The shia worlds and Iran

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Abstract: From Africa to Asia, Twelver Shi’a form significant minority and, in some cases, majority communities. Geography and history place Iran at the centre of these worlds. But to what extent can we speak of an ‘Iranian model’ that these groups follow? This researched volume presents the Shi’a worlds in all their complexities, exploring the tenuous relations between these groups and Iran while shedding light on the understudied Shi’a communities in the Gulf, Turkey, Afghanistan and Senegal.

Keywords: Shi'i Islam, Iran, Shi’a worlds

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Is Iran trying to engage the Arab Shiite masses? Is Iran attempting to expand its regional influence by building an ideological Shiite crescent? What are Iran's aims in establishing friendly relations with the Shiite factions in the region? With the new political developments in post-invasion Iraq, one should not dispute that there is an ongoing conflict between the Shiites and the Sunnis in the region. Yet my argument is that this rivalry is a pure inter-Arab world power-sharing conflict rather than an ideological Iranian-Arab rivalry. To examine this idea, I argue restly that, given Iran's politic