

Transnational Shia politics

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Résumé ou extrait : This timely book illuminates the historical origins and present situation of militant Shia transnational networks by focusing on three key countries in the Gulf, Kuwait, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, whose Shia Islamic groups are the offspring of Iraqi movements. The reshaping of the area's geopolitics after the Gulf War and the fall of Saddam Hussein in April 2003 have had a profound impact on transnational Shiite networks, pushing them to focus on national issues in the context of new political opportunities. For example, from being fierce opponents of the Saudi monarchy, Saudi Shiite militants have tended to become upholders of the Al-Sa'ud dynasty. The question remains, however, how deeply in society have these new beliefs taken root? Can Shiites be Saudi or Bahraini patriots? Louer concludes her book by analysing the transformation of the Shia' movements' relation to central religious authority, the marja', who reside either in Iraq and Iran. This is all the more problematic when the marja' is also the head of a state, as with Ali Khamenei of Iran, who has many followers in Bahrain and Kuwait.

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