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# Conquests and Rents

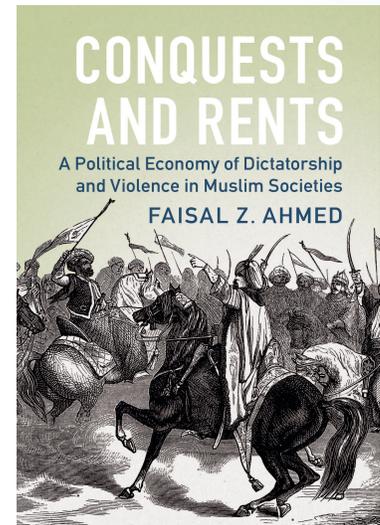
A Political Economy of Dictatorship and Violence in Muslim Societies

**Faisal Z. Ahmed**

*Princeton University, New Jersey*

Tragically, dictatorship and civil strife have led to less developed, less democratic, and more conflict-prone contemporary Muslim-majority societies. Ahmed argues, however, neither Islam nor aspects of Muslim culture are the cause. Grounded in a positive political economy approach, *Conquests and Rents* investigates why these societies are predisposed to political violence and low levels of development. Focusing on the role of political institutions and economic rents, Ahmed argues that territories where Islam spread via military conquest developed institutions and practices impervious to democracy and more prone to civil war, while societies in non-conquered territories developed governance structures more susceptible to democracy when rents decline. *Conquests and Rents* introduces a novel theoretical argument, with corroborative qualitative and statistical analysis, to examine the interplay of the historical legacy of institutions from the premodern period and contemporary rent streams in Muslim-majority societies.

Part I. A Political Economy Approach: 1. Political violence; 2. Analytical framework; Part II. The Institutional Legacy of Muslim Conquest: 3. The conquest equilibrium; 4. Conquest fostered autocratization; 5. The autocratic legacy of Muslim conquest; Part III. The impact of contemporary rents on dictatorship and violence: 6. Fueling authoritarian resilience; 7. Aiding political violence; 8. Democratic transitions in non-Muslim societies; Part IV. Conclusion: 9. Conclusion.



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'Why are Muslim-majority societies so often plagued by poverty, tyranny, and war? In this remarkable book, Faisal Ahmed offers a fresh answer to this age-old question. Synthesizing large and diverse bodies of scholarship and disparate data sources, he shows how historical legacies and natural endowments together determine the fate of nations. The result is one of the most important works on the political economy of the Muslim world to appear in many years.'

**Tarek Masoud**, *John F. Kennedy School of Government*



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