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demonstrate the extent of fissure in industries across time and space, much less evaluate causal claims about the effect of increased fissuring. Instead, the reader is left with the impression that this is largely an American phenomenon—but that hardly seems plausible. Weil does recognize the difficulty in measurement in the penultimate chapter. Unfortunately, he fails to suggest alternate approaches to the challenges of measuring organizational fissure in future research.

Weil coherently identifies what appears to be a pattern in U.S. industry that is possibly applicable to other economies. He provokes a series of interesting questions for workers, activists, policy makers, and social scientists. But in his effort to arouse interest—or even outrage—he seems to have stepped far ahead of the existing data and measurement abilities. Indeed one way to interpret the book is as a compelling plea for systematic data gathering.

COMPARATIVE POLITICS

_The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran._

— Kevan Harris, Princeton University

On March 20, 1976, Iranians went to sleep in the Persian year 1354. The next day, they woke up in the year 2535. During the night, the Pahlavi monarchy had put into place a chief element of Mohammad Reza Shah’s grand vision—a new “imperial” calendar that fixed 559 B.C., when Cyrus the Great ascended the Achaemenid throne, as Year Zero. Hardly the first to do so, the monarchy thought it wise to codify a temporal linkage between a nation-state and an origin myth. Newspapers, radio broadcasts, state documents, and sycophants all made the required switch. Yet time, it turned out, was not on the Shah’s side. Two years later, in an effort to placate a mounting revolutionary surge, the state reinstated the previous “solar hejri” calendar, which begins on the vernal equinox and is dated from the _hijra_, or migration, of Mohammad from Mecca to Medina. Although equipped with its own grand vision, the newly established Islamic Republic did not alter the solar _hejri_. The 12 names of solar months, derived from ancient Iranian zodiac constellations, were neither islamized nor shortened into the Arabic lunar months used in the Muslim calendar. The combining of the solar year with a hejri dating was enacted only in 1925, along with a host of state-building efforts associated with the Constitutional Revolution (1906–11) and the Pahlavi reign of Reza Shah (1925–44). Yet the revolutionaries under Ayatollah Khomeini’s tutelage remained satisfied with this relatively new invention of tradition. Though largely underemphasized in scholarship until recently, the provenance of contemporary Iranian nationalism originated from these early twentieth-century efforts. “It was in this pivotal period,” Ali Ansari writes, “that the meaning of Iran and the Iranians was defined for the modern age and for the modern state” (p. 295).

Ansari, a historian, is known for an impressive output of monographs and articles over the past decade on the political history of twentieth-century Iran. _The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran_ will likely overwhelm initiates to the subject, however. This is partly due to its contrarian approach toward the master narrative of Iranian politics, and partly because it assumes extensive knowledge of the matter itself. Much of this information can be gleaned from Ansari’s earlier works, while this particular study is best read as a book-length interpretive essay on the construction, use, and abuse of nationalism in Iran. Yet since current discourse on the country is suffused with primordialist declarations, the author’s argument is worth examining.

Ansari dubs late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Iran as the age of “enlightenment nationalists.” In the shadow of European power and domestic disarray, born out of diaspora networks reaching from Paris and Berlin to Istanbul and Mumbai, a small segment of the Iranian intelligentsia formulated notions of a constitutional republic that could usher in political reform and social solidarity by means of inclusionary state building. The 1906–11 revolution, a Persian _Risorgimento_ of sorts, forced the issue onto an ossifying Qajar empire but was stymied by great-power geopolitics. Many have posited the subsequent reign of Reza Shah as the extinguishing of this liberal nationalist upsurge. After all, Reza was literally a man on horseback from the Russian-trained (after 1917, British-directed) Cossack Brigades. Ansari argues that his rise was more Napoleonic than despotic. Perhaps late development under Bismarck is a better analogy: Reza Shah took power via parliamentary approval, oversaw the construction of bureaucratic foundations, defined the terms for social and economic modernization, and patronized the cultural production of nationalist historiography. Newly fashioned European scholarship on ancient Iran could be fused with inherited myths of Iranian-ness developed by various rulers over previous centuries. Hassan Taqizadeh (1878–1970), a seminary-trained intellectual and politician born in Azeri-Turkish-speaking Tabriz, best encapsulated in this era what Eric Hobsbawm recognized as civic nationalism. “Persians not an ethnic group,” he jotted in a diary; “culture and geographic area is binding force . . . language and religion not important . . . everyone 100% Iranian even when speaking other languages” (p. 145).

In an unusual periodization, Ansari claims that this top-down project reached past the forced abdication of Reza
Shah, through the period of Mohammad Mossadegh’s oil nationalization drive (1951–53), and only faded with the consolidation of the state around Mohammad Reza Shah in the 1960s. An “age of extremes” then took hold via ideological confrontations that, in tandem, portrayed the previous generation’s civic push as externally imposed. In Hobson’s terminology, ethnic or exclusionary nationalism won the day, guided in Marxist, monarchist, and Islamist packages. Conspiracy theory replaced historical self-awareness, and charismatic populism replaced state building. In this sense, the latter Shah’s oil-fueled merging of state, nation, and chauvinist messianism onto a single person was not trumped by the postrevolutionary Khomenei order, but mirrored in it. An intelligentsia that once harnessed mythology to foster pluralism became enslaved to myths that monopolized a worldview at society’s expense. This persisted until the end of the 1980s Iran-Iraq war, when a segment of a new revolutionary intelligentsia began to agitate for the fulfillment of constitutional promises long delayed.

Ansari’s final chapter on the Islamic Republic delineates an “age of contestation” between Iran’s “reformist” intellectuals and their conservative adversaries. During the Mahmoud Ahmadinezhad presidency, the latter forces wielded nationalism as a bludgeon, but “technological changes” had finally decentralized control over the “definition and articulation of nationalism and national identity” (p. 247). State-society relations thus transformed, the Whiggish hopes of Iran’s enlightenment nationalists are still possible.

Building from recent scholarship largely unknown to social scientists, the book’s sections on early twentieth-century state and nation building are valuable. From a comparative angle, there are striking similarities with other postcolonial projects in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Iranian historiography is belatedly going through a deconstruction moment, and the country is less exceptional than its nationalist scribes and journalist interpreters would have us believe. Yet as Anthony Marx argues (Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism, 2003), the distinction between civic/inclusionary and ethnic/exclusionary nationalism may itself be a product of nationalist mythology on the enlightened origins of Western European states, not a trajectory missed by the postcolonial world. More importantly, for a book that decries the simplified trappings of popular politics (which Ansari labels “demotic”) and the case with which charismatic power slides into place, there is no material on anyone other than the elites themselves. This may be warranted for a study of nationalism, but its claims cannot be assessed without accompanying social analysis concerning how these narratives were utilized, rejected, or adapted from below. Charismatic authority is not a causal explanation of political outcomes; this overused concept has long been modernization theory’s sloppy placeholder for describing Third World countries “stuck in transition.” A few sentences on educational expansion and demographic change can be found, but even while it critiques officialdom, to borrow from James Scott, this study still sees like a state.

The social—not political—ramifications of the 1979 revolution (or any other mass event) remain off page in this tragic tone poem. Iran’s 2009 postelection Green protests, for instance, witnessed young individuals forcefully wielding national myths to scorn the actually existing Islamic Republic and its revolutionary narcissism. The 2013 election exhibited a surprising solidarity between oppositional elites and popular mobilization under a porous nationalism to elect Hassan Rouhani and break up a conservative political monopoly. Future scholarship should weave these actors into the story. Nevertheless, Ansari’s contribution has set the stage for thinking through historical change in Iran more robustly than the dominant narratives invented, and then deployed, by nationalists themselves.


--- Lauren M. MacLean, Indiana University

Multiethnic coalitions are critical for democracy in Africa. Even after two and a half decades of political reform, many African regimes remain weak democracies where incumbents resist sharing power, or even stubbornly refuse to leave office. Indeed, since 2011, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation has been unable to identify a former head of state who merits the Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership. In the context of semiauthoritarian rule, the opposition must be strong; in particular, opposition parties must be able to unify across a host of ethnic and regional differences. Yet in many African countries, the opposition has been fragmented and unable to overturn incumbent regimes. Whereas Mwai Kibaki was able to create a multiethnic coalition to win the 2002 election in Kenya, the opposition remained fragmented and unsuccessful in Cameroon.

Leonardo Arriola’s book explores this important topic, asking: Why do multiethnic coalitions form in some countries and not others? In Chapter 2, Arriola lays out his theory of pecuniary coalition formation. He argues that opposition political elites are able to form multiethnic opposition coalitions in countries where neoliberal economic reforms have allowed the emergence of private business elites who have autonomy from the incumbent regime. The key juncture was therefore an incumbent’s response to external pressures to liberalize the economy during the 1980s and 1990s. Where incumbents liberalized...