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Introduction

If there is one aspiration shared by all religious people worldwide, it is the desire to practice their religions freely and without hindrance or restriction. While many of these people may not feel that members of other religions should have this same right, this desire for the free exercise of religion is universal among the religious. Yet, as I discuss in more detail in Chapter 2, religious discrimination is ubiquitous against religious minorities. Thus, this yearning for religious freedom is far more often a dream than it is a reality for religious minorities.

Government-based restrictions on religious minorities are common even in Western democracies. In fact, this study will show that the relationship between democracy and discrimination is not as straightforward as many assume, this assumption being that democracies, especially liberal Western democracies, discriminate less. More specifically, this relationship does exist in statistical models but myriad other factors that influence levels of discrimination can overshadow this relationship to the extent that absolute levels of religious discrimination are higher in Western democracies than in many other parts of the world. Thus, for example, non-Western Christian-majority democracies as well as non-Western Christian-majority nondemocracies have lower average levels of religious discrimination than do Western democracies. I discuss this finding in more detail in Chapters 5, 7, and 8.

Norway provides a good illustration of this phenomenon. Norway, which is by no means the most restrictive among Western democracies, engages in substantial restrictions on religious minorities. Laws requiring the stunning of animals before slaughter effectively ban the ritual slaughter of meat by both Jews and Muslims. This means Kosher and Halal slaughter in Norway are illegal, though Kosher and Halal meat may

be imported. While Norway has many Mosques, there are reports of local councils delaying or denying permits to build more. Similarly, while there are cemeteries set aside for Muslims, not all Muslim religious requirements for burial are always accommodated, so some Muslims are buried in their country of origin. In 2013 the Norwegian Parliamentary Intelligence Monitoring Committee reported that the Security Police were illegally keeping members of Muslim communities under surveillance. Some Norwegian uniformed services such as the police restrict the wearing of the hijab by Muslim women in those services, but this is primarily determined by the uniform regulations of the particular institution. In addition, until 2018 municipalities were allowed to set their own rules for religious head coverings that also cover the face in schools. In 2018 Norway passed a law banning all clothing that partially or fully covers the face in all public schools and universities. This applies to both teachers and students ("Must provide," 2010; "Norway bans," 2018; Ryland, 2012, 2013a, 2013b; Solholm, 2009). All of these types of restrictions are common in Western democracies.

The Norwegian government's efforts to control religion are not limited to overt restrictions on religious minorities. Rather, the government's system of financially supporting religion can be an explicit means of control over both the majority religion and minority religions. In the past, the government has used its control over the (as of 2017) former national church to alter its stance on issues like female clergy (Kuhle, 2011).

Interestingly the extent and nature of this control was discussed openly at a public conference in response to Norway's decision to disestablish the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC) as of January 1, 2017. The discussion at this conference, which was held the following October, focused on the issue of the nature and extent of the government's future involvement in religion. While opinions on this issue differed, the opposing sides of the debate illustrated the power of Norway's government to control religion and its influence on religious freedoms. Some conservatives felt that all funding for religion, including to the ELC, should be terminated. This is because the seduction of "free" money is difficult to refuse and is not really free. It comes with significant government control and oversight. Others wanted to continue the existing system of government funding for religion. One advocate for this stance explicitly stated that this should include funding for Muslim religious institutions in order to "keep the Muslim radicals under control."[1]

[1] I attended this conference, and this description is based on my recollections.

While, like every country in the world, Norway's religion policy is unique, its components are not. More specifically, restrictions on burials, ritual slaughter, building places of worship, and female religious headwear are each present in multiple Western democracies, though the exact manifestation and application of each of these restrictions is different across countries. Yet the basic types of restrictions are comparable across countries. On a more general level, most governments restrict religious minorities. In addition, most governments support religion in some manner, and this support almost inevitably leads to some control over the supported religions. In many cases this support is part of an intentional strategy to control religion. Also, this support can in complex ways be connected to restricting religious minorities.

The motivations for and influences on Norway's policy toward its religious minorities and religion in general are complex and crosscutting. This book's objective is to delve into these motivations and causes across the 183 countries and 771 religious minorities included in this study.

THE TOPIC OF STUDY

This book seeks to explain the nature, causes, and dynamics of government-based religious discrimination. Given this, it is important to define religious discrimination at the outset of this study. This is because religious discrimination is a deceptively simple term, but it can have different meanings to different people. For example, in the West, religious discrimination is at the center of recent intensive debates. In these debates religious freedom is often defined broadly to include the freedom of personal expression and even the freedom to discriminate against those who somehow violate one's religious beliefs.

In this study, the definition of discrimination is far narrower. Specifically, I examine the causes of a subset of all religious discrimination, government-based religion discrimination (GRD). In brief, for the purposes of the study contained in this book, I define GRD as restrictions placed by governments or their agents on the religious practices or institutions of religious minorities that are not placed on the majority religion. I discuss this definition in more detail and how it compares to other definitions and the general concept of religious freedom in Chapter 2.

The central goal of this study is to explore the causes of GRD. These causes are complex in two respects. First, there are multiple and often crosscutting factors that influence GRD. Second, these crosscutting influences manifest differently in different groupings of states. That is, the

same universe of causes of GRD are present in most groupings of states, but which causes are more important and the specific manner in which each of these causes influences GRD differs across groupings of states based on majority religion and world region. In addition, many of the findings of this study run counter to the prevailing wisdom.

An example of both the complexity of GRD's causes and how my findings contradict common wisdom is the link between democracy and GRD. Many assume that the liberal democracies of the West are the strongest bastions of religious freedom in the world and that, in general, democracies discriminate less than nondemocracies. My findings contradict both of these assumptions. For example, Western democracies engage in more GRD than the Christian-majority democracies of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Furthermore, among all Christian-majority countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, the average levels of GRD are similar between democracies and nondemocracies. Thus, Western democracies are not the grouping of states with the highest level of religious freedom for minorities in the Christian world, and there is even a large grouping of nondemocracies that engage in less GRD than the West. However, among non-Christian-majority states as well as Christian Orthodox-majority states, democratic states engage in less GRD. This indicates that there is a complex relationship between democracy and GRD, which I address in more detail, particularly in Chapters 5, 7, and 8.

In this study, I examine GRD using round 3 of the Religion and State-Minorities dataset (RASM3), which includes 771 religious minorities in 183 countries and independent territories. RASM3 covers the 1990–2014 period. GRD is very common: 162 (88.5%) of these countries engage in GRD against 574 (74.4 percent) of these minorities at some point during the study period. I also examine other forms of religious discrimination, primarily societal religious discrimination (SRD), which I define as societal actions taken against religious minorities by members of a country's religious majority who do not represent the government. I use SRD in this study primarily as a means to explain levels of GRD, though I do address the issue of the causes of SRD. Interestingly, I find that SRD only causes GRD in a limited number of circumstances. I argue here that a trigger is required for SRD to influence levels of GRD. That is, some other factor, usually the presence of an existential threat, is required to activate the latent potential of SRD to cause GRD. I discuss this in more detail in later chapters.

Both GRD and SRD increased between 1990 and 2014. GRD in 2014 was 23.6 percent higher than it was in 1990, and SRD was 29.6

percent higher. As I discuss in more detail throughout this study, this finding is consistent across countries in different world regions and belonging to different majority religious traditions. Thus, discerning the causes of religious discrimination is becoming increasingly important.

This focus on discrimination that is specifically against religious minorities is not to deny that many governments also restrict the religious freedom of their majority religion and that religion can motivate discrimination against other types of minorities such as the LGBTQ community. These issues, as well as many others related to government religion policy, are important and worthy of study. For example, based on the general Religion and State round 3 (RAS3) data, 88.5 percent of the 183 countries in this study restrict or regulate the majority religion to its institutions in some manner. This is certainly related to the concept of religious freedom, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 2, but the focus of the book is narrower.

Put differently, this focus on GRD against religious minorities in some ways limits the discussion and excludes many aspects that would be included in a discussion of religious freedom, more broadly defined. I make this choice because while related, the causes and dynamics of GRD are different from those of repression or limiting religion in general, for example. As I argue in another context, the distinction between GRD and repressing religion in general "is critical because actions that can be quite similar can have different implications" and causes "depending on the object of those policies" (Fox, 2015: 106). None of this is to deny the importance of the wider range of issues that may be included in a broader definition of religious freedom. Rather, despite the narrower focus of this book, explaining GRD is a complex task, and expanding the purview of the study would, in my assessment, limit my ability to explain GRD. In addition, as I discuss in more detail in Chapter 2, a ban on GRD is the one thing that many diverse and sometimes contradictory conceptions of religious freedom all agree is an essential element of the concept. So in that sense it is the minimum common denominator of all conceptions of religious freedom.

As will be seen in this study, the causes of GRD are complex and crosscutting. I find uncovering these causes a sufficiently complex task and choose to focus on it exclusively in this study. I believe that to do otherwise would further complicate an already complex task. All other elements of government religion policy addressed in this study are included for the purpose of explaining the causes of GRD. In addition the RASM3 data used in this study provides an unprecedented wealth of

information designed specifically to discover the causes of GRD against religious minorities. I therefore refer the reader to other studies that take a broader look at the influences on the religious freedom of both religious majorities and minorities, as well as the impacts of government-religion connections and polices on a wide range of other important issues and populations (e.g., Fox, 2015; Grim & Finke, 2011; Philpott, 2019).

THE CORRELATES OF GRD

In Chapter 2, I discuss the causes of GRD in theory. There are multiple potential causes. This makes the theoretical causes of GRD potentially complex. However, this study's findings paint an even more complex picture of the causes of GRD in practice. One aspect of this complexity is that when addressing the causes of GRD, one must explain both what types of states are more likely to engage in GRD and which minorities in these states are more likely to be subject to GRD. This is because most states that discriminate do so unequally. That is, in most countries, some minorities are subject to more GRD than others.

Perhaps the least surprising finding is that ideology plays a strong role in causing GRD. However, it is not just religious ideology that causes GRD. Both secular and religious ideologies, even in democratic states, result in more GRD. Thus, the second commandment, "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me," or its equivalent in non-Abrahamic religions, is still observed in practice by many governments. To be clear, the "God" that will tolerate no competition is often a secular one or the state itself.

In theory, secular ideologies should treat all religion equally. This means that if there are restrictions, they ought to apply equally to all religions in a country, including the majority religion. As Philpott (2009) points out, all uses of the term *secular* are either not religion, the negation of religion, or antireligion. While Philpott (2019) argues that some secular states will restrict and regulate religion more than others, the extent of this restriction and regulation should be uniform against religion. Positive-secular states tend to be neutral but tolerant toward religion and will restrict it less. Negative-secular states are those states that are explicitly antireligious and, accordingly, restrict it more. I discuss these distinctions in more detail in Chapter 4.

Philpott (2019) is correct in that the negative-secular states restrict religion more than do the positive-secular states. However, few of these states treat all minorities equally. This is true of both types of secular states. A number of positive-secular states engage in little or no GRD, but

many do engage in at least some GRD, and this GRD is usually applied differently to different religious minorities.

The antireligious negative-secular states tend to engage in restrictions that apply to all religions, including the majority religion, which is not GRD by the definition used here. Yet, even countries with the most antireligious secular ideologies restrict religious minorities in a manner that they do not restrict the majority religion, which is precisely this study's definition of GRD. On average, the more antireligious a state's ideology, the higher the level of GRD. I argue that this is because the antireligious elements of secular ideologies can be a force that magnifies other motives for GRD. That is, secularism, by itself, will likely motivate equal restrictions on all religions, but when combined with other motivations and causes of GRD that are minority-specific, it will amplify GRD against those minorities. As such potential motives are almost always present, there is ample opportunity for secular ideologies to interact with these motives to enhance levels of GRD.

In addition, in some cases, secular ideologies can cause a focus on restricting religious practices that are counter to the secular ideology in question. For example, many secularists consider Muslim women covering their hair an affront to woman's rights, the ritual slaughter of animals for food by Jews and Muslims a violation of animal's rights, and male infant circumcision, a ritual present in Islam and Judaism, a barbaric violation of the child's right to bodily integrity. All of these religious practices are limited in at least some Western liberal democracies. Thus, the secular Gods are also, in a way, jealous of those who follow ideologies, including religious ideologies that contradict their secular ideals. Thus, the liberal ideal of religious freedom is often trumped by secular ideology and beliefs.

All of this is linked to government religion policy, that is, how a government chooses by policy to address the issue of religion, including its majority religion, in general. Both states that support religion and those that are hostile to religion are more likely to engage in GRD, though for different reasons. Those that support religion are more likely to engage in GRD for reasons linked to religious ideology and intolerance of competing religions. Those hostile to religion, as I noted earlier, engage in GRD at least in part due to their distaste of all religion. In addition, both states that strongly support religion and states that are hostile to religion are more likely to regulate the majority religion. States that do this, on average, engage in more GRD. This means that an absence of GRD against religious minorities is most likely to be found in states that

are neutral on the issue of religion and are not strongly linked to secular ideologies. Thus, this combination of ideology and government religion policy is likely the most important state-level cause of GRD, but there are others.

Regime also has an influence on GRD. However, as noted earlier, democracy's influence on GRD is less straightforward than many assume. In part, this is because many democratic states support a single religion over all others, often through declaring it the state's official religion. Other democratic states espouse secular ideologies that can have antireligious elements. Also, many democratic states that have technically neutral religion policies and maintain high levels of separation of religion and states are still influenced by secular ideologies that can be intolerant of religious practices that contradict these ideologies. Also, not all democracies are fully liberal democracies. "Rule by the people" does not imply tolerance of religious minorities in any necessary way. Without sufficient protections for minority rights and civil liberties, the will of the majority can be to discriminate against minorities.

Thus, there are two kinds of neutrality in government religion policy. The first is ideological neutrality. This neutrality is based on secular ideologies that demand that in some manner the state separate itself from religion, but it can also include other ideological imperatives for regulating government and society that can potentially clash with religious views on the same issues. The second form of neutrality is more of a laissez-faire neutrality where the state simply chooses to leave religion alone. This may be for pragmatic reasons or simply a lack of desire to regulate and influence religion. As I argue in Chapters 7 and 8, it also may be due to a scarcity of the resources necessary to regulate it.

This perhaps explains one of this study's more interesting findings – that among Christian-majority democracies, those found in the developing world engage in significantly less GRD than do Western democracies. In fact, even Christian-majority nondemocracies in the developing world engage in less GRD than do Western democracies. Thus, this difference between ideological neutrality and nonideological laissez-faire neutrality can, under some circumstances, have a stronger impact on GRD than regime.

Other state-level factors also influence GRD. States with some religious traditions engage in higher levels of GRD. For example, Muslim-majority states engage in the highest levels of GRD, on average. However, as I discuss in more detail in Chapter 4, this general finding conceals a wide diversity among Muslim-majority states that includes both countries that

are among the most tolerant of religious minorities as well as countries that are among the most intolerant. World region matters. For example, many of the Muslim-majority states that are tolerant of religious minorities are found in West Africa. In addition, more populous and wealthier countries engage in more GRD.

That being said, state-level factors are not sufficient to understand the causes of GRD. Most countries that engage in GRD do so unequally. By this, I mean that some minorities are subject to different levels and types of GRD than others within the same country. Thus, there must be minority-level factors that cause these differential levels of GRD.

Ideology can also play a role in differential GRD. Some minorities or their practices may be in some way more objectionable to the majority ideology. As I alluded earlier, secular ideologies often do identify such objectionable practices, and the advocates of these ideologies often seek to limit these objectionable practices. For example, in France wearing "ostentatious" religious symbols in public such as a Muslim woman's head covering or modest "burkini" garb at a beach violates its secular *laicite* ideology. Other minorities that do not engage in this behavior will not attract this type of attention.

Nationalism and the desire to protect the local culture can play a role. This motivation directs GRD primarily at minorities that the majority or the government considers nonindigenous. North American Protestant denominations that actively proselytize around the world are common targets for GRD inspired by this motivation. Minorities considered to pose a security or political threat to the majority may be subject to more GRD. For example, in many Christian countries Muslims are seen as a security threat (Saiya, 2018). This stimulates GRD against them.

Minorities seen as cults are also often subject to higher GRD. While this phenomenon has some overlap with nationalism and protection of culture as well as threat perception, the nature of this perceived threat is different. These cults are seen as both poaching members of the majority religion as well as causing their members to engage in dangerous behavior. For example, both France and Belgium passed anticult laws after incidents of mass suicides by cults in their countries.

Some types of motivation are minority-specific. This study finds anti-Semitism to be present and increasing in the Christian-majority states of the West and former-Soviet bloc. However, this mostly manifests as SRD rather than GRD. In fact, between 1990 and 2014, SRD against Jews in these states has increased dramatically. I discuss this in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

SRD is also a common but complex motivation for GRD. In a major study of the topic Grim and Finke (2011) found that societal prejudices lead to government-based restrictions on religious freedom. Their study uses state-level variables. This study's use of the minority level of analysis reveals that SRD causes GRD only for some minorities but not others. I argue that this is because this dynamic requires a trigger. That is, SRD only causes GRD when some other factor activates this latent potential cause of GRD. These triggers are usually linked to a perceived existential threat.

All of these causes of GRD interact in a complex manner. I discuss all of them in more detail in the body and conclusions of this study.

WHY IS GRD IMPORTANT?

Why study the causes of GRD? I argue that GRD is important because it has multiple and overlapping influences on important political, social, and economic factors. First, and perhaps most important, GRD is in and of itself consequential. The majority of the world's population is religious, and there exist no countries lacking religious minorities (Norris & Inglehart, 2004). Thus, GRD can potentially influence the daily lives of many people across the world.

Second, GRD has implications for citizenship and justice. In theory, all citizens should be treated justly and equally. The presence of GRD not only undermines this equality, but also it is likely a sign that the government may be willing to disregard other rights normally granted to citizens. Third, GRD has similar implications for the nature of a regime. What does it say about a democracy when it singles out some religious minorities for restrictions that it does not place on the majority religion? As the majority of liberal democracies engage in GRD, this raises the question of whether religious freedom is truly a necessary trait of a liberal democracy or, perhaps, whether those countries that many consider to be liberal democracies actually are (Perez & Fox, 2018; Perez et al., 2017). This question is even more pertinent because the liberal democracies of the West engage in far more GRD that Christian-majority states in the developing world, including those that are nondemocracies.

Fourth, Gill (2008) argues that religious freedom is good for the economy. His argument is based on the free market. If a country restricts certain religions, members of that religion will be less likely to be interested in trading with that country. Thus, religiously free countries will have more potential trading partners, which is good for the economy.