

tax evasion was not an issue until governments needed more revenue. Today these same governments again need to increase their tax revenue in order to recover from the financial crisis and to pay their increasing social welfare obligations. Thus a final critique could be made that the authors' own emphasis on links between sovereignty, globalisation and tax havens in fact remains subsumed to the needs of the revenue collector.

**William Vlcek**

*William Vlcek is Lecturer in International Relations, School of International Relations, University of St Andrews.*



***The End of Influence: What Happens When Other Countries Have The Money*** by Stephen S. Cohen and J. Bradford DeLong. New York: Basic Books, 2010. 165 pp., £12.99 hardcover, 978 0465018765

America, the lonely superpower, has been haemorrhaging money, its dollars piling up in massive holdings of foreign reserves, foreign savings and sovereign wealth funds. But what happens when all the money is gone? This is the question that Cohen and DeLong ask in their short book *The End of Influence*, the title of which indicates the kind of answer they wish to give. America, the authors insist, 'will no longer be the boss'.

When the US had the money, its dollars bought the power to shape the world order according to American interests. And from the late 1970s onward, Cohen and DeLong explain, America was interested in promoting neoliberalism – giving markets primacy and rolling back the state. Now the money is gone, absorbed into massive government-owned asset pools, and after the financial crisis of 2007–?, so too is the neoliberal world order; neither are coming back soon. The emerging world, the authors argue, is one in which America's ambitions are tightly constrained by its dependence on foreign capital, where its soft power is reduced and its economic position weakened by the global resurgence of national industrial policies.

Much of this is familiar territory. The shelves of bookstores are virtually overflowing with volumes on America's decline and the fall of neoliberalism, and unfortunately *The End of Influence* does not stand out from the crowd. Cohen and DeLong are at their best when discussing the factors that have sucked money out of the US economy: the high commodity prices that have resulted from interventions in energy markets, namely by OPEC, and the increased demand for natural resources from the developing world, namely China; the rise of 'lemon socialism', where governments have intervened in the world economy in order to rescue national industries; and the low exchange rates needed for export-led development in China and elsewhere.

Yet they spend astonishingly little time evaluating how, and to what extent, US power is actually constrained when other countries have the money – a fact made all the more surprising in view of other recent, important books such as *World Out of Balance* (2008) by Brooks and Wohlforth, Fareed Zakaria's *The Post-American World* (2008) and Carla Norrlof's *America's Global Advantage* (2010), which arrive at quite different conclusions. Cohen and DeLong are, of course, aware of the possibility that the outflow of money may not matter too much. At numerous points in the book they even suggest that the massive accumulations of dollars and dollar-denominated assets held by other countries could, in fact, provide greater political leverage to the US (noting the well-known quip: 'if you owe the bank \$1 million, the bank has you; if you owe the bank \$1 billion, you have the bank'), but they make no attempt to grasp the nettle of this possibility, and that is the book's major flaw.

**Charles Barclay Roger**

*Charles Barclay Roger is a Research Officer at LSE Global Governance at the London School of Economics and Political Science.*



***Apart: Alienated and Engaged Muslims in the West*** by Justin Gest. London: Hurst, 2010. 288 pp., £15.00 paperback, 978 1849040754

The sociological and political processes impacting on the experiences of second-generation Muslim minorities in the west are explored in this theoretically and conceptually balanced book by Justin Gest. The book's research is focused on Moroccans in Madrid and Bangladeshis in the East End of London, and these two refreshing and unique comparative cases together provide an important contribution in relation to understanding a much maligned and misunderstood body of people.

While there has been considerable interest in questions of radicalism and extremism of late, few studies actually engage with young Muslim minorities in any meaningful way. Those that do tend to be carried out without any significant attempt to present detail, or tend to make a political point out of particular findings. Gest's book raises the research bar in relation to the ethnographic understanding of the real-world lived experiences of disaffected young Muslims in western Europe. The uniqueness of the contribution lies in presenting an analysis of how 'alienated' Muslims in western liberal democracies may well be disengaged in the classical sense of the term, but in everyday practical political terms these young Muslims are presenting an alternative world view and a form of (non)participation in everyday politics that remains important. Thus, the energy and exuberance expended by young Muslims is indeed a form of political



capital that can be transformed to generate social and public good. In a sense, the angry young Muslims of today are 'made in the west by the west'. According to this logic, they can be 'unmade in the west by the west'. Through this approach, the book contains valuable lessons on the impact of the ways in which democratic systems operate as much as an insightful perspective on what young Muslim men think and do in relation to politics. Citizenship can take on new directions to 'foster the bonds of civic fellowship' (p. 223).

While the book may well be of interest to a wide range of readers including the curious non-specialist, the analysis is grounded in political science. However, the study also usefully cross-fertilises with literature in sociology, anthropology and to an extent cultural studies. Furthermore, an analysis of Muslim minorities in the world today inevitably engages with, and may be of interest to, scholars and practitioners working in areas relating to migration, diasporas, transnationalism and international relations. In this way it is possible to understand the ebbs and flows of changing political identities.

As much as the context in which these identities are played out is important, so too are their linkages to history in general and the globalisation of capital, media, people, ideas and culture in particular. The book will appeal precisely to scholars and practitioners of western Muslim identity politics to utilise incisively political science perspectives in their own knowledge-building programmes.

The book is sensitively written, and manages to remain sympathetic towards the interviewees with whom the author clearly spent much time talking and listening. For other researchers engaging in studies in this area, the book could also provide a useful ethnographic instruction manual on how to carry out case study social research on western Muslims. It deserves to be widely read.

**Tahir Abbas**

*Dr Tahir Abbas is the author and editor of several books and articles on Muslim politics. He is currently Associate Professor of Sociology at Fatih University, Istanbul, Turkey.*

