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Islamic Political Culture, Democracy, and Human Rights, by Daniel E. Price

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ironic that the business community, once economic decentralization and marketization gave it significant structural autonomy from the state, systematically went about reestablishing informal ties to the state by cultivating relationships with officials. Pearson finds the roots of the hybrid pattern of socialist corporatism combined with clientelism in Confucian thought, in the history of merchant-state relations, in pre-revolutionary China, and in socialist China, but she never uses the term “political culture” to describe the source of this continuity between pre- and post-1949 China. She implicitly recognizes, but never states, that China’s political culture has survived the demise of the imperial state, as well as the collapse of republican and socialist institutional forms, such as a centrally directed economy. China’s traditional political culture is a key to understanding why the business community persists in its old habits of relating to the state instead of attempting to create a civil society. In short, Pearson could well have concluded that culture has as much, if not far more, to do with the pattern of society-state relations than does socialism.

Pearson may be correct that if the well-positioned new business elite does not bring about radical political reform, then no other economic group is likely to do so. But the entrepreneurial managers of town and village enterprises (TVEs), whom she dismisses as too conservative and not well positioned to force political reform, should not be overlooked; in local elections, the party is most likely to nominate, and villagers are most likely to elect, candidates who have successfully established or managed TVEs. Those who are elected gain greater power to challenge the basic society-state relationship, but this group is likewise bound by political culture to work with the state, not against it.

Pearson examines the state-created business associations, which represent the new elite but are dominated by retired officials, as part of the state’s effort to coopt potentially autonomous social forces. Here, again, she notes that this is not a one-way relationship. Business benefits from the linkages of these officials to government bureaucracies because they give members access to “the vertical, informal clientelism embedded in these associations” (p. 135).

Pearson makes an important contribution to our understanding of the relationship between political culture and the development of civil society. Elements that in another cultural context might lead to the creation of a civil society tend to be quickly absorbed in China into a culturally rooted clientelism and socialist corporatism. As a result, the state’s corporatist strategy is to encourage business to support economic development while restricting its political role. At the same time, the business elite has been allowed considerable financial success for its cooperation.

Pearson concludes by putting China into the East Asian context. Once she asserts that clientelism in China is far less functional for the purposes of development than elsewhere in East Asia, she is left with the difficult question of explaining China’s ability to produce growth comparable to such East Asian states as Japan and Korea. It is beyond the scope of her book to address this question fully, but her partial conclusion may tell us much about the success of the “Chinese model.” In her estimation, local officials in China may have acted as “corporate directors” for their localities, and the central state may not have interfered with “neophyte business entities in business, agriculture, or local government” (p. 158) as much as one might assume. In short, beneath a cloak of communism there beats a capitalist heart in many local Chinese officials, who have encouraged economic growth within the hybrid form of clientelism and socialist corporatism.

Pearson’s book adds an important dimension to our un-

derstanding of how China’s communist regime has been able to maintain broadly based support as it liberalizes the economy. Deeply entrenched cultural attitudes and practices predispose the new business elite to cooperate with the regime in a clientelistic pattern, a predisposition that is reinforced by socialist corporatism. It will take far more than the disappearance of communism or the creation of a multiparty system to eliminate this mutually beneficial hybrid pattern.

Islamic Political Culture, Democracy, and Human Rights. By Daniel E. Price. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999. 221p. \$59.95.

Shahrough Akhavi, *University of South Carolina*

Does “Islam” cause authoritarianism? Samuel Huntington claims it is antidemocratic (*The Clash of Civilizations*, 1996). Daniel Price begs to differ and concludes that it neither undermines nor supports democracy and/or human rights. Actually, it was Ann Mayer who in 1991 argued that Islamic values can be marshaled on behalf of human rights schemes but that male Muslims have interpreted these values in a way adverse to such rights (*Islam and Human Rights*, 3d ed., 1999).

Price, who ignores Mayer—although he lists the first edition in his bibliography—uses a simple typology, following William Shepard (“Islam and Ideology,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19 [August 1987]: 307–36). The key concepts are “comprehensiveness,” the degree to which the *shari’ah* (Islamic law) is applied, and “authenticity,” the extent to which non-Islamic values are permitted to influence society. Operationalization of comprehensiveness is based on whether Islamic law “is used” (p. 145) in the following domains: (1) personal status; (2) economics; (3) social customs; (4) crime and punishment; and (5) governance. If *shari’ah* is not applied, then Price assigns a zero. If it is applied exclusively, then he assigns a three. Between these extremes are cases of modest and major use, which merit a two and three, respectively.

By contrast, the scale for authenticity ranges from 0–15: 0–2 represents a society in which non-Islamic ideas, institutions, and technologies [sic] are accepted without reference to Islam; 3–5 means they are accepted by rationalizing their compatibility with Islam; 6–8 is a society in which they are accepted but believed enhanced by Islamic ones; 9–11 means they are accepted, but Muslims make efforts to “trace their roots in Islam” (p. 146); 12–15 means they are rejected.

Leaving aside the asymmetry of the 12–15 category (the ordinal range is four as opposed to three in the other four categories), there is no clarification of the difference between rationalizing the compatibility of non-Islamic ideas and institutions, on the one hand, and “trac[ing] their roots in Islam,” even though these two categories are on opposite sides of the intermediate position on Price’s spectrum.

Price is aware of the difficulties encountered in assigning numerical scores to societies’ performance on these dimensions, which in the final analysis are based on “guesstimates.” Turkey gets a one on authenticity, and Senegal gets a “three or four” (p. 146). The decision as to what score to accord a society comes down to interpreting the evidence contained in leaders’ statements and speeches; scholarship on the political systems involved; constitutions; media reports; information generated from these states’ embassies in the United States; the author’s personal contacts in these states; and survey questionnaire responses by members of the Middle East Studies Association of North America. Price then seeks to

collate and distill the data generated by all these sources into quantitative integers, which is a daunting task at the least.

Four descriptive chapters discuss Egypt and Jordan, Syria and Tunisia, Saudi Arabia and Morocco, and Algeria and Iran. Another fifteen Muslim states are included in the statistical analysis. The relationship between Islam and democracy is mediated by seven variables, four of which, because difficult to quantify, are excluded from the regression analysis. These four are historical influences, regime strength, regime strategy, and the strength and orientation of Islamic groups. The remaining three are quantifiable: modernization, presence of social cleavages in society, and the presence of a minority religious group. Among Price's hypotheses are: (1) an inverse correlation exists between the presence of politicized cleavages and democracy; (2) there is an inverse correlation between the existence of a minority religious group and democracy; (3) a curvilinear relationship exists between the degree of a society's "wealthiness" and democracy (beyond a certain threshold of wealth, the relationship becomes inverse); (4) the more rapid the economic change occurring in a society, the less democratic it will be; and (5) a positive relationship exists between the level of social mobility in a society and democracy.

After his statistical runs, Price concludes: "I have provided evidence in support of the argument that Islam is not a monolithic political force that is the primary cause of political outcomes in predominantly Muslim countries" (p. 177). When control variables are placed into the mix, the relationship between Islamic political culture and authoritarianism becomes insignificant.

To all this one can only say "amen." Should we be surprised? After all, a moment's reflection will reveal diversity in the social, economic, and political processes and institutions of contemporary Muslim states. Because of these variations, one may not logically use the constant of "Islam" to explain authoritarianism in these systems. If "Islam" were the culprit, then the polities of these systems would be characterized by uniformity. Price is to be commended for the industry he brought to the task of making sense of Islamic political culture, but such labors appear to have yielded a finding that is predictable on theoretical grounds.

The book contains a number of errors in grammar, syntax, orthography, and occasionally even substance. An example of this last is the statement that Islamic law "was finalized over eight hundred years ago and has not been significantly altered since" (p. 24). In fact, the *shari'ah* continues to evolve, in part because one of its sources is the opinion of jurists. In earlier periods, the juristic principle of *maslahah mursalah* (public interest) was scarcely known, but in the last two centuries it has been elaborated in a way as to be undoubtedly unrecognizable by earlier jurists, including the Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (d. 644) or Malik ibn Anas (d. 795), al-Juwayni (d. 1085), al-Ghazali (d. 1111), or Najm al-Din al-Tawfi (d. 1316).

Other mistakes include Price's assertion that the Prophet Muhammad's second wife was a merchant (p. 25). Populace is rendered "populous" (pp. 27, 30). The transliteration of the word for a Christian or Jew (protected people in Islam) is given incorrectly as *dhimmmini* (it should be *dhimmi*); we get the expression "quranically justified" (as opposed to Qur'anically justified); and the two early dynasties in Islam are spelled Abasaid and Ummayid (the correct forms are 'Abbasid and Umayyad). (All these mistakes occur on p. 28, and *dhimmmini* is repeated on p. 148.) In comparing Islam in Morocco and Algeria, Price tells us that "political Islam has taken a much less virulent form in Algeria," but surely he means in Morocco (p. 34).

In the bibliography Price errs in claiming 1986 to be the

date for Shepard's article (it is 1987); reverses the dates of publication of the two works by Piscatori; misattributes Vatin's essay on puritanism and reform in Algerian Islam to Piscatori's 1986 work, *Islam in a World of Nation States* (Vatin's essay appeared in Piscatori's 1983 edited volume, *Islam in the Political Process*); and misspells a variety of author names and terms: "Phanatos" (correct: Thanatos), "Akhavi" (it is Akhavi), "Mahkzen" (it is Makhzen), "Mat-tadeh" (it is Mottahedeh), "Tahari" (it is Taheri), "Tibbi" (it is Tibi), and so on.

Popular Movements and State Formation in Revolutionary Mexico: The Agraristas and Cristeros of Michoacán. By Jennie Purnell. Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 1999. 271p. \$49.95 cloth, \$17.95 paper.

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Jennie Purnell's detailed historical analysis of rural conflict in Mexico in the 1920s sheds new light on the formation of political identities in the context of revolutionary state formation. The book is well written and provides new material on the comparatively understudied cristero rebellion of 1926–29. Drawing on the experience of three regions of Michoacán state in Mexico's center-west, Purnell traces divergent responses to two main elements of postrevolutionary politics: radical agrarianism and anticlericalism. The author's concern with local histories is prompted by her dissatisfaction with structuralist analyses that tend to assume fixed interests and identities of social agents due to their economic position. Purnell also rejects new social movements theory as an inadequate framework for analysis. In explaining why some peasants supported the goals of agrarian reform and anticlericalism while others took up arms against such policies, Purnell focuses on how historical legacies of local conflict were politicized in new ways during the 1920s as the postrevolutionary elites sought to consolidate national government and reshape cultural identities.

For Purnell, the contours of state power emerged from myriad local and regional histories of negotiation, accommodation, and resistance. In this respect, Purnell clearly locates her work within the recent literature in Mexican studies on everyday forms of state formation (the title of a 1994 volume edited by Gil Joseph and Daniel Nugent, which include essays by James Scott and Derek Sayer). In this sense, Purnell takes aim against both orthodox and revisionist understandings of revolutionary state formation in Mexico. The former tend to view the state as representing the popular will, and the latter claim that the new state was able simply to impose its centralized authority on a passive society. For Purnell, state power is not seen in terms of the successful centralization of authority in the capital city (expressed by the notion of "Leviathan on the Zócalo"). Instead, it is the contingent result of conflictive processes of resistance and negotiation that take place in a great variety of local and regional contexts, where what is at stake is not national power but local understandings of political authority, religious practices, and property relations.

The book is divided into eight chapters. The first lays out Purnell's argument in favor of the nuances of local histories, promising a very descriptive but also analytically perceptive text. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 provide relevant historical contextualization of local resistance to nineteenth-century liberalism and (early) twentieth-century state formation. In this way, Purnell connects longer term processes of identity formation with the cristero rebellion. Her original, empirical research, carried out as part of a doctoral dissertation, is