

## **Citizens Abroad: Emigration and the State in the Middle East and North Africa**

*Laurie A. Brand*

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This book explores a critical and often neglected aspect of emigration from Middle Eastern countries. Rather than focusing on the policies of the states receiving Middle Eastern immigrants, Brand's research studies the policies of those Middle Eastern states from which emigration originates. She attributes this neglect to the chauvinism of scholars writing from the Americas and Western Europe who have made their own countries the central actors of their research. Her other theoretical contribution is to challenge and deconstruct simplistic and outdated conceptions of state sovereignty. She selects four case studies (viz., Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, and Jordan), noting each one's varied levels of involvement in the expatriates' lives, the emigrants' different destinations, and the dissimilar relationships between the expatriates and their countries of origin. By bringing together four disparate cases in one book, Brand addresses the larger question of how emigration from states impacts the originating states' conceptions of their own sovereignty.

In the first two chapters, she frames her study's contribution to political science and other treatments of emigration, particularly in a Middle Eastern and North African context. Brand asserts that her research points to an expanded understanding of the concept of sovereignty, "given the continuous re- and de-constructing of sovereignty over the years" and "challenge to the inside-outside dichotomy regarding immigrant and emigrant communities" (p. 44). She returns to this theme in her conclusion by asserting that the authority of the originating states is resilient and continues to be relevant to nationals who live outside its geographic boundaries.

Her next chapter deals specifically with Morocco and its attempt to exert political, economic, and cultural influence over its citizens in France, Spain, The Netherlands, and elsewhere. She sees a desire to control their financial remittances as a significant motivator for the state's desire to control Moroccans living abroad. However, she cautions that state actions cannot be seen in purely economic terms, for both the state and those Moroccans living abroad see the maintenance of connections as a matter of symbolic importance and (national) identity preservation. The author weaves these factors together while outlining the historical trajectory of state policies toward emigrants and concludes that the Moroccan state's conception of its sovereignty extends past geographic boundaries and into less tangible realms.

In the following chapter on Tunisia, Brand addresses a state in which emigration plays a less prominent symbolic role in the national culture. Similarly, financial remittances occupy a far smaller portion of the Tunisian economy than they do in Morocco. She sees Tunisia's attempts to institute sovereignty abroad as focusing more energy on political and social control. Mirroring the state apparatus concerned with domestic politics, state-run institutions abroad also closely monitor emigrants. Brand concludes that while the Tunisian state attempts to maintain strict control, its limited resources prevent it from achieving absolute success.

Her third case study, Lebanon, has sent emigrants to the largest number of destinations of the states studied. She asserts that Lebanese institutions and policies directed at Lebanese living abroad had less to do with interest in emigrants and more to do with extending domestic political infighting and rivalry into the international realm. Rather than using institutions that deal with emigrants as a means for extending Lebanon's sovereignty, political actors tend to secure control over such agencies and offices to increase their power over other contenders for domestic political control. This usually mirrors the sectarian issues that instigated much of the fighting during the Lebanese civil war.

The author includes Jordan because it has the lowest level of state intervention in emigrant affairs and the largest percentage of its population abroad. The author explains that as the majority of its emigrants are Palestinian, their commitment to Jordanian state sovereignty is not absolute. She cites these internal tensions between Palestinians and Jordanians as critical to understanding the development of institutions pertaining to emigrants. Unlike the other countries, which try to exert their sovereignty over an increasingly wider range of emigrant issues, Jordan has narrowed its attempt in order to extend its sovereignty to certain key areas, mostly economic.

Brand's book is a work of political science and engages in theoretical issues in that field by using its terminology and methodology. Readers looking for a greater understanding of how individuals or even small groups experience these issues will be disappointed, for her research is entirely at the level of governmental or quasi-governmental actors. Similarly, the instances in which she evokes "identity" as an explanatory factor in emigration policies and the consequent responses to them are the book's only weak part. For example, when writing that emigration is more significantly a part of Lebanese identity than of other national identities, she flattens "identity" into a universally shared and uncontested concept that exists entirely at the national level.

Overall, this book is a useful and thoroughly researched approach to a subject that has been undeservedly ignored in much of the academic literature. Brand convincingly demonstrates that the presence of diasporic communities and the outward flow of labor were significant to policymaking and government decisions in all four countries. In addition to its strong contribution to the theoretical literature on emigration and state sovereignty, this book is an excellent reference source for scholars of the four countries selected as case studies. Emigration from these countries is a significant factor in each one's contemporary configuration. Scholars and students from fields outside of political science whose research deals with any of them will find new data in her chapters and in her extensive bibliography of English, French, Spanish, and Arabic sources.

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