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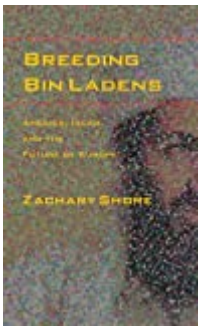

Zachary Shore. *Breeding Bin Ladens: America, Islam, and the Future of Europe.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006. xv + 223 pp. $25.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8018-8505-1.

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Published on H-Amstdy (October, 2007)

Given the tumultuous events of the past seven years, a cottage industry has recently developed for books on Osama Bin Laden and the supposed "clash" between radical Islam and the West. Heavy on polemics and light on substance, these works rarely involve historically nuanced accounts of the conflict and almost always fail to provide theologically accurate descriptions of the Islamic debate.

Thus, it may not be surprising to learn that I began Zachary Shore's *Breeding Bin Ladens* with a healthy amount of skepticism. I am pleased to report, however, that my expectations were only partially fulfilled. The book is certainly not without weaknesses and I will discuss many of the specific problems below. Yet, there remains much to be praised in this volume. Shore's extensive interviews and in-depth knowledge of modern European history allow him to identify key issues that are often overlooked in contemporary debates about Islam and the West.

The primary goal of this work is to describe, explain, and suggest ways to reduce "the deep ambivalence that many European Muslims feel toward Europe and the United States" (p. x). According to Shore, genuine anti-Americanism is rare among European Muslims (p. 41). Yet, the reality of widespread ambivalence is equally, if not more, important. Shore worries that the ambivalence of moderate European Muslims could take a radical turn if Western policy makers ignore their concerns and allow extremists to take advantage of their anxiety. He hopes his book will convince them to do otherwise.

Generally speaking, Shore's evidence for what he calls "ambi-Americanism" comes in one of three forms. As noted above, he relies quite heavily on personal interviews with young Muslims throughout the European continent. To round out these personal perspectives, he draws on a number of studies that survey the attitudes of European Muslims toward Islam, the West, and the interaction between the two. In the end, however, most of the evidence appears in the form of a series of detailed anecdotes. These anecdotes include, but are not limited to, the various terrorist attacks of the past six years; the assassination of Theo vanGogh; the explosive protests over the Danish cartoons and the French law banning headscarves; and the production of Muslim oriented merchandise like the Razanne doll, Kibla Cola, and Buerger King Muslim.

Though this anecdotal evidence is less than ideal, it is difficult to imagine anyone challenging Shore's thesis about widespread ambivalence. Yet, the underlying causes of this unease are far from clear and the explanatory theories he proposes are not without controversy. Shore begins his theoretical analysis with a rejection of

Marxist theories that trace these tensions back to economic disparities. Though poverty might be a "proximate" cause of the ambivalence, he does not believe it is "the underlying cause" (p. 167). He also rejects arguments which posit a fundamental incompatibility between Islamic theology and democratic liberalism, having rarely met European Muslims "who believed that Islam and democracy could not coexist" (p. 138).

Rejecting these two explanations, Shore emphasizes three different explanations, to varying degrees, at various points throughout the work. As to be expected, there are moments when he argues that the underlying cause of ambivalence is the foreign policy of the United States. He notes, for example, that European Muslims are "repelled" by America's "putatively hypocritical foreign policies" (p. 8) and that "no other single act in recent years has done more to turn Muslims against the United States than the invasion and occupation of Iraq" (p. 26).

At other times, however, it is the domestic policies of European countries that are to blame. Fearful of losing their Christian identity, Europeans have resisted the full integration of Muslim immigrants. This creates a second class of Muslim citizens, who experience daily discrimination and feel alienated from the wider culture. He notes, for example, that "British Muslims of Pakistani origin are three times as likely to be jobless as British Hindus," and "Indian Muslims in Britain are twice as likely to be unemployed as Indian Hindus" (p. 107).

Finally, Shore argues that the underlying cause of "ambi-Americanism" and "ambi-Europeanism" is "a growing discomfort with mainstream European and American cultural values" (p. 165). He is never entirely clear about what he means by "mainstream" or "values," but he notes that many European Muslims believe that Europe and America are "spiritually empty" (p. 8). As a result, they do their best to resist "American secular values" (p. 127), seeking out products and services that will reflect their own (p. 121).

This last theory is particularly important for Shore. Indeed, there are moments when he suggests that all other causes can be traced back to a conflict over values. Even the dissatisfaction with American foreign policy is seen as having a "core connection" to these moral concerns (p. 167). Yet, his analysis becomes muddled here. On the one hand, he argues that ethnic Europeans and Muslim immigrants fear integration because they believe the values of their counterparts might alter the identities of their unique communities. On the other hand, he argues that young Muslims are clinging to these Islamic values, in the first place, because it is an avenue for "defining themselves on a continent ... from which they often feel excluded" (p. 45).

As Shore himself points out, a careful understanding of the way in which these causes interact is a "necessary step in resolving Europe's Muslim dilemma" (p. 166). Yet, he is never entirely clear about which direction the causal arrows are pointing. If the conflict of values is the root cause of the conflict, solutions will have to address this divide. If, on the other hand, this value conflict turns out to be the artificial byproduct of Muslim alienation from European society, the solution should be focused on achieving genuine integration.

As it turns out, Shore's "modest proposals" for reducing Muslim ambivalence seem to move in numerous directions. Thus, the most charitable reading of his theory seems to be that numerous causal factors influence one another at the same time. Lack of integration leads to value conflicts, value conflicts lead to lack of integration, both lead to a growing ambivalence toward the West, and this ambivalence leads to further alienation. In short, there is no direct chain of events that leads to the "breeding of bin Ladens."

Nonetheless, Shore believes America and Europe can prevent this breeding by adopting "new strategies" (p. 165). To solve the problems of economic inequality, he suggests targeted "microlending" to Muslim immigrants (p. 190) and a "Head Start" program for their children (p. 188). To reduce the dissatisfaction with the hypocrisy of American policies, he contends that policy makers in the United States must re-think their policies on "torture, secret prisons, or the denial of basic human rights to terror suspects" (p. 192).

Most of his solutions seem to address the problem of Muslim integration in Europe. To smooth this transition, he suggests that Western states avoid using rhetoric about a "war of ideas" (p. 185) and try to prevent their religious leaders from using inflammatory language about Islam (p. 181). To encourage cultural understanding on both sides, Shore recommends sending young Americans to Muslim countries (p. 191) and the appointment of a presidential "council of historical advisors" on Islam (p. 194). Finally, he proposes the appointment of a "second-circle contact group" among Europe's moderate Muslim population. The hope is that these Muslims might be able to "serve as a crucial bridge to the rest of the Islamic world" (p. 70).

Conspicuous in their absence are proposals that ad-

dress the value conflicts Shore places at the center of his analysis. In my estimation, his intuitions about these conflicts are quite accurate. Thus, it is disappointing that he does not propose solutions to this most intractable of problems. It is possible that he thinks his other proposals will miraculously reduce the tensions, but is difficult to understand how this would work and Shore provides no guidance in this regard. Does he think the integration of Muslim minorities will lead to the assimilation of values, and if so, whose values will win out?

In a curious passage at the end of the book, Shore chastises the Bush administration for attempting to spread awareness of Western values among Muslims. He notes that "successful use of public diplomacy depends not on how well American values are packaged and exported, but on whether American values are in fact attractive" (p. 179). It is difficult to know what to make of this statement, but it could suggest that Shore believes Americans are the ones who need to change their values. Yet, it is not clear which American values are "in fact" unattractive and how one would make this judgment in the first place.

Indeed, the primary problem with Shore's analysis is that he never explains what he means by "values" or how he determines which are attractive, unattractive, mainstream, or Islamic. There are moments when he seems to suggest that the conflict is over what American political pundits identified as "values" in the 2004 election (so-called "social values" relating to religion, sexuality, and the family). Yet, it is not at all clear that the secular, individualistic, and libertine values Shore's Muslims oppose are "in fact" mainstream American social values. As scholars of American history and culture will quickly point out, the United States is anything but a "secular" nation.

This turns out to be a case where the distinction between European and American identity is particularly important. Yet, the two were discussed together throughout the work as if they were one and the same. Shore recognizes that there are differences between the two and tries to address the distinction in a few passages. Unfortunately, he is never quite successful and the reader is left to wonder whether this book is primarily about Europe or the United States. Indeed, one wonders whether the discussions of anti-Americanism were thrown in at the last minute to convince Americans to buy what was, primarily, a book about European problems.

It is also important to note that the value conflicts Shore observed were sometimes much deeper than concerns about headscarves and homosexuality. If the tensions were merely social, ensuring the peaceful co-existence of these communities in a pluralist democracy might be enough to prevent radicalization. Yet, Shore's interviews reveal that the values required to secure this peaceful co-existence (disestablishment, religious liberty, individual rights, etc.) are often the values at the center of the conflict. Indeed, when asked about the role of *shariah* (Islamic law) in Europe, one of Shore's subjects replied that "Islam gives us many rules to live by, and these rules are good for all people. What we do not want is democracy" (p. 141).

Shore is careful to note that this was not the prevailing sentiment of the Muslims he interviewed. Most, he claimed, saw no tension between the values of Islam and democracy. The key problem with this analysis, however, is that he never asked his subjects to define democracy or the values on which it depends. Thus, some of the subjects who support democratic elections might remain deeply ambivalent about disestablishment and the religious liberties granted by western constitutions. In fact, his interviews reveal that there are sometimes important connections between ambivalence toward western "social" values and a deeper ambivalence toward the political tolerance of liberal democracies.

These are subtle, but important distinctions. If it turns out to be the case that mainstream European Muslims are deeply ambivalent about the foundations of liberal political regimes, the task of reconciliation becomes much more difficult. It is certainly not impossible, but it will require serious conversations about the nature and function of government and its relationship to religion and morality. Though all of Shore's proposals will be an important step in the right direction, full integration will not be possible unless Muslims can advance Islamic foundations for the political values of liberal regimes.

Conceptualizing the problem in this way also suggests that this ambivalence is fundamentally linked to specific theological arguments. Unfortunately, Shore rarely discusses religion or theology. He mentions Islam throughout the book, but almost always as a marker for a particular ethnic group and/or set of cultural values. He seems to have a vague sense that the conflict over values can be traced back to the teachings of Islam, but he never addresses those teachings or how they are related to the values of his subjects. Thus, if you are a looking for a sophisticated philosophical or theological analysis of the tensions between Islam and the West, you will not find it here. Nonetheless, Shore's theoretical instincts are

surprisingly strong for someone untrained in either religion or philosophy. Though not always clear or carried through to its completion, his analysis of the value conflicts at the heart of this debate was particularly insightful.

Moreover, few who write about the tensions between Islam and the west have taken the time to explore the growing significance of Muslim communities in Europe. Shore is absolutely correct to note that this is an embarrassing gap in the literature. More importantly, his training in modern European history allows him to explore this dilemma with great detail. In fact, his extended discussion of European struggles with Muslim integration is the most worthwhile aspect of this volume.

Written in an informal journalistic style, *Breeding Bin Ladens* is a relatively quick read. Thus, it provides a nice introduction for scholars hoping to introduce themselves to the growing tensions between ethnic Europeans and second-generation Muslim immigrants. While not without problems, Shore's thoughtful and measured analysis stands out in a genre awash in oversimplification, misinformation, and polemics.