Cosmopolitanism in Dubai

Prince Turki | Picturing the Iranian Woman | Call to Prayer
MISSION STATEMENT

Al-Noor, The Boston College Undergraduate Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies Journal, aims to: ✦ Facilitate a nonpartisan, unbiased conversation within the Boston College community and beyond about the Middle East. ✦ Provide a medium for students to publish research on the Middle East and Islam. ✦ Promote diverse opinions and present a comprehensive view of the myriad of cultures, histories, and perspectives that comprise the Middle East. ✦ Be considerate of the complexity of the region while pursuing the utmost objectivity.
This semester, the Islamic Civilization and Societies Program at Boston College welcomed Prince Turki bin Faisal Al Saud to campus. During his visit, Al-Noor staff members Tate Krasner and Catherine Cole had the privilege of sitting down with the prince for an interview, which we’ve entitled Saudi Arabia at Home and Abroad. Prince Turki has served as head of the Saudi General Intelligence Directorate and ambassador to the United States and currently runs the King Faisal Foundation’s Center for Research and Islamic Studies. In our interview, he discusses topics ranging from Israeli policy to women’s rights in Saudi Arabia.

Laura Yan’s Cosmopolitanism in Dubai provides a fascinating look into one of the world’s most diverse cities. How can migrants make a space for themselves in a city that markets itself towards rich Westerners? Can economic power buy middle-class Indian immigrants a better standing in Dubai’s society? And in a city where the vast majority of the population is foreign-born, what does it mean to be Dubaian?

Call to Prayer, this fall’s photo essay, is Margaret Christ’s exploration of mosque architecture in a variety of countries. Her collection includes mosques from Egypt to Istanbul and Palestine to Paris. These beautiful photos give the reader the opportunity to reflect on the commonalities and distinctions in sacred architecture from around the world.

In Turkey’s Involvement in Africa, Alissa Heller and Merlin Harder examine Turkish foreign policy on the continent over the past two decades. They raise the question of how successfully Turkey can use its shared Islamic heritage and its willingness to invest in more troubled countries like Somalia to become a major player in African politics. They also pose the question of whether Turkey’s ostensibly philanthropic programs come purely from goodwill, or whether the Republic is viewing Africa as a key instrument to its future economic success.
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Saudi Arabia at Home and Abroad
An Interview with Prince Turki bin Faisal Al Saud

For a member of the Saudi royal family, Prince Turki bin Faisal Al Saud has spent much of his life outside of Saudi Arabia. At fourteen years old, he left his native Mecca to attend the Lawrenceville School in New Jersey. He then moved to Washington, D.C., where he received a bachelor’s degree from Georgetown University in 1968. Forty years later, Prince Turki was called upon to put his experience with American culture and politics to work when, in 2005, he was appointed by King Abdullah to serve as the Saudi Arabian ambassador to the United States, a position he held for over a year.

Before entering into diplomacy, Prince Turki forged a career in politics and public service. While at Georgetown, a Jesuit Catholic university, he organized a campus-wide conference on Islam during his freshman year. After his graduation, he went on to study Islamic law and jurisprudence in post-graduate
programs at Cambridge University and the University of London. In 1973, Prince Turki returned to Saudi Arabia, where he began working as an Advisor in the Royal Court in Riyadh.

In 1977, Prince Turki began working for the General Intelligence Directorate, Saudi Arabia’s main foreign intelligence arm. After serving briefly as deputy to Kamal Adham, Prince Turki stepped into his primary role as director general, a position he held for 23 years. After leaving the General Intelligence Directorate in September of 2001, Prince Turki moved to London to serve as the Saudi ambassador to the United Kingdom, where he remained until 2003.

Prince Turki returned to Washington, D.C. in July of 2005. In his role as ambassador, he presented his credentials to both Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and President George W. Bush. While in America, Prince Turki traveled extensively, visiting 37 states and working to foster positive relationships between the United States and the Middle East.

Today, Prince Turki serves Saudi Arabia in a variety of capacities. Foremost among them is his position as founder of the King Faisal Foundation. In keeping with his passion for education, he sits as chairman of the foundation’s Center for Research and Islamic Studies as an advocate of education investment in Saudi Arabia. For the past several years, he has also worked as a visiting professor at Georgetown University, visiting the United States frequently to lecture and travel.

Let’s talk about Saudi Arabia. What do you think are the most pressing domestic issues that Saudi Arabia faces at the moment?

Prince Turki: Well, Saudi Arabia has a lot of development issues. The Kingdom is a country of recent history, in terms of identity: in 1932 it became the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and at that time there were very few natural resources, let alone human resources. With the discovery of oil in 1935, the Kingdom began to develop. And since then, it’s been a race for time; how quickly the government can implement development in terms of infrastructure, services, hospitalization, education, housing, roads, airports, and so on. We’re still doing that, because we have a growing population, since the availability of financial resources coming from the oil allowed us to maintain a habitable environment for the population. Historically, the Arabian Peninsula, since the last Ice Age, has never held a large population because of the lack of resources: no rivers, very few other water sources, underground or otherwise. People simply moved from the Peninsula outwards to the more fertile valleys of Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus Valley in India. For the first time in the history of Arabia, since the coming of the oil industry, that migration has been reversed. So we’re trying to catch up not only with a growing population, but with the people who are coming in to help with our development projects.

Lack of human resources was one of the main challenges for the Kingdom and still is, so education became a primary objective and concern of the government. It’s expanding exponentially, not just in the level of primary, secondary, and high school, but also the university. One of the main accomplishments, I think, of the Kingdom, has been the King Abdullah Scholarship Program, which has expanded from the first few years of nearly 2,000 students with scholarships sent all over the world to now maybe 150,000 Saudi students. In this country alone, there are close to 70,000. There are a lot of Saudi students, both male and female, and so that is one challenge, the youth, and how to provide them with the skills and knowledge to find their jobs and livelihoods, whether in the Kingdom or otherwise. Practically all Saudi students, in my experience—I was student on scholarship as well—have returned after that they have finished their college education, so that is one positive factor in our favor, that having learned their skills and know-how, they go back to help in that development.

That is one of the internal issues. The other, of course, is the role of women in Saudi Arabia. As I mentioned to you, men and women share in our education system equally. I’ll rephrase that—the women surpass the men in their scholastic accomplishment, and I think that reversal is not only common in Saudi Arabia. The number of female graduates from universities exceeds that of male graduates, and their scholastic accomplishments are high. Finding a job, however, for women who graduate with these skills has been a social challenge for us. Because the government has decreed that all opportunities for women are open, it’s a matter of how a young lady will convince her parents or her husband—whoever is responsible, with her, for herself—to allow her to go out and work. I think the percentage of women in the labor force is between 15 and 20 percent, which is pretty low, but it is much better than it was ten years ago, when it was five percent. And the biggest employer is the government, in health services, education, in the social services, because of the necessary engagement with families and with other women in those fields. But this is another challenge that we have to pursuing in two years ago, the king named women to the Shura council, which is our parliament. And the year before that, women were enfranchised not only to vote in elections but also to be candidates for election, so in that aspect, there has been much progress as compared to a few years back.

Can you tell us about your time as ambassador to America and how the dynamic between Saudi Arabia and the United States has changed since then?

Prince Turki: The two countries have had a longstanding relationship. King Abdulaziz, our founder, met in 1945 with your president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, on an American ship in the middle of the Bitter Lake, near Suez. We’ve had, since that time, a very strategic relationship. Like all friends, we have our agreements, and we have our disagreements.

As an ambassador, I was actually here for a very short time, one year and four months, but it was an important time because it was post-September 11, 2001. When I came here in September 2005, the Iraq War had already been going on for at least two years,
momentum under President Bush, and he had, the year before, I think, issued what was then called the "roadmap to peace," which was agreed on by America, the European Union, the Russian Federation, and the United Nations as the way to establish a two-state agreement between Israel and Palestine. That also was one of the things I worked on with the administration. At the end of 2005, Mr. Bush and his foreign secretary, Ms. Rice, insisted that the President of Palestine, Mahmud Abbas, must hold elections for a parliament. There was much discussion then, for [Abbas] felt if he did that, then his party would lose and Hamas would become the government. And Hamas had already been declared by the U.S. government as a terrorist group, so the U.S. then would stop all contact with the government of Palestine. Unfortunately, the American administration persisted in pushing Abbas to hold elections. Sure enough, when the elections were held, Hamas won a majority in the government, and immediately the United States declared that they were not going to deal with that government. Subsequent to that, there was a split between Fatah and Hamas, which complicated matters. America, with the Kingdom, had a lot of discussions on those issues. Even though my time was short here, it was still fully occupied by these things.

At that time, the issue of Iranian nuclear ambitions was very much in Mr. Bush's mind. He had views of perhaps using armed might to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. Nothing came of that, of perhaps using armed might to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. Nothing came of that. But for the Kingdom, that was always in Mr. Bush's mind. He had views of what role the United States was going to play in the Middle East. He was keen to establish a two-state agreement between Israel and Lebanon and the P5+1 is dealing with Iran and any other potential developer of nuclear enrichment.

What are, in your opinion, the key differences between the United States and Saudi Arabia within the international community?

Prince Turki: One of our key differences is over the issue of Middle East peace, the Palestine issue. It's not a disagreement on what the aims are, because both of us want peace. Both of us want a two-state solution, both of us want an end of hostilities. The differences are mostly on how to get there. From Saudi Arabia's point of view, the King Abdullah Peace Plan that was presented in 2002 is the equitable way of achieving peace between Israel and the Arab world. It calls for Arab recognition of Israel, normalization of relations, and an end of hostilities in return for Israeli withdrawal from all the Arab countries that they occupied during 1967, including East Jerusalem, and a settling of the refugee problem by mutual agreement. That's a difference. We still continue to talk with the United States, and coordinate with the United States, but we differ on the tactics.

Another disagreement that we have with the United States, presently, is on the issue of fighting ISIS. We agree on fighting ISIS itself, but we believe that ISIS is a symptom of a disease, and that dealing with ISIS is dealing with the symptom. The disease is in Damascus. You have to fix Damascus in order to be able to meet the challenge of ISIS, as is happening now in Baghdad. Everybody in Baghdad saw how ISIS rushed through certain areas, to Mosul and other places, and all of a sudden discovered that the problem there was really the prime minister, because of the way he was mishandling his leadership of Iraq. The world community got together, convinced the Iraqi political parties that they must replace Mr. Maliki, which they did, and install a government which would be a national unity government, which they are doing. And that is the way to meet the threat of ISIS in Iraq. Equally so, in our view, should be the situation in Syria. But the president is not yet convinced that removing Mr. Assad is going to be a solution, while we think that it is. That is another issue that we have with Mr. Obama.
today, we see war in Syria, war in Iraq, and no spiking in the price of oil simply because there is too much production. It is not just because of America’s shale oil boom that that is the case. Everyone is producing more than the market can stand. Obviously, the Europeans’ slow economy has kept their consumption lower than was expected, and Saudi Arabia is merely trying to protect its share of the market by competing with others in the same market because, if we cut production, others will immediately take our customers, and that is not a fair proposition. Within OPEC, there is going to be a meeting in a few days’ time [November 2014]. I’m sure they’ll discuss all of these things and try to find a way out. You hear a lot of speculation, particularly in the American press, on where Saudi Arabia stands: whether it is a war against shale oil or a war against Iran, a war against Russia, etc. It’s really market forces coming to the fore and each country protecting its turf. Something will come out of the OPEC agreement. I think that will help everybody agree on a reasonable price and a reasonable quota of production for not just the OPEC members but also the non-OPEC members, like Russia and West Africa.

Do these price drops force Saudi Arabia to look at different economic opportunities besides petroleum?

Prince Turki: We’ve been doing that for the last ten years, because as our development grows and our population grows, we are consuming more of our own production. We’d rather sell it to other people and get money for it. So the Kingdom has set up a department for nuclear and renewable energy. They published a study of Saudi needs, and how these nuclear and other renewable energies can supply the Saudi consumption with their energy output. By 2050, we should have at least 35% of our own consumption coming from these other sources of energy. We have to produce more non-oil energy sources, so that we can benefit more from our oil by selling it or by putting it in a refinery and getting products like all of these new carbon-based plastic products that are coming into the fore.

While you were the Director of General Intelligence, what was the greatest challenge that you faced, and what are some of the greatest threats that Saudi Arabia faces today?

Prince Turki: The East-West confrontation, communism vs. capitalism, had ended in 1991 with the breakup of the Soviet Union, so the world changed direction and changed focus from East-West confrontation, which occupied most of my time as Director of Intelligence from 1977, when I became Director of Intelligence, until the Soviet Union fell. It became, for a short while, what was given the name of a “unipolar world” with the U.S. being the primary power, until U.S. involvement in both Afghanistan and Iraq abated that presumption, on the part not just of the United States but the rest of us. After that, of course, came terrorism. 2001 was the second stage in the al-Qaeda terrorist campaign. The first stage was addressed at Saudi Arabia six years before. 1995 was the first time that al-Qaeda undertook a terrorist act, and it was in Riyadh in Saudi Arabia. There followed other terrorist acts, or attempts at terrorist acts, in the Kingdom. The Kingdom was very much a target of the bloody group from the beginning, and still remain a target for them. Terrorism became the catchword in all intelligence agencies, and I think even now, since I retired from intelligence work, terrorism remains probably the main threat to stability and security, not just in the Middle East, but worldwide. If you look at the people who are operating within ISIS, they come from everywhere: from the United States, from Europe, from Russia, from China, from Saudi Arabia, etc. The world has to be on the same plane in order to meet that challenge. King Abdullah, in 2005, proposed the establishment of an international center for counterterrorism at the United Nations. Alas, from 2005 until 2012, nothing was done about that center. In 2012, finally the United Nations got around to it and accepted to establish the center, with the support of the world community. But that center has not yet begun to operate, and I think that’s a pity because many countries in the world today either don’t have the human resources, the economic resources, or the resources of training to be able to meet the challenge of terrorist groups, whether it is in sub-Saharan Africa—we’ve seen what happened in Mali, Niger, and Guinea—and in other places like Somalia, Kenya, and so on. We’re seeing what is happening in Syria, Iraq, Palestine, and other places. And if we do not deal with them collectively, we won’t be able to face them. So that center, I think, should be made operational as quickly as possible, and I hope that is something that all governments are working for.

We can’t thank you enough for your time. Thank you very much.

Prince Turki: Whatever I can do. Anytime.
Cosmopolitanism in Dubai

Laura Yan

Over the course of three decades, Dubai has become embedded in global consciousness as a harbor of hypercapitalism, luxury living, and openness to Western ideas. Cosmopolitanism usually connotes worldliness, urbanism, and cultural diversity.\(^1\) Due to its large multicultural population (approximately 90% of residents are foreign), booming financial and tourism industries, and amazing advances in architecture, Dubai seems to fit this term perfectly and is often spoken of as the next "global city."\(^2\)

However, Christopher Davidson and others argue that Dubai cannot be considered a cosmopolitan city due to the disharmonious and sometimes racist interactions between its communities. According to Davidson’s argument, pluralism is not sufficient for cosmopolitanism. Rather, communities need to interact with each other in harmonious and productive ways—relations that are absent between

Laura Yan graduated from Wellesley College in 2014 with a B.A. in History and Middle Eastern Studies. Originally from Hong Kong, Laura became interested in the Middle East and North Africa when she began studying Arabic in her first year at Wellesley. After spending a summer in Rabat and a semester abroad in Amman, she wrote an honors thesis in history entitled "Changing Spatial Discourses of National Identity in Jordan," which explores how various expressions of national identity developed in specific historical contexts, and how these discourses are represented in public spaces. Laura further explores the relationships between identity and spaces in the article "Cosmopolitanism in Dubai: Migrants, Subjectivities, and Spaces." Laura is currently working at a non-profit organization in New York City.

the different ethnic communities in Dubai. Unlike Davidson, Neha Vora designates Dubai as cosmopolitan but differentiates between global cosmopolitanism, largely determined by participation in the Western-dominated global economy, and Indian Ocean cosmopolitanism, shaped by the historically self-sufficient trade networks of the region. She argues that Dubai’s government is erasing its past form of cosmopolitanism, which centered on trade networks of the Indian Ocean, in order to project its vision of a global cosmopolitanism built by a community of Emirati locals and high-income foreigners.

This paper utilizes Vorā’s framework to analyze Dubai’s different ethnic communities, with a focus on middle-class South Asian migrants. It also examines the history of Indian Ocean cosmopolitanism and whether vestiges of this cosmopolitanism still exist in Dubai’s cityscape. By studying migrant groups, the paper shows evidence of, the formation of a Dubaian identity that could be both inclusive and exclusive. By 1959, the Front included Persians in its definition of Dubaian citizens. This indicates that Persians who had settled in Dubai in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century had become “local” enough in Arab merchants’ eyes to be included as citizens. Despite this increasing inclusivity, Indian traders were still excluded from the Front’s definition of who could be considered a citizen.

Cosmopolitanism, Communities, and Spaces

In the early twentieth century, the town of Dubai was split into three areas: Deira was the main commercial district, Bur Dubai was the home of the government, and Shindagha was a predominantly residential district, whose residents included the Al-Maktum family. During this period, these districts seemed to have been quite segregated; the creek dividing Deira and Bur Dubai was the heart of Dubai’s pearling and fishing industries but not usually crossed. Raquiyah, a girl who grew up in the Iranian-majority neighborhood of Bastakia in the 1930s, only crossed the creek to Deira once or twice during her childhood. Ethnic segregation was a fact of life. According to Raquiyah, “different communities had different places.” Wheeler’s interlocutors do not mention any monumental mosques, allowing different groups to maintain their own communal mosques. The lack of monumental mosques is one marker of an autonomous or semi-autonomous Indian Ocean port city.

The Indian Ocean cosmopolitanism that Vorā proposes for Dubai was based on pluralism and segregation, characteristics that were shared by other port cities such as Mocha and Bahrain.

Economic development sped up under Sheikh Rashid Al-Maktum, who began using loans to invest in infrastructure after succeeding his father, Sheikh Saeed, in 1958. Today, Sheikh Rashid is remembered as the father of modern Dubai, largely because he sought to unite Dubai residents under a single civic identity. Emphasizing shared economic ties, he worked to propagate a Dubaian identity that transcended migrants’ connections with their homelands. One banker recalls Sheikh Rashid’s intervention amidst clashes between Indians and Pakistanis:

Dubai was always open—people were respected regardless of their origin, color, or religion—Hindus, Christians, Muslims—Shiites and Sunnis. I remember the incident during the war between India and Pakistan when there were some clashes here in Dubai. Sheikh Rashid told the groups to stop fighting. He said, “Listen, you are not Indians and Pakistanis here, but locals. As long as you are working here you have to forget your background, otherwise, don’t stay. Fighting will not be accepted.”

Accordingly, Sheikh Rashid predicated migrants’ integration on their participation in the economy rather than any form of legal citizenship. Vorā argues that Indian merchants today still claim to belong on the basis of their involvement in Indian Ocean maritime trade networks. Mr. Soni, an Indian gold merchant interviewed by Vorā in the late 2000s, claimed, “We built this country, you see…Dubai is rich today because it was a re-export center with no exchange controls or customs.”

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Dubai: A Global City of Migrants, Social and Spatial Contexts

Vora’s distinction between the two cosmopolitanisms is rooted in the discrepancies between “old” downtown Dubai, composed of Deira and Bur Dubai, and “new” Dubai in the suburbs, with its hotels, malls, and showcases of “traditional” Emirati architecture. This tension creates a perception that globalization is a threat to tradition, and this produces ambivalence among the locals, who express both contentment with their consumerist lifestyle and displeasure about the potential loss of cultural identity.28 Syed Ali argues that locals feel a growing sense of estrangement from Dubai because of the perception that most expatriates are unwilling to accommodate local customs.29 Furthermore, some feel that the government panders excessively to tourists and foreigners.30 The government has recognized the threat its local Emirati society, or at least the threat to its own power, if locals are discontent. Locals are increasingly educated, but are discontent. Locals are increasingly educated, but companies view them as less skilled and, due to government subsidies, less motivated. Companies are therefore less likely to hire locals. In 2007, the government instated quotas to nationalize sections of the workforce and increase locals’ participation in the private sector. The government also set up a compensation system to encourage locals to marry other locals, in part to reduce the drain on Dubai’s free trade zone labor force, because they are more willing to refashion themselves as “useful citizens,” which means being able to participate productively in Dubai’s economy.

However, the government also wants to preserve and, in some cases, invent “pure” Emirati traditions and identity. Growing heritage revival projects such as the Dubai Heritage Village and the reconstruction of the Bastakia district show this. DHV focuses on Dubai’s Bedouin, agricultural, and pearl-diving communities. It emphasizes wind towers and sailas as Emirati cultural symbols,31 even though wind towers are actually part of the Iranian architectural tradition. By constructing such traditions, Sulayman Khalaf argues, the DHV “provides an appropriate context in which Emiratis can practice collective national imagining”32 and participate in a national culture. Similarly, the Bastakia district has been transformed into an open-air museum with upscale restaurants amidst what the government has portrayed as traditional architecture. According to Tasser Elshehawty, buildings were reconstructed using “traditional” materials such as coral and other decorative elements characteristic of architecture in the Gulf, which may not have been originally included in the buildings’ design. By portraying Bastakia as a symbol of Emirati culture, which is more than emphasizing its Iranian roots, the government erases the history of migrant communities and Indian Ocean cosmopolitanism.

Another community that the Dubaian government does not include in its narrative is low-income migrants. The most isolated low-income migrants usually arrive in Dubai for specific projects and do not rely on kinship networks. They are usually single, male construction workers and they make up a quarter of the residents in Dubai. Laborers are spatially and socially isolated from the rest of the population because they live in huge complexes on the edges of the city. These complexes constitute the world’s largest and most squalid labor camp.33 Conditions in the camps can be so inhospitable that workers sleep in public parks or any shaded space, creating an employed but homeless population.34 Even when companies tried to house construction workers in villas, they were forbidden to do so, as the government forced the workers to live in camps.35 On the other hand, many other migrants create what Elshehawty calls transnational spaces and have become integrated into the cityscape. Public places like Banias Square allow low-income workers who do not have access to cell phones or the internet to meet with others from their community. Furthermore, many of these migrants have arrived in Dubai using kinship networks from home and are living with their friends and relatives.36 Thus, they are able to maintain their connections with their homeland and also maintain their ethnic, religious, or regional identities.37 Elshehawty argues that these places for low-income migrants have become integrated into the city fabric because some migrants, especially South Asians, view these areas as the most culturally “authentic” spaces in Dubai.38 This indicates that Dubaian residents, in contrast to their government, base their notions of Dubai’s “true” identity and cultural authenticity on Indian Ocean networks rather than on the global cosmopolitanism displayed in the new Dubai. These spaces are simultaneously integrated places and transient non-places, which are “spaces which do not integrate the earlier places.”39 In fact, Elshehawty argues that transience is the defining characteristic of Dubai as a city,40 and the spaces are considered part of Dubai because they are transient. Migrants in Dubai are in a constant state of transience and vulnerability and make connections in spaces such as bus stops and markets, which are designed for transience.

Middle-Class Indian Migrants

Although they constitute the majority of Dubai’s population, Vora argues that middle-class Indian migrants are usually excluded from narratives about Dubai because they do not fit the triptych of local, high-income expatriate, and low-income migrant...
worker. According to Vora, this view of society relies on narratives of the past that erase Indian Ocean cosmopolitanism to “produce a strong imagined community of Emiratis and to place cosmopolitanism and the presence of foreigners into a timeline that coincides with oil and post-oil development.”40 In her analysis of Dubai, Vora finds that the city can still be included in Indian Ocean networks due to South Asian transnationalism. At the same time, middle-class Indians are integrated into and entrenched in the Dubaian social fabric due to what she terms “consumer citizenship”: a way of claiming belonging that is based on economic activity rather than on legal membership.

For well-paying jobs, salary is determined by race and nationality, and Western and Arab employees usually receive higher salaries than their similarly or even better-qualified South Asian counterparts.41 Western and Arab expatriates experience a life of privilege in their suburban villas and receive citizenship-like benefits from their companies.42 Middle-class Indian migrants, on the other hand, predominantly live in downtown Dubai. They are not considered expatriates because that term, in the context of Dubai, usually refers to upper- or middle-class, Western-educated migrants.43 Furthermore, their processes of migration are different due to their need to support their families financially; therefore, South Asian migrants are usually less transient and work in Dubai for a longer period of time than their Western counterparts.44 As a result, South Asians are more likely to form informal organizations and networks to support their fellow migrants.45

The availability of such networks and the high concentration of South Asian cultural markers such as restaurants, shops, and other services in downtown Dubai contribute to the conceptualization of the city as an Indian cultural space. Vora argues, “It was the overwhelming Indianiness of Dubai that framed Middle-class Indians’ experiences of liminality—as Indians, as emigrants, and as foreign residents in the city. Old Dubai was therefore a place of both intense belonging and intense exclusion.”46 Middle-class Indians living in intensively South Asian areas feel that Dubai is an extension of India, claiming that Dubai is like a “clean Bombay.” According to Vora’s Indian respondents, even locals expressed an affinity with Indian culture, and some old Emiratis still speak Urdu or Hindi, remnants from Dubai’s strong trade relations with Bombay.47 Yet this belonging also creates a sense of exclusion because of Dubai’s rapid development of megaprojects and luxury villas. Many of Vora’s interlocutors expressed that the spaces in “new Dubai” are foreign because they are dominated by Westerners. Vora argues that Indian migrants’ conceptualization of Dubai as Indian cultural space not only produces community and belonging but also a sense of exclusion from new Dubai. What emerges is a claim to belonging through consumer citizenship, a discourse based on economic activities that allows middle-class Indian migrants to claim belonging to Dubai and to construct distinctly middle-class subjectivities. Although migrants tend to envision Dubai as a city of opportunities and a place to refashion their identities through upward socioeconomic mobility, Vora’s interviews demonstrate that the Indian community in Dubai maintains religious, ethnic, and socioeconomic divisions that are present in India. Middle-class migrants are able to forge a middle-class identity by distinguishing themselves from low-income migrants. According to Vora, her interlocutors often expressed sympathy for low-income laborers. Some, however, blamed these low-income migrants for creating a stereotype of Indians as uneducated and unskilled, thus leading to the racism that middle-class migrants experienced themselves. By asserting a middle-class identity, these migrants claimed that they were less deserving of discrimination.48 Regional identities intertwine with class identities. Rohit, one such middle-class migrant interviewed by Vora, preferred to remind people that he is North Indian in order to distinguish himself from unskilled laborers from Kerala in Southern India.

These migrants can construct a middle-class identity because they are able to access economic conveniences and benefits that low-income migrants do not have. The migrants interviewed in Vora’s book describe the conveniences of life in Dubai and the difficulty of readjustment whenever they return to India, suggesting that they are becoming increasingly entrenched in Dubaian life.49 These migrants are excluded from the shops and only entered the hotels as far as the lobby.50 These middle-class Indian migrants take pride in Dubai’s global cosmopolitanism because, through economic contribution and consumption, they participate in the discourse of citizenship. However, they remain distinctly middle-class, accessing amenities but not luxuries. By participating in the Dubaian government’s discourse of global cosmopolitanism, middle-class Indian migrants both drive the neoliberal economy and use it to construct their identity.

“Many of the Indian migrants interviewed by Ali feel neither fully Indian nor fully Dubaian and describe themselves as Indians in, but not of, Dubai.”
Conclusion

The experiences and discourses of middle-class Indian migrants show that "old" Indian Ocean cosmopolitanism and "new" global cosmopolitanism do not constitute strictly separate spheres but interact and converge. South Asian migrants maintain their relationships with their Indian Ocean networks and carve out identities as transnational subjects by claiming Dubai as Indian cultural space. At the same time, middle-class Indian migrants seem to participate in the discourse of global cosmopolitanism because it allows them to distinguish themselves from lower-class migrants in Dubai. Global cosmopolitanism is not just a top-down discourse promulgated by the government alone; it is shaped by migrants’ economic consumption and contributions. They participate in and perpetuate this image because Dubaïsm neoliberal economy allows them to reshape their identities. Even during the early twentieth century, when Dubai was a small Indian Ocean port city, residents and migrants claimed belonging to the city in terms of economic activity. In fact, this may be a common characteristic among Indian Ocean port cities. In these autonomous cities, especially Dubai with its transnational networks, identity appears not to be based on territorial belonging but on participation in sociocultural networks and economic activity.

ENDNOTES

3 Ibid, 192.
5 Julia Wheeler, Telling Tales (Dubai: Explorer, 2005), 41.
6 Yasser Elsheshtawy, Dubai: Behind an Urban Spectacle (New York: Routledge, 2010), 64.
7 Davidson, 13.
8 Davidson, 67; Davidson, 89.
9 Fuccaro, 45.
10 Wheeler, 40.
11 Davidson, 75.
12 Ibid, 76.
13 Al-Sayegh, 90.
14 Ibid, 88.
15 Ibid, 93.
16 Ibid, 32-35.
17 Ibid, 43.
18 Ibid, 48-50.
19 Elsheshtawy, 64-65.
20 Wheeler, 40; Wheeler, 44.
21 Wheeler, 44.
25 Vora, 91.
28 Davidson, 193.
29 Ali, 165; Ali, 170; Ali, 182. According to Ali, the UAE government was alarmed by the allegedly high rate of marriages to foreigners and thus founded a "marriage fund" in 1992 to provide AED 70,000 worth of incentives for low-income locals to marry other locals. This initiative has caused the rates of marriages to foreigners to decrease (182).
31 Khalaf, 20; Khalaf, 25; Khalaf, 30.
32 Ibid, 35.
34 Khalaf and Alkobaisi, 292; Elsheshtawy, 214.
35 Ali, 93-94.
36 Khalaf and Alkobaisi, 287.
37 Elsheshtawy, 219; Elsheshtawy, 221.
38 Ibid, 229.
39 Ibid, 244.
40 Ibid, 245.
41 Vora, 52.
42 Ali, 117.
43 Vora, 47.
44 Ibid, 47.
45 Ali, 122-123.
46 Khalaf and Alkobaisi, 287; Khalaf and Alkobaisi, 289.
47 Vora, 67.
48 Ibid, 72-73.
49 Ibid, 131.
50 Ibid, 136.
51 Ibid, 77.
52 Ali, 150.
53 Ali, 153.
54 Vora, 136.
55 Ibid, 122-123.
Call to Prayer
Mosques in the Middle East and Europe—A Photo Essay

Margaret Christ
Margaret Christ is a senior at Boston College majoring in Political Science and Islamic Civilization and Societies. Her research interests include the Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt’s transition after the Arab Spring, and Islamist movements in the Middle East. She has studied Arabic and political science abroad in Kuwait, Egypt, and Jordan. After graduating, she hopes to pursue her research interests in Egypt.

A view of the minaret from the Christian Quarter of Jerusalem.
A view of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem.

A mosque in the H1 zone of Hebron in the West Bank.
View of the interior of the Grand Mosque of Kuwait.

Ceiling of the Blue Mosque in Istanbul.
Exterior of the Blue Mosque in Istanbul.

The Qalawun Complex in Cairo’s Bayn al-Qasrayn neighborhood.

Mosque on Failaka Island in Kuwait.
Interior of the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul.

Mosque of Omar in Bethlehem in the West Bank.
Turkey's Involvement in Africa

Regional and Bilateral Engagement on the Continent

Alissa Heller

Alissa Heller is a senior at Boston College with a Political Science major and International Studies minor. She studied at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul during the spring of 2014 and plans to continue research on Turkish policy and international relations after graduating.

Merlin Harder

Merlin Harder is studying International Business Management with a focus in Finance and Accounting at the Berlin School of Economics and Law. She lives in Hamburg, Germany and has volunteered in Kenya in the past. Merlin studied at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul during the 2013-2014 school year.

On August 19, 2011, in the midst of a famine and drought crisis in the Horn of Africa, the Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, drew worldwide attention to the war-torn country of Somalia with a visit to its capital, Mogadishu. At the time, Somalia was arguably the country most dramatically affected by the prolonged Sub-Saharan drought. Analysts have also depicted Somalia as the epitome of a failed state; the country endured the longest period without a national government in modern history. With his visit, Erdoğan became the first leader from outside the African continent to visit Somalia in almost two decades. His visits to refugee camps and hospitals demonstrated Turkey’s increased involvement in the region.
Turkey’s presence has gradually increased despite the deteriorating political and social envi-
rnment in the Horn of Africa. In June 2013, fif-
teen people were killed when Islamist militants
attacked the highly guarded UN compound
in Somalia. As other nations relocated their embassies
to neighboring Kenya or Ethiopia, even withdraw-
ing their non-governmental organizations, Turkey
is one of only nine countries—eight of which are in
the Middle East and Africa—with diplomatic rep-
resentation in war-torn Mogadishu.

While Somalia has been a primary recipient of
humanitarian aid in Africa from Turkey, the coun-
y of Africa’s goals are more comprehensive than
a simple humanitarian approach. Throughout the
last decade, Turkish foreign policy has pursued a
closer relationship with Africa through Turkey-
Africa Cooperation Summits, strategic partner-
ships with the African Union, and widening eco-
nomic and commercial agreements with the region.
Looking specifically at Somalia, this paper explains
Turkey’s increasing presence on the African con-
tinent as a combination of activism in regional
forums and bilateral arrangements to further its
political, economic, and humanitarian goals.

**Historical Relations**

Turkey’s Involvement in Africa can be divided into
distinct eras: the time of the Ottoman
Empire, the founding of the Turkish
Republic in 1923 through the late 1990s, and the
current era of strategic orientation towards the
continent, led by the ascendant Turkish Justice
and Development Party (AKP).

The first period of Turkish engagement in
Africa can be traced back to the Ottoman con-
quest of various parts of the continent. Several
African nations became partially or totally subject
to Ottoman domination, while others formed stra-
tegetic alliances with Istanbul. This period politically
and strategically altered the continent, led by the ascendant
Turkish Republic’s
engagement was limited to recognizing inde-
pendent states. Turkey pursued bilateral diplomatic
relations in the 1950s and 1960s, and as African
independence accelerated, the Turkish Republic’s
engagement was limited to recognizing inde-
pendent states. Though Turkey pursued diplomatic
relations with some North African states, its inter-
est in Sub-Saharan Africa was limited.

The third period of African-Turkish interaction
began with the establishment of the Turkish
Republic in 1923, lasting through the Cold War in
the 1990s. During this period, Turkey’s African
commitment was driven primarily by domestic instabilities, conso-
deration of power within the new republic, and the
presence of dominant European colonial powers
in Africa. In the late 1950s and 1960s, as African
nation-states emerged, Turkey’s foreign relations
began to accelerate. The Turkish Republic’s
engagement was limited to recognizing inde-
pendent states.

The second period of Turkish involvement
began with the establishment of the Turkish
Republic in 1923, lasting through the Cold War in
the 1990s. During this period, Turkey’s African
abandonment stemmed from crises of hunger,
pov-

erty, diseases, and civil wars. 3

Turkey’s presence remains prominent in Turkish perceptions
of Africa, even though it is not a major player in the region.
Sub-Saharan Africa was seen as a region remote from Turkey’s
interests, and the relationship was limited to providing
humanitarian aid, such as food and medical supplies.

The imbalance of the world trade system,
rooted in the abundance of raw materials and cheap labor5
in the region, has enabled some African countries to gain
trade benefits, including increased access to raw materials and
a boost to their economies. Turkey contributed to Turkish connection with the
region, whereas Sub-Saharan Africa was seen as a
remote region linked to crises due to hunger, pov-

erty, diseases, and civil wars. 3

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that the country is doing this without the overtly
trash, and build new schools and clinics. 23 Most of
initiatives to decontaminate water supplies, clear
version further have boosted Turkey's image as a
African States. These memberships and coop-
erations have also contributed to combating piracy off the Horn of
issues in African countries. In addition, Turkey has
be working to address each of these
ments, a greater potential for political alliances
emerge. 21

Turkey has made significant contributions to humanitarian aid in African countries. As of 2011, Turkey had donated more to Africa than any European country except the United Kingdom. Turkey's interest in sending aid to Africa appears to be a mixture of philanthropic intentions and support of its own interests.

Turkey's humanitarian aid is, for the most part, aimed at economic development in Africa. Turkish aid seems to support the premise that strong political and economic institutions are born under centralized and efficient governments. 22 From the beginning of its involvement, Turkey has taken initiatives to decontaminate water supplies, clear trash, and build new schools and clinics. 23 Most of this is achieved through the Turkish Collaboration and Coordination Agency (TİKA), the country's official aid agency. 24 Former President Gül of Turkey has said that their strategic actions of action should be "health, education, agriculture, environment, infrastructure, and capacity building." 25 and Turkey has been working to address each of these issues in African countries. In addition, Turkey has contributed to combating piracy off the Horn of Africa, and has provided personnel to at least five UN peacekeeping operations in Africa. 26 Turkey can also speak proudly of significant non-governmental outreach, with the private sector donating $365 million as of 2011. 27 What is more notable is that the country is doing this without the overtly exploitative intentions of China and India. Ambition in military and global security is a less understood but equally important dimension of the Turkish role in Africa. Following the "zero problems with neighbors" plan, Turkey, under the leadership of the AKP, began to plan for economic integration within the region. Thus, the African Opening Plan was formed 28 in which the spectrum of Turkish military presence ranges from equitable partnership with some of the continent's more powerful states such as Nigeria, Ethiopia, and South Africa to Turkish security development programs for the continent's more precarious states such as Somalia and Mali.

One of the more equitable and balanced relations resulting from the African Opening Plan is between Turkey and South Africa, each with similar strength in their respective regions. With a strong public defense as well as private sector relationships, both countries have used their relationship to strengthen their regional power. 29

On the other hand, Turkey has taken a very different approach with respect to military involvement in Somalia. In contrast to its strong diplomatic and humanitarian presence in Somalia, Turkey's military presence in the country is weaker. Turkey has provided training for Somali soldiers, but its focus is on security and development. 30 Despite the threat to Somalia from the terrorist group al-Shabaab, Turkey appears to feel that creating a stronger military partnership would be a poor investment and do little to further its role as a regional power.

Turkey's goal appears to be to use its influence as a regional power to sway longstanding military partnerships and form new and effective ones. Though it is not the central focus of their relationship with the nations of Africa, Turkey is using their military relationships to their advantage.

The Case of Aid in Somalia

Turkey's direct influence in Somalia is the most significant of its foreign policy efforts in Africa in terms of development aid. In 2011, Prime Minister Erdoğan became the first non-African leader to visit the Somali capital of Mogadishu in over two decades. 31 Now, much of Turkey's assistance is driven towards Somalia. Turkey's presence is mainly dedicated to reconstruction projects and infrastructure improvements to schools, roads, and hospitals. 32

Recently, Prime Minister Erdoğan announced plans to rebuild the main road that connects the airport to the rest of the city. One of the most important and symbolic accomplishments is the addition of regular flights from Turkey to Mogadishu through Turkish Airlines. The Turkish air carrier is now the first major non-African airline in over 20 years to make regular flights to the country's capital. 33 Taking this step indicates that Turkey intends to increase movement of diplomats and businesspeople between the two countries.

One of Turkey's strongest actions has been the granting of 1,200 scholarships to Somali students to attend university in Turkey. 34 The Republic had never given this many scholarships to one nation before. This offer shows Turkey's effort to foster a close relationship with Turkish society on the part of the Somalis. By bringing Somali youth to Turkey for their education, the program intends to stabilize Somali society and its economy, and to have Somali students to return to their country as friends of Turkey. Most of the students on scholarship are required to return to Somalia for a period after finishing their education. Tasked with rebuilding Somalia's weak government, they will no doubt have Turkey in mind; as Julia Harte states, this will "maximize Turkey's future influence in Somalia." 35

It is important to consider why Turkey garnered international attention after Erdoğan's first visit to Mogadishu. Somalia was and continues to be in a dire political situation, enhanced by the presence of the al-Shabaab terrorist group, which was only expelled from Mogadishu in October of 2011. 36 Al-Shabaab, an al-Qaeda-linked Islamic group, has been active in the country's capital for years. There has been one reported attack by al-Shabaab on the Turkish embassy in Mogadishu, but more concerning was the terrorist blast which targeted students waiting to receive their scholarships to Turkish schools. This killed around 70 Somali students. 37

This dangerous situation in Somalia is the reason that Turkey's entrance has been so well received. Nearly every step that Erdoğan has taken is the first of its kind since the continuing Somali Civil War began in 1991. 38 When Erdoğan visited Mogadishu for the first time, the mere fact that neither he nor those traveling with him were attacked sparked international attention. Turkish charities active throughout Somalia commonly operate without a security detail, illustrating a positive integration into Somali society. With Erdoğan being the first international leader in nearly two decades to travel to Somalia and to implement successful policies there, Turkey's role is contributing to a viable and positive future for Somalia.
Turkey should take a regional approach in Africa as it expands its influence. Africa is not unified. Not every country will respond to a blanket foreign policy in a productive manner. Therefore, if Turkey wants to be involved in Africa more broadly, it must create region-specific policy goals. There are certain key countries in Africa with whom Turkey should focus its engagement. These include important regional players like South Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Angola, and other countries that are relatively stable and prosperous. Of course, Turkey’s focus on Somalia can remain strong, but in order to play a regional role in Africa, Turkey must expand its involvement in the successfully developing nations. Third, there is a clear lack of information on both sides about the other. Mehmet Özkan recommends that Turkey and Africa continue to bridge this gap by exchanging students. The partnership between Turkey and Africa can grow stronger only if there is a mutual understanding of each other’s political, economic, and social structures. Turkey has drawn international attention with its quick success in Africa. As one of many countries that vie for Africa’s partnership, Turkey may be coming out on top. In forging its foreign policy for the continent, Turkey promotes its religious and cultural ties with Africa. For now, these narratives shift away from the past tendencies of imperialist European nations to seek economic benefits without properly engaging local culture. Leaving Turkey in an advantageous position when it comes to strengthening diplomatic and business ties. For these reasons, Turkey has been particularly successful in ascending to regional diplomatic forums and forming strong bilateral relationships that promote its economic, political, military, and humanitarian goals.

ENDNOTES
7 Özkan, “Turkey’s Engagement with Africa,” 116-117.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
13 Özkan, “Turkey Discovers Africa,” 5.
16 Ibid.
19 Özkan, “Turkey’s Engagement with Africa,” 120.
20 Ibid.
27 Harte, 36.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
34 Harte, 36.
35 Ibid.
36 Mesfin, “Turkey in Somalia.”
37 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 Özkan, “Turkey Discovers Africa,” 7-8.
42 Ibid.
43 Bali, Turkey’s Involvement in Africa
Picturing the Iranian Woman

Depictions in Revolutionary Graphic Art since 1979

Katherine Long

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On February 11, 1979, the Iranian Islamic Revolution was announced victorious.¹ It was the culmination of more than eighteen months of violent confrontations, wide-ranging labor movements, a general strike, mass demonstrations, and political maneuvering. Only 35 years later, a body of literature has sprung up around the art of that revolution, especially the so-called “minor art” of posters, graffiti, songs, chants and jokes. In fact, historian Peter Chelkowski has called this body of work Iran’s “Museum of Furious Art” for its expression of dissatisfaction with the Shah’s regime, Western influence, economic difficulties, constrictions on personal liberty, and the perception of a vanishing Iranian heritage.²

Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, conscious of the power of collectively constructed symbols,¹ had imposed harsh penalties for the creation of
anti-regime posters; an explosion in the number of revolutionary posters, therefore, took place on January 16, 1979, the day the Shah fled Iran. This creative discourse was carried out “almost exclusively by men.”

Yet many posters prominently feature women, many thousands of whom participated actively in the revolution. This paper seeks to analyze the representation of women in these posters, how such representations were influenced by predominately revolutionary and Islamist ideologies, how they succeeded and failed to create reality, and how they compare to contemporary actions and portrayals of women in the Green Movement of 2009.

The posters of the 1979 Revolution largely combined ancient Persian forms of art with styles of the Cuban and Russian Revolutions. While Iranian clerics’ institutional capacity and visionary ambiguity assured their leadership during the revolution, posters produced by Islamist artists hovered heavily from leftist visual motifs, and vice versa. Although Islamist groups “rejected Marxism as an ideology, the leaders and proponents of the Iranian Revolution...deliberately borrowed from it key pictorial elements and themes in an attempt to subdue the increasingly powerful leftist groups.” By claiming the imagery of leftist groups as their own, Islamist groups also asserted ownership over the ideologies of those groups. Full-scale Islamization, enforced top-down by the new government, followed after the victory of the revolution, at which point these themes were internalized in both art and politics, even as the regime persecuted communists.

Artists, both from seminaries and from Tehran University’s College of Fine Arts, created the posters of the Islamic Revolution. In both cases the artists were committed to the values of the revolution as they set out to “redefine social values and norms.” The study of revolutionary posters, therefore, is not a rambling diversion into a quasi but meaningless field. It can offer valuable insight into the development of women’s participation in revolution.

Most women joined the revolution with hopes of changing their economic condition. For “marginalized urban working-women, the revolution provided prospects for change in the material conditions and quality of their lives.” These women were not worried about gender issues or women’s rights; rather, their dire economic circumstances and the obvious disparities between social classes under the Shah compelled their action. Educated, upper-class women organized around ideologically related grievances with the goal of ending foreign economic and political domination in Iran. These women, largely members of leftist groups, possessed little to no gender consciousness. Issues of gender and sexuality were actively avoided in leftist groups. Women were integrated into a patriarchal structure as men’s counterparts. In order to achieve equal recognition, women had to “behave like men and repudiate their femininity.” The discourse on women’s oppression in these groups was limited to ascribing women’s problems to capitalist relations.

Leftist posters, drawing heavily on the graphic art of the Cuban and Russian Revolutions, were generally simple and dominated by the colors red, white, and black. They expressed a single idea or event, lacked detail and were depersonalized or symbolic in form. Above all, their messages were not grounded in any theory of that humanity’s own fate. In Iran, left-wing and non-Ishteri groups were producing posters until the middle of 1981 but were “soon left out in the cold” as a result of the Republic’s Islamization program. Most of the posters produced by these groups were not solely left wing because they emphasized support for Khomeini. However, they had difficulty attracting a following among the masses. Chelkowski blames the “stiffness” of left wing works in contrast to the lively, touching mythology of Islamic poster artists. While the Cuban and Rustem posters were used as plot devices or as reflections of male characters rather than “taking on the aspects of fully independent characters in their own right.”

During the revolution, leftist groups in Iran postponed the discussion of women’s rights until after victory was achieved. Women, therefore, do not feature prominently in leftist revolutionary posters, but one street poster produced by Islamist leftist group, the Mojahedin-e Khalq, exhorts women to take action against the Shah along predictably Islamic lines. The poster features a white-silhouetted woman with her fist raised, holding a gun. Each part is symbolic as white is the color of martyrdom, and the fist is a socialist symbol. She rises out of blue, black, and red waves into a red tulip-shaped space with the Mojahedin slogan, “God prefers warriors to those who sit idle.” Below her are portraits of five Mojahedin women martyrs. This poster can hardly be described as leftist in nature and in fact closely resembles those produced by Islamic intellectuals.

Islamic posters were characterized by allusions to Karbala and stylistic references to Persian miniatures, coffeehouse paintings, and Ashura banners. They boasted a broad palette while making heavy use of the color green. Like pardeh (coffeehouse paintings), they were often detail-heavy and showed multiple events happening at the same time. They used symbols to promote the “preservationist” model of womanhood, in which women were keepers of morality and a “true” Islamic culture untainted by foreign corruption, a direct contrast to the portrayal of women under the Shah as symbols of modernity. Her being made a member of the royal family were recognized as course against...the Iranian woman constructed and celebrated during the Pahlavi regime, who was veil-less and alienated from Islam. Under the Pahlavi dynasty, the birthdays of female members of the royal family were recognized as Mother’s Day, and Reza Shah announced manda- tory unveiling on what was then Woman’s Day. But the portrayal of women as mothers in revolution- ary posters was not limited to strict motherhood; a painting by Kazem Chalipa of a woman giving succor to a wounded protestor conveys a nurturing with the mother of the revolution.”

Women were also portrayed as active militants, though never to the same degree as men. In two exceedingly narrative pardeh-inspired posters, “Independence, Freedom. The Islamic Republic,” humanistic posters of the Shah fleeing Iran, black dog, small groups of chador-clad women are seen protesting in the background, separate from men, but participating in the revolution within their own sphere. Another poster, inspired by a photograph of a female protestor, shows a woman outlined in red (the color of martyrdom), her outstretched hand touching the symbolic “hand” of the five holy Shia personalities. Beneath her, a group of chanting women clad in black chadors carry a photograph of Ayatollah Khomeini. Again, women were portrayed as militants, but only Russian Revolutionaries, an example of the shador, in female-only groups, and in the images of Fatema and Zeynab.
In “White Silhouette of Fatima” (1979), a poster produced in celebration of Woman’s Day (Fatima’s birthday), Fatima’s white silhouette emphasizes the fact that she is the mother of martyrs of Karbala and by extension all the martyrs of the Islamic Republic; her blank figure encourages women to put themselves in her place. The poster’s text read, “Fatima’s rising, celebrating the true leader of women,” glorifying the values of “piety, patience, and obedience.” In “Young Girl Carrying Rifle” (1979), a young girl in a chador hold a Kalashnikov with a red rose in its muzzle. Behind her stands a group of soldiers, ready to defend her and the nation. The caption reads, “Our army does not belong only to our brothers in the armed forces. Men and women, young and old in our country are the members of the Islamic Army and are the guardians of Islam.” But the terms on which this girl, who can’t be older than seven, is a guardian of Islam hardly make her equal to the men—the real protectors of the nation—standing behind her. Her gun, clogged by a symbol of martyrdom, can’t shoot: clad in full chador, she defends her religion by proclaiming her virtue and her willingness to martyr herself.

One particularly significant poster is dominated by Zeynab’s white silhouette, containing within it modern-day Iranian women protestors. Zeynab is depicted in the negative, her clenched fist shattering a red-and-green crown that belongs to both Yazid, the caliph responsible for Husayn’s death, and the Shah. In her silhouette is a crowd of contemporary, veiled Iranian women, their “white faces emerging from a field of black chadors.” According to Ram, these women define their identity only through Zeynab’s “simultaneous absence and presence.” The poster “urges that all Iranian women emulate Zeynab’s heroic and steadfast leadership in times of crisis and despair” by speaking out against the Pahlavi monarchy. In the bottom right of the poster, a camel caravan rides into the distance, each white-shrouded woman clutching a child, implying that women can protest the regime by bearing revolutionary children, whom they inculcate with a sense not only of Imam Husayn but of Islamic justice.

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as women began to challenge “patriarchal family and tyrannical socio-cultural structures” despite a campaign by the government against educated, activist women. The Women’s Association (Society)28 of the Islamic Revolution was formed shortly after the Islamic Revolution. The WAIR, which included such prominent members as Zahra Rahnavard, the wife of Mir Hossein Musavi, advocated a Shariati-esque interpretation of women’s rights. Women, they said, were equal to men in their own sphere: the two sexes complemented each other.29

The most recent Iranian women’s activist movement was the One Million Signatures Campaign. The campaign, founded by young feminists on June 12, 2006, encouraged citizens of both Iran and the global human rights community to sign a petition advocating for the end of all forms of discrimination against women in Iran. They aimed to collect a total of one million signatures by spreading their message on a person-to-person basis. The campaign in its direct activism is reminiscent of the 1979 Revolution.

The imagery of the One Million Signatures Campaign was simple and direct, harking back to stylistic elements from the Russian and Cuban Revolutions. The subversive and semi-underground nature of the movement required imagery that was accessible to a wide international audience via the Internet. Campaign organizers often used only their logo—white silhouettes of the signs for “male” and “female” weighed equally on a scale against a red background—on street posters. Consistent with campaign organizers’ goal of including men and women from both religious and secular backgrounds in the movement, the logo can be interpreted in two different ways. On one hand, the colors red and white are symbolic of martyrdom, and could hint that joining the movement is a religiously self-sacrificing act. The scales are not attached to a stand but are left free-floating; they could be the scales of God, implying that men and women are capable of determining their fate for themselves. After its leaders were targeted by the Islamic Republic and imprisoned, the One Million Signatures Campaign was consumed by the Green Movement of 2009, which was ostensibly organized around Mir Hussein Musavi’s contested bid for President of the Islamic Republic but rapidly turned into a massive public outcry against the regime from a variety of arenas.30 The Green Movement produced a prodigious body of propaganda art, both in print and online. While no comprehensive study has been made of the graphic art of the Green Movement,31 I will attempt here to identify its key audiences, aims and methods in regards to the representation of women.

The graphic art of the Green Movement, which was often created by foreigners supporting the movement in the virtual sphere, turned the symbolism of the Islamic Revolution on its head. The color green, the official color of Musavi’s Islamist campaign, recalls the green of Ashura banners and is one unifying motif of Green Movement posters. But the Green Movement went beyond its Islamist roots and morphed into a general outcry against theocracy and all forms of oppression in Iran. As such, while prominent use is made of Islamic symbols and imagery harking back to the 1979 Revolution, those symbols are often unverified and used to criticize both the regime and the culture of martyrdom. It is, however, important to note that the green is a prominent revolutionary motif. But by showing women in a vacuous consumerist half-life, the posters of the Green Movement present a more nuanced stance towards the benefits and downsides of foreign influence. One poster produced inside of Iran shows a picture of a female student, fist raised à la Malcolm X, her hijab slipping, with the words “Na shaqri, na gharbi: Dowlat-e sabzi-e meli” (“Neither east nor west: The national green government”). This poster, on the surface, advocates for distinctively Iranian institutions (the twisting clouds in the background are reminiscent of Persian miniature artwork), and draws its focal imagery from a mixture of Islamism (the color green, the woman’s hijab, the symbol of the raised fist as a reminder of the Islamic Revolution) and revolutionary leftist (the focus on the woman’s face, presenting her as an individual and therefore in control of her own fate; the raised fist, alternatively, as a leftist symbol).

However, as Asfieh Bayat argues in his groundbreaking “Life as Politics,” it has not been women’s activist, revolutionary movements or even legalistic, Islamist efforts that have achieved most of the advances in Iranian women’s rights in the past 35 years. Women—ordinary women, not activists or legal scholars—have made remarkable strides, not by raising their voices against the regime, but in the struggle to simply live their lives. The “praxis of the ordinary,” including day-to-day stubbornness, have achieved many small, gradual victories for women. This “feminism of everyday life” includes simple acts such as working, playing sports, studying, showing interest in art and music, running for political office, and pursuing leisure activities. By imposing themselves as public players,
women have brought about the reinstatement of equal education institutions, curtailed polygyny, restricted man’s right to divorce, dem现场化，reformed marriage contracts, improved their employment status, brought back women as judges, and encouraged a debate about child custody. These “seemingly peculiar, dispersed, and daily struggles in the public domain” are not accompanied by fanfare or celebrated in graphic arts. Instead, women’s “power of presence”—their simple, obstinate refusal to be sidelined by the Islamic regime—has brought about slow, piece meal improvements in women’s rights.30

Women’s massive participation in 1979 compelled many religious leaders, chiefly Ayatollah Khomeini, to publically acknowledge women’s social and political agency. Similarly, even though the Iran-Iraq War suppressed discussion about women’s role in society, it opened doors for them to participate in society in other ways. Because the discursive sphere was so completely dominated by men, it is likely history bears false witness to the true number of feminist women who took part in protests. Nor would it be cor-

rect to say that every woman who took part in the Green Movement did so out of a wish to bring the issue of women’s rights to the forefront of the public agenda. As Iranian revolutionary posters bear out, in the thirty years between 1979 and 2009, Shariati’s Karbala paradigm of women’s rights has waned while a more comprehensive, nuanced understanding of how women should occupy the public space in Iran has been on the rise.

ENDNOTES
3 Ibid.
4 Chelkowski & Dabashi, 143.
8 Bayat.
9 Behery, 50.
11 Haideh Moghissi, Populism and Feminism in Iran: Women’s Struggle in a Male-defined Revolutionary Movement (New York: St. Martin’s, 1994), 57.
12 Moghissi, 118.
13 Chelkowski & Dabashi, 174.
14 Chelkowski & Dabashi, 175.
15 Behery, 50.
17 Aghaie, 115.
19 Ibid.
20 Chelkowski & Dabashi, 253.
22 Ram, 94.
23 Ibid, 141.
24 Ibid.
25 Translations differ.
26 Bayat, Chapter 5: “The Feminism of Everyday Life.”
27 Vakil, Chapter 8: “The Circles of Contradiction.”
28 New York’s School of Visual Arts curated a 2010 exhibition of graphic art from the Green Movement titled “Where Is My Vote?”
31 Bayat, Chapter 5: “The Feminism of Everyday Life.”
32 Ibid.
33 Chelkowski & Dabashi, 32.
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