citizenship (i.e. equality before the law) conflicts with two well-entrenched and inter-related political traditions, the first claiming the superiority of one chosen confession over the state (fundamentalism), and the second proclaiming the supremacy of one chosen nation (sectarianism). They aim to replace the voluntary foundations of religious, national and societal association with involuntary state sanctions.... It is in this sense and in this way that both fundamentalism and sectarianism represent gross violations of the universal secular value of political freedom and are correctly identified as tyrannical.<sup>10</sup>

The value in this description of the problem lies in its applicability both to the Ottoman and the Post-Ottoman context: in the Ottoman Empire, Muslims enjoyed predominance over non-Muslims; in the emerging national state after the end of empire, one (often ethnically, sometimes ethno-religiously defined) group claimed – and forcefully upheld – superiority over others. Carter V. Findley put it succinctly when he remarked:

These ideas (of modernization, politics and society) include a tendency to rationality and law, and a commitment to liberal principles of individual rights and the parliamentary-constitutional form of government. Simultaneously, they include a tendency towards technocratic authoritarianism and toward transmutation of liberal political forms into those of a tutelary regime, a collectivist concept of patriotism and a strong statist-centrist orientation, the final object of which was not the imperial order, but the nation-state.<sup>11</sup>

In the Middle East this tutelary regime of the modern state and its concept of citizenship – in origin European – did not originate with the colonial period after World War I,

---

<sup>9</sup> Selim Deringil, “They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery”: The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2003, 311–342.

<sup>10</sup> Uri Davis, “Conceptions of Citizenship in the Middle East: State, Nation and People”, in Nils A. Butenschøn/ Uri Davis/ Manuel Hassounian (eds.), *Citizenship and the State in the Middle East: Approaches and Applications*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 69.

<sup>11</sup> Carter Vaughn Findley, “The Advent of Ideology in the Middle East (Part II)”, *Studia Islamica* No. 56 (1982), 147–180, here 168.

but was already observable in the late Ottoman period, particularly in the less accessible parts of the empire. The modern state and its concept of citizenship was superimposed over indigenous societies.<sup>12</sup> A stronger bureaucracy coupled with more effective administration facilitated extraction (taxation and recruitment for military service) and strengthened the state in its struggle against colonial domination from outside powers. In the process, the legal pluralism of the millet system was increasingly discarded in favour of “Ottomanism”, an identity supposed to transcend ethno-religious boundaries. Turning members of millets into citizens was therefore an authoritarian act which encountered considerable – yet ultimately futile – resistance.<sup>13</sup> In the post-Ottoman Arab states the emergence and solidification of the authoritarian state also was supported by protracted intra- and inter-state conflicts (contested power within states, the Israeli-Arab conflict and international competition for hegemony in the region). The many conflicts Middle Eastern states found themselves embroiled in has given citizenship a martial character: many Middle Eastern regimes treat their citizens as a (military) resource to be employed rather than a populace to be cared for. Befitting the “serving” image of Middle Eastern citizens, regimes have placed a premium on the duties, but not the rights of citizens. This expansion of the means of coercion over both society and geographical regions thus allows Middle Eastern “citizens” to be classified, to a considerable degree, as subjects. The “authoritarian bargain” of the 1950s and 1960s tempered this subjectship by granting extensive social rights to citizens in exchange for the withholding of political rights. Initially the authoritarian bargain was complemented with various anti-colonial ideologies such as Pan-Arabism. Once these ideologies moved into the background, regime preservation took priority; regimes turned into forces of the status quo, while ideologies such as political Islam became powerful challengers. All attempts by the citizenry to re-acquire political rights have thus far proved futile.

Economic conditions have further hampered the emergence of democratic citizenship. Broadly speaking, the region is characterized by states that have either too few economic resources or too many. Too few resources mean stunted economic growth and usually an oversized state sector; citizens become dependent on their incomes from the state and can thus be disciplined. Resource-rich states, such as the Gulf States with their oil wealth, can simply buy off the demand for more political rights by funding extensive welfare systems that

---

<sup>12</sup> That does not mean that similar processes did not happen in many areas of Europe as well. See e.g. Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernisation of Rural France, 1871–1914*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976); Mark Mazower, *The Balkans: A Short History*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000); Wim van Meurs/ Alina Mungiu-Pippidi (eds.), *Ottomans into Europeans: State and Institution-Building in South Eastern Europe*, (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2010).

<sup>13</sup> Deringil, *They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery*, 327.

guarantee social rights. In general, Middle Eastern states have done reasonably well in the fields of health service and education, yet they have as a rule over-spent on their militaries and at the same time failed to create productive economic systems that are able to absorb a well-educated, growing population.<sup>14</sup> Coupled with corruption on the one hand, and the introduction of neo-liberal economic models on the other, this has created strong societal tensions, which most recently discharged themselves during the so-called “Arab Spring”; yet instead of liberalising the Middle Eastern regimes this upheaval seems rather to have given authoritarianism a new lease on life, as authoritarian rulers now claim to be the only reliable guarantors of “stability”.

### **Citizenship: An Alien Concept in the Middle East?**

Comparisons of the Ottoman and post-Ottoman states and societies with European states and societies are beset by a number of pitfalls. The difficulty lies in what might be termed the hurdle of translation: thus, for instance, the concept of “freedom” (Ottoman Turkish *hürriyet*) needs interpretation and should by no means automatically be understood to signify the same concept as the word “freedom” in modern Western understanding.<sup>15</sup> Other terms are even more difficult to translate: “democracy” does not have an authentic translation into any of the predominant languages of the Muslim world (Arabic *al-dimuqratiyya*, modern Turkish *demokrasi*). The same qualifier goes for historical concepts and even chronology. There seems to be, however, a practicable solution to this conundrum: given the fact that from the 18th century onwards the entire Muslim world was confronted with Western colonialism, and thus not only with Western military power but also with Western concepts, it appears justified to take European concepts as a frame of reference, always bearing in mind that such concepts will have been interpreted and perhaps even twisted by the receiving society.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, in his 1890 dictionary *A Turkish and English Lexicon* Sir James W. Redhouse simply translates the Ottoman Turkish term *watan* with “one’s place, one’s home”.<sup>17</sup> Götz Schregle’s *Deutsch-Arabisches Wörterbuch* uses the word “*muwatin*”, which is derived from

---

<sup>14</sup> Suleiman Abu-Bader/ Aamer Abu-Qarn, “Government Expenditures, Military Spending and Economic Growth: Causality Evidence from Egypt, Israel and Syria”, Munich Personal RePec Archive (MRPA) Paper No. 1115, <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/1115>, (accessed 15 October 2021).

<sup>15</sup> See Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, (3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York/ Oxford 2002), 129.

<sup>16</sup> For the (still understudied) topic of civil society in the Ottoman Empire, see e.g. Şerif Mardin, “Power, Civil Society and Culture in the Ottoman Empire”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 11 (1969), 258–281; Ömer Çaha/ M. Lutfullah Karaman, “Civil Society in the Ottoman Empire”, *Journal of Economic and Social Research*, vol 8, no. 2, (2005), 53–81.

<sup>17</sup> Sir James W. Redhouse, *A Turkish and English Lexicon: Showing in English the Significations of the Turkish Terms*, (Constantinople 1890/ New Impression Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1987), 2141.

*watan*, to translate the German *Staatsbürger* (citizen).<sup>18</sup> Krahl's *Deutsch-Arabisches Wörterbuch* concurs, yet also lists "citizenship/nationality" under "*tabi'a*" (which in Arabic is more akin to "nature"), and also "citizen-like" (*bürgerlich/ bourgeois*) under "*madani*" (more akin to "civilized") or "*burguazi*" (explanation superfluous).<sup>19</sup> Langenscheidt's *Standard Turkish Dictionary* of 1985 finally gives "*vatandaş/sivil*" as translations for "citizen" and "*vatandaşlık/ tabiiyet*" for "citizenship".<sup>20</sup>

The objective of this little exercise in perusing dictionaries in two of the leading languages of the Islamic cultural area is self-evident: no Arabic or Turkish translation exactly resembles the meaning of "citizen" in the modern Western sense. *Tabi'a/ tabiiyet*, more often translated as "nature", is more closely related to one's place of origin and of one's birth; *madani* refers, first and foremost, to the inhabitant of a city, presumably the only place where civilization (*medeniyet* in modern Turkish) may exist. Thus a grave problem comes into existence: terms like *madani*, better translated as "civilized", do not equate with the meaning of "citizen". Does one have to be "civilized" (even if that term had a clearly identifiable universal meaning – and if not, who is to determine what meaning it has?) in order to be a citizen? Likewise, a bourgeois is (even excluding Marxist terminology) rather a member of a class or a milieu than simply forming part of a community of citizens. "Citizenship", in the modern Western sense of the word, consequently appears to be an alien concept. Yet, on closer examination, European and non-European (for want of better terms) realms bordering on one another have more in common than first meets the eye. To begin with, "Europe/ Non-Europe" is not a clear analytical category, unless one is willing to apply Dipesh Chakrabarty's brutally simple notion that "if Europe is a universal paradigm for modernity we are all, European and non-European, to a degree inescapably Eurocentric".<sup>21</sup>

## **The Evolution of Citizenship in the Middle East from the Late Ottoman to the Present Period**

"Empire" as an analytical category has become associated with a certain style and method of rule that is strongly attentive to the religious and cultural variety of its subject peoples.<sup>22</sup> Many empires are territorially large, and the imperial centre is unable to exert effective

---

<sup>18</sup> Götz Schregle, *Deutsch-Arabisches Wörterbuch*, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harassowitz, here Beirut: Librarie du Liban, 1977), 1125.

<sup>19</sup> Günther Krahl, *Deutsch-Arabisches Wörterbuch*, (Leipzig: VEB Verlag Enzyklopädie, 1964/ here Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1971), 96, 368.

<sup>20</sup> Resuhi Akdikmen, *Standard Turkish Dictionary* (English-Turkish/ Turkish-English), (Istanbul: Inkilap Kitabevi Yayin Sanayi, 1985/ New York: Langenscheidt, 1986), 84.

<sup>21</sup> Vangelis Kechriotis, "Postcolonial Criticism Encounters Late Ottoman Studies", *Historiein* 13, 40.

<sup>22</sup> Jane Burbank/ Frederick Cooper, *Empires: Power and the Politics of Variety*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

control over its peripheries. In order to rule at all, it frequently resorts to indirect rule. Despite the attention paid to variety, this does not mean that empires do not strive to create an “imperial mentality” among their subjects. In the Ottoman Empire a process of creating imperial citizens – commonly known as the concept of “Ottomanism” – had been set in motion by the middle of the 19th century. It was an undertaking that is commonly regarded as at failure. For the very concept of citizenship in the Ottoman context meant not only equal rights for each and every citizen – irrespective of religious affiliation – but also the increasingly effective imposition of duties and foremost military service, which was strongly resented by the non-Muslim population. Ottomanism also spelt the death-knell for a system that had worked reasonably well for centuries: the Ottoman millet system.

The millet system, the Ottoman method of rule over a population consisting to a large extent of non-Muslims, originated partly from Qur’anic scripture and partly from practical considerations. In principle a “millet” was any religious community (thus including Sunni Muslims). In practice it referred to non-Muslim communities enjoying far-ranging autonomy. According to Muslim law, “People of the Book” (Arab. *ahl al-kitab*) – members of other monotheistic religions, such as Jews, Christians or Zoroastrians – are entitled to practise their religion and maintain communal buildings in exchange for a special tax (Arab. *jizya*, Turk. *cizye*). At the same time, the central authorities simply lacked the power to rule by force alone. Local elites needed to be co-opted by having their positions granted within the imperial framework. Thus religious leaders were appointed as quasi-rulers over their communities; they had the right to address the sultan in times of need, and administered laws dealing with all crimes excluding those involving bloodshed.<sup>23</sup>

The advantages and disadvantages of the Ottoman millet system were clear: on the one hand, it constituted a pragmatic and economic system of ruling and administering a multi-religious and multi-ethnic society; on the other hand, it introduced not only a vertical stratification (ruler – ruled), but also a horizontal one (different groups living side-by-side under common rule). It thus constituted a major obstacle to the creation of one common Ottoman identity, the need for which arose once the empire became threatened by centrifugal nationalisms, on the one hand, and European colonial encroachment on the other. The remedy, in the view of the reforming Ottoman governments of the late 19th and early 20th century, lay in the creation of “Ottomanism”, which might be translated as “imperial nationalism”.

---

<sup>23</sup> See Benjamin Braude/ Bernard Lewis (eds.), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, Vol. I: *The Central Lands*, Vol. II: *The Arabic-Speaking Lands*, (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982).

The liberal notion of the “imperial nation” followed the idea that coherence gives strength, and thus fosters the resilience of an empire facing colonialist encroachment. It assumes that the inhabitants of the empire – independent of their religious, ethnic or cultural identity – regard the empire as worthy of protection and are willing to contribute to its defence.<sup>24</sup> The outcome of this line of thought was the reform period known as the “Tanzimat” (New Order). Between 1839 and 1876 a number of reforms were carried out that aimed at creating Ottoman citizens out of the different millets. The success of these reforms, however, remained limited. Instead of applauding the removal of discrimination, non-Muslims in particular mourned the loss of previous privileges.<sup>25</sup> Despite such difficulties, the Ottoman vision of a harmonious multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society has resonated with scholars, particularly in light of the seemingly intractable conflicts that continue to trouble the Middle East. As Kemal Karpat describes:”

Although the Ottoman Empire is destroyed and cannot be reconstructed, there still exists throughout the area one legacy of the Ottomans: the memory of peaceful religious and ethnic coexistence on the basis of mutual recognition and acceptance. This legacy is a valuable one that should be appreciated and preserved, and this memory of the days of peaceful coexistence should be converted into a present-day reality in the Middle East.<sup>26</sup>

Other authors concur: Michelle Campos’s study on civic Ottomanism that cut across ethnic and religious lines in late Ottoman Palestine ended by noting that “a shared civic project and a shared homeland, though short-lived and incomplete, could not be more relevant to the present historical moment”.<sup>27</sup> Öztan noted in 2016: “We may be inclined to interpret this recent scholarly preoccupation as an unconscious attempt to romanticize the Ottoman past and to see this romanticization as a reflection of scholarly discontent about the ways in which the secular nation-states that replaced Ottoman rule failed to extend prosperity, peace, and stability to the wider social segments in the modern Middle East.”<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> See Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 67–102.

<sup>25</sup> Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 74–129.

<sup>26</sup> Kemal Karpat, “The Ottoman Ethnic and Confessional Legacy in the Middle East”, in Milton Esman/ Itamar Rabinovich, *Ethnicity, Pluralism and the State in the Middle East*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 35–53, here 53.

<sup>27</sup> Michelle A. Campos, “Making Citizens: Contesting Citizenship in Late Ottoman Palestine”, in Yuval Ben-Bassat/ Eyal Ginio (eds.), *Late Ottoman Palestine: The Period of Young Turk Rule*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 17–33.

<sup>28</sup> Ramazan Hakki Öztan, “Nationalism in Function: ‘Rebellions’ in the Ottoman Empire and Narratives in Its Absence,” in M. Hakan Yavuz/ Feroz Ahmad (eds.), *War and Collapse: World War I and the Ottoman State*, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press 2016), 161–162.

The demise of the Ottoman Empire, for all practical purposes, may be dated to the Ottoman defeat in World War I. Thus, on 30 October 1918, an imperial tradition of more than 600 years (or more than 400 years if one looks at the Middle East only) was terminated. It thus appears to be justified to argue that all states of the Middle East are post-imperial states: they have become “nation states” on the surface, but preserve the complicated ethno-religious and ethno-cultural political and social systems of Ottoman imperial society. In recent years this problem has been diagnosed not only in the Middle Eastern successor states of the Ottoman Empire, but also in those to be found in the Balkans: the breakdown of Yugoslavia into hostile communities engaged in fierce and bloody civil wars during the 1990s was at least partially rooted in this heritage. The defective relationship between “citizen” and “state” in many south-east European states reinforces this argument even further.<sup>29</sup>

### **Post-Ottoman Citizenship**

One of the central issues that came to the fore after the end of the Ottoman Empire was the transformation of the millet system into a social – and political – order which gave “majority” status to some groups, and that of “minorities” to others.<sup>30</sup> The Treaty of Lausanne of July 1923, which paved the way for the foundation of the Turkish Republic, paid particular attention to the issue of minorities. The allied powers, on the one hand, expressed grave concern about potential maltreatment of these groups in a Muslim-dominated nation state, due to the expulsions and mass killings of Greeks and Armenians they had witnessed in the years immediately preceding and during World War I. The Turkish envoy, Ismet Pasha (Inönü) rejected these concerns by pointing out that the Turkish state to be founded would be a secular republic inhabited by citizens; all Turkish citizens would be equal in rights and duties under the Turkish constitution and the introduction of new legal codes (notably based on the Swiss civil code).<sup>31</sup>

The crux was that Ismet Pasha spoke of an ideal, and not of a reality. The excesses of World War I, the territorial boundaries of the new state and the official policy adopted by the Turkish nationalists meant that the Turkish Republic would come into being as a (Sunni-) Muslim-dominated state; in fact, “Turkish” nationalism during the first decade of the

---

<sup>29</sup> Wim van Meurs/ Alina Mungiu-Pippidi (eds.), *Ottomans Into Europeans: State and Institution-Building in South-Eastern Europe*, (London: Hurst, 2010).

<sup>30</sup> See Aline Schlaepper, “Defining Minorities: Mission Impossible? The Case of Hashemite Iraq”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol. 50, No. 4, (November 2019), 769–772; Heather J. Sharkey, “History Rhymes? Late Ottoman Millets and Post-Ottoman Minorities in the Middle East”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 50 (2018), 760–764.

<sup>31</sup> For the importance of the Swiss Civil Code for the shaping of Turkish society, see for example David Hotham, *The Turks*, (London: Macmillan, 1972), 194.

republic's existence might more appropriately be called "Muslim" nationalism. It came as a huge shock to the Turkish nationalists that the Kurds, after the events of the First World War by far the most numerous non-Turkish group within the republic's boundaries, vehemently rejected a Turkish identity. This rejection was the more noteworthy as the absolute majority of Kurds were (and are) Sunni Muslims: not even a shared religion was a sufficiently strong bond to overcome ethno-cultural boundaries. Since its inception, the Turkish Republic has been faced with a "Kurdish problem" (or Turkish Kurds with a "Turkish problem"), and a solution to said problem, sought sometimes by violence, sometimes by political and diplomatic means, is still a long way off. Syrian and Iraqi Kurds have likewise faced discrimination and violence sometimes bordering on genocide.<sup>32</sup>

Arab nationalism took a similar direction. Sati al-Husri, one of the most profound theoreticians of Arab nationalism, minced no words when he remarked that the Arab nation was inclusive and open to all feeling themselves Arab; yet whoever – in spite of being Arab – rejected a national identity "would have to be shown the right path".<sup>33</sup> It thus follows that the inroads that nationalism – in whichever form – made into the modern Middle East have created a massive problem for groups at variance with a Muslim majority. No state in the region has found a satisfactory way to deal with "difference". The problem is particularly pronounced in those states with a multi-ethnic and multi-religious population. Egypt, for instance, where the only sizeable majority are the Copts (roughly 10% of the population), may be regarded as fairly homogenous; Syria, with a considerable Kurdish minority, several Christian confessions and a deep division between the Sunni Muslim majority and the 'Alawi minority (which from 1970 until the outbreak of the civil war in 2011 dominated the country) is the exact opposite.

The result of this inability among countries in the Middle East to accommodate difference has been drastic: no country has developed a functioning democracy. Lebanon and Israel, the two exceptions to that rule, may at best be called "defective democracies": Lebanon's democracy is restricted by its attention to religious diversity in the country, with seats in parliament and official positions allotted in proportion to the different religious groups (based on a census that is long outdated); Israel, since its foundation, has been beset by the inherent contradiction of its nature: it can be a Jewish state (in which case all non-Jews are reduced to second-class citizens) or a democratic state (which would mean that its Jewish character is in danger).

---

<sup>32</sup> See Soner Cağaptay, *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who is a Turk?*, (London: Routledge, 2006); Thomas McGee, "The Stateless Kurds of Syria", *Tilburg Law Review* 19 (2014), 171–181.

<sup>33</sup> Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: From Triumph to Despair*, (Princeton and Oxford, 2003), 72.

However, these two countries are the only ones which have refrained from taking the course all the other countries have adopted: authoritarian government to a greater or lesser extent. Such regimes came into being as anti-colonial regimes, dealing with problems that had already beset the late Ottoman Empire and that increased – rather than decreased – in its aftermath. The turn toward authoritarianism was not inevitable: in the early post-World War I period there was definitely a “liberal phase”, which in Syria lasted until 1949 and in Iraq until 1958.<sup>34</sup>

### **Dominant Minorities and Continuous Warfare as Impediments to Democratic Citizenship**

In many Middle Eastern states, dominant minorities took over power, either right from the beginning or in later periods. Sharif Faisal and his retinue (also referred to as the “Sharifian officers”) established a Sunni-led regime in the Shi’ite majority territory of Iraq. The Sunnis managed to hold on to their dominant position until the US-led invasion of 2003, which toppled the Ba’ath regime of Saddam Husain and eventually put a Shi’ite-dominated regime in power.<sup>35</sup> In Transjordan, the dominant parties were two-fold: the British guaranteed and financed the state while the Emir (from 1946 King) ‘Abdullah, a Hashemite originating from the Hijaz, executed practical power. In Lebanon the Maronite Christians – by the time of independence considered a majority – acquired a dominant position, as a proportional system of representation was introduced. This system has not shown itself flexible in reflecting demographic changes over time. Finally, Syria has been ruled by the minority ‘Alawite sect since 1970.<sup>36</sup>

The problem with dominant minorities was that they adopted a defensive mentality characterised by fear of the majority; this, in turn, made them unlikely to make concessions to other groups once their power was challenged. The Lebanese civil war between 1975 and 1990, and the ongoing Syrian civil war (since 2011) have provided ample proof of how such recalcitrance can erupt in massive violence. Other conflict lines, such as the Arab-Israeli

---

<sup>34</sup> Elizabeth Thompson, “Rashid Rida and the 1920 Syrian-Arab Constitution: How the French Mandate Undermined Islamic Liberalism”, in Schayegh, Cyrus/ Arsan, Andrew (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of the History of the Middle East Mandates*, (New York: Routledge, 2015), 244–57. See also Zeine N. Zeine, *The Struggle for Arab Independence: Western Diplomacy and the Rise & Fall of Faysal’s Kingdom in Syria*, (Beirut: Khayat, 1960), 138, 163. The full Arabic text of the constitution may be found in *Dasatir al-Bilad fil-‘Arabiyyah*, Arab League’s Institute for Arab Higher Studies, (Cairo: Government Printing House, 1956), 3–22.

<sup>35</sup> It should be noted that, for instance, the Sunni-dominated regime of Saddam Hussein made determined efforts to appear less sectarian by including at least a token number of Shi’i Arabs and Kurds. See Amazia Baram, “The Ruling Political Elite in Ba’thi Iraq, 1968–1986: The Changing Features of a Collective Profile”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 21 (1989), 447–493.

<sup>36</sup> Daniel Pipes, “The ‘Alawi Capture of Power in Syria”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 25, No. 4 (Oct. 1989), 429–450.

conflict and regional wars, have also impeded the emergence of democratic citizenship. For much of their modern history, Middle Eastern countries have been at war, directly dominated by militaries (or their interests) and ruled with the aid of the resulting emergency laws. Turner has drawn attention to the point that the evolution of citizenship is very often connected with periods of war and societal upheaval.<sup>37</sup> This has applied to the Middle East as well: the evolution of concepts (and implementation) of citizenship is a direct by-product of a long-drawn out period of wars. Hurewitz has demonstrated how this has led to drastic over-spending on the military and the neglect of other, potentially far more productive fields in the case of Iraq:

In next-door Iraq, where the per capita prospects for economic expansion on the basis of cultivable land, plentiful water and generous oil income probably exceeded those of Iran, the Arab-Kurdish civil war plunged the economy into such deep and prolonged crisis that development projects, other than schools and roads, received only scant attention.<sup>38</sup>

Iraq was only a mild example: other states – particularly the front-line states in the conflict with Israel – invested far larger sums. The decision of Egypt and Jordan to opt out of the united Arab front against Israel originated not only from a preference for peace, but from hard-headed economic considerations.<sup>39</sup> High military expenses led to the neglect of productive investment; this, in turn, meant that the state was increasingly unable to keep the promises of its authoritarian bargain. The authoritarian regimes began to adopt neoliberal economic policies and allowed the emergence of a new state bourgeoisie, which profited from high levels of corruption to the detriment of poorer segments of society.

### **The Case Studies: Syria and Iraq**

Both Syria (in the borders of the Syrian Arab Republic) and Iraq are “artificial states”, to the extent that their territories were parcelled out by the mandate powers after the First World War. In both states, sub-state and supra-state identities vied with a citizens’ perception of the state as the point of reference. Both countries have multi-ethnic (predominantly Arab and Kurdish) and multi-religious (Sunni Muslim, Shi’i Muslim, various Christian denominations)

---

<sup>37</sup> Bryan S. Turner, “Islam, Civil Society and Citizenship: Reflections on the Sociology of Citizenship and Islamic Studies”, in Nils Butenschon/ Uri Davis/ Manuel Hassounian, (eds.), *Citizenship and the State in the Middle East: Approaches and Applications*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press 2000), 28–48, here 42.

<sup>38</sup> J.C. Hurewitz, “The Role of the Military in the Middle East”, in Vernon J. Parry/ Malcolm Yapp (eds.), *War, Technology and Society in the Middle East*, (London: SOAS, 1975), 403.

<sup>39</sup> Egypt left this anti-Israeli united Arab front through its peace treaty with Israel of 1979; Jordan followed suit in 1994.

populations. Most of the different sects and ethnic groups did not previously live in clearly defined territories. The relations of the populations of Syria and Iraq with their states were marked initially by distance to state authority per se, and later by the avoidance of contact with the state due to the emergence of repressive regimes. The integration of rural – in the Middle East also tribal – populations in states has been amply demonstrated by, among others, Eugen Weber in the classic *Peasants into Frenchmen* (see footnote 12) and by James C. Scott in several of his works.<sup>40</sup>

The “Arab” character of both states has brought political leaders to adopt Arab nationalism as ideology; this has led to discrimination against non-Arabs.<sup>41</sup> It is noteworthy that both Syria and Iraq were officially secular countries; in fact, sectarianism (Arab. *al-ta’ifiyya*) was long regarded as a great evil. Even in Syria, where the Shi’ite ‘Alawi sect dominated from 1970 onwards, determined efforts were made to broaden the power base of the regime by co-opting non-‘Alawis. Several scholars have ascribed the weakening of the regime that allowed the outbreak of civil war in 2011 to the failure of president Bashar al-Assad to maintain this power base.

The two countries are extremely dissimilar as far as their economies are concerned: according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, Iraq ranks 5th in oil reserves, and 6th in oil production, as the second-largest oil producer in the Arab World after Saudi Arabia (2021). The country thus has enormous natural resources, which combined with its strategic location (it does not border Israel and thus was never a front-line state in the Arab-Israeli conflict) allowed Iraqi governments to invest heavily in state-building and modernising measures during the 1970s, only to squander this wealth during the disastrous war against Iran (1980–1988). Syria, albeit with a smaller population, possesses only small oil resources and is a front-line state, leading to considerably greater economic struggles.

## **Iraq**

The State of Iraq, as it was called in 1920, was formed from three Ottoman provinces in the territory of Mesopotamia: Basra to the south, Baghdad in the centre and Mosul to the north.<sup>42</sup> Prior to the foundation of the state, Basra – with its majority Shi’i Arab population – had

---

<sup>40</sup> James C. Scott, *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

<sup>41</sup> Thomas McGee, “The Stateless Kurds of Syria”, *Tilburg Law Review* 19 (2014), 171–181.

<sup>42</sup> Overviews of the history of Iraq include: Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002); Aeed Dawisha (ed.), *Iraq: A Political History*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017); Courtney Hunt, *The History of Iraq*, (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2005); Charles Tripp, “The United States and State-Building in Iraq”, *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 30, Issue 4, October 2004, 545–558.

maintained close contacts with Iran; Baghdad, dominated by Sunni Arabs, looked west to Syria; and Mosul, with a prominent Kurdish element, was oriented towards Anatolia. After the outbreak of World War I, the British invaded the territory and established themselves at Basra in late 1914. Baghdad was taken in March 1917 and Mosul occupied in September 1918, shortly before the Armistice of Mudros terminated Ottoman involvement in World War I. There were conflicting views on the British side about what to do with the occupied lands. The Government of India (GOI) advocated running them as an Indian province; the authorities in London advocated the creation of a de-jure independent country under British tutelage. The League of Nations eventually awarded the mandate over Iraq to Britain, yet mandatory rule could only be implemented after a revolt involving Iraqis of different ethnic and religious background had been subdued. When the French deposed Sharif Faisal, the military leader of the wartime “Arab Revolt”, as king of Syria in July 1920, evicting him from Damascus, the British were hard pressed to find a position for him; as a result of rigged elections the Sharif became King of Iraq in 1921.

The newly crowned king and his government found themselves faced with two fundamental problems. First, the authority of the state over rivals (particularly tribal ones) had to be asserted; second, a feeling of “Iraqiness” had to be promoted. While the first undertaking met with success, the second did not: Faisal’s government (and all subsequent regimes until 2003) based their power on the Sunni Arab minority. There were continuous conflicts, particularly with the Kurds in the north. However, as some researchers have noted, there were indeed expressions of Iraqiness, particularly when it came to opposing colonial encroachment: the British had to put down a revolt involving both Sunni and Shi’i groups in 1920 with considerable effort and expense.<sup>43</sup>

Iraq entered the fold of “revolutionary states” in the Middle East quite late: in 1958 ‘Abd al-Karim Qasim and ‘Abd al-Salam ‘Arif toppled the monarchy violently. There was a first coup by the Pan-Arab socialist Ba’ath Party in 1963, which decisively came to power in 1968. However, long-term stability, albeit under gruesome conditions, was only reached under the brutal dictatorship of Saddam Hussein (1978–2003). While scholars had earlier assumed that Iraq between 1958 and 1978 was a more inclusive society, and that Saddam based his power ever more firmly on the Sunni minority, this has been disproved by more recent research that revealed that Saddam’s rule recruited support among Shi’ites as well as among Sunni Arabs; what drove a wedge between the regime and other groups was neo-

---

<sup>43</sup> Aula Hariri, “The Iraqi Independence Movement: A Case of Transgressive Contention (1918–1920)”, in Fawaz A. Gerges (ed.), *Contentious Politics in the Middle East: Popular Resistance and Marginalized Activism beyond the Arab Uprisings*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 97–126.

patrimonialism that meant that only proximity to the regime could guarantee personal safety, material well-being and professional advancement. This state of affairs survived the Iraqi defeat in the Second Gulf War of 1991, with the exception that the ever-oppressed Kurdish minority achieved practical autonomy with the introduction and enforcement of a no-fly zone in northern Iraq.

After the US-led invasion of 2003 the destruction of the previous regime (“de-Ba’athisation”) was considered an absolute necessity. Power was handed over to a Shia-dominated government, a move which alienated the Sunni minority and opened the way for sectarian violence. Disgruntled Ba’ath members, formerly in high-ranking positions, profited from Sunni resentment and set out to organise the terror group “Islamic State”, which in its rejection of the “colonially imposed” boundaries proclaimed the creation of an Islamic Caliphate covering large parts of Iraq and Syria as their goal. While militarily quite successful until about 2016, the fortunes of the Islamic State have since taken a turn for the worse. Where the Islamic State was in power, it instituted a brutal regime that created fear among non-Muslims (Christians) and non-Sunnis (Shia), and violently persecuted members of religions not considered *ahl al-kitab* (People of the Book). While followers of these religions are entitled to protection in exchange for a special poll tax, Yazidis in northern Iraq were not included in this group and were savagely oppressed. Violence in Iraq has become almost endemic, although it has waxed and waned in the more recent period. Millions have fled from their homes, a large number into safer places within Iraq (such as Kurdistan, controlled by the Kurdistan Regional Government) and a considerable number abroad.

## Syria

While Iraq at least has historical Mesopotamia (the land between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers) as a geographically uniting feature, the same cannot be said about Syria. The term “Syria” is of ancient pedigree, as is evidenced by the name of a Roman province from the 1st century C.E..<sup>44</sup> During the Ottoman period the term referred to the Arab provinces from the mountain ranges of southern Anatolia to the Arabian Desert in the south, and from the Mediterranean to the Syrian Desert in the East. All of the modern-day states of Lebanon,

---

<sup>44</sup> Overviews of the history of modern Syria include: Christopher Phillips, *The Battle for Syria: International Rivalry in the New Middle East*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016); James A. Reilly, *Fragile Nation, Shattered Land: A Modern History of Syria*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2018); Adel Beshara (ed.), *The Origins of Syrian Nationhood: Histories, Pioneers and Identity*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011); Stephen Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1958); Benjamin White, “The Nation-State Form and the Emergence of ‘Minorities’ in Syria”, *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 2007, 64–85; Ayşe Tekdal Fildis, “The Troubles in Syria: Spawned by French Divide and Rule”, *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XVIII, No. 4, Winter 2011, 129–139.

Palestine/Israel, Syria and Jordan belonged to this region. Administrative re-organisation in the 1860s led to Ottoman Syria being split up into various provinces (vilayets), each with a large Syrian city as a capital (notably Damascus, Aleppo and Beirut). Mount Lebanon from 1861 onwards received a special status, as did the district of Jerusalem.

The mandate powers, appointed by the League of Nations to prepare their mandates for independence in 1920, further cemented this territorial separation. In 1920 the French amalgamated Mount Lebanon and the coastal plain in order to form “Greater Lebanon” (Grand Liban), with Beirut as its capital. Confronted with a Druze revolt between 1925 and 1927 they temporarily split up their Syrian mandate into several states. While Britain acted as a territorial unifier in Iraq, it split up its Palestine mandate into two states to the east and the west of the River Jordan respectively: to the west lay Palestine proper, coveted by the Zionists and defended with increasing anger and desperation by the Arab inhabitants. To the east, in 1921, the Hashemite Emirate (later kingdom) of Jordan was established.

Syrian nationalists fighting for independence disagreed on the division of Syria; only Maronite Christians vehemently defended the separation of Lebanon, and arguably all Arabs were opposed to the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine. The Arab defeat in the Israeli War of Independence (1948/49) terminated the first government after Syrian independence and ushered in a still-ongoing period of authoritarian government. In 1958, at the heyday of Arab nationalist enthusiasm, Syria united with Egypt to form the United Arab Republic, only to split away as a result of intra-governmental conflicts between Syrian and Egyptian members of the ruling junta in 1961. After a period of extreme political instability, the seizure of power by Hafez al-Assad in 1970 created a largely stable regime; its only significant challenge, by the Muslim Brotherhood, culminated in the bombing and near-destruction of the city of Hama in 1982. Assad’s take-over not only opened a new phase of Syrian history, but also tilted the political weight towards the Shi’ite Alawite sect (some 10% of the population), which before had been largely marginalised. Assad managed to create a regime based on personal dictatorship and sectarian solidarity, although the president also curried favour from members of the Sunni elite. After Assad’s death in 2000 his son Bashar took over as president. He alienated many of the Sunni elites by ridding himself of his father’s cronies in the first decade of the 2000s; at the same time, a policy of economic liberalisation and a cutting of welfare benefits created increasing conflict. When, in the wave of the “Arab Spring” in 2011, an initially peaceful opposition movement met with a harsh and violent response from the regime, the turmoil rapidly became a civil war. The fighting soon involved outside powers (Russia, Turkey, the USA, Iran), and has continued to the present day.

## Coexistence: Citizenship Before and After Cataclysms

Rebecca Bryant correctly points out that there are two ways of interpreting and analysing coexistence: one is to look at the actual day-to-day interaction of different religious, ethnic or cultural groups. With regards to the Middle East, this “everyday history of pluralism” can be difficult to study due to the lack of comprehensive sociological research. The other method is to analyse historical memories after coexistence has been upset severely or destroyed entirely.<sup>45</sup>

This introduces a lateral or horizontal orientation of citizenship studies, one that has been studied even less than the not very broadly covered general citizenship studies with regard to the Middle East. As Butenschøn has argued, one central question has rarely been asked in the literature covering societies in the Middle East: “Who are the people?”<sup>46</sup> Citizenship in the sense of “passport citizenship” is not sufficient to identify a Syrian, Iraqi, Jordanian or other person from the region; rather, there are a multitude of ethnic, religious and other groups who feel (and are) better or worse integrated into their states. Despite the criticism that the notion of “primordial” allegiances – as opposed to inclusive, modern (Western) citizenship – is an orientalisng construct, there can be no denying that religious and ethnic affiliation play a far more profound role in the personal status of the inhabitants of Middle Eastern states than is the case in many (by no means all) regions of the world.<sup>47</sup>

“Citizenship”, as an inclusive concept, is still struggling to overcome these boundaries. Several aspects are particularly deserving of attention and enquiry. First, there is the notion that only authoritarian, if not dictatorial, government is able to prevent a struggle of all against all (in the Hobbesian sense). Second, there is the fact that authoritarianism by no means pits “dictators” against “the people”; rather, authoritarian regimes enjoy considerable support from those who profit either directly (through nepotism and corruption) or indirectly (particularly minorities whom the secular dictatorships successfully mobilise as supporters by portraying themselves as the only bulwark against Islamist dictatorship). Third, there is the belief that only the idea of a common enemy serves to temporarily unite these deeply divided societies.

---

<sup>45</sup> Rebecca Bryant, “Introduction”, in Rebecca Bryant (ed.), *Post-Ottoman Coexistence: Sharing Space in the Shadow of Conflict*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2016), 1–3.

<sup>46</sup> Nils A. Butenschøn, “State, Power and Citizenship in the Middle East: A Theoretical Introduction”, in Nils A. Butenschøn/ Uri Davis/ Manuel Hassounian (eds.), *Citizenship and the State in the Middle East: Approaches and Applications*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 3.

<sup>47</sup> Thus, for instance, Dame Freya Stark noted during her travels in the Middle East during the inter-war-period: “I see no peoples here, only hatreds, hatreds, hatreds.” The Lebanese politician Edward Atiyah, in defence of Lebanese independence from Syria, countered Syrian nationalism with the statement: “If ever there was a country in which every conceivable influence, divine and mundane, physical and moral, inherent and extraneous, militated against national unity and the formation of a patriotic sentiment, that country was Syria before 1914.” See Daniel Pipes, *Greater Syria: The History of an Ambition*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 13.

The struggle for independence mobilised large segments of Middle Eastern societies across ethno-religious boundaries, while it must be noted that there were always groups that profited from the presence of the colonial powers. The Arab-Israeli conflict was likewise a “popular” issue insofar as it managed to pit “Arabs” (of all religious denominations) against Israel; yet also in this case there were groups that had no perceived ethno-nationalist ties to Palestine and took less of an interest in the conflict (particularly the Kurds). Fourth, there is the idea that citizenship is not only a concept expressed through papers, but has (or should have?) a deeply emotional content.

### **The Salience of Sectarianism**

Sectarianism is one of the most prominently studied aspects of Middle East Studies. Researchers have paid intensive attention to the trajectory of the multi-religious and multi-ethnic Ottoman imperial system into a number of (supposedly) national states, with particular regard to processes of inclusion and exclusion. The general argument is that sectarianism was reasonably well administered in Ottoman times through the millet system, but became a divisive and conflictive social element with the spreading of nationalism. This drove wedges between not only ethnic, but also religious communities and led to processes of nation-building accompanied by violent and brutal acts of homogenisation, such as in Turkey.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, the mandate regimes and many of the authoritarian governments that succeeded them used “the containment of sectarianism” as a tool of legitimacy, particularly in the eyes of minorities.<sup>49</sup>

Yet closer inspection indicates that sectarianism is by no means as deeply rooted in the Syrian and Iraqi populations (not to mention the Middle East as a whole) as has been hitherto assumed. Researchers have gone so far as to identify sectarianism not as a popular sentiment (with negative effects on societal cohesion), but as a political tool of regimes. Others even argue that sectarianism has become restricted to conflicts between regimes, and is increasingly discredited as offering any solution to social, economic and political problems for the majority of peoples in the Middle East.<sup>50</sup>

Sectarianism, as has been pointed out, has been used intensively by regimes of various characters to shape identities and form political allegiances among the population. This has

---

<sup>48</sup> Gregory J. Goalwin, “Understanding the Exclusionary Politics of Early Turkish Nationalism: An Ethnic Boundary-Making Approach”, *Nationalities Papers*, 2017, 1–17.

<sup>49</sup> See Simon Mabon, *Houses Built on Sand: Violence, Sectarianism and Revolution in the Middle East*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020).

<sup>50</sup> Justin Gengler, “Sectarianism from the Top Down or Bottom Up? Explaining the Middle East’s Unlikely De-Sectarianisation after the Arab Spring”, *The Review of Faith and International Affairs* 18, 1 (2020), 109–113.

been done through intensive propaganda conducted in classrooms, the media and political campaigns. It should be asked how successful authoritarian regimes have been in imbuing a sense of sectarian identity and sectarian fear in their populations, and if so, whether such identities and fears have increased or decreased due to the experience of civil war and flight. Gal Levy has rightly asked if the “Arab Spring” proved that Arab peoples had “shed years of conditioning (to passivity) to emerge as political subjects”.<sup>51</sup> There is a rich body of literature that covers the coexistence of different groups, albeit not under the heading of common citizenship.<sup>52</sup> Harrington explains that multiple identities are by no means in competition with citizenship; in fact, citizenship emerges from these multiple concepts.<sup>53</sup>

### **Psychological Citizenship**

Inclusive nationalism and citizenship have much in common: they aim at the creation of a community. While the state dimension of citizenship has meant that force and economics play an important role in its development, there is another level that seems of at least equal importance: the psychological. Benedict Anderson’s “imagined communities” consist of people “who have never seen or met, but feel related to one another”.<sup>54</sup> Likewise, citizenship, in its aspect of binding a community, has a decided psychological component. According to Razi, this “most significant, but least studied aspect of nationalism” should also be applied to citizenship.<sup>55</sup> Sinem Adar’s work on emotion and nationalism offers a good overview of this discrepancy with a focus on the example of Turkey.<sup>56</sup> If citizenship is inseparable from the state, and if the post-Ottoman states of the Middle East are considered as national states, the authoritarian act of citizen-making also includes nation-building through force and manipulation. In an innovative approach Arshin Adib-Moghaddam has addressed this phenomenon as “Psycho-Nationalism”; in his words, it

fosters intolerance and hate towards those who do not belong (to the imagined community). It is about ‘othering.’ It is about delineating the community from the ones who are not thought to be part of it due to racial, linguistic, ethnic or other reasons... And it is a form of narcissism. The

---

<sup>51</sup> Gal Levy, “Contested Citizenship of the Arab Spring and Beyond”, in Engin F. Isin/ Peter Nyers (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Global Citizenship Studies*, (London: Routledge, 2014), 25.

<sup>52</sup> Jan Asmussen, „Wir waren wie Brüder: Zusammenleben und Konfliktenstehung in ethnisch gemischten Dörfern auf Zypern“, (Münster: LIT-Verlag, 2000); Bryant (ed.), *Post-Ottoman Coexistence*, 25–26.

<sup>53</sup> Jack Harrington, “Navigating Global Citizenship Studies”, in Isin/ Nyers, *Routledge Handbook of Global Citizenship Studies*, 16.

<sup>54</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London: Verso, 1983).

<sup>55</sup> G. Hossein Razi, “Legitimacy, Religion and Nationalism in the Middle East”, *American Political Science Review* Vol. 84, No. 1, (March, 1990), 69–91.

<sup>56</sup> Sinem Adar, “Emotions and Nationalism: Armenian Genocide as a Case Study”, *Sociological Forum*, 2018, 1–22.

followers of the community are thought to be purer, greater and superior to those who are outside the group who become the objects of psycho-nationalist control.<sup>57</sup>

In fact, studies that have paid attention to this issue have identified that the emotional and psychological aspects of Syrian and Iraqi citizens' exasperation with the regime's wanton and cruel behaviour caused locally erupted discontent to spread, and continued to be such a mobilising force that in each case the regime saw itself confronted with a serious challenge, later to deteriorate into civil war.<sup>58</sup>

### **Conclusion: The Excluded**

In older literature the common trajectory of Middle Eastern states in the 20th century is depicted as that of a fairly functional Ottoman imperial system being replaced by national states in which “diversity management” means the subjugation – or the constant fear of subjugation – of “minorities” by majority regimes.<sup>59</sup> This aspect becomes particularly salient if (numerical) minorities hold the top positions of power in the state, as seems evidenced by the Sunni-dominated Iraqi Ba’ath regime until 2003, and the Alawite Syrian Ba’ath regime since 1970.

However, more recent literature points rather to the extensive use these regimes made of sub-state relations such as family, clan and tribe – including considerable efforts to integrate representatives of “minorities” in the internal circles of power.<sup>60</sup> Thus, membership in the right “sect” carries with it tangible professional and economic benefits: but the “sect” is no longer defined as a religious grouping, but as a circle of “chosen ones”.<sup>61</sup> What has been observable is top-down exclusion of the underprivileged rather than sectarian mobilisation from below. This observation has in fact caused scholars to question the sectarian model by

---

<sup>57</sup> Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, *Psycho-Nationalism: Global Thought, Iranian Imaginations*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 14.

<sup>58</sup> Reinoud Leenders, “Social Movement Theory and the Onset of the Popular Uprising in Syria”, *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 3, Special Issue: Perspective on the Arab Uprisings (Summer 2013), 273–289.

<sup>59</sup> The terms “majority” and “minority” do not necessarily translate into numbers. Dominant minorities are often characterised as “minorities that behave as if they were the majority”. See Aline Schlaepper, “Defining Minorities: Mission Impossible? The Case of Hashemite Iraq”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 50 (2018), 769–772.

<sup>60</sup> Elliott Rousseau, “The Construction of Ethno-Religious Identity Groups in Syria: Loyalties and Tensions in the Syrian Civil War”, [http://vc.bridgew.edu/honors\\_proj/66](http://vc.bridgew.edu/honors_proj/66) (accessed 10 Oct. 2021).

<sup>61</sup> With regard to the Syrian Military, see Kheder Kaddour, “Assad’s Officer Ghetto: Why the Syrian Army Remains Loyal”, Carnegie Middle East Center: Civil-Military Relations in Arab States, 4 Nov. 2015.

offering alternative narratives, some even going so far as to discard sectarianism altogether due to its shortcomings as an analytical category.<sup>62</sup>

However, practical observations allow the conclusion that the sectarian model has not become outdated: both Syria and Iraq have seen considerable sectarian mobilisation; regimes have tried to play the “sectarian card” in order to rally supporters from a given sect. Nonetheless, an increasing number of scholars points to quite different reasons for the outbreak of what only on the surface appears as sectarian violence: an rise in economic and social exclusion.

While civil wars – or civil war-like situations – have indeed occurred, these have not been fought purely by sectarian communities. The conflict parties were radical Islamists, armed forces of sectarian regimes and secular opposition groups, but their respective make-up allows the conclusion that in spite of these tensions a spirit of belonging to an Iraqi or Syrian population has emerged and solidified. Although the origins of modern Syria and Iraq as states may have been anything but auspicious it must be taken into account that by now several generations have grown up with at least partly “Syrian” and “Iraqi” identities.

What seems to be of utmost interest and importance, not only for reconciliation, but for the survival of unified states, is to determine whether Syrian and Iraqi citizens can agree on the societal and political ills of their states and on possible remedies. These, as Razi has pointed out, might not be democratic systems, but regimes that create legitimacy through justice:

Consequently, the significant issue is not so much the existence of inequalities, restraints on individual freedoms (from which no political system can escape completely), or even the level of political participation (which varies considerably among stable as well as unstable political systems) as it is whether the degree to which these features exist is considered just or unjust in terms of shared values.<sup>63</sup>

Asef Bayat argues that it is indeed the notion of “the just” that has assumed greater importance than ever before. Injustice has been felt differently by different layers of society. “The poor” clamoured for purely material betterment, the right to which they based on Islamic notions – which turned them into supporters for Islamist movements, and explained the socio-political appeal and clout of the latter. The social middle class – well-educated, but

---

<sup>62</sup> Fanar Haddad, “‘Sectarianism’ and its Discontents in the Study of the Middle East”, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 71, No. 3, (Summer 2017), 363–382; Reidar Visser, “Ethnicity, Federalism and the Idea of Sectarian Citizenship in Iraq”, *International Review of the Red Cross*, Vol. 89, No. 868, December 2007, 809–822.

<sup>63</sup> Razi, *Legitimacy, Religion and Nationalism in the Middle East*, 70.

increasingly feeling cheated of their economic desserts by regimes that discarded the authoritarian bargain for neo-liberal capitalism – previously regarded such interests with contempt. Even scholars like Charles Tilly claimed that one could not speak of civil society or social movements if all that seemed to be at stake were purely material interests.<sup>64</sup> In recent decades, however, an alliance seems to have come into existence: that of “the poor” and the increasingly impoverished and underprivileged middle classes. an alliance seems to have come into existence: that of “citizens of need” (the poor) and “citizens of want” (the frustrated middle class).<sup>65</sup> This alliance leads to a conflict situation where “the people” are opposed to “regimes”. “The people” refers to all those in a given socio-political context who are not members of a privileged, increasingly shrinking elite. While the voices of politicians, intellectuals and other elites have been expressed through a multitude of media and have been the subject of intense scholarly study, the life and experience of “ordinary citizens” still remains largely unexplored.<sup>66</sup> “The people” do not necessarily care who is in power, but rather what those in power do, regardless of which sect they belong to. A common perception of being increasingly short-changed by the elite could turn into a powerful impetus for a societal and solidaric “citizenship of want”, able to overcome ethno-sectarian boundaries. Valbjørn’s notion of a re-politicised Arab world is true when one considers an Iraq still in upheaval and a Syria ten years into civil war; yet it remains to be seen if the centrifugal neo-sectarian forces or the centripetal coherence of a “citizenship of want” will prevail in the future.<sup>67</sup>

## **Bibliography**

Abu-Bader, Suleiman/ Abu-Qarn, Aamer: “Government Expenditures, Military Spending and Economic Growth: Causality Evidence from Egypt, Israel and Syria”, Munich Personal RePec Archive (MRPA) Paper No. 1115, <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/1115>, (accessed 15 October 2021).

Adar, Sinem: “Emotions and Nationalism: Armenian Genocide as a Case Study”, *Sociological Forum*, 2018, 1–22.

---

<sup>64</sup> Charles Tilly/ Sidney Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, (Boulder, Col.: Paradigm Publishers, 2007).

<sup>65</sup> Asef Bayat, “Islamism and Social Movement Theory”, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 6 (2005), 891–908; Asef Bayat, “The Arab Spring and its Surprises”, *Development and Change*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (2013), 587–601; Asef Bayat, “Plebeians of the Arab Spring”, *Current Anthropology*, Vo. 56, Supplement 11, October 2015, 533–543.

<sup>66</sup> Jan Wilkens, “Contention and Constitutionalization in the Global Realm: Assessing the Uprisings in West Asia and North Africa and their Impact on International Politics”, in Gerges, *Contentious Politics in the Middle East*, 25–50.

<sup>67</sup> Morten Valbjørn, “Upgrading Post-Democratization Studies: Examining a Re-Politicised Arab World in a Transition to Somewhere”, *Middle East Critique*, Vol. 21, No. 1, (Spring 2012), 25–35.

- Adib-Moghaddam, Arshin: *Psycho-Nationalism: Global Thought, Iranian Imaginations*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
- Akdikmen, Resuhi: *Standard Turkish Dictionary* (English-Turkish/ Turkish-English), (Istanbul: Inkilap Kitabevi Yayin Sanayi, 1985/ New York: Langenscheidt, 1986).
- Anderson, Benedict: *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 1983).
- Asmussen, Jan: *“Wir waren wie Brüder”: Zusammenleben und Konfliktentstehung in ethnisch gemischten Dörfern auf Zypern*, (Münster: LIT-Verlag, 2000).
- Baram, Amazia: “The Ruling Political Elite in Ba’thi Iraq, 1968–1986: The Changing Features of a Collective Profile”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 21 (1989), 447–493.
- Bayat, Asef: “Islamism and Social Movement Theory”, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 6 (2005), 891–908.
- Bayat, Asef: “The Arab Spring and its Surprises”, *Development and Change* Vol. 44, No. 3 (2013), 587–601.
- Bayat, Asef: “Plebeians of the Arab Spring”, *Current Anthropology*, Vo. 56, Supplement 11, October 2015, 533–543.
- Beshara, Adel (ed.): *The Origins of Syrian Nationhood: Histories, Pioneers and Identity*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011).
- Braude, Benjamin/ Lewis, Bernard (eds.): *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, Vol. I: The Central Lands, Vol. II: The Arabic-Speaking Lands, (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982).
- Brewbaker, William Rogers (ed.): *Immigration and the Politics of Citizenship in Europe and North America*, (Washington: University Press of America, 1989).
- Burbank, Jane/ Cooper, Frederick: *Empires: Power and the Politics of Variety*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).
- Bryant, Rebecca: “Introduction”, in Rebecca Bryant (ed.), *Post-Ottoman Coexistence: Sharing Space in the Shadow of Conflict*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2016).
- Butenschön, Nils A./ Davis, Uri/ Hassounian, Manuel (eds.): *Citizenship and the State in the Middle East: Approaches and Applications*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000).
- Çağaptay, Soner: *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who is a Turk?*, (London: Routledge, 2006).
- Çaha, Ömer/ Karaman, M. Lutfullah: “Civil Society in the Ottoman Empire”, *Journal of Economic and Social Research* 8(2), 53–81.

Campos, Michelle A.: “Making Citizens: Contesting Citizenship in Late Ottoman Palestine”, in Ben-Bassat, Yuval/ Ginio, Eyal (eds.): *Late Ottoman Palestine: The Period of Young Turk Rule*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 17–33.

Cooper, Frederick: *Citizenship, Inequality and Difference: Historical Perspectives*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

Davis, Uri: “Conceptions of Citizenship in the Middle East: State, Nation and People”, in Butenschön et al. (eds.), *Citizenship and the State in the Middle East: Approaches and Applications*, 69-87.

Dawisha, Adeed (ed.): *Iraq: A Political History*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

Deringil, Selim: “They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery”: The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2003, 311–342.

Fildis, Ayşe Tekdal: “The Troubles in Syria: Spawned by French Divide and Rule”, *Middle East Policy*, *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XVIII, No. 4, Winter 2011, 129–139.

Findley, Carter Vaughn: “The Advent of Ideology in the Middle East (Part II)“, *Studia Islamica* No. 56 (1982), 147–180.

Gengler, Justin: “Sectarianism from the Top Down or Bottom Up? Explaining the Middle East’s Unlikely De-Sectarianisation after the Arab Spring”, *The Review of Faith and International Affairs* 18, 1 (2020), 109–113.

Goalwin, Gregory J.: “Understanding the Exclusionary Politics of Early Turkish Nationalism: An Ethnic Boundary-Making Approach“, *Nationalities Papers*, 2017, 1–17.

Haddad, Fanar: “‘Sectarianism’ and its Discontents in the Study of the Middle East”, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 71, No. 3, (Summer 2017), 363–382.

Hariri, Aula: “The Iraqi Independence Movement: A Case of Transgressive Contention (1918–1920)”, in Gerges, Fawaz A. (ed.): *Contentious Politics in the Middle East: Popular Resistance and Marginalized Activism beyond the Arab Uprisings*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 97–126.

Harrington, Jack: “Navigating Global Citizenship Studies”, in Isin/ Nyers, *Routledge Handbook of Global Citizenship Studies*, 16.

Hotham, David: *The Turks*, (London: Macmillan, 1972).

Hourani, Albert: *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).

Hunt, Courtney: *The History of Iraq*, (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2005).

Hurewitz, J.C.: “The Role of the Military in the Middle East”, in Parry, Vernon J./ Yapp, Malcolm: *War, Technology and Society in the Middle East*, (London: SOAS, 1975), 403–424.

Karpat, Kemal: “The Ottoman Ethnic and Confessional Legacy in the Middle East”, in Esman, Milton/ Rabinovich, Itamar: *Ethnicity, Pluralism and the State in the Middle East*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 35–53.

Kechriotis, Vangelios: “Postcolonial Criticism Encounters Late Ottoman Studies”, *Historiein* 13, 40.

Khaddour, Kheder: “Assad’s Officer Ghetto: Why the Syrian Army Remains Loyal”, *Carnegie Middle East Center: Civil-Military Relations in Arab States*, 4 Nov. 2015.

Kivelson, Valerie A./ Suny, Ronald Grigor: *Russia’s Empires*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

Krahl, Günther: *Deutsch-Arabisches Wörterbuch*, (Leipzig: VEB Verlag Enzyklopädie, 1964/ here Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1971).

Leenders, Reinoud: “Social Movement Theory and the Onset of the Popular Uprising in Syria”, *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 3, Special Issue: Perspective on the Arab Uprisings (Summer 2013), 273–289.

Levy, Gal: “Contested Citizenship of the Arab Spring and Beyond”, in Engin F. Isin/ Peter Nyers (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Global Citizenship Studies*, (London: Routledge, 2014).

Lewis, Bernard: *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, (3rd ed. New York/Oxford 2002).

Longrigg, Stephen: *Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1958).

Mabon, Simon/ Ardovini, Lucia: *Sectarianism in the Contemporary Middle East*, (London: Routledge, 2018).

Mabon, Simon: *Houses Built on Sand: Violence, Sectarianism and Revolution in the Middle East*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020).

Mardin, Şerif: “Power, Civil Society and Culture in the Ottoman Empire”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 11 (1969), 258–281.

Marshall, T.H.: *Citizenship and Social Class: And Other Essays*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950).

Mazower, Mark: *The Balkans: A Short History*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000).

McGee, Thomas: “The Stateless Kurds of Syria”, *Tilburg Law Review* 19 (2014), 171–181.

Marshall, Thomas Humphrey: “Citizenship and Social Class”, in Thomas Humphrey Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class: And Other Essays*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950).

- Meijer, Roel: “Political Citizenship and Social Movements in the Arab World”, in Heijden, Hein-Anton van der (ed.): *Handbook of Political Citizenship and Social Movements*, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2014), 628–660.
- Meurs, Wim van/ Mungiu-Pippidi, Alina (eds.): *Ottomans into Europeans: State and Institution-Building in South Eastern Europe*, (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2010).
- Öztan, Ramazan Hakki: “Nationalism in Function: ‘Rebellions’ in the Ottoman Empire and Narratives in Its Absence”, in Yavuz, M. Hakan/ Ahmad, Feroz (eds.): *War and Collapse: World War I and the Ottoman State*, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press 2016), 161–162.
- Phillips, Christopher: “Sectarianism and Conflict in Syria”, *Third World Quarterly* 36, vol. 2, (2015), 357–376.
- Pipes, Daniel: *Greater Syria: The History of an Ambition*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).
- Pipes, Daniel: “The Alawi Capture of Power in Syria”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 25, No. 4 (Oct. 1989), 429–450.
- Razi, G. Hossein: “Legitimacy, Religion and Nationalism in the Middle East”, *American Political Science Review* Vol. 84, No. 1, (March, 1990), 69–91.
- Redhouse, James W.: *A Turkish and English Lexicon: Showing in English the Significations of the Turkish Terms*, (Constantinople 1890/ New Impression Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1987)
- Reilly, James A.: *Fragile Nation, Shattered Land: A Modern History of Syria*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2018).
- Rousseau, Elliott: “The Construction of Ethno-Religious Identity Groups in Syria: Loyalties and Tensions in the Syrian Civil War”, [http://vc.bridgew.edu/honors\\_proj/66](http://vc.bridgew.edu/honors_proj/66) (accessed 10 Oct. 2021).
- Schlaepfer, Aline: “Defining Minorities: Mission Impossible? The Case of Hashemite Iraq”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* Vol. 50, No. 4, (November 2019), 769–772.
- Scott, James C.: *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).
- Scott, James C.: *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).
- Schregle, Götz: *Deutsch-Arabisches Wörterbuch*, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harassowitz, here Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1977).
- Sharkey, Heather J.: “History Rhymes? Late Ottoman Milletts and Post-Ottoman Minorities in the Middle East”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 50 (2018), 760–764.

- Thompson, Elizabeth: “Rashid Rida and the 1920 Syrian-Arab Constitution: How the French Mandate Undermined Islamic Liberalism”, in Schayegh, Cyrus Schayegh/ Andrew Arsan (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of the History of the Middle East Mandates*, (New York: Routledge, 2015), 244–257.
- Thym, Daniel: “Frontiers of EU Citizenship: Three Trajectories and their Methodological Foundation”, in Kochenov, Dimitry (ed.): *EU Citizenship and Federalism: The Role of Rights*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 705–730.
- Tilly, Charles/ Tarrow, Sidney: *Contentious Politics*, (Boulder, Col.: Paradigm Publishers, 2007).
- Tripp, Charles: *A History of Iraq*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002).
- Tripp, Charles: “The United States and State-Building in Iraq”, *Review of International Studies* Vol. 30, Issue 4, October 2004, 545–558.
- Turner, Bryan S.: “Islam, Civil Society and Citizenship: Reflections on the Sociology of Citizenship and Islamic Studies”, in Butenschøn, Nils/ Davis, Uri/ Hassounian, Manuel (eds.), *Citizenship and the State in the Middle East: Approaches and Applications*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press 2000), 28–48.
- Valbjørn, Morten: “Upgrading Post-Democratization Studies: Examining a Re-Politicized Arab World in a Transition to Somewhere”, *Middle East Critique*, Vol. 21, No. 1, (Spring 2012), 25–35.
- Visser, Reidar: “Ethnicity, Federalism and the Idea of Sectarian Citizenship in Iraq: A Critique”, *International Review of the Red Cross*, vol. 89, no. 868 (December 2007), 809–822.
- Weber, Eugen: *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernisation of Rural France, 1871–1914*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976).
- White, Benjamin: “The Nation-State Form and the Emergence of ‘Minorities’ in Syria”, *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 2007, 64–85.
- Wilkens, Jan: “Contention and Constitutionalization in the Global Realm: Assessing the Uprisings in West Asia and North Africa and their Impact on International Politics”, in Gerges, *Contentious Politics in the Middle East*, 25–50.
- Zeine, Zeine N.: *The Struggle for Arab Independence: Western Diplomacy and the Rise & Fall of Faysal’s Kingdom in Syria*, (Beirut: Khayat, 1960).

## ABI Working Paper series

The ABI working paper series focuses on socio-political issues in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East.

### Already published issues

- 18** | Nadine Segadlo, Ulrike Krause, Franzisca Zanker, Hannah Edler  
Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on refugees and their protection in Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe  
ABI Working Papers Freiburg | 2021
- 17** | Andreas Mehler, Denis M. Tull, Miriam Glund  
Dialogue as the new mantra in responding to political crisis in Africa? The cases of Mali and Cameroon  
ABI Working Papers Freiburg | 2021
- 16** | Helga Dickow, Nadia Beider, Yonatan N. Gez  
Religious Nones in Sub-Saharan Africa: What Do We Know and What Would We Like to Know?  
ABI Working Papers Freiburg | 2021
- 15** | Michael Cobb, Annika Hampel, Antje Missbach, Dilshad Muhammad, Fabricio Rodríguez  
“Insiders” and “Outsiders”: Reflections on Hierarchies, Privileges and Positionalities in Academic Research  
ABI Working Papers Freiburg | 2020
- 14** | Gurol, Julia Gurol; Wetterich, Cita  
Perspectives on Field Research in Security-Sensitive Spaces – Insights from China and the Southern Mediterranean Area  
ABI Working Papers Freiburg | 2020
- 13** | Dickow, Helga  
The Ambiguities of Cohabitation: Religious Attitudes between Tolerance and Fundamentalism in Chad  
ABI Working Papers Freiburg | 2019
- 12** | Kößler, Reinhart  
The Bible and the Whip – Entanglements surrounding the restitution of looted heirlooms  
ABI Working Papers Freiburg | 2019
- 11** | Jenss, Alke; Lehmann, Rosa  
Multi-Scalar Struggles: The Selectivity of Development Governance in Southern Mexico  
ABI Working Papers Freiburg | 2019
- 10** | Le Noan Anne-Clemence; Glawion, Tim  
Education nationale en territoire rebelle. Le cas du lycée de Ndélé en République Centrafricaine – State education in rebel-held territory. The case of the Ndélé secondary school in the Central African Republic  
ABI Working Papers Freiburg | 2018
- 9** | Wetterich, Cita  
Gendered security perspectives of the refugee “crisis” in the British and German Media: a securitization of gender?  
ABI Working Papers Freiburg | 2018
- 8** | Mehler, Andreas; De Vries Lotje  
Les Conditions marginales du néopatrimonialisme performant: Pourquoi l’Afrique ne « marche » pas dans la République centrafricaine  
ABI Working Papers Freiburg | 2018
- 7** | Niyonkuru, Aimé-Parfait  
Judicial Protection of Human Rights in Post-Conflict Burundi: Gap Between Legal Principles and Practices  
ABI Working Papers Freiburg | 2018
- 6** | Plänitz Erik  
Fixed on the Rural – Neglecting the Urban? Reviewing spatial disparities in Climate Change – Conflict Literature  
ABI Working Papers Freiburg | 2017
- 5** | Franzisca Zanker  
The Politics of EU and African Migration Governance: From Rhetoric to Practice  
ABI Working Papers Freiburg | 2017

- 4 | Ottmann, Martin, Haas, Felix  
Does Peace Trickle Down? Micro-Level Evidence  
from Africa  
ABI Working Papers Freiburg | 2017
- 3 | Schütze, Benjamin  
Misrepresenting the Contextual and Idealising the Universal  
– How US Efforts at Democracy Promotion Bolster Authoritarianism in Jordan  
ABI Working Papers Freiburg | 2016
- 2 | Solarin, Adepeju O.  
Respect, Restorative Justice and the Oslo 1993 Talks  
ABI Working Papers Freiburg | 2015
- 1 | Lübke, Christian von  
Continuity and Change – Societal Power and  
Accountability in Democratic Indonesia  
ABI Working Papers Freiburg | 2015

---

ABI Working Paper No. 19

Edited by the Arnold Bergstraesser Institute

The ABI Working Papers series serves to disseminate the research results of work in progress prior to publication in order to encourage the exchange of ideas and academic debate. An objective of the series is to get the findings out quickly even if the presentations are less than fully polished. Inclusion of a paper in the ABI Working Papers series does not constitute publication and should not limit publication in any other venue.

Copyright remains with the authors.

Copyright for this issue: © Tilman Lüdke

Tilman Lüdke is Senior Reseracher at the Arnold Bergstraesser Institute at the University of Freiburg.

All ABI Working Papers are available online and free of charge on the website.

[www.arnold-bergstraesser.de/abi-working-papers](http://www.arnold-bergstraesser.de/abi-working-papers)

For any requests please contact: [info.abi@abi.uni-freiburg.de](mailto:info.abi@abi.uni-freiburg.de)

The Arnold Bergstraesser Institute cannot be held responsible for errors or any consequences arising from the use of information contained in this Working Paper; the views and opinions expressed are solely those of the author or authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Institute.

Arnold Bergstraesser Institute  
Windausstraße 16  
D-79110 Freiburg  
Germany

Arnold-Bergstraesser-Institut Freiburg e. V. | Windausstr. 16 | D-79110 Freiburg  
Tel.: 0761-888 78-0 | [www.arnold-bergstraesser.de](http://www.arnold-bergstraesser.de) | [info.abi@abi.uni-freiburg.de](mailto:info.abi@abi.uni-freiburg.de)

