

Oman

Ethnicity in Oman

Group selection

Oman's population consists predominantly of Ibadhi Muslims (Arabs) which make up about 74% of the total population (CIA World Factbook; Fearon, 2003). The rest of the population is made up of foreigners from South Asia, mainly from India, Pakistan or Bangladesh.

Power relations

Since 1970, when Oman's ruler, Sultan Qabus ibn Said Al Said, assumed power, the sultanate has moved from a poor underdeveloped country toward a modern nation state. Although the government's administrative structure expanded to accommodate public services, change in the political system has been slow. Oman remains a conservative monarchy, with the sultan relying on the support of a traditional political elite comprising the Al Said ruling family, established merchant families, and, to a lesser extent, tribal sheikhs (cf. ²⁶³⁹). As the head of state, Sultan Qabus holds the office of the prime minister and presides over the Council of Ministers. The Consultative Council has advisory role but no legislative powers. "Its purview remains limited to social and economic matters, and it can only review government policies" (²⁶⁴⁰). Oman does not have a constitution and political parties are not allowed. Minorities in Oman are "experiencing no oppression or discrimination, either religious or ethnic, and, on the contrary, they were enjoying all the privileges of traditional Omani hospitality and generosity" (²⁶⁴¹, 129). In fact, Oman is one of the most tolerant countries in its region: the sultan has built churches and Hindu temples for the Christian and Indian minorities amid the large Muslim majority. There are no indications for discrimination based on ethnic origin.

²⁶³⁹ [Federal Research Division, 1994]

²⁶⁴⁰ [Peterson, 2004]

²⁶⁴¹ [Ghubash, 2006]

2010-2013: There is no evidence signs that subnational identities have been politicized in recent years or that non-Ibadhi minority groups are experiencing state-led discrimination (see e.g. ²⁶⁴²). Therefore, the previous coding is simply extended.

²⁶⁴² [Al-Rasheed, 2013]

Bibliography

- [Al-Rasheed, 2013] Al-Rasheed, M. (2013, December 9). Omani rejection of GCC union adds insult to injury for Saudi Arabia. Al Monitor. Retrieved on 28 May 2014 from <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/12/oman-rejects-gcc-union-insults-saudi-arabia.html#ixzz33U1Dp7Be>
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- [Ghubash, 2006] Ghubash, H. (2006): Oman – the Islamic democratic tradition. New York: Routledge.
- [Peterson, 2004] Peterson, J.E. (2004). Change and development in Oman. Middle East Policy, 11(2).

Political status of ethnic groups in Oman

From 1971 until 2013

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Ibadhi Muslims (Arab)	0.74	IRRELEVANT

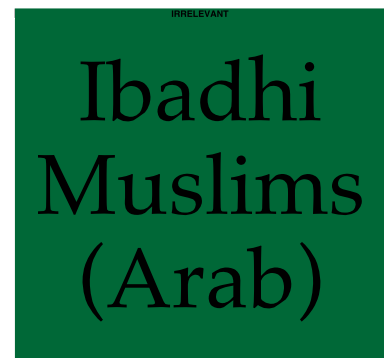


Figure 573: Political status of ethnic groups in Oman during 1971-2013.

Conflicts in Oman

Starting on 1957-07-31

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Oman	State of Oman/Free Oman		1957-07-31			

Starting on 1968-10-31

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Oman	PFLO		1968-10-31			