

princely interference, lack of demographic data, calls for more predictable administrative procedures. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*

In the end, I highly recommend this book not only to specialists on Saudi Arabia or oil states, but more broadly to those who do political economy in general. It would be an enjoyable book to use also in the classroom at any level.

THOMAS HEGGHAMMER, *Jihad in Saudi Arabia: Violence and Pan-Islamism Since 1979* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 302 pages; £60.00 hardback, £18.99 paperback.

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Most researchers who have followed the jihadi movement during the last decade will have read Thomas Hegghammer's brilliant articles on the rise and decline of al-Qaida on the Arabian Peninsula (QAP). It is therefore with some interest that publication of his synthesis of these separate articles and reports has been anticipated.

The reader will not be disappointed. Hegghammer has written a remarkable book that covers a wide range of issues, containing a wealth of information, and is meticulously reasoned and extremely well researched. It is amazing that such an excellent work should come out of such an under-researched country as Saudi Arabia. I will, however, not go into detail about its merits, which, I am sure, will be enumerated elsewhere. Instead, I will concentrate on one point I believe is problematic. This is Hegghammer's strategy of leaving out Wahhabism as an explanatory factor in analysing the background of what he calls global jihadism. In a way this is a wise decision: many analysts of terrorism in Saudi Arabia make the mistake of blaming violence in the country on it. This is not smart for several reasons: first, it lumps together different, often contradictory trends in the specific form of Islam that has been developed on the Arabian Peninsula since the eighteenth century; second, it does not take into account outside ideological influences, such as those of the Egyptian and Syrian Muslim Brotherhood; finally, it overstates the importance of ideologies as such in social movements.

In line with his reasoning, Hegghammer states that Wahhabism is "not a political doctrine" but "a living theological tradition". His decision to concentrate on "political priorities", i.e. concrete political goals, however, is a more fundamental choice. He claims that ideologies do not provide guidelines for the analysis of political activism. At the very beginning of his book (p. 6) he presents a table entitled "Rationale typology of activism with examples from Saudi Arabia", which depicts the political behaviour or the different rationales or motivations characterizing various Islamic movements (p. 5). There are several reasons why this approach does not hold water.

The first is that, although Hegghammer regards the table as a representation of "ideal-type motivations", it is far too rigid in its dichotomy between non-violent and violent forms of political contestation. Why is the violent form of reformist socio-revolutionary Islamism the opposite of pietist vigilantism, and violent pan-Islamism the radical form of soft pan-Islamism? There is no immediate logic. Socio-revolutionary Islamism can very well be based on pietism, as well as peaceful reformism.

Another reason why this approach is not very satisfactory is that one, in the end, has to come up with examples, and analyse the genealogies of ideologies to explain this political behaviour. How such behaviour has come about is the result of the interaction between leaders, circumstances and ideologies. As an example of pietism, al-Jamā'at al-Islamiyya in Egypt started out as a pietistic

movement, rejecting politics, later on radicalising and becoming a jihadi movement, eventually returning to its pietistic roots, while accepting politics as one of the means of performing *da'wa*. Islamic ideologies can move both up and down and diagonally in Hegghammer's scheme because their ideologies are fundamentally ambiguous and fluid. The same goes for some elements in Wahhabism. The strong xenophobic strain represented in such concepts as *al-walā' wa-l-barā'* (loyalty and disavowal) can certainly be traced, even if it has both a peaceful pietistic form and a violent jihadi one. Likewise, the concept of loyalty to the ruler (*walī al-'amr*) so crucial in legitimising the Saudi ruling family is an essential part of "Wahhabism" and part of its political doctrine. The ambiguity and multi-dimensional character of these concepts in the end undermines Hegghammer's search for certainty in looking for the political rationale of Islamic movements: is there a clear-cut social revolutionary Islamist movements, or a specifically pan-Islamist one, as he tries to analyse in his table? Is not the basic problem with all these movements that their concept of politics and their goals are ill defined? A pietistic movement can be potentially revolutionary when it denies the legitimacy of the ruler without necessarily devising a socio-revolutionary programme. Likewise, anti-American pan-Islamism and attacks on foreigners in Saudi Arabia in 2000–01 probably contain more critique of the existing political system than Hegghammer accounts for by analysing it as a pan-Islamist inspired movement. In fact, Hegghammer himself analyses pan-Islamism as an ideology when he explains that it is based on classical jihadism, which has its roots in classical *fiqh* and has been radicalised by Abdallah Azzam and later turned into global jihadism by Osama bin Laden. But by deleting its ambiguous and multi-faceted character and trying to pin down this movement in such rigid and narrowly defined terms, he hardly does it justice. This is eminently clear in his otherwise wonderful analysis of the "Shuaybi school" (pp. 83–98). Although he describes the main characters as politicised and radicalised, opposing all the positions the state adopts, he maintains that they are primarily pan-Islamic. Only later on does he admit that global jihadism also has "an important revolutionary dimension" — although he lamely adds that, "the fight against the far enemy was deemed to have priority" (p. 105, also p. 108). The Wahhabi roots of this school, and therefore the source of the opaqueness and ambiguity of its politics, is unmentioned. My own research on Yusuf al-Uyairi, the first leader of QAP, showed a different picture. His writings demonstrate a whole range of interlocking concepts borrowed from Wahhabism and other ideologies, turned into a modern activism revolving around jihad as a permanent revolution. The strong influence of a strict Salafi thinker like Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi on QAP confirms the existence of this radical Wahhabi strain.

Hegghammer's insistence on bringing all the actions of QAP down to anti-Americanism and pan-Islamism also has a political dimension. By disconnecting QAP from the more radical tradition in Wahhabism, he regards it as a onetime event that was easily defeated by the Saudi state. The tremendous effort the Saudi state continues to invest in counter-terrorism, both in its hard and soft forms, seems to belie this idea.

These criticisms are not intended to disparage the tremendous accomplishments of this book: they do, however, mean that one should be cautious about its ideological sections.