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Islam, the Middle East, and the New Global Hegemony (The Middle East in the International System)

Simon W. Murden

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#4434643 in Books Lynne Rienner Pub 2002-04 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.75 x 6.00 x .501, .0
#File Name: 1588260887220 pages | File size: 70.Mb

Simon W. Murden : Islam, the Middle East, and the New Global Hegemony (The Middle East in the International System) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Islam, the Middle East, and the New Global Hegemony (The Middle East in the International System):

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Simon Murden concepts revisited By shibani Islam, The Middle East, and the New Global Hegemony by Simon W. Murden published by Lynne Rienner Publishers, in 2002 takes a liberalist perspective of International Relations Theory by looking at the free markets and the western hegemonic structure and throwing light on how the Muslim world interacts with the Western hegemony. It makes an interesting analogy when it states the fact that Hegemony has changed structure and has now become the diffuse structure and the competition for power is in the realm of cyberspace as much as in the hyperreal and the global systems [p.7] This is an important point to remember because in the same vein, the author says that U.S might be forced to defend its turf in the Middle-East in order to maintain the image of a hegemon in the rising pressures of China or the European Union challenging its hegemonic status in a multi-polar world. It goes over the same things that the other authors like Gerges, Esposito and probably a million other scholars have repeated themselves hoarse about - the reason for the U.S interests in the region, the crowding together of individual identities and the formulation of Pan-Arabism/ Islam, the tenets of Islam. What is interesting in this amalgamation and strengthening of identities is the portrayal of OIC [The Organization of

the Islamic Conference] as a limited counter-hegemon. He also adds that the OIC was successful in giving a common identity and a strong voice but that remained restricted to rhetoric because the different interpretations of Islam led to break-ups. He also observed that the stance of the OIC was getting increasingly moderate in its tone. What is disturbing about this variety of scholarship is the fact that though it addresses pertinent and important questions' yet it makes sweeping generalizations and claims which could end up doing more harm than good to a lucid understanding of the topic under study. [statements like - Muslims have a distinct identity is right but then this kind of a statement runs the danger of being blown out of proportion by right wing and orthodox authors] Thus in attributing meanings and subjectivity to such a sensitive topic as this, one needs to exercise more caution and restraint of language than is being shown here. It also speaks of a Western bias when it talks of a liberal idea and expresses skepticism on the Islamic culture's ability to get assimilated. Modernity could mean different things depending on the culture under consideration and modernity as understood in the Western world might not even be relevant or better for that part of the World.³ of 6 people found the following review helpful. Theoretical and uninformative
By Robert Owen
This text is written by an academic who, it would appear, has little practical knowledge or understanding of the Middle East or Islam. A very theoretical approach that discusses little of relevance to today's issues on Islam.

Simon Murden investigates how Muslim societies in the Middle East are being affected by globalized politics and economics and how they are adapting to it. Murden describes how a Western-designed set of economic and political norms, institutions and regimes has come to be a hegemonic system. His focus is on the encounter between the Islamic vision of society, with its emphasis on community and social control, and the Western liberal vision of economic liberation and individual choice. Attempting to make sense of the various political purposes to which Islam is being put in Middle Eastern states, he explores the response of the Islamic world to the penetration of the liberal political agenda. Moving the debate beyond the polarization engendered by the "clash of civilizations" thesis, Murden reveals the complex interactions between Islam and the West that are shaping Middle Eastern politics.

About the Author
Simon Murden is lecturer in Middle Eastern studies in the Department of International Politics, University of Plymouth. He is author of Emergent Regional Powers and International Relations in the Gulf, 1988-1991.