Before Recognition

Recognizing religion in global politics is neither neutral nor benign. This book reveals how recognition operates to reinforce hierarchies, reify religious difference, and deepen political divisions. Maria Birnbaum reframes religion as a historically contingent category of knowledge and governance. She shifts the question from whether religion should be recognized to how it becomes recognizable. Through the entangled imperial histories of British India and Mandate Palestine, the book traces how colonial and anti-colonial governmental logics shaped the politics of religious minorities, representation, and border-making – dynamics that continue to shape postcolonial states like Pakistan and Israel. Offering a timely critique of the epistemic assumptions underpinning global discourses on religion, sovereignty, and political order, *Before Recognition* challenges conventional understandings of religion in international relations. This title is also available as Open Access on Cambridge Core.

MARIA BIRNBAUM is Lecturer at the University of Basel and Senior Researcher of swisspeace. Her most recent publications include the articles 'The Costs of Recognition' (*International Theory*) and 'Entangled Empire' (*Millennium*) and the chapter 'Recognizing Diversity' in the edited volume *Culture and Order in World Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), which won the International Studies Association Theory Section Prize for Best Edited Book.

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Before Recognition

How the Politics of Religion shaped the International Order

MARIA BIRNBAUM
University of Basel

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