

BOOK REVIEWS

Minoo Alinia, **Honor and Violence against Women in Iraqi Kurdistan**. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, 190 pp., (ISBN: 978-1-137-36700-6).

This book is an excellent account of honour based violence in Iraqi Kurdistan or indeed anywhere in the world. Minoo Alinia sets out by positioning Kurdish women's experiences in their socio-political context. Making use of Kimberle Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality, Alinia argues that "intersectional analysis concerns not only oppression but also resistance and struggle... not only the complexity of oppression but also the complexity and contradictory nature of struggles when various forms of oppression intersect" (p. 8). The book structure does exactly that. After locating the book in chapter one, chapter two discusses the historical context of political oppression and resistance in this region. This is followed by outlining the intersectionality of women's oppression in chapter three. Chapter four discusses the relationship between honour, masculinity and violence. The following three chapters address women's individual and collective resistances and empowerment. The ideas are then summarised and their implications are discussed in the final chapter.

This multi-dimensional study takes different perspectives into account. It analyses 30 interviews with perpetrators, survivors, women activists and the staff of women's organisations who work in this field. The result is a rich account of honour-based violence in a historical context where militarisation and political violence "reinforce the effects of militaristic thinking" and make violence "a large part of everyday consciousness" (p. 33). Alinia identifies two concepts of honour in her book. The first is a broad concept which is linked to "honour and prestige" which is incompatible with violence. The second concept of honour is connected to masculinity and violence. Going against the perception of honour-based violence as a cultural phenomenon, Alinia argues that: "connecting violence with culture... is the perpetrator's discourse and should be seen as such- not as the culture of a society or a people" (p. 47). She then goes on to explain that there is no "unified and homogenous community behind perpetrators" (p. 98). It is the "powerful honour discourse" which silences contradictions and ambivalence in the community, exerting pressure on male members of the family to act.

Perhaps the greatest part of this book is its discussion of the relationship between identity, masculinity and violence in the context of national struggle. First of all, Alinia explains that Kurdish identity is constructed in the context of retribalisation policies of Britain and America. She argues that: "The British and later the US occupation contributed to a revival and the strengthening of tribal and sectarian power and conflicts, which have been extremely harmful to society in general and for women in particular" (p. 23). Alinia identifies three power centres which have pursued and normalised violence against women in Iraqi Kurdistan. These are the Iraqi state, the Kurdish tribes and

the Kurdish nationalist movement (p. 23). The tribes themselves played an important role both in the Kurdish opposition and later in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) when the ruling Kurdish parties incorporated them into their own structures. She goes on to conclude: “the growth of tribal power and its system of norms and values has continued in Iraqi Kurdistan in parallel with the war, state violence and brutality, socioeconomic marginalization and poverty, militarization, every day and institutionalized discrimination, a lack of infrastructure and a proper education system, and the existence of laws that legitimize and accept the killing of women” (p. 28). Secondly, Alinia explains how controlling women’s sexuality is directly related to “maintaining collective identity and maintaining biological and social boundaries” (p. 31). Drawing on Yuval Davis (1994) and Collins (2009) this study shows that women experience restrictions on their sexuality to make sure that they “give birth to the right kind of children in order to maintain the boundaries of the collectivity” (p. 43).

The relationship between nationalism and masculinity has also been explored. The powerlessness that men from the oppressed ethnic groups endure is experienced as “feminisation”. The reconstruction of male and female roles has therefore been essential for liberation movements (Yuval-Davis, 1997:67, cited in Alinia, p. 34). As in Palestine, the nationalist movement in Kurdistan is linked to the “achievement of manhood” and therefore men’s capacity to control women’s sexuality (p. 35). This is because: “In societies where ethnic oppression, militarization and violence are part of daily life, men’s multiple and complex individual identities can be undermined by a narrow male identity built around violence, honour, and the control of women’s sexual behavior” (pp. 53-54).

Occasional minor errors do occur in this thorough study. For example, it is claimed that the Anfal campaign was carried out when the Iraq-Iran war came to an end (p. 23). In fact, Anfal started on 23 February 1988 and carried on until 6 September, two weeks after the Iraq-Iran war came to an end. Also, while discussing retribalisation in this region the roles played by Britain in the 1920s and America in the aftermath of the 2003 war are highlighted as the main culprits, undermining the Iraqi state’s thorough work in the 1970s and 1980s when tribes were given power and money to fight the Kurdish peshmarga during the Iraq-Iran war.

Honor and Violence against Women in Iraqi Kurdistan will prove to be a great resource for those who study honour-based violence, masculinity and women’s oppression within nationalist struggles for independence. It is well written, well-structured and thoroughly researched. Scholars as well as students will benefit highly from reading this book.

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Fevzi Bilgin and Ali Sarhan (eds.), **Understanding Turkey's Kurdish Question**, Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2013, 250 pp., (ISBN: 978-0-7391-8402-8).

The Kurdish conflict in Turkey has been a key domestic problem during the past three decades. The significant decline in the violence used by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) since 1999 and the minor reforms introduced by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government over the past decade has created a situation where a negotiated end to the conflict is within sight. However, the dialogue between the PKK and the Turkish state is yet to result in a negotiated end to the conflict. The Kurdish experience in Turkey during the past 50 years raises numerous important research questions concerning conflict, violence and mobilisation, which requires careful and in-depth analyses. Described as "an excellent collection of essays on Turkey's most enduring political problem" by Mesut Yeğen, who is a leading expert on the Kurdish question in Turkey, *Understanding Turkey's Kurdish Question* aims to "clarify the complexity of Turkey's Kurdish question" (p. vii). Written by academics and journalists, it brings together chapters that have both a historical and contemporary focus.

The book is divided into four parts each of which focuses on a distinct aspect of the Kurdish question. The introduction to the book is written by Fevzi Bilgin, in which he briefly reflects on Turkey's Kurdish question and then summarises each of the book's 13 chapters. The first three chapters aim at shedding light on the origins of the Kurdish question and the legacy of Kurdish nationalism. In chapter 1, historian Djene Rhys Bajalan studies the period between 1851 and 1908 to trace the emergence and evolution of early Kurdish nationalism and Kurdish identity politics in the Ottoman Empire. He examines the early articulations of the idea of Kurdish nation by traditional elites, drawing on an impressive amount of primary and secondary sources. The chapter is well written and in particular, he provides analysis of the poetry of Hacı Qadirê Koyî and the contents of *Kürdistan* – the first Kurdish newspaper which was first published in Cairo in 1898. Rather than accepting that Kurdish nationalism contains a particular content or Kurdish identity embodies particular characteristics, Bajalan argues for the need to explain "why different groups within Kurdish society have mobilised Kurdish identity in a particular way in a particular period" (p. 21). His chapter is a welcome addition to the growing literature on Kurdish nationalism that offers a new and nuanced empirical account.

In chapter 2, the well-known journalist Oral Çalışlar discusses the social, political and cultural dimensions of Turkey's Kurdish question. Çalışlar traces the origins of Turkey's Kurdish question to the early years of the republic and its "monist" approach, which to the Kurds meant denial: "The Kurdish issue was a social problem at the beginning, but with the policies of rejection, denial, and destruction, it turned into a complex issue" (p. 29). The chapter is written in a journalistic style (without end or in-text references, it does not refer to

wider academic literature on the Kurdish question and only cites two primary sources) and presents an idiosyncratic narrative of the Kurdish question. For example, to the question why Kurdistan was divided, Çalıřlar responds: “Due to their partnership with the Turks during the Armenian massacre and their resistance to the occupation of Anatolia by Western allies, Turks and Kurds became enemies to be punished...The punishment of the Kurds came in their division among four states” (p. 30). In addition, the chapter lacks a coherent structure and a clear line of argument. Hence, it will confuse readers who are new to the topic while to experienced readers, it will appear shallow and lacking analytical rigour.

In chapter 3, E. Fuat Keyman and Umut Özkırmımlı argue that nationalism as “a strategy used both by the Kurds to put forward their demands for recognition and the state to suppress these demands, is the most serious hurdle in the way of a peaceful resolution to the ‘Kurdish question’” (p. 47). The chapter draws from democratic theory and is situated within Turkey’s ongoing problem of pluralism. They argue that “the solution lies in the democratic reconstruction of the political in Turkey” (p. 47) and propose the “de-ethnicization” of the Kurdish question and the exploration of the ways in which identity claims could be articulated with citizenship rights with an emphasis on the rule of law and democracy” (p. 51). However, it is not clear whether their solution is able to accommodate the key Kurdish demands and consequently various major questions remain unanswered: Does the re-articulation of Kurdish identity claims involve its constitutional recognition?; If not, why not?; Does it lead to the satisfaction of the cultural and language rights as has been popularly demanded by the Kurds? Furthermore, the discussion does not take into account the transformation undergone by the Kurdish movement in Turkey over the past 15 years that has led to the re-articulation of Kurdish demands within democratic discourse and not as particularistic ethnic demands as the chapter assumes. Such a framing of the Kurdish question continues to be rejected in Turkey and the authors neither discuss how the rejection of Kurdish democratic demands can be overcome nor identify who will be the agent of the “de-ethnicization” of the Kurdish question.

Part two of the book explores the contemporary period. In chapter 4, the renowned Turkish journalist Cengiz Çandar provides an overview of the Kurdish question in Turkey, with brief comments on its regional dimensions. Çandar also writes in a journalistic style but in contrast to Çalıřlar’s chapter, his account is much more focused and coherent. It also briefly covers the major developments connected to the Kurdish question in the past century. In a similar fashion, in chapter 5, Michael M. Gunter provides a descriptive overview of the different organisations that collectively make up the Kurdish national movement in Turkey. He briefly discusses the emergence and evolution of the PKK up to the year 2012, the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK), which is described as an “umbrella pan-Kurdish organisation” (p. 77), the then pro-Kurdish political party the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) with a

brief history of the pro-Kurdish democratic movement in Turkey that came into being in 1990, and the Democratic Society Congress (DTK). The Kurdish Diaspora activism is also briefly mentioned.

In chapter 6, Ali Sarihan compares and contrasts the periods of 1984–1999 and 2004–2010 in which the PKK carried out an armed campaign with the aim of explaining the intensity of the conflict. It provides a description of the PKK, its aims and how it is run on a daily basis. However, it does this without the use of any ideological material produced by the PKK to explain itself and motivate its actions. In chapter 7, Kılıç Buğra Kanat uses the concept of diversionary strategy to explain the reasons behind the PKK ending its ceasefires. The chapter starts with an overview of the Kurdish question in Turkey, which is repetitive of what has been discussed in previous chapters and goes on to explain the PKK's return to military attacks by way of Abdullah Öcalan's attempt to continue his dominance within the PKK. In chapter 8, Hugh Pope examines the AKP's "Democratic Opening" in 2009 and discusses the actual steps taken by the party and the problems faced during its attempts to broaden Kurdish rights in Turkey. The chapter does well to question the claims made in other chapters about the PKK being an impediment to peace and Turkey's democratisation: "Disappointment deepened as the AKP became more nationalist ahead of the 2011 elections, in which Erdoğan dropped two key Kurdish candidates from his list, denied any plan to reduce Öcalan's multiple life sentences, and said that he would have hanged the PKK leader" (p. 124).

In chapter 9, Gökhan Bacık and Bezen Balamir Coşkun discuss the reasons behind Turkey's failure to develop a political solution to the Kurdish question and identify four reasons: first, the state tradition in Turkey, which leads to preference of the military approach; second, the absence of an acceptable interlocutor caused by the state's oppression of the pro-Kurdish democratic movement, who, given the opportunity, could have developed (and subsequently has over the past two years) into an acceptable interlocutor; third, the political cost of peace being high, which prevents governments taking risks; and, fourth, the "international conjecture" (p. 157). The authors do not explain what "international conjecture" refers to but I wonder if it should instead be rephrased as "international conjuncture"?

Part 3 of the book is titled 'Civil Society Efforts in Turkey's Kurdish Region' but limits the discussion to Islam based challenges to Kurdish nationalism from the Hizbullah and Gülen movements. It is not clear why mainstream Kurdish civil society activism by human rights organisations, women's organisations, trade unions, and Kurdish language and culture orientated organisations are left out of the discussion completely. In chapter 10, Mustafa Gürbüz focuses on the radical Islamist group Hizbullah and its attempts in the past decade to transform itself into a non-violent social movement that has increasingly tried to rebrand itself as Kurdish Islam. It discusses some of Hizbullah's activities but within the context of "its armed struggle with the ethno-nationalist PKK in Kurdish cities such as Diyarbakir and Batman" (p.168).

Such a focus is too narrow and ultimately prevents the author from seeing the full dimensions of Hizbullah's past activities. A fuller account of the Hizbullah's murderous campaign against Kurdish civilians during the early 1990s is needed in order to highlight the difficulties Hizbullah faces in transforming itself into a civil society movement. The process of transformation depends on whether Hizbullah will be able to gain widespread acceptance from Kurdish society in general, which in turn depends on its successor organisation's ability to acknowledge and face Hizbullah's past crimes against Kurdish civilians.

In chapter 11, Doğan Koç discusses the activities of the Gülen Movement (GM) – also known as the Hizmet Movement – and tries to show how they are useful in reducing the appeal of the PKK. The discussion is contextualised within civil society's role in conflict resolution but the chapter does not explore peaceful resolution of the conflict. Instead it focuses on how the educational activities of the GM (university preparation centres, private schools and tutoring centres) are effective tools against the PKK. The argument is based on select interviews with pro-GM Kurds and statistics on the numbers of PKK members and attacks that the author has compiled from various sources, some of which are based on conjecture. On the basis of statistical analysis, he establishes a positive correlation between the increase in GM activities in Kurdish majority areas and the decrease in the PKK activities (attacks as well as recruitment). However, the statistical analysis summarised on page 190 seems spurious and at best highly suspicious because the decline in PKK attacks during the 2000s can actually be attributed to the ideological and organisational transformation that the PKK underwent coupled with the resultant ceasefires declared during this period, one of which lasted almost 5 years. However, Koç makes no reference to the transformation in the conflict. Additionally, he does not discuss the views of the GM regarding the Kurdish conflict and the accommodation of Kurdish rights in Turkey. It would have aided our understanding if the chapter explored the publications and other organisational materials the GM produced that target the Kurds, including the numerous emotional sermons of Fethullah Gulen in which he articulated the GM's position on the Kurdish Question and argued for the need to target the Kurdish nationalist activism with more force and severe security measures. Instead the chapter assumes – as the proponents and supporters of the movement do – the GM to be an agent of peace and in the service of sustainable peace building in Turkey. Hence, in order to present a credible argument the author needs to prove that there is a positive correlation between the conflict transformation achieved by the PKK's ceasefires and GM's activities in the Kurdish region.

In part 4, the international dimensions of the Kurdish question are discussed. In chapter 12, H. Akin Ünver focuses on the way Kurdish question has been discussed in the West, in particular by the European Parliament and the US Congress. The chapter seeks to highlight the dominant frames used by the Western countries in their discussion of the Kurdish question, and also

the way in which the Kurdish question has impacted on Turkey's external relations. In chapter 13, Joshua W. Walker tries to understand how the Kurdish question has "affected Turkey's perceptions about its international environment starting with the Cold War" (p.224). Both chapters offer a historical overview of the Kurdish question as well as the main events that have shaped its trajectory, which is quite useful.

The main weakness of the book is that it discusses the Kurdish question while ignoring the main actors that have put the Kurdish question on Turkey's agenda in the contemporary period. The chapters in part 2 ignore the discourses and practices of the Kurdish national movement (the PKK as well as the legal pro-Kurdish political parties) and more specifically its articulation of the Kurdish question, the Kurdish demands, its ideological evolution, how it managed to mobilise the Kurds during the past 30 years etc. This becomes a serious weakness for chapters 6, 7 and 9, in particular because they seek to understand and explain the actions of the PKK as an organisation and its behaviour during the conflict but we learn almost nothing about key issues such as how the PKK managed to mobilise a large number of the Kurds, what the party's key demands have been or how and why it has evolved and transformed ideologically and organisationally. None of these chapters refer to the PKK's publications or analyse its discourse in any meaningful way. The weakness such an exclusion creates becomes very clear in chapter 9 when such a complex process as the PKK's mass mobilisation of the Kurds during 1980s and 1990s is merely explained through the actions of the Turkish state: "In retrospect, it was mainly due to the Turkish state's tactical errors that the PKK was able to become a major organisation that represents the larger Kurdish groups" (p. 146). Such a description completely removes political agency from the PKK and more broadly the Kurds.

Similarly, the book ignores the pro-Kurdish democratic movement (except very briefly in chapter 5) and the series of legal political parties that have represented it since its formation in 1990. Such political parties have been significant actors in the Kurdish question but again we learn nothing from this book about their key political objectives and how have they articulated Kurdish demands. On page 92, the pro-Kurdish democratic movement gets treated as being connected to the PKK, which is the repeated accusation the pro-Kurdish political parties have faced for articulating Kurdish demands and simply serves the aim of delegitimising the pro-Kurdish movement and undermining its democratic demands. Hence, the way pro-Kurdish political parties are framed by Turkey's state and mainstream political actors is reproduced uncritically within this book. In contrast Hizbullah, which is responsible for the murders of hundreds if not thousands of civilians during the 1990s, is described as a "revolutionary Kurdish Islamic movement" (p.xviii).

In addition, this exclusion becomes a major barrier to the book's ability to present nuanced and impartial accounts that aids our understanding of the Kurdish question in Turkey. Without offering due considerations or providing a substantiated account, various problematic and incorrect claims are made

about the Kurdish movement. As an example, Sarihan states “The Iraqi war [of 2003] strengthened and encouraged the PKK to pursue the ideal of an independent Kurdistan” but in actual fact from the early 2000s onwards the PKK have been advocating a solution to the Kurdish question on the basis of self-rule for the Kurds within existing state borders. Similarly, completely ignoring the fact that the pro-Kurdish movement has been in existence in Turkey since 1990 and the DTP was established by numerous well-known Kurdish politicians, he states, “In 2005, the PKK also founded the Democratic Society Party (DTP) as a political representative of the organization” (p. 92).

Chapter 7 claims that movements whose leaders are imprisoned are less motivated to generate great change (p. 113) but ignores the fact that the PKK experienced a major discursive and organisational transformation during the 2000s in the time Öcalan has been in prison. In chapter 9, contradictory statements are made: the authors argue that “Since 1994, the PKK has repeatedly called for a ceasefire” (p. 150), which acknowledges that the PKK has been attempting to end the conflict through a peace process. Furthermore, they argue “In 1993, the PKK declared its first unilateral ceasefire, which enabled it to initiate a process that eventually led to a negotiated solution. However, the Turkish government never moved to take serious stock either of the PKK’s successes, or of its preparedness to negotiate” (p. 145). However, later on in the chapter, they argue “A further reason for the failure of a political solution to emerge is that the PKK never felt obliged to seek a peaceful solution” (p. 157). Inadvertently, their discussion reveals the difficulties involved in bringing about and successfully completing a peace process to end the conflict. Given the deep roots of the conflict and its complexities, such difficulties are understandable and Turkey needs to overcome them if it is to succeed in peacefully solving the conflict. Instead of exploring these difficulties and how can they be overcome, the dominant tendency (except perhaps chapter 8) – as the above discussion shows – is to blame the PKK for the failures of the attempts at conflict resolution, which uncritically reproduces the government’s argument.

Lastly, some of the chapters contain quite similar sections on the background to Turkey’s Kurdish Question, which is repetitive and perhaps a little tedious for the reader. Instead, the introduction could have been longer and provided the background information to the conflict, which would have opened up space for the chapters to engage with the subject matter on a deeper level.

Overall, some of the chapters do make a contribution to our understanding of the Kurdish question in Turkey. However, others fail the test of objective research. A more inclusive and unbiased approach to the Kurdish movement in Turkey would have allowed for an accurate analysis of the difficulties involved in the resolution of the conflict.

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Michael M. Gunter, **Out of Nowhere: The Kurds of Syria in Peace and War**, Hurst Publishers, London, 2014, 169 pp., (ISBN: 978-1-84904-435-6).

Political scientist Michael M. Gunter has published one of the first books written in English on the topic of Rojava after the establishment of a de facto autonomy by the Democratic Union Party (PYD) in 2012. His quick-to-print publication is a well-informed text, but it is far from being current and only focuses in part on Rojava. The book is mainly based on secondary sources and not on fieldwork of the author. Much of the book is a general introduction on the larger Kurdish region.

It seems that the publisher took more than a year to publish the ready-to-print text. Though the author states that it was written in 2013 (p. 44), it was not published until autumn 2014. Thus such a timely publication really suffers from the publisher's delay. Available more than two years after the establishment of a de facto autonomy in Rojava, it covers only slightly more than the first year. It does not include the rise of the so called "Islamic state," the establishment of the three autonomous cantons by the ruling PYD in January 2014, or the siege of Kobanê.

Additionally, the result of such a delay is that several pieces of information in the book are not up to date. For example, while it is correct that in 2013 the KDPS led by Abdul Hakim Bashar was the sister party of Barzani's KDP in Iraq (p. 44), in spring 2014 this party merged with three other parties (Yekiti Kurdistanî and the two Azadi Parties) and formed a new sister party to Iraq's KDP with a new leadership under Saud Mullah. This is no mistake of the author, but it would have been nice if he could have updated the book before publishing. However, writers should think twice before selecting Hurst for such timely projects.

Other than that, the book gives a well-informed overview on the developments in Syrian-Kurdistan until 2013. A long time expert on the Kurds in general and the Turkish Kurds in particular, Gunter tells the story of the Syrian Kurds from more of a Turkish-Kurdish perspective than from a Syrian one. This has advantages and disadvantages. The recent history of Rojava is mainly told in the context of the developments in Turkey, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the Syrian-Turkish rivalry. It also includes the transnational activities of Iraqi Kurds, in particular Massoud Barzani's PDK and Jalal Talabani's PUK in Syria. However, it fails to contextualise the Kurds in the political development of Syria and its development from a revolutionary movement in 2011 to a civil war.

Michael M. Gunter's book gives extensive general information about the Kurds in all parts of Kurdistan, in particular in Turkey and Iraq. The book starts with a map of the Kurdish inhabited areas in Syria. However it is a rather generous map that includes many mixed territories referred to as "Kurdish," such as the region from Jarablus to the west or the city of Aleppo. I had not previously seen a map of "the Kurdish areas of Syria" that included terri-

tories south of the Kurd Dag region on the southeast of the Turkish town of Antakya or on the northern coast of the lake Assad.

An informative introduction is followed by a chapter detailing the historical background. A few pages introduce the reader to the history of Syria and the Kurds from the 1920's on, the establishment of Khoybun, the foundation of the KDP-S in 1957 until the fire in the cinema of Amûdê on 13th of November 1960 (p. 17). Chapter two ("The Forgotten") gives a brief eight page summary about the development of the Syrian Kurds during the Baath regime from the 1960s onwards, including a short summary about the political parties of the Syrian Kurds and their political struggle. This chapter includes the exceptional census in 1962 that led to the removal of Syrian nationality from 120,000 Syrians, the erection of the so called "Arab belt" and the renaming of Kurdish with Arab names.

Chapter three focuses on Kurdish women. In only five pages Gunter provides an outline of women organising in three parts of Kurdistan, focusing mainly on Turkey rather than Syria. However, it is important that he hints at the "lack of protective labour laws [which] led to women and young children being exploited as cheap agricultural wage workers" (p. 33). He also elaborates that "many Kurdish families in Syria could not afford to have more than one child placed in a school, a position usually given to the son. Even if they managed to enter school, many girls dropped out to help their families take care of younger children, carry water and perform chores in the household" (p. 33).

Chapter four elaborates on transnational actors, both states and non-state actors, like the PKK and the Iraqi Kurds. Chapter five and six discuss the KRG and the PKK as possible models for the Syrian Kurds. Both chapters are well informed summaries about the recent developments within the KRG and the PKK, however this chapter does not then go on to connect these developments with the Syrian Kurds.

One of the most interesting chapters is chapter seven, which talks about the United States and the Kurds. As an American political scientist and specialist on the Kurds, Michael M. Gunter has an intimate knowledge of U.S. Kurdish policy. From the U.S. involvement and betrayal during the uprising of Mullah Mustafa Barzani to the U.S. policy towards Syria, he provides a wide range of in-depth information about American attitudes and policies on the Kurds.

Chapter eight sheds light on the prelude of the present uprising from the Qamishli uprising (Serhildan) in 2004 to the assassination of Mishaal Tammo on the 7th of October 2011. Finally, chapter nine concentrates on the establishment of the de facto autonomy in Rojava in 2012 and the rise of the PYD leader Salih Muslim as a political leader. This chapter also includes some information about the rivalries of the PYD with other Kurdish parties and the infighting the PYD had with the Kurdish Democratic Concord Party (SKDCP) or Wifaq, that split from the PYD in 2004 and the split of the still existing Rekeftin (Reconciliation) Party in 2004 (p. 108). Thus, most of this sub-chapter on intra-Kurdish fighting focuses on the rivalry between the PYD

and the Kurdish National Council (KNC), supported by the KRG in Iraq. The tenth chapter discusses the possible future of Rojava. In this chapter the theory of “Democratic autonomy,” developed by the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan is presented. The chapter includes an excerpt on the theories of the American eco-anarchist Murray Bookchin, whose ideas influenced the late works of Abdullah Öcalan in his prison on the island of Imralı.

All together the book gives an easy-to-read introduction on the history of Syrian-Kurdistan in a broader Kurdish context. However, as a quick-to-print-publication the book has its shortcomings. Sometimes the book suffers oversimplifications of the Kurdish political spectrum in Syria. Of course there are many Kurdish parties who had and have very limited membership and influence and nobody would call for a complete summary on the fragmented political spectrum of the Syrian Kurdish political arena. Nevertheless it is disturbing that Gunter limits his discussion to political parties with close ties to outside political forces. The book creates the disputable impression that only the sister parties of the Turkish-Kurdish PKK (PYD), the Iraqi-Kurdish KDP (KDPS) and the Iraqi-Kurdish PUK (KDPPS) play a significant role. The book largely neglects other political parties who played an important role in the years predating the uprising of 2011 and who were not directly linked to one of the Kurdish parties from Iraq or Turkey. The Azadi Party and the two Yekiti Parties, which played an important role in protesting against the regime, as well as the independent youth movements actively involved in the protests of 2011, should not be ignored. Other than the Azadi Party, which weakened itself with the split of 2011 and which became part of the new KDPS in 2014, the two Yekiti Parties still play a significant role in the Kurdish opposition against the rule of the PYD in Rojava. It was a demonstration by one of the Yekiti Parties in Amûdê that led to bloodshed between protesters and YPG forces in June 2013. The focus of the book on transnational Kurdish political actors leads to a neglect of other relevant political forces. The independent Kurdish youth movement T.C.K. (*Tengera Civanên Kurd*) and the Tansiqiyat, the local coordination committees of the Syrian revolution, which organised the first anti-regime demonstrations in Syrian-Kurdistan, are completely ignored by the book. Readers who want serious insight into the history and function of the Kurdish political parties should instead consult Harriett Allsopp’s recently published book on Kurdish political parties in Syria.¹

Nevertheless, Michael M. Gunter’s book gives an informed introduction on the recent developments in Syrian-Kurdistan and its interdependencies with the developments in other parts of Kurdistan. It is apparent that Gunter’s work focuses on Turkish- and Iraqi-Kurdistan and many parts of the book include far more information concerning the peace process between Turkey and the PKK or the recent developments within the KRG in Iraq rather than information about Syria. However, this may be an advantage for

¹ Allsopp, H. (2014). *The Kurds of Syria: Political Parties and Identity in the Middle East*. London and New York: I.B. Tauris.

non-specialised readers and makes the book a good introduction to an otherwise very complex topic.

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Mohammed Shareef, **The United States, Iraq and the Kurds: Shock, Awe and Aftermath**, *New York and Oxon: Routledge, 2014, 234 pp., (ISBN-13: 978-0415719902).*

This book provides “a descriptive and analytical narrative of the evolution of US foreign policy towards Iraq on the global, national and subnational level from 1979 onwards” (p. 2). The book addresses US foreign policy towards Iraq primarily under the two presidencies of George W. Bush and the incumbent Barack Obama, whereas US policy towards Iraq’s Kurds since 1961 is covered in one chapter. The central purpose of the book is “to address change and continuity in US Iraq policy” (p. 2) and it aims to fill the gap in studies addressing US Iraq policy. Yet, US Iraqi foreign policy is part of the broader US Middle Eastern foreign policy and Iraq, as the US administration’s focus from 1991 onwards, has been extensively researched.

In particular, Chapter 2 looks at US Iraqi policy under the George W. Bush administration before 9/11. The author’s emphasis on the “aftermath of the 1975 Algiers Agreement as an opportunity for the US to establish relations with Iraq” is debatable as a substantial event to have determined US-Iraqi relations. Chapter 3 looks at the ideational or ideological factors that have shaped US policies under the administration of George W. Bush. These factors are the neoconservatives; the President himself represented as an idealist; the assertive nationalists and the defensive realists. All these influences, according to the author, helped motivate the invasion of Iraq and shaped the Bush Doctrine. Chapter 4 constitutes a narrative of the “discussion that led to the US decision to topple Saddam and how the administration reached this decision” (p. 44) reflected, in a process of different reasoning categorised into “a crust, a mantle and a core as different layers of reasons and motivations that helped drive the War on Iraq” (p. 54). The author thus outlines some of the rationales of the Iraqi War (2003) as follows: That is the hypothetical scenario of the WMDs, US misperception of the risk Iraq posed to it, US fear that Saddam was a potential source of terrorist action, the belief that the US would be perceived as liberators, the pursuit of democracy promotion, the security of Israel, US perception of Iraq as a weak target, and the pursuit of the goal of regional transformation. Additionally, the US objective in Iraq to secure oil, as “Bush had a personal grievance due to Iraqi agents assassination attempts against him” (p. 68) along with the US perception that “Iraq was unfinished business and remained a US national security concern since First Gulf War” (p. 69) and the author’s claim that “Saddam seems to have constantly misinterpreted US policy” (p. 52) are further widely known points

raised in the literature. Yet, “regime change” is ignored as well as the repercussions of the “Arab Uprisings” (namely the “Arab Spring”) especially on the regional level.

Chapter 5 reviews the aftermath of America’s invasion of Iraq and it provides an overview of the evolution of US policy after the toppling of Saddam while it also enumerates the mistakes made by the Bush administration. The author attempts to analyse the evolution and impact of the Obama administration’s US Iraqi policy, a difficult task given that this administration has not yet come to the end of its second term. At this point the author’s claims about Iraq’s transitioning from total US occupation to joint control and to national sovereignty appear precarious. The author divides post-invasion Iraq again into three phases, namely “the neoconservative phase immediately after Saddam’s fall, the interim government of Ayad Allawi with emphasis on security and stability and the third phase marked by the defeat of a pro-western political order to a transitional government of Shiite dominance” (p. 114). The post invasion transition in Iraq is in turn divided into several further stages as well.

Chapter 6 concludes with a historical review of US-Kurdish relations. US-Kurdish relations are primarily viewed through the dimension of independence whereas the interrelation between the US and the Kurds of Iraq has already been analysed by the current literature.

The most interesting feature of the book is the primary sources used more so than the thematically divided look at US foreign policy analysis. The author concludes that US Iraq policy is one of continuity and distinguishes three major phases in the US Iraq relations, the periods that start in 1979, 1990, and 2001 respectively. Overall the book is particularly informative for the reader. The contribution of the author is twofold; first, highlighting the role and effect of the individuals and the leadership in US Iraq policy decision-making, and second, concentrating on the material gathered on US Iraqi foreign policy adds to the author’s argumentation. On the other hand, the divisions, stages and periods are exaggerated and applied to every notion. Thus, the US Grand strategy is identified by three phases and US foreign policy is in turn characterised by a four stage repetitive cycle. Yet such divisions are in need of further justification considering the generalisation inherent in such notions. This might be more effective then when addressing specific regions. Finally, the US presidencies have evidently been identified by a realistic practice coupled with an idealistic discourse throughout compared to the author’s reference to the “hold back stage” which “signals the return to cautious realism as was the case with US withdrawal from Iraq” (p. 195).

The book has also some areas in need of citation and further clarification. In specific, references to the “US -Kurdish relationship official but covert” relations (p. 141) needs citation from the existing literature as well as claims that “a weakened Iraq in the face of a hostile Syria was not in the US interest” (p. 141), bearing in mind that Syria also emerged weak from the 1973 war as well as that it was also in a building up process after its successive coups

throughout its early history. Statements such as “Kurdish officials were taken to a coffee shop outside the building of the State Department” (p. 147) could probably have been omitted. Claims that “Iraq gained in 1979 favourable status as a practical replacement to the valuable but now lost regional asset of Iran” (p. 2) are in need of further explanation considering Iran’s impact on regional politics even during Khomeini’s rule in addition to the fact that US goal of regional stability through containment of both states has been consistent throughout the last decades. More rigorous analysis is also required of arguments regarding the US strategy of neutrality during the early years of the Iran Iraq war in the 1980s (p. 199) bearing in mind US support for both Iran and Iraq in the first half of the 1980s.

Finally, there is a structural confusion in certain places, such as when the author states that “in 1971-72 calls for US support were totally ignored” (p. 139) whereas arguing at the same time “the first US support for the Kurds going back to July 1972” (p. 140); and in actual fact, this had already been the case since the end of the 1960s. Similarly the author argues that “the US was working against Kurdish interests in Baghdad” (p. 166) but later that “US Iraq policy became a policy of sympathy and support for the welfare of the Kurds” (p. 170). Likewise, the argument of the author that “the Kurds seem to have no particular strategic importance in US national interest calculations in the Middle East” as “US policy is always an extension a function of Turkish policy and/or of Iraq policy” (p. 173) contradicts the claims later on the author’s adoption of the existing literature’s findings of institutionalised US-Kurdish interrelations (p. 182). Instead the author refers to “a US -Kurdish friendship” which has not been conceptualised (p. 173).

The book is of interest to those in the fields of Strategic Studies as well as Middle Eastern Studies. Conceptualisation and a theoretical framework are missing. The quotation of various authors and policy makers which are excessive could have been adopted selectively for the author’s perspective to stand out more.

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Latif Tas, **Legal Pluralism in Action: Dispute Resolution and the Kurdish Peace Committee**, Farnham: Ashgate, 2014, 208 pp., (ISBN-13: 978-1472422088).

At the time the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) was established as a political party, it had a classical communist party type organisational structure, with a General Secretary as the leading party official and an Executive Committee responsible for direct operations. The highest executive institution was the Central Committee, and the Party Congress was the party’s highest decision-making body. Today, the PKK has developed into a complex of parties and

organisations.² While the PKK initially aimed at the realisation of self-determination through the establishment of an independent state, today the objective is to realise independence through the development of self-organising and self-governing capacities of people. Relatedly, the PKK promoted the establishment of institutions realising these self-governing and self-administrating capacities. In *Legal Pluralism in Action: Dispute Resolution and the Kurdish Peace Committee* Latif Tas looks at the practices of one such organisation which mediates and takes decisions in disagreements and disputes, and as such contributes to the capabilities of Kurds and their organisations to arrange and implement their own system of justice.

The focus of the book is the Kurdish Peace Committee (KPC) and how it has organised dispute resolution. The KPC is positioned within the wider framework of PKK initiatives to offer dispute resolution and conflict mediation services for Kurds in Turkey in the context of inaccessibility and a lack of trust in the official judicial system. Later, these arbitration services were developed in those countries where Kurds had settled, among them the Kurdish Peace Committee KPC, established in 2001 in London, and is studied as a case by the author. Members of the KPC are elected for one year and must stand for election if they want to continue their post. The work is voluntary and unpaid. Cases are accepted if all parties involved consent to mediation by the KPC. After a case has been accepted, the Committee listens to the parties involved, can organise a hearing at which both parties are present, listens to any witnesses, and examines documents or other information related to the case, before it takes a decision. Decisions made by the KPC can be appealed by either of the parties. Though the book also makes reference to what is called the *Roj Kadın Meclisi*, the functioning of this Women's Council in the UK has not been studied by the author. This council is said to work in a similar way to the KPC, but mainly takes cases which are brought by women, usually related to domestic and sexual violence and forced marriage. The idea behind the separate council is both to sensitise towards gender issues and to create a safe environment for people, mostly women, who bring their cases. The Women's Council works together with the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), which is basically an agency and community based response to domestic abuse in the UK.

In his book, Latif Tas distinguishes two groups of cases brought to the KPC: the first one related to marriage and divorce, the second one related to disputes in business. The author examined seven cases brought to the KPC related to marriage and divorce which also included issues related to menace and domestic violence. The 15 business cases discussed in the book deal with such issues as financial compensation after the termination of a joint business,

² Akkaya, A. H. and Jongerden, J. (2013). Confederalism and autonomy in Turkey: The Kurdistan Workers' Party and The Reinvention of Democracy. In C. Gunes and W. Zeydanlioglu (eds.), *The Kurdish Question in Turkey: New Perspectives on Violence, Representation and Reconciliation*. London: Routledge.

a dispute related to import, dispute over property rights, theft, debt and lending.

The author contextualises the work of the KPC against the background of legal pluralism, which is defined as a situation in which two or more legal systems co-exist or when there is more than one legal order in place. Legal pluralism, the author continues, may result in a complex interplay of different (legal) systems and requires attention for the ways people engage with the options available. However, the author does not say much about the complex interplay between institutions, the relation between the Roj Women Council and the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference is only briefly mentioned, and we do not know much about the institutional context within which the KPC operates. We also do not learn much about the motives of the parties filing applications or accepting the KPC to deal with their cases nor the deliberations of the KPC preceding a decision. What the author does share with us are cases brought to the Kurdish Peace Council, problems related to these cases, decisions taken by the KPC, and responses by the parties.

On several occasions, the author links the work of the KPC and the motivations of those who call for their mediation and judgement to the Kurds alleged traditional norms and values and customary practices. Decisions, the author states, are firmly based on these customs and traditions. Though cases brought to the KPC include marriage arrangements not known in UK law, the approach of the KPC, and in several cases the way problems are framed by one of the parties, is not so much related to tradition and customs, but to the ideological discourse of the PKK, and the party's definition of social justice and gender equality. Already mentioned is the desire of the PKK to create forms of self-administration and self-government, and the KPC could be considered the institutionalisation of this idea, and the authority of the PKK, in the daily lives of people. Having said that, the merit of the book is that it draws our attention to an important and understudied subject, namely the use of alternative disagreement and dispute resolution mechanisms and the actual workings of the KPC. What the book also shows, though not explicitly discussed, is how by means of the KPC and their mediation and judgements, new forms of "morality" are constructed. This becomes clear, for example, in the application by the KPC of the PKK's gender equality discourse in divorce cases. Yet also in the business related cases, the KPC applies a social justice discourse, for example by not only considering (in)formal business agreements, but by incorporating in their judgement such ideas as "fair price", and thus of moral economy. Concluding, *Legal Pluralism in Action: Dispute Resolution and the KPC* paves the way for students and scholars interested in the why, how and when conflict resolution and mediation is organised by self-organisations of Kurds abroad, and raises fascinating issues for further research.

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Galia Goran and Walid Salem (eds.), **Non-State Actors in the Middle East: Factors for Peace and Democracy**, Oxon: Routledge, 2013, 230 pp., (ISBN-13: 978-0415517058).

This edited volume consists of scholarly articles that have been written before and during the critical events that took place in the MENA region throughout the last few years. It is edited by respected academics, Galia Goran and Walid Salem, who have succeeded in putting together a series of articles that comprehensively analyse the current developments in the region, the reasons underlying these changes and the potential consequences they might engender in the region. It deals with the role of non-state actors in this political environment and how they get engaged in efforts for further democratisation, peaceful transition as well as equal citizenship. The volume starts with an introductory chapter by Goran and Salem where they explain the scope of the book, which is divided into four main parts: Civil Society (NGOs), New Media, Diaspora and Private Companies. All these institutions, organisations and technological developments are important components of any effort that aims to understand the contemporary dynamics of political change anywhere in the world. What makes the book unique is perhaps the fact that all the authors who contributed to this volume are from the region or they have been directly involved with these topics for a long time. They manage to bring first hand knowledge to the literature and provide original accounts of events that might be missing in other scholarly works.

Chapter one by Walid Salem focuses on civil society transition in Palestine. The author displays the conflicting views among Palestinian political circles about what civil society actually is and discusses the consequences of this confusion. By analysing the emergence of civil society in Palestine within a timeline, he finds that civil society efforts usually focused on the national liberation struggle while postponing matters related to social issues. In Chapter two, Galia Golan discusses the impact of peace and human rights NGOs on Israeli policy. The chapter is an empirically rich one that demonstrates the dynamics that left wing NGOs in Israel bring into the debate on the Israeli-Palestine conflict. Golan does an excellent job of explaining the competing agendas of right and left wing NGOs and their impact on policy-making procedures. Leftist NGOs or peace NGOs were blamed by certain circles for the isolation of the Israeli state in the world, however managed to sustain support from various segments of the public. Fatima Sadiqi, in Chapter three, focuses on women's NGOs and the struggle for democracy in Morocco. Adopting a gender lens, she looks at the last six decades of democratisation efforts in Morocco and analyses each period by displaying the context that Morocco was in. She suggests that women's NGOs found a space for expressing their concerns in between the public space and the political parties which limit women's roles in these circles. According to her, the NGO aspect of women's participation in democratisation efforts was a daunting tool in Morocco and it has managed

to reach legal achievements that are considered as significant improvements. In Chapter four Raoudha Kammoun provides an outline of NGOs in Tunisia by focusing on issues of gender, peace and political activism. After explaining the situation in Tunisia through a timeline starting from the 1950s until the present day, the author demonstrates the hardships that women encountered in terms of political participation in Tunisia. The conclusion of the article suggests that it is still too early to assess the consequences of the recent uprisings on the women's rights related issues.

In Part II, the focus is on new media and its impact as an actor and factor in peaceful transition and democratisation. In Chapter five Yossi Alpher introduces the website called *bitterlemons*, which was a fantastic initiative that was born in 2000 when Ghassan Khatib and Yossi Alpher decided to publish their discussions online. The articles were short and written in English, and they aimed to reach various people all around the world who can read opposing and sometimes complementary views about the potential resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The article tells the story of the website and how it came to an end, and concludes with two sections written by both Khatib and Alpher with their views about the impact of the website. This was one of the best chapters in this volume, which felt like a constant dialogue and made the reader understand the "kitchen" use of media in peace building. In Chapter six Sherif Mansour focuses on the role of new media in Egypt and puts emphasis on its "Facebook Revolution". Mansour has a cautious approach to the use of new media. Rather than taking it for granted that the new media enabled the uprisings, he analyses the root causes and by process tracing he reaches the conclusion that the new media facilitated what happened in Egypt, however it would be futile if there was no existing critical mass already. In Chapter seven Sara Bazoobandi draws our attention to the role of online technology in Iran and how it affects the democratic movements there. She first explains that the online networks facilitate communication among activists and enables them to share information rapidly. However, she also underlines that the state authorities can intervene in these technologies by controlling Internet freedom and interrupting communications. She highlights that the state can use methods such as filtering, slowing down the Internet at critical times or creating its own state propaganda in online networks. This is not unique to Iran as we also witnessed similar strategies during the Gezi protests in Turkey. Online technologies may also make users vulnerable, as one may face counter hacking, manipulating content or tracking, which may result in a prison sentence. Therefore, it is still early to conclude that the new media only plays a positive role in transition periods.

In Part III the focus is on diaspora groups as non-state actors. In Chapter Eight Mukhtar Hashemi discusses the role of the Kurdish Diaspora in Europe as a driving force of democratisation in the Middle East. He provides an excellent literature review on the existing literature on the Kurdish diaspora. The article is comprehensively written in the sense that it takes the Kurdish populations from four different countries into account and successfully narrates

their story. In Chapter nine Yehuda Magid introduces the Jewish American peace camp to the readers. By demonstrating the heterogeneous nature of diaspora mobilisation, the article puts emphasis on the leftist movements within the diaspora by giving a historical analysis of the JAPC and then by taking the new organization J Street as a case study. The article is very informative and challenges the common prejudices about the Jewish diaspora which is usually depicted as a monolithic body. Charlotte Karouby focuses on the Maronite Diaspora in Chapter Ten. It is shown that the multi-ethnic, so-called 'mosaic', situation in the homeland also reflects on the Lebanese diaspora. The author analyses the mobilisation of a rather neglected group, the Christian Maronites by taking a deeper look at their transnational activities, remittances, skill transfers and political activism.

Part IV makes an original contribution by emphasising the role of private companies as non-state actors in democratization and post-conflict reconstruction efforts. In Chapter Eleven Abdulwahab Alkebsi discusses the private sector's role in democratisation efforts. He argues that in transition periods, the private sector has a stabilising role and it is vital for the sustainment of democracy. He explains his thought process by simply stating 'democracy is good for democracy.' Safi Kaskas, in a similar approach, focuses on the role of civil society and private business in the democratization of Saudi Arabia. It is stated that Saudi Arabia needs an evolutionary transition to democracy and that businessmen can open up avenues for civil participation in such a context. The last chapter by Benjamin McQueen elaborates on a rather popular and contentious topic: the private sector and post-conflict reconstruction in Iraq. McQueen has a rather critical approach towards private sector led reconstruction projects and argues that it has negative consequences for Iraq and one should approach this matter cautiously before jumping to conclusions about private sector development in post-conflict societies.

By focusing on these four different but crucial areas, this volume provides an excellent snapshot of the current situation to the reader. The authors do not engage with theoretical debates related to their field and do not aim to contribute to a theory building effort in terms of understanding the role of non-state actors in today's world. Rather, each chapter provides rich empirical data, which constitutes a toolbox for other scholars who plan to undertake that endeavour. The book is very informative and makes us understand that non-traditional actors are players in the game of politics all around the world, as in the MENA region, and their interests are also at stake. The book is highly recommended to those who want to learn more about the current developments, opportunities and challenges in the region.

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Mehmed S. Kaya, **The Zaza Kurds of Turkey: A Middle Eastern Minority in a Globalised Society**. London: I.B. Tauris, 2011, xii, 223 pp., (ISBN 978-1-84511-875-4).

Not long after Turkey's military coup of 1980, an obscure institution in Ankara named Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü (Institute for the Study of Turkish Culture), which appeared to be run by retired military officers, launched an ideological counter-offensive against the Kurdish movement in the form of a series of booklets that reasserted the old claim of the Kurds' Turkish origins. One of the books had as its title *Two Turkish Peoples: The Zazas and the Kurmanc* [*İki Türk boyu: Zaza ve Kurmanclar*, 1984]. The author, Hayri Başbuğ, claimed not only that the Zazas were Turks but also that they were a distinct people from those other Turks, the speakers of Kurmanci. His most important sources included a series of articles published in a popular history journal in 1950 by the retired army colonel Nazmi Sevgen, which in turn leaned heavily on field research by the Republic's expert on "ethnopolitics", Hasan Reşit Tankut, carried out prior to the military campaign against Dersim of 1937-38.³ Tankut, who had been "inspector of East Anatolia" for the nationalist Turkish Hearths association and an expert at the Turkish Language Institute, believed that the assimilation of the Kurds would be accelerated if Zaza and Kurmanci speakers were first separated. In the wake of the 1960 military coup, he proposed to the ruling junta a massive project of population resettlement, to create a 50 kilometre-wide corridor of Turkish settlers between the Zaza and Kurmanci-majority regions.

Zazakî speakers, Sunni as well as Alevi, had taken part in the Kurdish movement from its inception in the early twentieth century. The first modern publications in Zazakî appeared in Kurdish journals in Turkey in the late 1970s and in the diaspora from the 1980s onwards. Most of their authors were firmly committed to Kurdish identity but insisted that the Zazas constitute a distinct subculture, or a set of subcultures, within Kurdish society. A small number of diaspora intellectuals developed the idea that the Zazas are neither Turks nor Kurds but constitute a distinct ethnic group, or even two distinct ethnic groups, one Sunni and the other Alevi. Their claims were based on linguistic arguments, presented by such scholars as Karl Hadank, D.N. MacKenzie and Ludwig Paul, and these claims found significantly more acceptance among the Alevi than among the Sunni Zazas.⁴

More recently, the Armenian scholars Garnik Asatrian and Victoria Arakelova have weighed in heavily in these debates, insisting that the Zazas are a people distinct from the Kurds, even though they may only recently have be-

³ Tankut's secret report was first published by Mehmet Bayrak in his important collection of documents, *Açık-Gizli Resmî-Gayrresmî Kürdoloji Belgeleri*, Ankara: Öz-Ge, 1994, and Sevgen's articles were reprinted by a publisher specialising in books on Dersim: *Zazalar ve Kızılbaşlar*, Ankara: Kalan, 1999.

⁴ An overview of the debates is given by Kehl-Bodrogi, K. (1999). Kurds, Turks, or a people in their own right? Competing collective identities among the Zazas. *The Muslim World*, 89, 439-54.

come aware of this distinctness.⁵ Unsurprisingly, many Kurdish nationalists have perceived the emerging Zaza nationalist movement to be a creation of either the Turkish state or Armenian nationalist interests, or an invention of Christian missionary interests (which appeared to lurk behind some of the publishing in Zazakî and about Zazas in Germany).

In short, the study of Zaza history, culture and society is a highly politicised and polarised field. The leading Zazakî writers and their journal *Vate* (which began publication in Stockholm in 1996 and moved to Istanbul in 2003), have to tread carefully in this field, wary of being associated with attempts to divide the Kurds while remaining dedicated to preserving and developing the Zaza language and cultural traditions. Most of the research as well as the polemics has concerned the Alevi Zazas, especially those of Dersim. Tankut and Sevgen, but also Asatrian and Arakelova, wrote primarily about Dersim. There is a considerable body of writing, including anthropological accounts, on the religion and cultural traditions of the Zazakî-speaking Alevi of Dersim, as well as those of Varto. On the Sunni Zazas, however, there is hardly any literature – except memoirs and studies of the Shaykh Sa'îd uprising, in which Sunni Zaza tribes were the main actors.

We have therefore good reason to welcome this book by Mehmed S. Kaya, which makes the rightful claim of being the first anthropological study of (Sunni) Zaza society. The author was born in a Zaza village in the district of Solhan, in eastern Bingöl, but as a child followed his family to Norway, where he grew up and studied sociology and anthropology. He carried out a total of eight months of fieldwork in the early 2000s, mostly in Solhan, and completed the manuscript for this book in Norwegian in 2006. Kaya does not explicitly engage with the ongoing debates on Zaza identity and does not even mention the existence of a separatist Zaza nationalism, but shows in the title of the book where he stands. He often speaks of “the Zaza people” but makes clear that for him these are a subgroup of the Kurds. He notices the surprising strength of Turkish nationalism in Solhan – sections of most tribes, including half the leading Solhan tribe, are affiliated with the ultranationalist party MHP – but blames this on false consciousness and manipulation by the state. The power of tribal chieftains and religious leaders is gradually being eroded by the growing influence of the PKK among the younger generation.

The book is structured as a classical ethnography. Successive chapters discuss the role of kinship, tribal organisation, patriarchy, religious leadership, various forms of reciprocity, economic life, relations with the state and the PKK, culture and identity, gender relations and the role of religion as a conservative moral system. There are some interesting observations in each chapter, but unfortunately the author tends to write in very general terms and discuss Zaza society as exemplifying patterns that have been described for other societies. Kaya appears to take for granted that other authors' observations on

⁵ Among several other papers in the same journal, see Arakelova, V. (1999-2000). The Zaza people as a new ethno-political factor in the region. *Iran & the Caucasus* 3, 397-408.

Kurdish society are also valid for the Zaza Kurds; it is often not clear to what extent his generalising claims are supported by empirical evidence from his own field research. He asserts that what famous anthropologists have said about other societies – Edmund Leach about descent groups and the right to cultivation in Ceylon, Clifford Geertz on the “bazaar economy” of an East Javanese town in the 1950s, Bruce Kapferer on the nature of “the Sinhalese nationalist state” in Sri Lanka – also pertains to the Zaza society in Solhan. It would have been more interesting if he had told us in what respects Zaza society differs from those celebrated cases in the anthropological literature. Or simply, in what respects the Zaza tribes differ from Kurmanci-speaking tribes (no long-distance nomadism, for instance, but there may be other differences too), how the economic marginalisation of Solhan compares with that of other districts of Kurdistan and Turkey, and how the state’s counter-insurgency impacted specifically on Solhan society.

The best passages in the book are those where the author renounces on generalities and provides us with concrete descriptions of situations and events, such as struggles over land, the role of tribal and religious leaders in national elections, and mechanisms of reciprocal exchange that cut across tribal divisions, such as spontaneous help when a family had some heavy construction work (and every household contributed one man to work), or the ritual co-parenthood established at circumcision between the boy and the man who holds him on his lap, his *kerwa* (or *kerû*, in Kurmanci, godfather).

Kaya emphasises that large portions of Zaza society continue to evade contact with the state as much as possible, preferring to resolve internal conflicts through traditional mechanisms, in which tribal and religious authorities play crucial roles (and which in turn enable these authorities to maintain their dominant positions). In the case where a small tribe was deprived of its access to land by a stronger one, it did in fact appeal to the court and won a favourable verdict, but this was never implemented, so that the tribe was obliged to fight for its rights by seeking tribal allies against its stronger rival, with all the economic and political obligations this entailed. Kaya perceives a hierarchy of authorities, the mullahs (*mele*) closest to the commoners, above them the tribal chieftains (*agha*), and on top the shaykhs, men who are believed to have supernatural powers. The shaykhs here all belong to the Naqshbandi Sufi order and are connected with the family of Shaykh Sa’id.

In my understanding of the Shaykh Sa’id rebellion, the participation of the (Sunni) Zaza tribes was immense. It was the only Kurdish uprising in Turkey that had a truly compact and massive core region, and this was no doubt due to the degree of penetration of the Naqshbandi network, supported at the grassroots by the mullahs, in this society. This would seem to make Zaza society somewhat different from most other parts of Kurdistan. Kaya’s observations seem to confirm this, but unfortunately he gives very little detailed information about the mullahs and shaykhs; he is more interested in the new forces that are challenging their position.

The self-regulating potential of the traditional power structure comes with a price – of exploitation and violence and oppression of women – as Kaya argues in several of his chapters. He believes that social trust and mutual obligations, which compensated for the violence of inequality, continued to function well until the 1980s but then started breaking down, giving rise to distrust and insecurity. Because social and economic interactions are still based on personal obligations rather than written law, “extensive trickery, lies, fraud, hard haggling (..), cunning and so forth” prevail. In the same period, the Kurdish movement started gaining influence in the region, taking the side of the weak and challenging established authorities. The Turkish counter-insurgency effort in the region was also intensive, and succeeded in mobilising a large proportion of the population against the PKK. Nonetheless, the aghas and shaykhs lost some of the unquestioning support they had enjoyed in the past, as Kaya’s observations on the elections of 1999 and 2004 show. Migration from the region in response to land shortage or to the conflict between the PKK and the state, and the spread of education to others than the children of the elite, are factors likely to further undermine the position of these traditional authorities.

Kaya’s account touches upon many important issues and awakens in the reader the desire to know and understand more. His treatment of the issues is uneven and anecdotal. While he points out the importance of religion in this society, this is the aspect about which his text is weakest. Even on the rise of the Kurdish movement and its interaction with this tribal society, which is closer to his interests, he does not attempt a systematic account. Moreover, the process of translation from the Norwegian without proper editing has resulted in a number of inaccuracies, inconsistencies and some unintelligible passages, for which the author may not be held responsible. But it is the only book on its subject, and therefore the best so far. Future researchers will have to take it from here, and Kaya has pointed at many issues deserving further research.

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Shanna Kirschner, **Trust and Fear in Civil Wars: Ending Intrastate Conflicts**, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015, 189 pp., (ISBN: 978-0-7391-9641-0).

Worries about future security extend civil wars (p. 15). This is Shanna Kirschner’s main conclusion in the book *Trust and Fear in Civil Wars: Ending Intrastate Conflicts*. Kirschner, an assistant professor of Political Science and International Studies, wonders why some civil wars continue for lengthy periods, while others end rather quickly (p. 1). She argues that trust is a key factor to cease hostilities in a civil war (p. 2). For adversaries to stop fighting they need to have trust in their adversaries that they will no longer be a threat to future security. The level of trust relies on the perception about the adversary,

which is based upon the available information about those adversaries. The trust or fear appears in two forms. First, actors in civil wars will hold doubts on whether the other side will remain committed to a peace agreement as soon as the circumstances change. Second, the actors will fear the possible consequences of a failing peace agreement. Consequentially, adversaries in civil wars will continue the conflict if they assess that fighting is a better option for their own future security than an uncertain peace agreement (pp. 3-4).

The structure of the book is straightforward. Chapter 1 of the book introduces the main argument and explains the relevance of the subject. The second chapter first elaborates on the concepts of trust and fear. Then it discusses the three underlying assumptions: Combatants try to settle conflict, they prefer conflict to an uncertain future security, and interactions provide the information on which the calculations are based (pp. 22-23). Finally, chapter 2 mentions the hypotheses used. The hypotheses focus on the independent variables that influence the perceptions about adversaries: Presence of previous conflicts, atrocities (both in general and early during conflict), discrimination, and identifiability (i.e. how distinctive members of a group are compared to members of other groups). Presence of each of these independent variables increases the duration of conflict (pp. 23-30). The hypotheses are tested in chapters 3 to 6. Chapter 3 uses a quantitative analysis based upon a final dataset of 128 civil wars from 1945 to 2008. Chapter 4 deals with a secondary source based comparative case study of two civil wars in Sri Lanka. Chapters 5 and 6 also contain case studies, civil wars in Turkey and Cyprus respectively. These case studies are based upon analyses of secondary sources and semi-structured interviews among the adversaries. The final chapter draws the conclusions and links these to policy implications and further avenues for research.

From a Kurdish Studies perspective chapter 5 is of special interest. It focuses on the conflict between the Kurdistan Workers' Party (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan*, PKK) and Turkey. Kirschner finds that within this conflict "all four of the independent variables – historical conflict, discrimination, atrocities, and identifiability – affect how both Kurds and non-Kurdish Turks perceive each other and how they weigh the relative costs of ending the war when compared to fighting on" (p. 99). Turks seem reluctant to grant Kurds greater rights, fearing these will eventually lead to fragmentation of the Turkish state. Many are especially suspicious because of PKK attacks in the past and see dissolution of the Kurdish nationalist movement as the only guarantee for their future security. Kurds do not trust Turkey due to discrimination experienced in the past. Presence of all four factors that increase the duration of civil wars explains the longevity of conflict between PKK and Turkey.

Adding the concepts trust and fear contributes to the field of Conflict Studies. Linking trust and fear to perceptions of future security contributes to understanding behaviour of individuals and groups in conflict situations. This is reminiscent of Maslow's model on what motivates individuals. Primary needs are basic human needs necessary for survival, such as food, sex, shelter,

and sleep. As soon as the primary needs are sufficiently fulfilled, the secondary needs of safety and security become important motivators, eventually leading to what is known as self-actualisation.⁶ Keeping this process in mind, the theory explored in the book has the potential of better understanding other conflicts than civil wars alone, as Kirschner already recognises (p. 156). Studies that address topics that touch upon civil war could benefit from the new insights in explaining observations from quantitative analysis or case studies.⁷

However, the book lacks a clear explanation on how individuals' fear translates into group behaviour. Therefore, the link between the group-level quantitative analysis and the individual-level qualitative analysis (p. 10) remains rather vague. Models from Social Movement Theory that study political mobilisation and describe the dynamics between individuals and groups might help to improve the theory. Because the role of perception about the adversary is so important in Kirschner's theory, the Social Movement Theory of framing might be a relevant aspect. Framing deals with how a group tries to influence individuals in order to gain support for the group's cause.⁸ In addition, Kirschner argues "[a]lthough elite and popular actors have different interests and make different calculations [...], the basic decision-making processes [...] are the same, regardless of one's social or political position" (pp. 21-22). This is undoubtedly true. But arguably, in the end the calculation of adversaries' elite-members might be more relevant as these are the people who actually make the decisions. Public support for the elite's decisions contributes to success, for example by decreasing the possibility of splintering or spoilers.⁹

Kirschner's theory has the potential of being more broadly applied, which makes the book a worthwhile read. This makes the book more relevant for the field of Conflict Studies than for the field of Kurdish Studies, as it is intended to be. Current conflicts such as in the Middle East, northern Africa and Ukraine show the obvious relevance of the theory. The quantitative analysis forms an interesting foundation to build future case studies from. The chapters containing case studies offer insights into the conflicts studied with the focus on trust and fear. Understandably, these chapters will offer little new knowledge to area experts apart from these insights. The case studies are introduced in a general fashion to provide the context in which the findings of the interviews can be positioned. The findings from these semi-structured interviews do invite other scholars to conduct comparative research using the same hypotheses.

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⁶ Myers, D.G. (2012). *Social Psychology (11th ed.)*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

⁷ Cronin, A.K. (2009). *How Terrorism Ends. Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

⁸ Opp, K.D. (2009). *Theories of Political Protest and Social Movements: A Multidisciplinary Introduction, Critique, and Synthesis*. London: Routledge.

⁹ Cronin, A.K. (2009).