

Muslim Public Opinion Toward the International Order

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Support for International and Regional Actors

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*Dedicated to
My (late) mother, Hina Isani*

PREFACE

This book is based on my dissertation, which was submitted and accepted at the University of Muenster. Its journey began when, as an empiricist seeking an important puzzle worthy of becoming the focus of a dissertation, I noted that some of the data I was analyzing revealed that populations in Muslim majority countries had a relatively unfavorable view of regional and international organizations. This finding aligned with my experience growing up as a Muslim in Pakistan, where I recalled that longings of lost Muslim glory were common. Critiques of international and regional organizations, I knew, came not only from the political right, who felt Muslims were deliberately targeted, but also from the left, who felt that a group of core non-Muslim countries were increasingly taking advantage of the Muslim majority countries on the global periphery.

Since my preliminary data analysis showed that this contempt of the international order was not limited strictly to Pakistan, I wanted to explore and pinpoint *why* populations in Muslim majority countries hold particularly negative views of international organizations. This topic was also close to the theme of a larger research endeavor in which I was involved at the time, at the Religion and Politics Excellence Cluster at the University of Muenster. Hence, I decided to embark upon answering what seemed an extremely pertinent question to me.

The journey to collect data and do fieldwork for this dissertation took me to various Muslim majority countries, including Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. Although this book does not detail

my experiences in these various countries, I nevertheless attempt to provide important observations from data collected within them.

This book is an empirical attempt to depict factors that affect the formation of attitudes toward the international order in Muslim majority countries. Though the work is primarily meant to interest political science students, scholars, and policy practitioners, it may also be of interest to people who struggle with the question of whether Muslims are somehow distinctive.

Indeed, this book has its weaknesses. In particular, I wish I had been able to collect better survey data during the course of my dissertation. However, I do not intend for this to be my last attempt at tackling the broader themes of this project, and I am even more optimistic about the value of future work I might do on the topic; the process of completing this dissertation has helped me to improve greatly as a scholar, particularly in the sense that developing multiple versions of the project has taught me to be more critical of my own work. I trust, thus, that my future investigations on this and related issues will be even more useful insight.

In conclusion, I am certain this book has not put to rest the topic of Muslim public opinion toward the international order. Nonetheless, I hope it has been able to contribute to a pressing question on which there is a great paucity of research.

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Many among my friends, family, hosts, and colleagues, in addition to the various institutions of which I have been a part, have influenced and aided in making this work possible. Mentioning specific names would do an injustice to the many I would not be able to cover. Hence, I wish to extend a general “Thank you all,” with one important exception: I would specifically like to mention my dissertation chair, Bernd Schlipphak, without whom this book would not have been possible.

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