Workshop on Military Regimes, Diversity, and Sectarianism in Muslim Societies – Abstracts and Bios

October 24–25, 2014

Edin Hajdarpasic, Loyola University Chicago | "Special Subjects: Islam, Education, and the Politics of Difference in Twentieth-Century Bosnia"

Abstract: During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Bosnian Muslim movement for autonomy in religious and educational affairs produced a number of reform initiatives. For many Bosnian Muslims, mekteb attendance became an essential part of Muslim identity, a practice that was supposed to be the first and formative level of education that distinguished Muslims from Bosnia's other constituencies (namely Serbs and Croats). But as various "modernizing" reforms unfolded during the twentieth century, many Bosnian Muslims came to see the mekteb as both a touchstone and burden of Muslim identity that hampered their transition to "secular" state-sponsored schools (first in the Habsburg Monarchy and then in interwar and socialist Yugoslavia). This paper explores how the modern mekteb—repeatedly reformed, updated, streamlined—became a site of backwardness, a place shaped by wide-ranging debates over educational rights, Muslim difference, and legal pluralism.

Bio: Edin Hajdarpasic is Assistant Professor of History at Loyola University Chicago. His research explores conflict and memory, ethno-national politics, and Ottoman legacies in southeastern Europe. His book, Whose Bosnia? Political Imagination and Nation-Formation in the Modern Balkans, is appearing with Cornell University Press in 2015. It analyzes how Serbian, Croatian, and Muslim activists discovered and fostered identification with their co-nationals in Bosnia, who appeared simultaneously as their "brothers" and their "enemies" over the course of the nineteenth century.

Bruce Hall, Duke University | "Ethnic nationalism and racialized violence in the Sahara: State collapse and the prospect of Islamist cosmopolitanism in Mali"

Abstract: One of the most far-flung consequences of the Arab Spring was the collapse of state institutions in the Saharan borderlands of Mali in early 2012, and the subsequent occupation of the region by various Islamist-jihadists. Under the cover of a complicated mix of ethnic nationalism and global jihadism, rebels who had been living in Libya were able to acquire sophisticated military equipment from the collapsing regime of Mu'amar Gadhafi and use it to launch an highly successful invasion of Northern Mali. This paper will attempt to explain some of the underlying

causes of this conflict, focusing especially on the history of military rule in Mali. It argues that the instrumentalization of racial and ethnic differences has been a feature of post-colonial Malian statecraft since independence in 1960. It also looks at Islamist responses to this history of conflict in Mali and asks whether the kind of cosmopolitanism which Islamists have proposed is likely to attract a growing following as a solution to decades of ethnic and racial strife.

Bio: Bruce S. Hall is an associate professor in the Department of History at Duke University. He previously held a position at the University at Buffalo (SUNY). His book, entitled A History of Race in Muslim West Africa, 1600-1960 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), was the co-winner of the 2012 Martin Klein Prize from the American Historical Association for best book in English on African History. He has also published articles in the Journal of African History, Journal of North African Studies, and International Journal of African Historical Studies. He earned his Ph.D. in History at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2005.

Ayesha Jalal, Tufts University | "Abstract Military Dominance and Regional Dissidence in Pakistan"

Abstract: The breakup of Pakistan in 1971 was the result of the autocratic policies of its state managers rather than the inherent difficulties involved in welding together linguistically and culturally diverse constituent units. Islam proved to be dubious cement not because it was unimportant to people in the different regions. Pakistan's regional cultures have absorbed Islam without losing affinity to local languages and customs. Non-Punjabi provinces came to perceive the use of Islam as a wily attempt by the Punjabi led military-bureaucratic combine to deprive them of a fair share of political and economic power. But politics more than cultural difference stoked regional resentments. What came in the wake of 1971 was a seemingly endless trial by fire for the constituent units of a Pakistani federation that the military in league with the central bureaucracy insisted on governing as a quasi-unitary state. After eluding Pakistan for over six decades, democracy is coming to be recognized today by a cross section of society in all the different provinces as the one remaining salve that can relieve the extreme stresses caused by aborted political processes and military authoritarianism. This presentation will assess the prospects of substantive democracy and federalism in Pakistan with a few comparative remarks about Egypt and Turkey.

Bio: I joined Tufts University as a tenured full professor in the fall of 1999. Since 2003, I have held a joint appointment at the History Department and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and am currently the holder of the Mary Richardson chair. After double majoring in history and political science from Wellesley College in 1978, I went to the United Kingdom where I received my doctorate in history from the University of Cambridge in 1983. I was a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge (1980-84), Leverhulme Fellow at the Centre of South Asian Studies,

Cambridge (1984-87), Fellow of the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars in Washington, DC (1985-86) and Academy Scholar at the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies (1988-90). Between 1998-2003, I was a MacArthur Fellow. I have taught at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Tufts University, Columbia University, and Harvard University.

Joshua Landis, University of Oklahoma | "Minorities in Iraq and Syria: Why is the Struggle so Long and Bloody?"

Abstract: I will discuss how religious communlism has become the new ethnicity in many respects. Sectarianism in both Iraq and Syria has taken on a national aspect raising the stakes in war and complicating peacemaking.

Bio: Joshua Landis is Director of the Center for Middle East Studies and Associate Professor at the University of Oklahoma. He is past-President of the Syrian Studies Association. He was educated at Swarthmore (BA), Harvard (MA), and Princeton (PhD). He writes "SyriaComment.com," a daily newsletter on Syrian politics that attracts some 200,000 page-reads a month. He is a frequent analyst on TV and radio, appearing recently on the PBS News Hour, the Charlie Rose Show, NPR and the BBC. He frequently publishes in journals such as Foreign Policy and Middle East Policy, speaks at Washington think tanks, and consults for the US government. He has received three Fulbright grants, an SSRC and other prestigious grants to support his research. He has lived four years in Syria and fourteen in the Middle East.

Murray Last, University College London | "Nigeria's military or its politicians: who does better, government-wise?"

Abstract: In the context of this workshop, Nigeria today is an anomaly. Its military, humiliated by its failure, despite massive funding, yet to defeat Boko haram within Nigeria, is in no position to take over the Government (even were it to want to). If the elections in February go very badly, the Army could nonetheless have a role. As for diversity, "federal character" is embedded within the constitution so that every government institution and agency must employ their staff according to quotas by State (all 36) and/or by multi-state 'zone' (six of them). In the 774 Local Government authorities (LGAs), 'certificates of indigeneity' can limit access to local services to 'locals' (albeit defined politically). Nonetheless, the notion of "it's our turn" is commonplace in the rhetoric of politics – it effectively means that we, for the few years we have in office, must maximize our 'take' from the Government's till – and we literally can't afford to lose the next election. Finally, sectarianism is legitimated by the right within the constitution to practice whatever religion you wish. Violence in the name of religion is however not permitted. It means that there has been a proliferation of sects within both Islam and Christianity, resulting in a certain disregard for established religious leadership, not least because the extremes of sectarianism can seriously pay. The religious faith of the government in

power (especially that of its President and his wife) can, however, affect both its words and its deeds (or at least its priorities). Given this anomalous context, my paper looks at how military and civilian regimes in Nigeria have compared over the last five decades, especially at their ability (or indeed their willingness) to share out 'fairly' the huge oil wealth, and tries to assess the comparative costs to the country - or to the average citizen - of political and military regimes. I also offer some views from Nigeria's grass-roots on who does better, views I have heard from individuals of all ranks over the last 50+ years. "Democracy is a slogan, not a practice – elections are just a charade", many have told me.

Bio: Murray Last is Professor emeritus in the Department of Anthropology, University College London. His PhD in 1964 was the first to be awarded by a Nigerian university (University College Ibadan); his previous degrees were from Cambridge (1959) and Yale (1961). He specialises in both the pre-colonial history of Muslim northern Nigeria and the ethnography of illness and healing. He has been working in or on northern Nigeria since 1961, researching a wide variety of subjects especially with colleagues in Bayero University, Kano (where he was Professor of History 1978-80); he visits Nigeria every year for a month at least. He has been both a 'traditional' Muslim student in Birnin Zaria and a guest for two years in a Maguzawa (non-Muslim Hausa) farmstead. In 1967 he published The Sokoto Caliphate (London: Longmans Green. It has now been published also in Hausa as Daular Sakkwato) and in 1986 he edited (with G.L. Chavunduka) The Professionalisation of African Medicine (Manchester: Manchester University Press for the International African Institute). In addition he has over a hundred publications on African history and anthropology. He was sole editor of the International African Institute's journal AFRICA for 15 years (1986-2001).

Marcus Mietzner, Australian National University | "Post-colonial Indonesia, Islam and the military"

Abstract: The management of Indonesia's religio-ethnic diversity was one of the most serious challenges that Indonesian leaders faced when declaring independence in 1945. The core of this challenge was to determine the proper role of Islam in state organization, with one camp demanding the implementation of sharia law and the other insisting on a pluralist state design. Unable to resolve this question, the democratic, civilian-dominated polity postponed further discussions on the issue until 1956, when it believed it was strong enough to revive the debate. But the debates between 1956 and 1959 produced another deadlock, allowing Sukarno and the military to abort democracy in 1959. Under forty years of authoritarianism that followed, the Indonesian state (after 1965 dominated by the military) strictly imposed secular-pluralist principles of state organization, rewarding those Islamic groups that endorsed them and punishing those that didn't. By the end of military-backed rule in 1998, the two largest Islamic groups had turned from pro-sharia advocates to defenders of religious pluralism, making the post-1998 democratic transition much easier than that of the 1950s. Nevertheless, my presentation will

also show that some radical Islamist groups have used the democratic opening to promote their conservative religious agenda (especially in provinces with very devout populations), prompting calls for a revival of the secular-pluralist principles advanced before democratization began.

Bio: Marcus Mietzner is Associate Professor at the Department of Political and Social Change, School of International, Political and Strategic Studies, College of Asia and the Pacific at the Australian National University. He is the author of "Military Politics, Islam and the State in Indonesia: From Turbulent Transition to Democratic Consolidation" (KITLV, 2009) and "Money, Power and Ideology: Political Parties in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia" (University of Hawaii Press, 2013).

Roger Owen, Harvard University | "Egypt's Political History since the Second World War: Between the Military and the Muslim Brothers"

Abstract: The Free Officer's Coup of 1952 put an end to thirty years of party politics dominated by the Wafd, a Congress-style nationalist rally containing both Muslims and Christian Copts. It also began a longer period of unequal struggle between the military and its associates within the 'deep state' and the Muslim Brotherhood a uniquely Egyptian organization devoted initially to pursuing a call (dawa) for an individual return to the faith but one which became increasingly politicised before being outlawed and persecuted by the Nasser regime in 1954. Revived but not basically reinvented under the Sadat regime in the 1970s it found a new role for itself as a maintainer of the social-peace under the Mubarak regime 1981-2011 before being forced to re-enter the political arena due to its success in the elections of 2013.

Bio: Roger Owen is A.J. Meyer Professor (Emeritus) of Middle East History at Harvard University and a former director of Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies. He previously taught Middle East political and economic history at Oxford University where he was also many times the Director of the St Antony's College Middle East Centre. His books include Cotton and the Egyptian Economy , The Middle East in the World Economy: 1800-1914, State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East (3rd revised edition 2004) and Lord Cromer; Victorian Imperialist, Edwardian Proconsul. He is also the co-author (with Sevket Pamuk) of A History of the Middle East Economies in the Twentieth Century. His most recent publication is The Rise and Fall of Arab Presidents for Life published by Harvard UP on 1 May 2012 - a political history of an era when most presidents were becoming more and more monarchical in their style ruler - which effectively came to an end with the revolutions of the 'Arab spring'. He has written a regular column for the Arabic newspaper, Al-Hayat, since the late 1980s.

Michael Semple, Queens University Belfast | "The Taliban's Minority Problem – Dilemmas over Whom to Hate"

Abstract: The paper explores the contrasting stance of the Afghan and Pakistan Taliban on religious and sectarian minorities.The Afghan Taliban have maintained an ambiguous relationship with Afghanistan's minorities. Prior to 2001 the movement was responsible for episodes of violence against the Shia and marginalised them politically. After 2001 Afghan Taliban anti-Shia violence has been localised and Taliban have avoided claiming responsibility for anti-Shia incidents. The movement has projected an ideology of religious nationalism, based on shariat-based reform of the Afghan state, unthreatening to any other country in the region. The Pakistani Taliban (TTP) have claimed responsibility for egregious acts of violence against minorities and have allied with overtly sectarian groups in Pakistan, consistent with their preferred image as a fraternity of mujahideen and unemcumbered by any realistic ambition of attaining state power. Both movements also seek credentials as part of a broader international Islamist movement. The rise of Islamic State propaganda on the minorities, and its Islamist critics, have created new dilemmas for the Taliban over what to say and do about Shia and non-Musim minorities.

Bio: Michael Semple is a Visiting Professor at the Institute for the Study of Conflict Transformation and Social Justice, Queens University Belfast. Prior to this he was a senior fellow at the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy, Harvard Kennedy School. His research is focused on the Taliban Movement and its relationship to conflict transformation in South Asia and beyond. He has published widely on this issue and contributes to policy advice.

Kabir Tambar, Stanford University | "Brotherhood of the Abject: Founding Violence and Popular Sovereignty in Turkey"

Abstract: This paper explores critiques of popular sovereignty in contemporary Turkey. Taking as a point of departure select moments during the Gezi Park protests of 2013, the essay discusses a speech by a Kurdish politician and some remarks delivered by street musicians from the Black Sea region. While given from socially and politically distinct locations, both of these discursive moments interrogated the category of popular sovereignty by asking about the forms of violence constitutive of the historical foundation of “the people.” These critics also claimed that problems of state violence, which once seemed restricted to certain regions or minorities, were in fact precedents for the kinds of violence experienced during the Gezi protests by those who may otherwise have identified with the majority. The critical discourses move from a critique of violence to a critique of the normative formation of politics, and from a concern about the status of a minority to an open provocation about the status of the majority. They allow us to explore how the figure of the popular comes to ground, not a shared political destiny embodied in the state, but a common experience of historical violence perpetrated by that state. What political futures become imaginable from these claims of historical injustice?

Bio: Kabir Tambar is an assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology at Stanford University. He was a member in the School of Social Sciences at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton in 2011-2012. His work has largely centered on Turkey and has explored questions of citizenship, religion, and the politics of history. This research led to the publication of a book, The Reckoning of Pluralism: Political Belonging and the Demands of History in Turkey (Stanford University Press, 2014). Tambar has also begun new research on military rule and the instabilities of mass politics.