

Islam, Society, and Politics in Central Asia. Edited by Pauline Jones. University of Pittsburgh Press. 2017. 392 pp. (ISBN-13: 9780822964278).

The collapse of the Soviet system marked the closing of the Cold War period, with some serious implications on multiple levels for the regions that it was encompassing. Subsequently, Soviet Central Asia's global isolation also came to an abrupt end. The Central Asian states represent to this day a mystical puzzle and stir curiosity among academics around the world. In a parallel development, in the past three decades, Islam as an ideology has inaugurated itself as a relevant actor with a significant impact on global politics. Consequently, in addition to academics, government officials and policymakers around the world also delve into the decipherment of Central Asia. *Islam, Society, and Politics in Central Asia* engages in a subject of central interest to academics and policymakers alike. The multidisciplinary aspect of this edited volume allows Pauline Jones and her colleagues to treat the issue(s) at stake in a very comprehensive way.

In a series of meticulously detailed essays analyzing the link between Islam and society on the one hand and the state on the other, the contributors investigate the extent, nature, and meaning of Central Asia's Islamic revival, and its social and political implications over time. This edited volume thrives on providing a comprehensive depiction of Islam in the region to forge a venue for a cumulative body of knowledge. The four parts of the book attempt to display a complete and aggregate portrayal of Central Asia's Islamic revival from a different perspective by exploring the role that the religion has played in Central Asia since independence.

Part I centers on the usual facade of ordinary Islam in local communities across the region. All three chapters in this section accentuate the pivotal role played by both individuals and organized groups in determining the parameters of Central Asia's Islamic revival. Chapter One looks at the possible connection between the process of religious revival in Kyrgyzstan and any potential increase in religiosity in Kyrgyz society. Chapter Two recognizes the individual uniqueness of Central Asian Muslims and subsequently, disputes the prevailing and expected assumptions about Muslim piety as an impediment to the portrayal of religious diversity in the region. The final chapter scrutinizes the impact of groups such as Mujaddidiya and Hizb-ut Tahrir in the Ferghana Valley, not only during Soviet times but also after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It argues that the state-driven approaches to analyzing the role of radical Islam in the Ferghana Valley are not rewarding, and that other perspectives are needed to understand the reality on the ground.

Part II screens the transformation of state policies towards Islam by using the cultural, legal, and political institutions in place and showing the main differences from the prior Soviet religious system. Along with this line of logic, the chapters in this section advance another set of collective insights vis-a-vis the evolution of state policies towards Islam arguing that the self-professed secular governments of Central Asia have maintained approaches to controlling Islam. Chapter Four scrutinizes the Uzbek state policies of control of Islam in the country with the aim of engineering Muslim religiosity à la Karimov, which in turn gave birth to a much more restrictive set of rules and regulations than the Soviet period. Chapter Five takes a look at the interplay between Sufism and the use of it by the authoritarian state(s) in Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan, highlighting how Sufism was instrumental in manufacturing their brand of secularism. Chapter Six raises the question of the Soviet state's enduring authority over Islamic belief and practice in the region by investigating the perseverance of unregistered Muslim religious leaders despite the strict registration requirements that originated in the 1940s.

Part III details the role(s) of the multitude of religious actors at the local and national levels and how they are endeavoring to shape communities' understanding/practice of the religion alongside state policies towards Islam, and public receptions of those policies. Chapter Seven, by focusing on the case of Kyrgyzstan, asserts how the sources of religious authority have evolved and how these contending sources have forged local spinoffs of Islam in the region. Chapter Eight points out the case of Tajikistan to show how the government has failed to restrain the influential role played by a number of non-state religious figures in fostering a national following through a sort of historical lineage and/or economic achievements as their source of authority. Chapter Nine, by centering on the case of Kyrgyzstan, shows how local informal ties and dispute-resolution mechanisms developed during Soviet times are instrumental in safeguarding the legitimacy of local religious leaders while functioning as a natural dispute-resolution mechanism between the community and the secular state.

Part IV reassesses the possible ramifications of transnational Islam on Central Asia in terms of shaping the content of Central Asia's Islamic revival and subsequent state responses. Chapter Ten examines the aspirations of global Tablighi Jama'at in Kyrgyzstan in terms of readjusting their strategy to the local environment. Consequently, the localization mechanisms empower the Jama'at to further beliefs and practices affiliated with scripture-based understandings of Islam. Chapter Eleven, equal-

ly, accentuates the pivotal role played by domestic actors in terms of adapting the concepts/notions generated by transnational Islamic institutions to the local setting. Chapter Twelve delves into the variety of motivations among young Tajiks to study religion abroad, even though they may face more scrutiny by the state upon their re-turn. The findings point to more tangible material gains than religiosity.

This edited volume is an exceptional addition vis-a-vis the study of Islam in Central Asia. It provides numerous insights into the ways Islamic ideology interacts with society and the nation-state building efforts undertaken by countries of the region. By doing so, the volume in question deepens the reader's understanding of Islam in Central Asia. The book has immense value for Central Asian studies, and it will benefit academics and researchers as well as policymakers and students focusing on Central Eurasia.

Cagri Erdem
Keimyung University