

States, Minorities and Conflicts in the Middle East: A Comparative Study of the Durability of States, Regimes and Dissident Movements in Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey, 1948-2003

Looking at the “minority factor” as a key element in order to study the interaction between states, regimes and movements of dissent in Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Turkey throughout the second half of the twentieth century, the project will offer a new reading chart for the contemporary Middle East history. It will also allow the advancement of the understanding of the two different but interrelated issues: the legitimacy and the durability of both the state and of the social and political movements of dissent in the Middle East. Both issues will be seen along three axes: 1) The survival strategies of the states and of dissident movements 2) To what extent the social and political movements of dissent reveal issues linked to the crisis of legitimacy and durability of the states 3) the points of convergence, inflexion and discord between states and movements of dissent; in other words, the *path dependence* of the construction of the political system.

The research team will focus on three cases of study: the Kurdish movement in the four countries where Kurds constitute a large “minority” (Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey), the radical left movement in Turkey, and the Shi‘i Islamist movement in Iraq.