The State in the Pulpit: State Incorporation of Religious Institutions in the Middle East

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Abstract: Political development literature held that the process of secularization is conflict-ridden between the state and religious institutions. Later state building literature left state-religion relations outside its theoretical scope and left a puzzle in our understanding of state building. How did state-religion relations really change in the course of modern state formation? This article argues that the relationship between state builders and religious institutions was not necessarily conflictual. Rather, there were potential areas of cooperation between the two. However, whether any cooperation was realized was historically contingent. Depending on the type of relationship established, state-religion relations took different institutional shapes. This article makes two observations. First, if the religious institutions have a fairly hierarchical internal organization, then the state and religious institutions part their ways. This is the picture classical political development literature paints. Second, in cases where the state faces a disunited body of religious institutions, the state incorporates religious institutions into its apparatus, its extent depending on the institutional capacity of the state. As the institutional capacity of the state increased, its control over religious institutions also increased. The article then illustrates these observations through major cases from the Middle East.

Two features characterize state-religion relations in the Middle East in the 20th century. First, there was an increase in secularism in the state incorporation of religious institutions; that is, over time more and more religious institutions have become part of the state apparatuses. Second, this historical trend was non-synchronized across the countries, some states achieving greater merging with religious institutions earlier than the others. Why do

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the states develop an interest in controlling religious institutions? And, why did some states achieve greater success than the others in this endeavor? These questions are critical in shedding further light on the nature of modern state building and its relationship with religious institutions.

State-building and religion have been inextricably linked. In its development, the modern state expanded its activities into the fields in which religious institutions had formerly operated, such as, education, judicial services, intermediation, health, provision of social services, and redistribution of wealth. State builders confronted religious institutions in an effort to assume these functions, a process famously termed 'secularization'.

In the process of secularization, potential areas of conflict came about, be it ideological, or institutional, or materialistic (Gill and Keshavarzian 1999). In fact this key theme, conflict-ridden process secularization, was common in the literature on state-religion relations, most notoriously so in political development literature (Smith 1970), religious institutions being treated as some remnants of the past to be gotten rid of.

This article views the secularization process, an attempt, not necessarily a hostile one, to adjust religious institutions so as to expand state power. Hence, the historical trend toward a merging of the state and religious institutions is a result of this state attempt, which was eventually translated into incorporation of more religious institutions into the state. By doing so, state builders secured an important public space, religious institutions, which would not be used by the opposition in the society. Two structural factors help explain the historical lag across the countries in incorporating religious institutions into the state apparatus: (1) the institutional capacity of the state and (2) the internal organization of religious institutions.

First, if the religious institutions have a fairly hierarchical internal organization, the state finds it more difficult to incorporate religious institutions. Second, in cases where the state faces a disunited body of religious institutions, state incorporation of religious institutions depends on the institutional capacity of the state. As its institutional capacity increases, the state incorporates additional religious institutions.

This article illustrates these observations through three main cases from the Middle East: Turkey, Iran, and Egypt. A few other cases from the region, Syria, Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria will also be visited to shed further light on the topic. The next section argues that state building literature leaves state-religion relations outside its theoretical scope despite the apparent relevance of state-religion relations. This article then moves into the in-depth case studies, to show how and why state-religion relations took on different forms in the Middle East.

THE LITERATURE ON STATE BUILDING AND RELIGION

The classical texts of state building literature largely ignore the religious institutions in their accounts. Tilly (1990), for example, relegates religious communities and their actions *vis-à-vis* state-building to anecdotal notes. For Spruyt (1994), the Roman Catholic Church appears as a contender for political supremacy, but loses its chance as the expansion of trade in Europe brings new classes in conflict with the Church. From then on, the Church completely disappears in Spruyt's study. Although Downing (1992, 34) says, "an account of medieval political history would be incomplete without discussing the role of the Church," he devotes only one full paragraph to the Church in his more than 250-page book. Elsewhere religion appears only in passing notes. Ertman (1997) places relatively more focus on the Church and its contributions to state-building trajectories. Yet Ertman's account stops far back in history in assigning any role to the Church.

As such, this literature is not of great help in understanding the underlying dynamics of change in state-religion relations. Partly responsible for this, the literature remains within the Weberian framework, viewing state building simply as a process of institution building. If we go beyond this framework, in the footsteps of Michel Foucault, we can regard the transformation of the state as involving an ambitious project of re-ordering and disciplining the society. In such a project, religion and religious institutions can be of great help. As Taylor (2007, 103) notes, "attempts to discipline a population, and reduce it to order, almost always had a religious component, requiring people to hear sermons, or learn catechism." This point strongly echoes in the state-building experiences of the Dutch Republic and Brandenburg-Prussia (Gorski 2003). Such an observation invites us to look at state-religion relations from a different angle. It may be that the modern state in fact has a strong interest in religious institutions and through them being a provider of religious services.

There are potential benefits in the incorporation of religious institutions into the state apparatus. First, the state will have an easy access to a ready-made, long-standing network of religious institutions going deep into the society. These institutions can spread an understanding of religion, praising obedience to state power, denouncing illegal activities, and disciplining their adherents. Second, the state appropriates powerful religious symbols and terminology to fill in the meanings of more secular symbols and terminology, for example, by blending national anthems and flags with religious symbols and meanings. In the context of the

Middle East, such concepts as religious brotherhood, martyrdom, and charity are employed in filling out the meanings of otherwise secular notions, such as nationality, citizenship, and taxation. Last but not the least, especially in authoritarian regimes, the network of religious institutions can prove fatal to the regime by providing channels of coordination among the opposition forces. Historical examples are many. For example, the Puritans' organizational skills and leadership were crucial to the success of the Parliamentarians in the English Revolution.[1] Likewise, in the Iranian revolution of 1979, the networks of religious institutions were crucial to the success of the revolutionary forces (Skocpol 1982). Thus, state incorporation of religious institutions will prevent opposition forces from taking advantage of these vital networks. It will strengthen the state power over the society, where diverse societal forces now have to build up a new space independent from the State.

Incorporating religious institutions and providing religious services through them, however, come at a cost. Training the staff, paying their salaries, and maintaining the religious institutions are some of the costs associated with having control over religious institutions. Hence, the state builders' choice will depend on the potential benefit and cost analysis. Two structural factors determine the overall cost associated with state incorporation of religious institutions. The first factor is the institutional capacity of the state. High institutional capacity helps state builders to provide religious services at lesser costs. Whether a state has high institutional capacity, in turn, depends on the history of successful prior state-building experience. The second factor is the internal organization of a religious community. More united internal organization helps religious communities to bargain with the State on terms of incorporation.

In this article, I assume that state builders make this cost/benefit analysis. This assumption helps me shed insightful light on state-religion relations in the Middle East. The following section illustrates the historical trend in state-religion relations in the Middle East through three major cases, Turkey, Iran, and Egypt, and four auxiliary cases, Syria, Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya. As each case shows, there is a marked tendency in all countries toward a merging of the state and religious institutions.

STATE-RELIGION RELATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Islam is the dominant religion in the Middle East. Traditional Islamic religious institutions are mosques, seminaries, Sufi lodges, and pious

foundations financially supporting these institutions. There is a spectrum of possibilities in the relationships of these institutions to the State.[2] On the one extreme, the state owns all mosques and seminaries, pays the salaries of the clergy, finances religious research and publications, and does not permit any corporate religious activity other than its own. On the other extreme, the State and religious institutions completely part their ways; religious institutions are run and religious services are provided by non-state actors. Most of the cases fall between these two extremes. In some, the state is just one major religious service provider, owning some of the mosques, employing some clergy, but far from being the only major player in the field. In other cases, the state is a major player in the religious sphere, but does not have a full ownership of all religious institutions; independent mosques and Sufi orders continue to provide their own religious services.

In Turkey, the state established full ownership of religious institutions in the 1920s and has continued to protect its position since then. In the 1920s, the State nationalized all mosques and employed preachers, prayer leaders, and religious counsels through the Directorate of Religious Affairs.[3] In addition, the State banned all Sufi orders and forbade any religious activity outside the supervision of the State. The State also incorporated research institutes formerly under the office of Sheikh al Islam into the Directorate of Religious Affairs; it funded a 10-volume Qur'an commentary in Turkish and translated the Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions (the hadith) into Turkish. The State printed thousands of copies of these works and distributed them throughout the country. The private religious activities were severely punished, as evidenced in the lives of Suleyman Hilmi Tunahan and Said Nursi, who spent their lives under constant state surveillance.

The Turkish state remained as the sole provider of religious services in the rest of the century. Independent religious groups tried to enter into the religious market in Turkey, by especially opening Qur'an schools. However, the Turkish state periodically nationalized these private schools. There are still some private Qur'an schools in Turkey, however, tightly controlled by the state. Being barred from religious market, religious groups instead turned their attention toward education, media, and social services in Turkey (Yavuz 2003).

Algeria and Tunisia fall into the second category. In the beginning of reform period, the 1950s and 1960s, in both countries, the state became a major religious service provider without establishing full control over religious institutions. In both countries, the state nationalized the

mosques, took control of the religious foundations, and made prayer leaders and preachers state employees. The directorate of religious affairs in Tunisia and the ministry of religious affairs in Algeria became responsible for the state-run religious services (Boulby 1988; Vatin 1983). Yet, the state did not extend full control over religious services. In Algeria, for example, local communities established their own mosques and paid their own prayer leaders and preachers (Vatin 1983). It was not unsurprising, therefore, that the religious opposition in both countries gained momentum throughout the 1970s in those uncontrolled mosques, the most suitable ground for mobilization and activity (Enhaili and Adda 2003).

To increase its control over religion and religious institutions the Algerian state reorganized the Ministry of Religious Affairs in 1980. To train quality personnel, the state established a new university, University of Islamic Sciences, in Constantine (Stora 2001). Yet, by the end of the decade, the non-state mosques still outnumbered the state mosques. In the 1990s, the mosques became a battleground for the state and the Islamists, plunging the country into a civil war. As of now, the struggle continues, for some mosques are still recruitment grounds for militant Islamist groups, like Al-Qaeda (Jameh 2007).

In 1988, the Tunisian state passed a law forbidding anyone not appointed by the state from leading any activity in mosques. The newly built mosques, doubled in number since 1987, became state properties immediately. The state also opened new Qur'anic schools, and their number more than doubled in the last two decades (US Department of State 2008).

Egypt and Syria fall into the third category, in which the state incorporated some of religious institutions. In the beginning of reform, the Egyptian state was quite ambitious about the Al-Azhar religious institution, the most prestigious center of Islamic learning. In a major reorganization in 1961, Al-Azhar became fully subordinated to the state, being purged of those faculties that could possibly oppose the regime. However, in terms of owning the mosques, the Egyptian state was sluggish. In 1962, the state controlled only 17 percent of the total mosques in Egypt, extending aid to another 7 percent (Moustafa 2000, 8).

In the next 20 years, the state doubled the number of mosques under its ownership from 3,006 in 1962 to 6,071 in 1983. Yet, the ratio of state-controlled mosques among all mosques in Egypt remained almost the same. In 1983, the percentage of state-owned mosques rose to just 19 percent, the state extending aid to another 27 percent of mosques under private

control (Moustafa 2000). After 1983, the Egyptian state invested more in religious market, increasing the number of state mosques to 61,000 out of a total 70,000 mosques by 2001 (US Department of State 2008).

In the pre-1980 period, the Syrian state owned some of the religious institutions. However, there were religious scholars outside the state, who maintained their autonomy through their ties with the traditional merchant class. Their mosques later would be the places where anti-regime opposition crystallized.[4] The Syrian state was also quite sluggish in keeping control of Sufi orders. Similar to dissident religious scholars, Sufi sheikhs also joined the opposition against the regime and mobilized their own followers to confront the regime in the late 1970s (Pinto 2003; 2004). After the bloody suppression of the Muslim Brotherhood in Hama, the state constructed thousands of new mosques, opened more than 20 Islamic higher education institutions and Qur'an schools, such as the Hafiz Al-Assad Qur'anic Institutes (Moubayed 2006). As Annabelle Bottcher shows, in the period concerned, the state increased its control over mosques, removing hostile preachers, providing the preachers with weekly sermons or lists of sermon topics to be covered in Friday sermons, and regulating teaching in religious schools (Freitag 1999).

Libya and Iran fall in the last category, in which the state had no presence in the religious market. In Libya, it was only after the coming to power of Muammar al-Qaddafi in 1969 that the Libyan state increased its control over religious institutions. It took control of pious foundations in 1972. In the late 1970s, the state seized some mosques and replaced their prayer leaders with more compliant ones. The state also constructed 324 new mosques between 1973 and 1982, bringing the total number of mosques in Libya to 2,565 in 1982 (Joffe 1988; 1995). As of now, the state controls most mosques and religious institutions in Libya, imposing tighter control over mosques owned by prominent families (US Department of State 2008).

In Iran, especially in the 1930s the state expanded its activities into education, health, judiciary, traditional strongholds of religious community; however, it stopped short of venturing into religious sphere. The Shi'a scholars were left largely independent in religious field, forcing them to reorganize their educational system in seminaries and base it upon a much sounder financial structure. Their long-established ties to the merchant class[5] and the charismatic leadership of two prominent scholars, Abdul Karim Haeri-Yazdi and Hosayn Borujerdi, helped them in this venture. Under the management of these two scholars, the city of Qum

became the bastion of Islamic learning in Iran, attracting the future leadership, including Rohullah Khomeini, of the Shi'a Muslims (Algar 1990; 2002).

State-religion relations had remained the same in Iran until the 1979 revolution. After the revolution, the Iranian state, from then on controlled by religious scholars, began to assert its control over religious institutions. However, it has been partially successful so far. Only a part of the religious institutions is affiliated with the state now, the bulk of religious institutions being under the control of Shi'a religious scholars not affiliated with the state (Buchta 2002). The rift among the Iranian religious establishment can be seen most vividly in Friday prayers controlled by the state, with the crowd chanting "Death to America," "Death to Israel," and "Death to Those Who Are Against the Rule of the Jurist."

ACCOUNTING FOR THE VARIATION

Starting in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the state rulers in the Middle East began to reform their states along the lines of European states. It started with Muhammad Ali Pasha (1805–1848) in Egypt, then by Mahmud II (1807–1839) in the Ottoman Empire, and by Ahmad Bey (1837–1855) in Tunisia. The Qajars in Iran also put their own efforts in reforming their state under Fath Ali Shah (1797–1834). The later reforms in military, education, legal system, and state finance continued upon the background laid out by these early reformists. For various reasons, state building reforms in the Middle East achieved varying degrees of success in different countries. As a result, in different countries in the Middle East, state builders inherited state structures with different institutional capacities. This difference, in turn, explains much of the variation in state incorporation of religious institutions.

Among the countries considered in this article, Turkey had the highest state institutional capacity when it started its reforms on religion and religious institutions. This was due to a long prior state-building experience. Starting in 1826, the date marking the destruction of the Janissaries, the Ottomans embarked on an extensive program of military reform, which would later spill over to the bureaucracy, state finance, education, and the legal system. It was first Mahmud II who established a new army based on a European model. The successive Ottoman statesmen later expanded the army in size and updated it with the newest technology. In this vein, the Empire imported arms from Germany, Britain, and

France. Thus, the Ottoman Empire became, as Grant (2002, 9) puts it, "one of the most important markets for armaments in the world."

The Ottoman statesmen also hired foreign military personnel in the army, opened new military colleges, modernized the already existing ones, and introduced conscription as early as 1841. When domestic resources were exhausted, Ottoman statesmen sought external financial resources from foreign governments and international financial institutions to continue the reforms. Eventually, the Ottoman government became so indebted that it declared bankruptcy in 1878, and deferred the collection of certain revenues to a European controlled institution, the Ottoman Public Debt Administration, in 1881. Even this bankruptcy did not stop the Ottomans. In fact, the reign of Abdul Hamid II (1876–1909) marked the most extensive state-building programs. The Ottoman bureaucracy grew in size, from approximately 2,000 bureaucrats at the end of the 18th century to roughly 35,000 in 1908. Extending back to the second quarter of the 19th century, continuous Ottoman state-building increased the state institutional capacity. This became most evident in the First World War, 1914–1918.

The Ottoman Empire entered the war in November of 1914 on the side of the Central Powers. The Empire was the least populous and the most economically backward among the major powers of the war. In the words of Erickson (2001, 15), a military historian, "By 1914, the Ottoman Empire had fallen far behind the European Great Powers in every category of resources necessary for the conduct of modern war."[6] Yet, the Empire fought in the war quite impressively even if the frontiers covered such a vast area stretching from the Dardanelles to the Caucasus and from Iran and Iraq to Yemen. The Empire even scored important victories against a joint French-British force in the Dardanelles and against the Russians in the East, and halted the British advance in Iraq until 1917. With the revolution in Russia, the Ottoman forces advanced further in the East to the Caspian Sea.

The Empire could have done much better if it had not been troubled by local Armenian and Arab subjects in the Eastern and Southern frontiers. Only after it was certain that Germany was defeated, did the Ottoman armies surrender. In the meantime, the remnants of the same army, which numbered 110,000–130,000, had defeated the US-supported Armenians in the East and the British-supported Greeks in the West by 1922 (Zurcher 1987, 141). Hence, state builders in the 1920s inherited highly sophisticated state institutions from their predecessors. And this helped them greatly in incorporating religious institutions.

What differentiates Turkey and Iran from other cases is that these two countries had not been colonized by any European power. The remaining countries considered here — Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, and Syria — experienced European colonization. It is recognized in comparative politics that European colonization left post-colonial independent countries at different levels of state institutional capacity. This difference depended to a large extent on the institution-building strategy of the respective colonial power; thus, France left behind a much stronger state apparatus than Britain (Goldstone et al. 2000). Among the four countries, only Tunisia and Algeria experienced a long French colonial administration. After the First World War, Syria was put under the French mandate, but it was relatively short, lasting from 1920 to 1946.

Before French colonization, Tunisia had already experienced state building under the rule of Ahmed Bey (1837–1855). His reforms were very much in line with his contemporaries, Mahmud II of the Ottoman Turkey and Muhammed Ali of Egypt,[7] updating the weapons of his army, introducing conscription, creating a military school, devising new methods of state finance such as establishing state monopolies over certain items. Later reformist statesmen stopped his military program for it was too costly for Tunisia. In the legal system and education, however, the reforms continued, especially under Khayreddine Pasha, who served as grand minister from 1873 to 1877.

The French invasion came to Algeria in 1830, then to Tunisia in 1881, the former serving as a model to be emulated in the latter (Johnston 1905). Hence, the reforms undertaken by France were pretty similar in both countries. In state finance, legal system, administration, education, and public transportation, France strengthened the central state institutions, undermining the power of local elites and religious scholars. In state finance, France established an efficient way of revenue collection, reorganized the administration of the country along French administrative system, dividing the country into administrative units and appointing officials from the center as administrators, and introduced and expanded public education. France also made great inroads into the administration of religious institutions. Due to the much longer colonial administration, France made much better progress in Algeria. The state took the control of religious foundations, paying the costs of mosques and salaries of the religious officials, such as, religious counsels, the heads of the mosques, and professors of religion (Andrews 1916). In short, France left behind a strong state apparatus in Tunisia and Algeria. Still, there was a difference between the two. Due to the long colonial history in Algeria, there were more

French citizens in Algeria than in Tunisia. In the course of lengthy and bloody independence war, most of these French citizens left Algeria, leaving behind a state apparatus to be filled with Algerians. In Tunisia, however, decolonization was a mostly through negotiation achieved, which enabled a smooth transition to the independence period.

The Syrian state could have had a relatively high institutional capacity like the Tunisian and Algerian states. However, first, the Ottoman reformists could not extend their activities into the Arab regions. Hence, what Albert Hourani calls "the politics of notables" lingered into the post-Ottoman period (Hourani 1981). Second, the French effect, which had worked in Algeria and Tunisia, did not work in the Syrian case because it was too short. Syria was put under the French mandate in 1920 to be ended officially in 1944. However, the first five years passed with rebellions, the final one breaking out in 1925 (Miller 1977). Independence was negotiated in 1936, but refused by the French parliament. The Protectorate effectively ended in 1940 when France was invaded by the German armies. In the next quarter century, political instability marked the Syrian politics. Between 1944 and 1969, there occurred some 16 military coups, out of which only nine were successful (Perlmutter 1969). The coming of Hafez Assad to power in 1970 ended this period of political instability and marked the beginning of an extensive state-building period in Syria.

Egypt initiated state building reforms even earlier than the Ottoman Turkey under Muhammed Ali Pasha (1805–1848). In a typical fashion, he established a new army on a European model, employed Italian and French military teachers in a newly opened officer training school, instituted a new taxation system, bought marginal lands and turned them into state land for cultivation, improved irrigation systems, introduced new crops, and established a state monopoly over cotton. These reforms paid off. Muhammed Ali Pasha's new army gained impressive victories against the Ottomans, the Wahhabis in Arabian Peninsula and in Sudan, expanding the Egyptian territories into Crete, Sudan, Syria, and the Hijaz. Domestically, the Egyptian state eliminated or subordinated all centers of opposition, including religious institutions, to the state power. However, this process was halted, first, by the British-imposed treaty of London in 1840, and, second, by the British occupation of Egypt in 1881. The Treaty of London forced Egypt to downsize its army to 18,000, bringing about an effective end of the reforms in the Egyptian army. The British colonization brought further negative effects to the state institutional capacity: unlike French rule in Tunisia and Algeria,

British rule in Egypt was indirect as it was elsewhere. Therefore, rather than increasing the institutional capacity of the state, the British colonization in Egypt stifled the development of state capacity, best exemplified in the re-emergence of powerful domestic groups, the land owners, the Ulema and religious movements, competing for political power, and in the Egyptian army's defeat in the 1948 war against Israel.

Iran and Libya inherited state structures with the least institutional capacity in the beginning of state building period, thus explaining why both fall in the lowest category of state incorporation of religious institutions. Libya was invaded by Italy in 1911. Italian colonization did not bring any strengthening of the state apparatus. On the contrary, it undermined whatever previous Ottoman administrative reforms had created (Anderson 1984) as the country plunged into a stiff tribal resistance to the Italians. At the time of independence, the country was one of the poorest in the world economically as well as in human capital with seven to 14 college educated people. In 1959, Libya's federal government would have only 1,200 employees (Vandewalle 2006, 48). The state presence was much weaker at local level where the administration was largely in the hands of powerful local families.

Like Ottoman Turkey, Iran had never been colonized. However, unlike her, Iranian state building attempts, even if sporadic, all failed in the 19th century. The Qajar Iran also faced increasingly hostile international environment. Especially, the Russians advanced in the north in the beginning of the 19th century. In two devastating wars, Iran lost to Russia the regions which are now Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. The British also began to press the Qajars in the East, engaging in a war with them in 1856–1857. Unlike the Ottoman Empire, however, the Qajars' repeated attempts of state building failed. Patrimonial practices continued; provincial governors were granted the right to collect taxes in their administrative units in return for providing troops upon request from the Shah.

In the second half of the 19th century, the sale of governmental offices, even governorships, ambassadorships, and ministries, increased even more (Sheikholeslami 1971).

The only success of sporadic Iranian state building attempts was probably the formation of the Cossack Brigade in 1879. Having been established with the help of the Russians, the Brigade played the role more of a Russian army, rather than that of the Qajars. By 1907, the Qajars even stopped paying the Brigade. Having no control over the brigade, the Iranian state initiated another relatively successful attempt in 1911 and formed the government gendarmerie. The Germans provided the

financial help; the Swedes provided officers. Taking sides with the Germans and confronting the British during the war cost the force dearly. Except for a few Swedish officers and a few hundred men, the Gendarmerie lost all of its men. In the aftermath of the war, the Gendarmerie, however, recovered and in 1921 numbered 360 Iranian officers, and 9,270 men (Cronin 1997). Up until 1917, it was Russia that provided the officers corps for the Brigade. After 1917, the British began to control the Brigade. By 1921, the Brigade possessed 300 Iranian officers and 7,000 men. In 1921, both forces united to form the only Iranian central army.

Generally observed, the 20th century witnessed a tremendous increase in the powers of the states in the Middle East partly due to the Cold War (Owen 2005). In this period, by becoming clients of one of the superpowers, many third world country leaders obtained in abundance financial, military, and human resources from the US and the USSR. This put state builders in the Middle East at a disproportionate advantage *vis-à-vis* the societal forces, including religious institutions. This factor was an important catalyst in state building in almost all countries in the Middle East. For Libya, the discovery of oil must be added to the cold war politics as an additional boost to state building. The increasing power of the state was reflected in the increase in the size of army, of bureaucracy, and other state institutions. With the increasing institutional capacity, the states in the Middle East incorporated more religious institutions.

Still, the Iranian case begs for further explanation. Even under a very theocratic regime, the Iranian state failed to catch up with the rest in incorporating religious institutions. What made state incorporation of religious institutions even more difficult in Iran was the fairly hierarchical internal structure of its religious institutions. This difference was born historically as a result of different imperial state policies followed *vis-à-vis* the religious communities. Starting with the Safavids, the Iranian state, in alliance with the Shi'a religious scholars, suppressed all Sufi orders and movements perceived as heterodox, like Baha'ism. As a result, Shi'a religious scholars had been more successful in establishing their control over religious services than their counter-parts in the Sunni world. With the collapse of central authority in Iran in the 18th century, the religious institutions acquired their autonomy from the state, eventually developing a fairly hierarchical internal structure. This autonomy and unity helped the Shi'a religious scholars later to oppose the state in Iran, especially in the second half of the 19th century (Arjomand 1984; 1988).

In the Sunni Middle East, which had been under Ottoman rule, there were certain periods in which the state went against religious movements perceived as heterodox such as Wahhabism. However, these periods were exceptions rather than the rule. For example, the heterodox Bektashi sufi order had operated for centuries in the Ottoman Empire until its suppression in 1826. Some religious scholars had been part of the imperial bureaucracy as religious judges, sheikh al islams, state administrators. However, there were a number of religious functionaries outside the state; indeed, sufi sheikhs, dervishes, preachers, and prayer leaders were the real religious service providers. They frequently served as the spokespersons for the dissidents. Thus, in the religious sphere, religious pluralism had been the rule throughout the history of Sunni Middle East. This is most evident in the plurality of sufi orders, which had remained more autonomous from the state. For example, in the beginning of the 20th century, there were 12 different sufi orders operating in Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire (Albayrak 1996). Likewise, in the early 20th century, there were 11 Sufi orders operating in Algeria, nine in Tunisia, and six in Libya (Andrews 1916).

CONCLUSION

State-building process affected both religion and religious institutions. The state expanded its activities into the fields that had been in the hands of religious institutions. As expected, this process was conflict-ridden ideologically, institutionally, materialistically between the state and religious institutions. However, the same process also had the potential of bringing benefits to both sides. The power of the modern state possibly amazed the religious figures too. State builders could not simply neglect the extensive networks of religious institutions and the power of religious symbols. Yet, the cooperation between state builders and religious institutions in building stronger states was not taken-for-granted nor was the conflict between the two. The outcome was highly contingent.

Whether the relationship has been primarily conflictual or cooperative, it has always assumed an institutional dimension. In the European experience, for example, in one ideal pattern, religious institutions and the state merged as it had happened in predominantly protestant North European countries. In the other pattern, religious institutions and the state parted their ways and remained as two separate institutions as it had happened in predominantly Catholic European countries. This article observes a

similar variation across the major Middle East countries. At one extreme stood Turkey, where the state established full control over religious institutions by making them part of the state. At the other extreme stood Iran, where the state and religious institutions separated their ways, which was somewhat rectified with the coming to power of religious scholars. In the beginning of reform period, Egypt, Syria, Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria fell between these two cases. However, a historical trend was set in motion, with which the states in all of these countries incorporated more of religious institutions.

In accounting for this historical observation, I started with a simple assumption. That is, the state may develop a strong interest in providing religious services directly like any other public service. This in fact implies that state builders and religious institutions can cooperate in building stronger states. So, when is this cooperation realized? Or, why do state-religion relations take one of these two patterns? Through an analysis of major historical cases from the Middle East, this article identifies two critical factors: the internal organization of religious institutions and institutional capacity of the state.

Two central observations can be made: First, if religious institutions are hierarchically organized, then the state find it more difficult to incorporate religious institutions. This is also what happened in Iran and in Catholic European countries. Second, if religious institutions are fragmented, then the level of state incorporation of religious institutions depends on the institutional capacity of the state. Higher institutional capacity helps state builders to incorporate religious institutions into the state, as observed across Turkey, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Libya, and Syria.

A further line of research on this topic might look at how state involvement in religious sphere affected the power of civil society in the Middle East and, hence, democratization prospect of authoritarian Middle East regimes.

NOTES

1. Christopher Hill puts it, "the English revolution could not have succeeded even to the limited extent it did without the power of Puritanism to awaken and organize and discipline large masses of people who knew what they fought for and loved what they knew." cited in Fulbrook (1983, 6).
2. This statement is true for all religions and countries. See the bewildering diversity of state-religion relations in Fox (2008).
3. The directorate proved to be one of the most resilient Republican institutions in contemporary Turkey. Now it controls well over 70,000 mosques throughout Turkey. Visit the directorate's website at http://www.diyanet.gov.tr
4. For example, religious scholars protested the Ba'ath party on its alleged atheism and intervened to include Islamic provisions in the 1973 constitution (Hinnebusch 2001).

5. For example, 88 out of 275 religious scholars in the 1970s have either merchants or shopkeepers in their genealogies (Fischer 1980).

6. While Germany had a population of 65 million, Britain 45 million, France 39 million, the Ottoman Empire had only 22 million. Moreover, while the British and French armies deployed their colonial subjects, the Ottoman Army could only depend on ethnically Turkish population, which was around 12 million. The Empire was also the most economically backward. In coal production, for example, Germany produced 277 million tons of coal, Britain 292 millions, France 40 millions. The Empire, however, could produce 826 thousands tons of coal. In railway construction too, the Empire lagged behind the others. While Germany had 64 thousand kilometers of railways, France 51 thousands, the Ottomans had only around 5 thousands. See more discussion in Chapter 2 of Erickson (2001b).

7. See Brown (1974), *The Tunisia of Ahmad Bey*, 1837–1855, for a comparison of the earliest three state builders in the Middle East.

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