

emerged among the elites of the regime, the masses, and intellectuals through the process of modernization. From this perspective, *gharbazadegi* as a social imaginary “is the general sociological source of anti-modern ideologies and social movements” (206–07).

By implicating the Pahlavi state in its own downfall through its appropriation of *gharbazadegi*, Mirsepassi uncovers an important shift in the official ideology of the 1970s, puncturing the depiction of the Pahlavi monarchy as the modernist antipode of the fundamentalist Islamic Republic. The book’s propositions, however, also raise several questions that merit more scrutiny.

First, to what extent was the 1970s official ideological shift a break with the glorification of an imagined pre-Islamic Persia that was linked to the West? This leads to another question about the definitions of “anti-modern,” “nativist,” and “anti-Western,” terms that are used almost synonymously but could have been more clearly defined. Arguably, some of the “nativist” discourse in Iran had a greater resemblance to the Romantic anti-capitalism of nineteenth-century Europe, and Al-e Ahmad’s *gharbazadegi* could be read within the framework of antiracist critique of (neo)colonialism, as discussed by Eskandar Sadeghi-Boroujerdi in “*Gharbazadegi*, colonial capitalism and the racial state in Iran” (*Postcolonial Studies* 24(2), 2021, 173–194), rather than associated with the revolutionary conservatism of 1920s and 1930s Germany. “Nativism” as a catchall phrase risks overlooking that reference to the (imagined) past can entail both reactionary and progressive politics. Looking back to precapitalist societies and observing social qualities that are lost in modern societies can be a forceful critique of capitalist alienation, depending on which qualities, and whether one is committed to a politics of reactionary traditionalism, or what Marx, following Hegel, called *Aufhebung*.

A third question is a historiographic one: To what extent should the intellectual debates of the 1960s and 1970s be interpreted in the light of the outcome of the Iranian Revolution? While it is legitimate to evaluate the contribution of intellectual trends to this outcome, these trends merit to be explored on their own terms, leaving room for contingencies and alternative forms of *gharbazadegi*. As Mirsepassi discusses in the final chapter, Fardid, Al-e Ahmad, Shariati, and various Marxist intellectuals had different positions toward modernity and the West.

Addressing or debating questions such as these would allow a vigorous criticism of certain aspects of postcolonial approaches, which *Iran’s Quiet Revolution* partly provides, while allowing a space for a productive engagement with the postcolonial critique of Eurocentric modernity, which it precludes.

It would locate the debate about modern Iran in one that transcends Iran’s history. Nevertheless, *Iran’s Quiet Revolution* has managed to recast Iran’s recent history through an insightful account of intellectual figures and trends in the context of larger debates that make it an indispensable read for students and scholars of Iran, Islam, modernity, and (post) colonialism.

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**Pouya Alimaghdam.** *Contesting the Iranian Revolution: The Green Uprisings.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020. Pp. xviii, 316. Cloth \$99.99, paper \$32.99, e-book \$26.00.

In *Contesting the Iranian Revolution: The Green Uprisings*, Pouya Alimaghdam offers a thorough and accessible account of the “green movement” that coalesced around Iran’s 2009 presidential election. But the book is more than an account of that year; it relates the 2009 election that kept incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in office for a second term to the disputed genealogies of Iran’s 1979 revolution. The thesis is that the intense period of reformist activity from June 2009 to February 2010 was really a sequence of “uprisings” whose participants “were contesting the ownership and the very meaning of the Iranian Revolution and its symbols in order to condemn its outcome—the Islamic Republic” (12).

The book, which began as a University of Michigan dissertation, deciphers a complex moment in contemporary Iranian history by engaging with historiographies as familiar to readers of the *American Historical Review* as *Iranian Studies*. The analysis is rooted in literature on “the crowd,” borrowing from George Rudé and Ervand Abrahamian to refute conservative European scholarship and the language of “hooliganism” and “street trash” that Iran’s political establishment used to discredit the opposition (52–55). Instead of European peasants or proletariat, Alimaghdam’s “crowd” consists of Iran’s “baby boomers” (12–13) born the 1980s. These are the main actors in this history from below, along with the two leading reformist candidates—Mehdi Karroubi and Mir-Hossein Mousavi. The author makes no attempt to sort out competing claims about the election results (78), but instead unpacks the meaning of their contestation. The core of the book explains how a predominantly young but multigenerational coalition of Iranians attempted to co-opt the Iranian calendar’s most symbolic dates to make a point—not unlike Frederick Douglass on July 4, 1852.

Those symbolic dates in Iran ran from June 2009 to February 2010. On June 28, just weeks after the election, protesters commemorated the death of

Ayatollah Beheshti, a founder of the Islamic Republic. Other significant dates discussed in chapter 3 are November 4, which was the first day of the hostage crisis in 1979, and December 7, or Student Day, whose origins date to 1953. Chapter 4 focuses on Quds Day, which Iranians celebrate on the last Friday of Ramadan to show solidarity with Palestinians. On September 18, 2009, the protesters argued that Iranians were, in effect, occupied, linking domestic problems to international affairs. “No to Gaza, no to Lebanon,” the protesters chanted, “I sacrifice my life only for Iran” (180). Chapter 5 turns to Ayatollah Montazeri—a one-time successor to Ayatollah Khomeini—who turned against the state he helped create. Montazeri’s death and mourning period in 2009 coincided with the Shia holiday of Ashura. Compared to the momentous 1978 Ashura marches, those of December 2009 were less successful. By this point, state repression had begun to take its toll on the movement, and the government realized it was in a game of “political jiu-jitsu” (184) with its citizens. When the final of the green uprisings commenced on Revolution Day on February 11, 2010, the Iranian government drowned out dissent by turning out its supporters en masse.

The analysis is relevant not just to Iran but to the broader Middle East. Alimagham contrasts and compares the green movement—and the Iranian government’s response to it—with the Arab Spring, or the “Arab uprisings” to borrow from James Gelvin, which began one year after the situation in Iran had settled down. On the one hand, some Arab governments were toppled after proving to be less populist and, ultimately, less successful than the Iranian government in weathering a groundswell of discontent. On the other hand, Alimagham finds that Iran’s green activists had more in common with their Arab brothers and sisters than with their Iranian parents’ generation (2–3). Alimagham borrows from Asef Bayat to characterize the wave of popular unrest that swept the region from Tehran to Tunis as being “post-Islamist” (18). This is a nonrevolutionary phenomenon whereby individuals in Muslim-majority societies call for “civil rights” (19) and other “neoliberal” (275) demands within the context of their respective states. Unlike the revolutionaries of 1979, the reformers of 2009 did not offer an alternative to the status quo. Readers are reminded that green—the choice color of the movement—is laden with Islamic symbolism (74).

Historians will be interested in the sources and methods used to document an event that many of us read about in the headlines barely a decade ago. WikiLeaks documents appear throughout the bibliography, as does the author’s personal archive of social media and internet posts from 2009 to 2010. Interestingly, the very technology that facilitated the rise of the green movement enabled the writing

of its history. If 1979 was the “world’s first televised revolution,” then 2009 was a “pixelated revolution” that provided the “raw footage” (24–25) for its study. Many of these posts have since been taken down, often to conceal the safety of individual protesters, but Alimagham was diligent at the time in downloading and cataloging them. There is also sophisticated analysis of material culture sources such as stamps (109), murals in Tehran (242), and other “modern sources for a modern movement” (23–28).

There may have been a missed opportunity to reflect more on what happens when large generations, born and raised in highly ideological societies and restrictive political systems, come of age. In a conclusion titled “History as Prologue” (254), Alimagham relates the green movement to June 1963 (272–73), an uprising that was not immediately successful but signaled the birth of the Khomeini movement. Another reference point might be 1968 in the United States. The 1968 US elections and the 2009 elections in Iran were marred by violence and resulted in the victory of conservative candidates with whom activists vehemently disagreed. Yet, in the United States, the movements of the 1960s had profound long-term ramifications, especially in the sociocultural life of the country. Whatever the long-term legacies, historians will be thankful to Alimagham for writing a history of the contested, and now contextualized, 2009 Iranian election.

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**Liora Hendelman-Baavur.** *Creating the Modern Iranian Woman: Popular Culture between Two Revolutions.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019. Pp. ix, 330. Cloth \$120.00, e-book \$96.00.

In *Creating the Modern Iranian Woman: Popular Culture between Two Revolutions*, Liora Hendelman-Baavur presents an insightful, albeit constrained, study of Iranian women’s print media as a popular cultural enterprise during the late Pahlavi era, when Iran pursued state-regulated modernization reforms targeting women. *Creating the Modern Iranian Woman* is bookended between two revolutions: the 1960s and 1970s reform-driven program of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, known as the White Revolution, and the 1979 Iranian revolution, which led to the founding of today’s Islamic Republic. Hendelman-Baavur charts the evolution and performance of print media for women, noting their articulations, imaginations, and reception amid intervening local and international influences, trends, and experiences, and more so how dual Iranian discourses of modernization and gender shaped the popular press’s rendition of the contemporary women of