

While the US would want Israel to maintain the ability to balance regional rivals and deter hostile attacks, the US would have a stronger interest in resolving the Arab-Israeli dispute, giving it more incentive to press Israel to compromise with its Arab neighbors.

While advocates of offshore balancing promote many policies that progressives have long called for, their approach is still rooted in the capacity of the US to project power into the region (when needed), requiring a strong maritime presence, access to air bases and forces over the horizon. And as repeatedly witnessed during the Cold War, when the US followed a strategy of offshore balancing, regional forces are not likely to stay in equilibrium. US allies may provoke conflicts with the expectation of US intervention, and forces opposed to US interests may rise. The argument for restraining the American role in the region is taken further by Barry Posen, who argues that the diffusion of global power and the spread of globalization have made the forms of control neo-conservatives and neo-liberals desire so costly as to be self-defeating. As Posen writes, "The very act of seeking more control injects negative energy into global politics as quickly as it finds enemies to vanquish."⁹

Though a neo-isolationist policy limits the forms of power the US would wield over the Middle East, like offshore balancing it would require accepting a government that abandons any effort to build institutions at the local, transnational and global levels that might help promote a more just, inclusive and environmentally sustainable global order. With reason, some suggest that Barack Obama is the most "cosmopolitan" American to win the White House and that he has an interest in redefining America's relationship with the world in fundamental ways. In any case, most would agree with Posen that "we do not have a debate on the deep foundations of grand strategy in the US mainstream today."¹⁰ We did not get such a debate during the presidential campaign. The time is now to have it and to seek the change we need. ■

Endnotes

1 Barack Obama, "Renewing American Leadership," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2007).

2 Richard Haass, "The New Middle East," *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 2006).

3 In contrast, the secular left-liberal intellectual Samir Kassir argues that the Arab experience of modernity, initiated during the *nahda* in the nineteenth century, collapsed more as "a function of [the Arabs'] geography than their history," as the embrace of anti-liberal ideologies—pan-Arabism and Islamism—came about in the process of the Arab world's struggle against colonization by outside forces. See Samir Kassir, *Being Arab* (London: Verso, 2006), p. 67.

4 Testimony to Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, June 2, 2004.

5 It is useful to recall that by 1998, two years before Bush took office, President Bill Clinton had already discarded a multilateral approach at the UN in his own effort to contain Iraq. See Marc Lynch, "The Politics of Consensus in the Gulf," *Middle East Report* 215 (Summer 2000).

6 Barack Obama, "The War We Need to Win," speech at the Wilson Center, Washington, DC, August 1, 2007.

7 See Stephen Walt, "In the National Interest: A New Grand Strategy for American Foreign Policy," *Boston Review* (February/March 2005); John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, *The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), pp. 338–341; and Christopher Layne, "Who Lost Iraq and Why It Matters: The Case for Offshore Balancing," *World Policy Journal* 24/3 (Fall 2007).

8 Mearsheimer and Walt, p. 340.

9 Barry Posen, "The Case for Restraint," *The American Interest* (November/December 2007), p. 13.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Aziza Khazzoom, *Shifting Ethnic Boundaries and Inequality in Israel: Or, How the Polish Peddler Became a German Intellectual* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008).

—Reviewed by Tamir Sorek

The ethnic divide among Jewish Israelis is an elusive concept and a rarely acknowledged reality. There are no discriminatory laws that explicitly sustain it, as with the divide between Jewish and Arab citizens. And it is not institutionalized in parallel state-sponsored school systems, as exist for religious and secular Jews. Zionist ideology, whereby all Jews belong to one nation, may seem to have forged a melting pot.

But a deeper analysis would find that Ashkenazim (Jews who came from Europe or America) constitute most of the upper and upper middle classes, while most Jews in the lower classes are Mizrahim (from Africa or Asia). This cleavage has concrete political implications, furthermore, since continent of origin is an important predictor of voting in parliamentary elections. Aziza Khazzoom's book traces the genesis of the gap, and also shows how and why "Ashkenazi" and "Mizrahi" became constructed as categories in the Israeli job market, in an echo of the global dichotomy between East and West.

The historical context is the mass immigration to Israel during the first 13 years of the state's existence. In May 1948, Israel had about 600,000 Jews, mostly of European origin. Over the next three and a half years, the newly established state absorbed 700,000 Jewish immigrants, of whom about half were Holocaust survivors from Europe and the other half Jews from Muslim countries. By 1960, another 300,000 Jews had arrived, about 60 percent of them from Muslim countries. Counter to conventional wisdom, what immigrants brought with them explains little about the contemporary Ashkenazi-Mizrahi divide. Khazzoom quotes studies illustrating that the educational attainment of older immigrant men varied among countries of origin, but with no obvious clustering of Europeans and Middle Easterners. Among the Israel-born second generation, however, there was a clear binary opposition. Newly arrived Iraqi men, for example, had an educational level similar to that of Romanians and Poles, and far above Moroccans and Yemenis. By the second generation, the Iraqi men's level of education was much closer to that of the Moroccans and Yemenis, and far below the Poles' and Romanians' level.

To explain the growth of this disparity, Khazzoom uses the 1961 census, which provides a snapshot of ethnic stratification. Her argument is more complex than a claim that Ashkenazi immigrants had privileged access to jobs. True, in the 1950s most gatekeepers were Ashkenazim, and employers tend to hire those with whom they feel comfortable and can more easily communicate. What, then, accounts for the "Iraqi paradox"—the ability of many first-generation Iraqis, like Ashkenazis, to translate their education into professional prestige?

Khazzoom answers with an argument evoking Edward Said: "Gatekeepers distributed occupations and residential locations with an eye to maintaining the hegemony of a culture that reflected ideals established during the Jewish Enlightenment, not...with an eye to maintaining Ashkenazi monopolization of resources." For many Ashkenazim, who were "Orientalized" by non-Jewish society in Europe, Zionism was a way to reinvent themselves as "Western" and "modern" in the Middle East. The Westernization project later became an ideological goal shared by most of the well-educated Jews in Israel. Immigrants from Muslim countries were seen as a potential obstacle, but gatekeepers rewarded those among them who were seen as contributors to Westernization. Statistical evidence shows that during the formative decade of the 1950s, "Westernness"—as measured by mastery of a Western language, for instance, or record of a secular education—significantly improved the chances of Mizrahim getting high-status jobs. More than others from Muslim countries, Iraqis were equipped with the requisite cultural capital. Interestingly, for Ashkenazim the elements of Western identity were often taken for granted, while Mizrahim had to prove them.

The default, nonetheless, was "dichotomous discrimination." One of the best examples is the distribution of immigrant housing, over which the Israeli state, in its first decade, had considerable control. Many immigrants were sent to "development towns" built on the periphery of Jewish settlement to Judaize the country; these places had very little to offer in terms of employment. Immigrants from Middle Eastern countries were much more likely to be sent to these towns, regardless of age, education and original occupation. In job interviews, immigrants had the opportunity to demonstrate Westernness, but their place of residence was decided for them, and here, continent of origin was the main marker of cultural identity.

Concentration in development towns does not explain the second-generation educational disparity, because so many Iraqis escaped to the metropole early on. So what does? One possibility is the lower educational level of women and the higher birth rate among Iraqi Jews. Khazzoom argues that when one controls for the father's occupational prestige, there is no statistical correlation between parental education and that of their children. Instead, she speculates that Iraqis did not transmit their "European" cultural capital to the second generation, and that "dichotomous discrimination" grew as the years went by because gatekeepers became less sensitive to differing degrees of Westernness among the Mizrahim and because more of the gatekeepers were new Ashkenazi immigrants who were themselves less secure in a Western identity. More research is needed here.

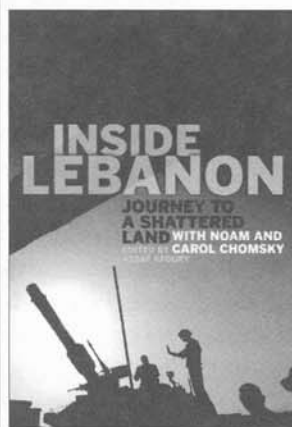
Khazzoom's study joins several important studies of these subjects published since the late 1970s. What makes her book particularly valuable is its subtle integration of statistical investigation with racialization theory and post-colonial analysis. The study of ethnic stratification in Israel, and more generally,

the field globally known as "ethnic and racial studies," is divided between two schools that scarcely intersect, to the extent of maintaining separate journals and conferences. One school tends to be positivist, usually using sophisticated statistical methods to measure ethnic stratification and distribution of resources and claiming to be politically neutral. Authors of this persuasion rarely pause to reflect. The other branch of the field favors "softer" qualitative methodologies, is highly influenced by post-modernist, post-colonialist and racialization theory, and displays a forthright political agenda. The lack of dialogue between the two schools is frustrating.

Khazzoom masters the methodological tools of both, with full awareness of and frank reference to the limitations of each. She presents clearly the ways in which the two approaches to ethnicity are mutually complementary. Other social scientists should step across the uncommon bridge that her book has built.

Parts of this book, like the story of Khazzoom's aunt and uncle, who immigrated to Israel from Iraq in the 1950s, are very readable. Elsewhere, however, it is likely that readers without a background in sociology and quantitative methods will have to invest an extra effort. Since this book is sociology at its best, that effort is certainly worth the reader's while. ■

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