As regards transactions involving ribā in Dār al-Ḥarb, it is not correct to say that there is a consenses (ijmā') on its being lawful. The fact is that Maliki, Shāfi'i and Ḥanbali jurists do not allow ribā transactions regardless of whether they are made in Dār al-İslām or Dār al-Ḥarb. In their opinion, a prohibited act remains prohibited no matter where it takes place. The Hanafī jurists, however, consider it permissible for a Muslim to enter into ribā transaction with a Ḥarbī because, in their opinion, his property does not enjoy protection. But the fact is that this permissibility in the Hanafī law is not absolute and unqualified, it is restricted to a situation where a Muslim community is in the state of war with a non-Muslim community. It goes without saying that the preservation of the property is one of the basic objectives of the Sharī‘ah. Thus, it is not allowed for a Muslim to devour the property of non-Muslim wrongfully by taking interest from him.

In my opinion, the views expressed by the author of the book under review, are essentially his own understanding of the rules of law on ribā. Obviously it is a great departure from the majority opinion and consensus (ijmā') of ummah on the issue of ribā. However, the book reflects some new aspects on the subject of ribā, which may provide some new grounds for further exploration by the scholars and researchers.

Muhammad Tahir Mansuri

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This fine book on the Arab Shi‘ah by Graham E. Fuller, a senior political analyst at the RAND Corporation, and Rend Rahim Francke, the Executive Director of the Iraq Foundation, a research and information organization dedicated to democratization in Iraq, does not pretend to be something that it is not. It is not an exhaustive historical study on the Shi‘ite communities that analyzes extensively the development of Shi‘ah theology intended to enlighten, for example, the students of Islamic Studies. Rather, the authors clearly state that their book has a “practical” (p. 3) purpose. They intend to address some
policy questions of Western governments, especially the American government, *vis à vis* the Arab world in general and the *Shi‘ah* in particular.

The authors state that this practical purpose is imperative because the Arab *Shi‘ah* are the “forgotten Muslims”. Most other studies on the *Shi‘ah* population focus on Iran thereby overlooking the Arab *Shi‘ah* population even though they are strategically located in large oil-producing areas (p. 1). These Arab *Shi‘ah* communities have been systematically suppressed by the dominant *Sunnī* population for centuries thereby creating domestic tensions which, the authors contend, are an ongoing source of instability. The “Shi‘a problem” (p. 11) is that they are an “oppressed religious minority in a number of states and an oppressed religious majority in two others” which the authors believe goes to the heart of the dilemma of modern Arab politics because the failure to integrate the Shi‘a represents the failure of the Arab state in microcosm (p. 3). Consequently, the authors feel that it is important to concentrate on the Shi‘ite issue and develop “open-minded approaches about how to solve it” (p. 5). In particular, the authors suggest encouraging increasing democratization in the Middle East. Interestingly, and seemingly contradictorily, the means to that end, the authors assert, especially in the potentially difficult transitional period, is to apply some form of proportional representation or political sectarianism such as in Lebanon (p. 259). The authors argue that confessional proportionality might serve as a “‘halfway house’ for the later development of broader nonsectarian democratic institutions” (p. 233).

In order to better elucidate the problem at hand, the authors start their discussion with a chapter on the Shi‘ite identity. This chapter is the most interesting portion of the book. The authors point out how the *Shi‘ah* face a number of intractable dilemmas such as the fact that they are Muslims yet are often treated as non-Muslims. If they try to downplay their Shi‘ite identity they are denied entry in politics because they are *Shi‘ah*, but if they insist on their Shi‘ite identity, they are called divisive and sectarian.

The authors next analyze the political status of the *Shi‘ah* communities in Iraq, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon, focusing on such elements such as Shi‘ite political activities, their functions (or lack thereof) in government, and connections to Iran. In their analysis, the authors emphasize that the status of the *Shi‘ah* varies from country to country. According to their account, great strides have been taken toward greater equality in Lebanon and Kuwait whereas the conditions in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia an Iraq call for much improvement. In fact, the authors are quite alarmed over the situation in those last three countries, maintaining that this issue will be “explosive” (p. 256) in the future. The authors also consider *Shi‘ah* views of the West and *Shi‘ah*
terrorist activities. These issues are discussed in the context of how to formulate American policy in the area.

Given their policy-oriented approach, the authors are fully aware and indeed sensitive to the fact that many readers could be suspicious of their agenda. They recognize that their approach could easily be construed as a typical example of old-fashioned Orientalism or facilitating a “divide and rule” approach to the region that seeks to create or “magnify differences within Muslim society where little or none exists, thereby making Muslim society seem prejudiced, divided, vulnerable or weak” (p. 4). As opposed to many policy-oriented texts which typically fail to assess indigenous sources and thus do not take into the account the aspirations and views of the people in question, Fuller and Francke conducted extensive interviews with a number of Shi’ab. The authors thereby avoid many of the traditional trappings of such studies making this book refreshing and more compelling.

In fact, the authors go to great lengths to present a sympathetic and sensitive account of the Shi’ab communities in the various Arab countries. At times, the authors are so sensitive and so committed to their topic that they exaggerate the Shi’ab problem at the expense of other groups in the Middle East. For example, they state that the Shi’ab, as a group, have been “the primary victims” (p. 253) of the absence of human rights and democracy in the Middle East. Although the Shi’ab have certainly had their share of problems, there are also numerous other social groups, such as women, or religious or ethnic minorities which would benefit tremendously from increased human rights.

In their analysis, the authors focus only on the Ithnā’Ashariyyah — Twelver Shi’is — and do not discuss the various heterodox forms of Shi’ism such as the ‘Alawīs of Syria, the Zaydis of Yemen, or the Arab Ismā‘īlī communities. This limitation is a major drawback of this book. While such an omission is understandable from a practical perspective, it does relegate the subtle and complex contours of the ethnic and religious mosaic of the Arab world into perhaps all too simple and distinct categories. Although the authors frequently mention that the Shi’ab are far from being a monolithic or unified group, this book does not depict an entirely accurate picture of the complex social realities of the various sects of the Arab Shi’ab. For example, their discussion would have been enriched by including a discussion on the ‘Alawīs of Syria who have dominated the Sunni majority population of Syria and how that compares to governance in other Arab countries.

Furthermore, the authors could have taken various historical aspects more into consideration in analyzing the current political situation, such as the development of Shi’ab political ideology. Influential figures in the early history of Shi’ism, such as Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (d. 765) transformed early political
Shi’ism into an introverted and quietistic religious movement. Although it is certainly subject to debate how that early history dictates modern preoccupations traditional Shi’ah views should be taken into account when assessing the political development of the Shi’ite communities in the respective countries.

Hopefully the intended readership of this book will actually read what Fuller and Francke have to offer. Their narrative is presented in clear language and their account, especially their concluding remarks, is well organized and concise. Overall, this book will not contribute much to the field of Islamic Studies, which anyway was never the intention of the authors. This book does, however, offer a sympathetic account of Shi’ah political problems in the select number of Arab countries and presents a long-range view of politics in the region that stresses the essential need to expand the democratic process in the Middle East.

Magnus T. Bernhardsson

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Taking as its starting point the fact that Islam is the fastest growing religion in the United States, a religion that will soon replace Judaism, the second largest religion of the country, this volume examines such issues as Islamic identity, anti-discrimination laws, African-American Islam, Islam in the American press, mosque design, economic security, Islamic legal views on Muslim minorities, and female conversion. These issues are all part, as John L. Esposito notes in his ‘introduction’, of a central question faced by Muslims in the United States: “will they remain Muslims in America or become American Muslims? (p. 3)”; in other words, to what extent will Muslims become integrated into American society, and what are the potential costs of such integration?

The first section of the book addresses what the editors term the “American path option”. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad examines the diversity within the American Muslim community, arguing that the stereotypes of Islam and hostility to Islam and Muslims in the United States creates a climate