

Minorities in West Asia and North Africa

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This series seeks to provide a unique and dedicated outlet for the publication of theoretically informed, historically grounded and empirically governed research on minorities and ‘minoritization’ processes in the regions of West Asia and North Africa (WANA). In WANA, from Morocco to Afghanistan and from Turkey to the Sudan almost every country has substantial religious, ethnic or linguistic minorities. Their changing character and dynamic evolution notwithstanding, minorities have played key roles in social, economic, political and cultural life of WANA societies from the antiquity and been at the center of the modern history of the region. WANA’s experience of modernity, processes of state formation and economic development, the problems of domestic and interstate conflict and security, and instances of state failure, civil war, and secession are all closely intertwined with the history and politics of minorities, and with how different socio-political categories related to the idea of minority have informed or underpinned historical processes unfolding in the region. WANA minorities have also played a decisive role in the rapid and crisis-ridden transformation of the geopolitics of WANA in the aftermath of the Cold War and the commencement of globalization. Past and contemporary histories, and the future shape and trajectory of WANA countries are therefore intrinsically tied to the dynamics of minorities. Intellectual, political, and practical significance of minorities in WANA therefore cannot be overstated. The overarching rationale for this series is the absence of specialized series devoted to minorities in WANA. Books on this topic are often included in area, country or theme-specific series that are not amenable to theoretically more rigorous and empirically wider and multi-dimensional approaches and therefore impose certain intellectual constraints on the books especially in terms of geographical scope, theoretical depth, and disciplinary orientation. This series addresses this problem by providing a dedicated space for books on minorities in WANA. It encourages inter- and multi-disciplinary approaches to minorities in WANA with a view to promote the combination of analytical rigor with empirical richness. As such the series is intended to bridge a significant gap on the subject in the academic books market, increase the visibility of research on minorities in WANA, and meets the demand of academics, students, and policy makers working on, or interested in, the region alike. The editorial team of the series will adopt a proactive and supportive approach through soliciting original and innovative works, closer engagement with the authors, providing feedback on draft monographs prior to publication, and ensuring the high quality of the output.

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Maurizio Geri

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PREFACE

Almost half century ago, Samuel Huntington¹ explained how state capacity is fundamental to guarantee order in societies in transition. Francis Fukuyama² revived this concept, arguing that a strong and effective state is fundamental for the stability of democratizing countries. But strong institutions are not enough to make democracy and political order compatible: institutions also need to be inclusive, to foster participation and respect freedom of all parts of society, including ethnic minorities.

This can be seen today in many fledgling democracies, but also in more mature and stable ones. From Myanmar to the Philippines, from Hungary to Poland, we see how newly or less newly democratized states are passing from a process of re-authoritarianization, as some scholars call it,³ in which populism erodes the liberal democratic values and structures of a country. One of the first things to indicate such a trend in a country is the repression of minorities, who are often targeted as scapegoats. The exclusion and repression of old or new minorities (like immigrants in the European case) causes those democracies to start down the path of regression in their polity and society towards a more authoritarian system.

¹Samuel P Huntington, *Political order in changing societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

²Francis Fukuyama, *Political order and political decay* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014).

³Andrea Kendall-Taylor and Erica Frantz, “How Democracies Fall Apart. Why Populism Is a Pathway to Autocracy”, *Foreign Affairs*, December 6, 2016, accessed September 30, 2017, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2016-12-05/how-democracies-fall-apart>.

This book aims to concentrate on democratizing Muslim majority states, for several reasons. First is that so-called Arab exceptionalism, and the recent democratic failure or success of the Arab Spring countries, depends on a fundamental domestic variable: the exclusion or inclusion of ethnic, religious or political minorities by the new regimes (as we saw for example in Egypt or Iraq with respect to Tunisia or Morocco). Second, when we talk about democracy, there is no Islamic exceptionalism because a majority of Muslim citizens actually live in democracies (mostly on the Asian continent), and several Muslim states are democracies; nevertheless, the majority of Muslim countries (mostly in the Arab World) are not democracies. Third, studies of social conflict in Muslim countries typically emphasize sectarian divisions but ignore ethnic differences. Likewise, theories of democratization in Muslim countries examine the rights of religious minorities but overlook the inclusion of ethnic minorities. Finally, by examining states with ethnic diversity but very little religious diversity, the research controls for the effect of religious conflict on minority inclusion, and so allows for future generalization and comparison to minority inclusion in democratizing states that are not Muslim.

Therefore, the main question this book aims to answer is: What factors explain the differences in how democratizing Muslim countries treat their ethnic minorities? In other words, why do democratizing Muslim majority states differ in their approaches to the incorporation of ethnic minorities? The research represents a comparative analysis of two similar cases with different outcomes: Turkey and Indonesia. The focus of the book is to analyze specifically the securitization (Buzan et al. 1998) of Kurds in Turkey and the “autonomization” (drawing from Lijphart 2004 and Kymlicka 2001) of Acehnese in Indonesia to understand what independent variables affect these different results. The cases chosen are the two democracies in the Muslim world that are most recognized by scholars. Hypotheses will be tested using four variables: the elites’ power interest, following rational choice theory; international factors, following the international system and structural theories; institutions and the history of the state, following the historical-institutionalist theory; and finally the ontological security of a country, following critical theories.

Evidence analyzed in the book shows that none of these variables is necessary *and* sufficient, as none of them alone can cause the outcome of the dependent variable studied here: they are not uniquely sufficient to cause either securitization or autonomization. Nevertheless, there may be treated as prescriptive elements or policy suggestions to fledgling

Muslim-majority (and non-) democracies facing the challenge of including minorities, in particular if there is an open armed conflict with a self-determination movement of a minority. These countries should consider intervention by external mediators, a process of decentralization, and a very gradual transition of power among elites, hoping to have inclusive historical institutions that do not require excessive reform, a peaceful and secure regional situation that will not impact domestic issues with minorities, and a respectable national identity conducive to high levels of ontological security. It is not an easy situation to establish, but it is what all countries interested in fostering stable democratization processes should aim for.

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When you write a book, there are many people to thank. This book stems from the work done for my PhD dissertation, and so I want to thank first my dissertation supervisor Dr. David Earnest, who helped me not only with the research but also to improve my professional and human qualities. Also, I thank Dr. Regina Karp and everyone in the Graduate Program in International Studies at Old Dominion University, where I spent 4 years of my life starting my academic career with great faculty, supportive staff, and amazing colleagues who have always been helpful with their constant inputs. Thanks also to the many colleagues I met over these years of study in the USA and at the many international or national conferences I attended, especially those organized by the International Studies Association, the Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa, and the Conference on World Affairs at University of Colorado Boulder. I am also grateful to the think tanks and research centers where I had the good fortune to collaborate with top-rate scholars, including at the Carter Center, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, the Allied Command Transformation of NATO, the Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies at the University of Rhode Island, and Nonviolence International. Finally, I thank my family, who helped me to reach this point in my life, and my mentor and best friend Shadia Marhaban.

I dedicate this book to the Kurds and the Acehnese, for a brighter future, and to all minorities around the world, the disenfranchised, the underdog, those excluded and discriminated against. Here's to you, for a future in which all humankind will find the path to social justice, human equality, and freedom.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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