

Governance, civil society and cultural politics

constructed is persuasive, its focus is perhaps too narrow and as a result it fails to capture the complexity of Al-Qaeda's political agenda.

The book then goes on to explore the campaigns currently being waged in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the many problems the Americans experienced in trying to use force in this more complex operating environment which has come to define modern war. Generally, Murden provides a balanced assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of these campaigns and a cogent analysis of why they have failed to deliver the desired strategic effect. The greatest problem is that because of the contemporary nature of the topic, his analysis is a 'hostage to fortune', and events and new information which has become available since publication of the book challenge some of the arguments made. A good example of this is the Chilcot Inquiry in the UK. The final part looks more deeply at the issue of strategy, specifically how to develop an effective framework within which to prosecute the war on terror, providing food for thought for political and military circles. In sum, this book represents a selective synthesis of the existing literature on the changing character of war and the American prosecution of the war on terror, and the result is a useful commentary.

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Apart: alienated and engaged Muslims in the West. By Justin Gest. London: Hurst. 2010. 288pp. Pb: £15.99. ISBN 978 1 84904 075 4.

Alienation of young Muslims in the West, together with its causes and effects, is so intensely debated in the media and among policy-makers that one might be forgiven for thinking there was nothing new to be said about it. One would be wrong. Justin Gest, a young scholar at Harvard and the London School of Economics, has studied alienation—and its neglected twin, engagement—among the Bangladeshi community in London's East End and among Moroccans in the southern suburbs of Madrid. The result is a rich, groundbreaking work which researchers and government officials alike will find both valuable and challenging.

Of the 200,000 people who live in the London borough of Tower Hamlets, about a third are of Bangladeshi origin. The district suffers from familiar inner-city problems of crime, drugs, overcrowding, domestic abuse, and tension between gangs of young men and the police. It is, the author tells us, one of the cheapest places in Europe to buy heroin. To get a feel for the place and win the trust of his interviewees (young Muslim men between the ages of 18 and 28), Gest hung out on street corners and in council estates, played ping-pong, attended Friday prayers at local mosques, and ate a lot of chicken and chips.

He finds a more complex picture than the one we may be familiar with. These young men are, in many ways, integrated into British life: in particular, they have a clear sense of the rights to which, as British citizens, they are entitled. But if the British state has given them health, housing and education, Gest argues it has not given them (or allowed them to develop) an effective voice. The result is either active or passive alienation. Alienation—or, to use Gest's ungainly term, 'apartism'—does not necessarily stem from educational or economic disadvantage. Those who join the radical group Hizb ut-Tahrir, which disdains engagement with a political system it regards as un-Islamic, are usually university-educated. They are articulate in their critique of both the British state and the traditional culture (and traditional Islam) of their Bangladeshi elders. With its 'deceptively clear solutions', writes Gest, the movement has found the East End 'fertile soil'.

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But ‘active apartism’ is not the only option. Gest encounters plenty of passive alienation—a fatalistic sense that society, government and media are so hostile to Muslims that engagement is futile. He also encounters young men who share the grievances of their peers, but believe the answer lies in working within the system and its institutions—for example, through lobbying and protest—rather than turning their back on them. Like other researchers before him, Gest finds an absence of trust between the young and traditional figures of authority. Parents, imams and community elders are all, to varying degrees, out of touch. Tellingly, Gest found that every local imam he interviewed needed an interpreter.

The author’s other case-study, Madrid’s southern suburb of Lavapiés, is home to a Moroccan community of similar size (some 70,000) but of more recent origin and hence with much shallower roots. Few have Spanish citizenship, and even fewer vote. The entire city has only two purpose-built mosques. Alienation, largely of the passive kind, is widespread. One school drop-out tells Gest that in Morocco he’s comfortable but has no rights, whereas in Spain he has rights but doesn’t feel comfortable.

As in *Tower Hamlets*, there is significant economic and social disadvantage. But the situation of Moroccans in Madrid is made worse by their almost complete lack of civic or political engagement—and, as Gest makes clear, the Spanish state seems not to want them to engage.

One of his conclusions, though counter-intuitive, is highly significant: that integration can actually *encourage* alienation. ‘The logic’, he argues, ‘is that integration fosters a sense of entitlement that predisposes the integrated to expect a more complete set of rights and liberties than the less integrated. The sense of injustice is therefore significantly more sensitive and disappointment more poignant among those with greater expectations, with a stronger sense of rejected national identity, but without much faith in the democratic system to remedy the inequity’. Among the possible products of alienation are, of course, radicalization and violence. The Madrid bombings of 2004, and the London bombings the following year, are not what Gest’s book is about; but he is conscious of them as a grim backdrop to the data and conclusions of his case-studies.

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Political economy, economics and development

Capital ideas: the IMF and the rise of financial liberalization. By Jeffrey M. Chwieroth. Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press. 2010. 352pp. Index. Pb.: £20.95. ISBN 978 0 69114 232 6.

How do ideas travel and become shared beliefs? Or, more worryingly, how do ‘casual beliefs become hardened into articles of faith’ (p. 47)? And how do beliefs get turned into policies? In this intelligent, well-researched and thought-provoking book Jeffrey Chwieroth addresses these questions, using the IMF’s approach to capital account liberalization as a case-study. Chwieroth presents the development of the debate on capital control vs. capital freedom and the progressive shift towards shared acceptance of the latter as an appropriate policy for balance of payment imbalances. The book explains how different schools—from the neo-classical orthodoxy and Keynesianism in the interwar period to neo-liberalism, monetarism, post-Keynesianism and the neo-classical synthesis—approached the issue of the liberalization of the capital account, and how, at the turn of the 1980s, the belief that countries should liberalize their capital account started to filter through to policy-making. The IMF, the book argues, played an important role in fostering such a transformation of