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Governing "areas of dissidence"

Creating a common national identity and binding society's allegiance to central authority have been important objectives of the modern state. Particularly in the Middle East and North Africa, formation of a national identity took a more state-led character than in the Western context. While in Western Europe, the process of linguistic and cultural homogenization extended over centuries as a result of industrialization, capitalism, urbanization, and increased literacy, in the Middle East and North Africa, the pressures of centralizing and expanding state authority have led rulers to undertake more top-down strategies to achieve social homogeneity in a shorter time span. Ethnic groups that are different from the state's ideal image of the citizen have been affected by these homogenization policies in various ways. Some ethnic identities politicized and became the basis for full-fledged nationalist mobilization. Some ethnic groups, however, entered into uneasy, and yet peaceful, relations with the state. Why do some ethnic groups live peacefully with the states that govern them, whereas others develop into serious threats to state authority? What sorts of nation-building policies breed violent ethnic mobilization and which policies lead to state–minority reconciliation? Why do states pursue different strategies to build their nations? This book tackles these questions through a comparative study of Morocco and Turkey, where nation-building and state–minority relations have followed very different trajectories.

In both countries, authorities faced "areas of dissidence" in the early and mid-twentieth century in which Kurds in Turkey and Berbers in Morocco presented huge challenges to the new states attempting to establish dominance in their territories. Kurds and Berbers held the capacity for

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resistance to state domination and control. Geographically, these communities were located in rough terrain with inaccessible mountains and difficult climates. Socially, they were organized into tight clans or tribes, as a result of which a strong local hierarchy competed with central rulers for social control. Finally, a distinct culture, marked by a separate language, created a powerful basis for autonomy in the areas of dissidence. Initially, Berbers and Kurds posed similar challenges to the Moroccan and Turkish state rulers in centralizing their states and creating a national identity. However, the complex, often volatile, relations between the Berber and Kurdish societies in Morocco and Turkey, respectively, and the states in which they live have taken very different turns. While the Kurds have resisted the Turkish state, sometimes violently, Moroccan Berbers have worked out an uneasy accommodation with the state. This book explores the reasons behind the relatively peaceful relationship between the Berbers and the Moroccan state and the sometimes violent and confrontational relationship between the Kurds and the Turkish state.

In Turkey, Kurds constitute the largest ethnic minority and are estimated to be between 15 and 20 percent of the population (Watts 2010, xi). Since the foundation of Turkey as a nation-state, Kurdish protest has increasingly radicalized and became the primary challenge that threatened Turkish security. In time, the Kurdish activists' demands for cultural rights were progressively replaced by demands for secession and national liberation. In other words, Kurdish ethnic activism has gradually evolved into a nationalist movement.[1] Since 1984, the movement has resorted to violence and the armed wing, the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), has succeeded in becoming a hegemonic power within the movement, dictating the strategies and demands of Kurdish activists at large. The insurgency also managed to gain considerable support from Kurdish society, succeeding in becoming a mass movement. Successive political parties and several nongovernmental organizations have formed the political wing of this movement.

The Berber movement followed a distinct path. Estimates put Berber-speakers in Morocco at around 40–45 percent of the population (Maddy-Weitzman 2011, 1) and they form the second largest ethnic group in Morocco after the Arabs. Like the Kurdish movement in Turkey, Berber activism emerged as a cultural movement, advocating linguistic and cultural rights. Unlike the Kurdish movement, however, there has been little

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[1] The difference between an ethnic and a nationalist movement is that the latter asks for self-determination or regional autonomy (Olzak 2006, 40–41).

change in its demands and strategies over the years. Today the Berber activists' demands primarily revolve around acceptance of difference and cultural recognition. It is an ethnic identity movement. Berber mainstream activists take a conciliatory stance in their relations with the state and refrain from challenging the political system of Morocco, let alone territorial unity. The Berber movement also has shown considerable diversity in its structure as it is composed of more than 100 associations with different agendas, ranging from doing social work in rural areas to publicizing Berber rights abuses by state authorities. Despite the large number of organizations working for a pro-Berber agenda, the movement's support has been limited to the urban areas, largely to the educated strata, such as lawyers, students, and intellectuals. As David Crawford (2001, 364) points out, there is no one unique sense of Berberness that appeals to the larger Berber-speaking society in Morocco and the rural Berbers remain outside the scope of this ethnic movement.

Through a comparative historical analysis, this book explains the different evolutions of Kurdish and Berber dissent by looking at the different nation-building strategies of the respective states, which varied, I argue, because of these states' different paths to state formation. Nation-building refers to state attempts to create a common national identity within its borders. States vary in their willingness and capabilities to seek social homogeneity and to intrude into their citizens' lives to build a common identity. Language policies, states' attitudes towards expressions of ethnic identity – such as dress, naming, and music – and official discourses on national identity indicate how states draw the boundaries of national membership. I argue that complex interactions at the ground level, where states have demanded changes in everyday behavior, such as how to dress, what language to speak, what names to give children, and more mundane practices, account for the nature of emerging state–minority relations, particularly the possibility of violent confrontation between ethnic groups and the state. Differences in the everyday intrusiveness (the extent to which the state interferes in the private sphere of individuals that it aims to transform) and the comprehensiveness of nation-building policies (the extent to which the state seeks a wide range of changes in behavior, values, habits, lifestyles) go a long way in explaining whether state–ethnic group relations end up as confrontational or not.

Why do states' nation-building strategies differ? This book contends that a state's nation-building is influenced by the type of its state-building strategies. State-building is the process of establishing monopoly of rule

by a central authority over a bounded territory. The relative autonomy of
the state vis-à-vis local centers of power, such as tribal leaders, religious
sheikhs, and landed notables, affects the state's ability to intervene in
society and seek social transformation for the sake of building a common
identity. I argue that variation in state autonomy from social centers of
power is critical for the formulation of nation-building strategies.

In Turkey, a military-bureaucratic elite, which inherited a large state
apparatus from the Ottoman Empire, founded the Turkish Republic and
consolidated the central state at the expense of local authorities, more
specifically the tribal leaders and religious sheikhs. In their attempt to
create a homogeneous nation, these political elites aimed at an "extreme
makeover" of the society and sought a wide range of changes in people's
behavior, values, habits, and lifestyles. As the largest minority and liv-
ing in areas that are hard to control, Kurds became the main targets of
this social-engineering project. The Kurdish protest in Turkey, I maintain,
rests on the everyday experiences of the Kurdish masses as a result of the
state's policies to push such a "makeover" and to interfere in their private
lives. In Morocco, on the other hand, the monarchy needed the support
of the local authorities in centralizing and consolidating its state institu-
tions. Due to the high level of interdependence between the state and
local authorities, the state followed a cautious nation-building strategy
and refrained from undertaking a transformative state project to hom-
ogenize the society. The Moroccan state's interference in the Berber areas
was minimal and gradual as a result of the monarchy's alliance with,
and cooptation of, Berber power centers. Due to the absence of a social-
engineering project and a low level of state intrusion, the Berber activ-
ists' demands did not radicalize and the appeal of Berber mobilization
remained limited.

This chapter is composed of three parts. In the first part, I elaborate
on the concept of "areas of dissidence" to discuss the similarities between
the Berber- and Kurdish-speaking areas and to highlight the puzzling
aspects of my question.[2] This section also presents a brief discussion of
the earlier relations of the Kurdish and Berber communities with the
Ottoman and Moroccan dynasties and provides a historical background
to the study. The central arguments of the book, along with a discussion
of how they conform to and diverge from some of the main arguments

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[2] I borrowed this term from the academic literature on Morocco, which divides the country
into *bilad al-makhzen* (government land) and *bilad al-siba* (land of dissidence). Further
discussion on these concepts in the Moroccan context can be found below.

of the state- and nation-building literatures, constitute the second part of this chapter. The final section presents a brief outline of the book.

AREAS OF DISSIDENCE

The Turkish Republic was founded in 1923 following the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire in the aftermath of World War I, after a four-year War of Independence. Morocco became independent from French colonial rule in 1956. During these states' struggle against the Western powers, the Kurdish and the Berber populations largely supported the nationalist military campaigns. In the Turkish case, most Kurdish leaders sided with the Ankara government in its resistance against the Allies. In the Moroccan case, Berbers and Arabs fought against the French under the Liberation Army. These strategic alliances, however, did not immediately pave the way for peaceful relations between the Berbers and the Kurds and their respective states in the aftermath of independence.

The Kurdish and Berber communities initially presented similar challenges to the Turkish and Moroccan state-builders at the time of their countries' establishment as modern nation-states. This was largely because both ethnic groups shared certain characteristics as residents of "areas of dissidence," or areas that present a higher capacity for resistance to state domination and control. I do not conceptualize the characteristics of "areas of dissidence" as constant features. Neither do I take it for granted that these areas' relations with the central power will always be contentious. In this section, my objective is to clarify the main characteristics of these areas that pose similar challenges to centralizing states. The outcome of such challenges depends on state strategies to rule over these areas.

One important characteristic of "areas of dissidence" is the presence of a strict social hierarchy or of communities governed by local elites with high authority and legitimacy. Tribal chiefs, large landowners, warlords, and religious authorities are examples of such local centers of power that enjoy authority to mobilize collective action within their community. The literature on modern states conceives of these strong local elites as potential impediments to state centralization and expansion (Tilly 1992; Hechter 2000). Predecessors of modern states, such as empires and feudal states, are characterized by indirect rule and rely on the intermediacy of local elites to rule their subjects. No central ruler was able to enforce his will over the territories he ruled before the advent of modern communications technology. While the regions that were closest to the

center were ruled directly by the central ruler, the peripheries could only
be controlled through some form of indirect rule. Central rulers had to
cooperate with powerful local intermediaries in order to extract from
and control these peripheral regions. The local centers of power were
allowed to enjoy autonomy in governing their own territory in return
for compensating the central ruler in taxes and supplying military service
in times of war (Hechter 2000). Modern states, nevertheless, are defined
by direct rule, administrative centralization, clear territorial boundaries,
monopoly of binding rule-making, and the monopoly over the means of
physical violence (Mann 1986). As states' capacities to administer distant
territories increased with improvements in transportation and commu-
nication, central rulers began to claim monopoly of rule over their terri-
tories, without any intermediaries. As a result, the increasing attempts by
central states to rule directly over their territories tend to challenge the
authority of local elites. This increases the likelihood of conflict between
the central state and local elites. In line with these expectations, Wimmer
et al. (2009) find that secessionist mobilizations are more likely to occur
in regions with previous autonomy and long histories of indirect rule.

For modern state-builders tribal regions are potential "areas of dissi-
dence." Tribal societies are built upon a hierarchical structure and their
leaders can compete with central states for social control. A tribe can
be defined as "a political entity, bound by shared conceptions of patri-
linear kinship serving as a basis for solidarity, and oriented toward the
collective defense of itself as a group" (Charrad 2001, 9).[3] Tribal social
organizations may seriously threaten modern state rulers' intentions to
monopolize the use of violence, to extract surplus, and to impose a uni-
form law. Tibi (1990, 130) suggests: "Any state structure, being a central-
ized monopoly of power, runs counter to all kinds of segmentary tribal
social organization insofar as a distinctiveness and a certain degree of
autonomy are basic features of any tribe." Tribal leaders enjoy consider-
able authority over their tribesmen and have strong bargaining power in
dealing with the state, largely due to their ability to mobilize collective
action. They combine a certain moral authority, usually based on a com-
bination of religious and customary authority, over their societies. Tribal
leaders' authority is also derived from the amount of wealth they possess

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[3] Tribal forms are immensely diverse in terms of their political leadership, cultural attri-
butes, number of members, and mode of production. For instance, some tribes may con-
tain only a few hundred people while others may be composed of hundreds of thousands.
While some tribes are nomadic pastoralists, others are settled cultivators. For more on the
complexity of the tribal systems in the Middle East, see Tapper (1990).

and their legitimacy depends on a continuous flow of goods and services to their followers (Khoury and Kostiner 1990, 9). Historically, tribes usually retained a certain degree of autonomy from central power, depending on their military power. Aside from the existence of a highly authoritative leadership, tribal norms and customs may also challenge states' law and ideology. Fragmented tribal identities may threaten modern states' attempts to build unmediated, direct rule and their ideals of constructing equal citizenship and a common national identity (Tibi 1990).

The Berber and Kurdish societies were largely tribal at the time of Turkish and Moroccan independence. As such they posed three basic challenges to their respective states. Both societies were traditionally ruled by powerful local authorities, namely, the tribal chiefs and religious leaders. Both communities enjoyed a long history of different degrees of autonomy from central rule. And, finally, they were both well-armed societies, which directly threatened states' claims to the monopoly of means of violence. These factors made collective action against a centralizing power easier for the Berbers and Kurds.

During the Ottoman period, the Kurdish areas formed a frontier region along the eastern border between the Ottoman and the Safavid Empires. Before the Ottoman conquest, the Kurds were organized either under nomadic tribes that were free from central control or in confederations of tribes, called emirates (Özoğlu 2004, 46–47). The Kurdish leaders' loyalty was crucial for the Ottoman rulers in curbing Safavid expansion. The Ottoman Empire incorporated these emirates in the sixteenth century and, in return for their loyalty to the Ottomans against the Safavids, accorded them an autonomous status. When the Ottoman state was strong, the Kurdish leaders fulfilled their military and financial obligations. But such fulfillment was irregular. Many times they could simply refuse to pay tribute or send military support to the center (Van Bruinessen 1992, 158–159). As Özoğlu (2004, 59) states: "Although the Ottoman state oversaw the function of the Kurdish emirates, organized as districts or sancaks, Kurdish rulers enjoyed de facto autonomy, particularly in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; the strong emirates were almost in complete control of their own internal affairs, paying only lip service to Istanbul."

The main confrontation between the Kurdish emirates and the Ottoman state started in the nineteenth century with the centralization efforts of the state. As a result of a series of political and military actions, the Ottoman state managed to abolish the Kurdish emirates and centrally appointed governors began to rule over these territories. In practice,

nevertheless, the governors' authority was quite limited. The removal of the emirates fragmented authority in the Kurdish regions, resulting in several tribal authorities being in conflict with each other. The governors' authority was not adequate to prevent tribal conflicts. The sheikhs, leaders of religious brotherhoods, gained political power as they began to mediate between tribes: "This was because sheikhs were the only figures whose influence exceeded the limits of the tribes. Eventually, the sheikhs became the new political leaders after the defeat of the Kurdish emirs. Beginning in the late 1800s, most Kurdish rebellions were led by Kurdish sheikhs" (Yeğen 1996, 219). As Kasaba (2009, 103–104) argues, paradoxically, Ottoman reforms of centralization also strengthened local authorities. For instance, the new land code of 1858, which aimed to break up communal tenure by registering land in the name of individuals, ended up benefiting tribal chiefs and sheikhs. People's fear of new taxation and conscription led them to avoid registering their land in their names. In the end tribal chiefs and sheikhs, who knew how to deal with state officials, registered large conglomerates of land in their own names and became powerful landowners. In addition, the state rulers' concern over Russian occupation and the rise of Armenian nationalism led them to recruit many Kurdish tribal leaders into the Ottoman army or to create tribal militias to police the Eastern provinces. As a result, loyal Kurdish tribes were supplied with arms by the Ottoman state (Kasaba 2009, 119–122; Van Bruinessen 1992, 185). While the Ottoman state went a long way in centralizing its institutions over the course of the nineteenth century, tribes continued to survive (Kasaba 2009, 120). When the Turkish Republic was established in 1923, the state founders encountered economically, politically, and morally strong tribal leaders and sheikhs, who would not be happy with losing their privileges to state power. Hence the majority of the revolts in the early years of the republic arose in the Kurdish tribal areas as a reaction to the expansion of state authority.

The Berber tribes' historical relationship with the state exhibited many similarities to the Kurdish case. The Alawite dynasty ruled Morocco from the mid-1600s. The literature on pre-colonial and colonial Morocco divides the country into two conceptual areas. *Bilad al-makhzen* (government land) refers to the areas that were under the control of the central authority and that paid taxes to it.[4] *Bilad al-siba* (land of dissidence)

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[4] *Makhzen* literally means "storehouse," denoting the state treasury where collected revenues were kept. In current use it refers to the governing elite that is centered around the king.

was composed of dissident tribes that did not recognize the *makhzen's* authority and did not pay taxes. It was largely the Berber-speaking tribes that constituted the majority of the *bilad al-siba* (Gellner 1972a; Hart 1999).[5] The relationship between the central power and the tribal areas fluctuated continuously. Whenever the sultan had the military means, he could bring the dissident tribes into the orbit of central authority and weaken their autonomy. At other times, mutual alliances brought tribal support for the sultan's rule. Local chiefs acted as intermediaries between the central authority and tribal groups. While the sultan achieved some social control, the local chiefs could keep part of the taxes that they collected for the sultan.

In the nineteenth century the Moroccan countryside was characterized by "regional pockets of power" ruled by local elites with their own armies (Charrad 2001, 104–107). When the French started their colonial conquest of Morocco, they encountered the strongest resistance in the mountainous Berber areas. It took the French more than two decades to pacify the Berber countryside. French colonial rule (1912–1956) expanded the reach of the central authority and modernized the political structure, but its influence on state–tribe relations was mixed. On the one hand, the French built a modern administrative apparatus, pacified and disarmed the dissident Berber tribes, and strengthened the central state. On the other hand, they found it easier to rule over the countryside indirectly through a number of loyal tribal chiefs, whom they appointed as *qaids*, or rural administrators, leaving the tribal structure intact. When compared to the earlier periods, the French weakened the Berber tribes' previous power to challenge the central state, but as part of their divide-and-rule strategy the French also sought to create clear-cut boundaries between Arab and Berber identities, tried to strengthen customary law and tribal councils, and allowed certain tribal leaders to accumulate enormous amounts of wealth and enjoy autonomy in exchange for their support for colonial authority (Maddy-Weitzman 2011, 60–61; Wyrtzen 2011, 228–232). Charrad (2001, 129) writes that some tribal chiefs received arms to conquer areas and rule them in the name of the French. Ben Kaddour (1972, 260) points out that some tribal notables received land and were transformed into feudal landlords during the colonial period.

[5] This dichotomy has been recently criticized as being overly simplistic. Scholars emphasize that the relations between the central authority and rural areas were constantly negotiated and that there was a continuum of relations between the *siba* and the *makhzen*, rather than a rigid distinction between the two areas (Maddy-Weitzman 2011; Wyrtzen 2011).

When Morocco gained independence from colonial rule in 1956, Berber chieftains presented a strong challenge to state rulers' aspirations of further centralization and social penetration. As in Turkey in the first years after independence, the Moroccan state encountered a series of tribal uprisings in the Berber-speaking regions.

A second feature of "areas of dissidence" is the difficult geography that makes the intrusion of state authority difficult. These areas have historically been "zones of refuge," in James Scott's (2009) terms, and enjoyed varying degrees of autonomy from central control. Peripheral regions, deserts, mountainous areas, swamps, and jungles are examples of such rough terrain. The states' inability to reach and exercise effective rule in these areas allows the communities residing in them to form their own political structures and enjoy considerable autonomy. Fearon and Laitin (2003) find that rough terrain is significantly related to higher rates of civil war because these areas give a crucial advantage to rebels fighting states. The Berber and Kurdish areas at large presented such rough terrain for state-builders. The Eastern and Southeastern provinces of Turkey, where the majority of the Kurdish-speaking populations lived (and still live even after years of internal migration), are known for their rugged mountains and severe climate. As Van Bruinessen (1992, 11) writes: "The heart of Kurdistan consists of forbidding mountains that have always deterred invading armies and provided a refuge to the persecuted and to bandits." In Morocco, the Berber regions similarly constitute the geographically less accessible part of the country with their high mountains. The Moroccan Berber-speakers are traditionally concentrated in the Northern Rif mountains, High and Mid-Atlas mountains, the Anti-Atlas mountains in the southwest, and the Souss Valley in Southern Morocco. One important consequence of difficult geography is the low economic integration and development of these populations, which is also seen as a potential source of conflict (Gurr 2000). The difficulties of states to bring public services to these areas is usually perceived as discrimination by their residents and creates grievances that may push them to mobilize against the state. In both Morocco and Turkey, the rural, mountainous Berber and Kurdish areas have been the least developed areas with the highest levels of poverty compared to other parts of the two countries (Crawford 2002, 64–65; Kirişci and Winrow 1997, 122). In fact, until the late 1990s the Turkish state considered the economic underdevelopment of the Kurdish regions to be the root of the Kurdish unrest (Yeğen 2007) and invested heavily in developing its infrastructure and improving its socio-economic situation. The public non-military expenditure in Eastern