ROUTLEDGE STUDIES IN RELIGION AND POLITICS Series editor: Jeffrey Haynes



# JONATHAN FOX AN INTRODUCTION TO RELIGION AND POLITICS THEORY AND PRACTICE

#### An Introduction to Religion and Politics

This fully revised edition offers a comprehensive overview of the many theories of religion and politics, and provides students with an accessible, in-depth guide to the subject's most significant debates, issues and methodologies.

It begins by asking the basic questions of how social scientists see religion and why religion remains relevant to politics in the modern era. Fox examines the influence of religious identity, beliefs, institutions, and legitimacy on politics, and surveys important approaches and issues found in the literature on religion and politics. Four new chapters on religious policy around the world, political secularism, and religious freedom and human rights have been added to fully revised content covering religious identity, rational choice approaches to religious politics, worldviews, beliefs, doctrines, ideologies, institutions, and political mobilization, fundamentalism, secularization, and religion and conflict.

This work will be essential reading for all students of religion and politics, comparative politics, international relations, and security studies.

**Jonathan Fox** is the Yehuda Avner Professor of Religion and Politics in the Political Studies Department at Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan, the director of the Religion and State Project, and the recipient of the Distinguished Scholar Award from the Religion and International Relations section of the International Studies Organization (ISA). He has published extensively on religion and politics.

#### **Routledge Studies in Religion and Politics**

Edited by Jeffrey Haynes, London Metropolitan University, UK

This series aims to publish high-quality works on the topic of the resurgence of political forms of religion in both national and international contexts. This trend has been especially noticeable in the post-Cold War era (that is, since the late 1980s). It has affected all the "world religions" (including, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism) in various parts of the world (such as, the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa).

The series welcomes books that use a variety of approaches to the subject, drawing on scholarship from political science, international relations, security studies, and contemporary history.

Books in the series explore these religions, regions, and topics both within and beyond the conventional domain of "church–state" relations to include the impact of religion on politics, conflict, and development, including the late Samuel Huntington's controversial—yet influential—thesis about "clashing civilisations."

In sum, the overall purpose of the book series is to provide a comprehensive survey of what is currently happening in relation to the interaction of religion and politics, both domestically and internationally, in relation to a variety of issues.

www.routledge.com/Routledge-Studies-in-Religion-and-Politics/book-series/RSRP

#### Politics and the Religious Imagination

Edited by John Dyck, Paul Rowe, and Jens Zimmermann

**Christianity and Party Politics** Keeping the Faith *Martin H. M. Steven* 

#### **Religion**, Politics and International Relations

Selected Essays Jeffrey Haynes

#### **Religion and Democracy**

A Worldwide Comparison *Carsten Anckar* 

#### **Religious Actors in the Public Sphere**

Means, Objectives, and Effects Edited by Jeffrey Haynes and Anja Hennig

**Politics and Religion in the United Kingdom** *Steve Bruce* 

#### Politics, Religion and Gender

Framing and Regulating the Veil Edited by Sigelinde Rosenberger and Birgit Sauer In memory of Ted R. Gurr (1936–2017). In 1159 John of Salisbury wrote that we are like dwarfs sitting on the shoulders of giants who can see more than our predecessors because we are lifted up by their great stature. I believe this is true of all scholars. Ted R. Gurr was my mentor and the most important and significant influence on my academic work. He more than any other taught me the skills that I continue to use today in my own work. I metaphorically sit on his shoulders and owe much of what I see to him. He gave freely and generously to all of his students. His personal contribution to scholarship is among the most important and significant of political scientists of this era and will continue to shape how we think about issues like conflict and violence for many years to come. His legacy will also be carried forward by his students who sit on his shoulders and add to his impressive body of work.



# An Introduction to Religion and Politics

Theory and Practice

Second Edition

Jonathan Fox



Second edition published 2018 by Routledge 2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

and by Routledge 711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2018 Jonathan Fox

The right of Jonathan Fox to be identified as author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

*Trademark notice*: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

First edition published by Routledge 2013 British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Names: Fox, Jonathan, 1968– author. Title: An introduction to religion and politics : theory and practice / Jonathan Fox. Description: 2nd edition. | New York : Routledge, 2018. | Series: Routledge studies in religion and politics | Includes bibliographical references and index. Identifiers: LCCN 2017036313| ISBN 9781138740099 (hardback) | ISBN 9781138740105 (pbk.) | ISBN 9781315183787 (e-book) Subjects: LCSH: Religion and politics. Classification: LCC BL65.P7 F695 2018 | DDC 322/.1—dc23 LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2017036313

ISBN: 978-1-138-74009-9 (hbk) ISBN: 978-1-138-74010-5 (pbk) ISBN: 978-1-315-18378-7 (ebk)

Typeset in Bembo and Frutiger by Florence Production Ltd, Stoodleigh, Devon, UK

## Contents

	List of tables and figure	xi
1.	Introduction	1
	Approaches to the study of religion and politics	2
	A social science approach to religion	4
	The religion and state dataset	6
	Religious discrimination vs. religious freedom	8
	A note on methodology and citations	8
	Conclusions	9
	Notes	9
2.	Secularization and functionalism: predictions of religion's	
	decline and irrelevance	10
	Classic secularization theory	11
	Religion's resurgence?	15
	The evolution of secularization theory	17
	Moving past secularization theory	20
	Functionalism	20
	Critiques of functionalism	22
	Religion as a tool vs. as an independent force in political science theory	23
	The doctrine of religion's irrelevance	25
	Secularization, functionalism, religion, and political science theory	27
	Discussion questions	30
	Notes	30
	Further reading	31
3.	Religious identity	32
	Is religious identity unique?	33
	The origins of religious identity in politics	33
	Religious identity and tolerance	38
	Religious identity and democracy	40
	Religious identity and conflict	43
	Political opinions, voting, and beyond	45
	Discussion questions	47
	Notes	47
	Further reading	47

4.	Religious worldviews, beliefs, doctrines, and theologies	49
	Religion as a basis for understanding the world	49
	Religious rules and standards of behavior	51
	Political manifestations of religious worldviews, beliefs, and ideologies	53
	Religious actors	55
	Belief vs. identity	56
	Conclusions	57
	Discussion questions	57
	Notes	58
	Further reading	58
5.	Religious legitimacy	59
	Religion as a justification for anything	60
	The evolving role of religious legitimacy in government	61
	The political uses of religious legitimacy	64
	The limits of religious legitimacy	69
	Discussion questions	71
	Notes	71
	Further reading	72
6.	Religious institutions and political mobilization	73
	Religious institutions and political resource mobilization	73
	Religion and the "free rider" problem	77
	The downside of religious-based mobilization	77
	When do religious institutions mobilize?	79
	Conclusions	81
	Discussion questions	81
	Notes	81
	Further reading	82
7.	Rational religion	83
	Functionalism and rational choice	83
	The supply side theory	85
	Religious liberty and rational calculation	87
	The interests of religious institutions	90
	Rational actor theories in perspective	92
	Religion and the economy	94
	Conclusions	96
	Discussion questions	96
	Notes	97
	Further reading	97
8.	Religious fundamentalism	98
	What is fundamentalism?	98
	Why is fundamentalism politically relevant?	104
	Radicals, extremists, and deviants?	107
	Conclusions	108

	Discussion questions	108
	Notes	109
	Further reading	109
9.	Religion and conflict	110
	Religious worldviews, beliefs, doctrines, and ideologies	112
	Religious legitimacy	117
	Religious institutions	120
	Fundamentalists and violent conflict	120
	Religious terror	121
	Messianic violence	122
	Recruitment	123
	Are religious conflicts different?	124
	Religion and peace	125
	It is not just religion	125
	Discussion questions	126
	Notes	126
	Further reading	126
10.	Government religion policy 1: official policies and supporting	
	religion	127
	What is government policy?	127
	Official policy	129
	Motivations for supporting religion	135
	Types of support for religion	138
	Conclusions	148
	Discussion questions	148
	Notes	148
	Further reading	149
11.	Government religion policy 2: restrictions, regulation,	
	control and discrimination	150
	Regulation, restriction, and control	151
	Religious discrimination in theory	157
	Religious discrimination in practice	160
	Conclusions	167
	Discussion questions	168
	Notes	168
	Further reading	168
12.	Political secularism	169
	What do "secular" and "secularism" mean?	169
	Defining political secularism	170
	Families of political secular ideologies	171
	Secular-religious competition	176
	A complex competition	179
	Conclusions	179

#### x CONTENTS

	Discussion questions	180
	Notes	181
	Further reading	181
13.	Religious freedom	182
	Official religious freedom	182
	The multiple meanings of religious freedom	183
	The complexity of religious freedom	191
	Conclusions	193
	Discussion questions	194
	Notes	194
	Further reading	194
14.	Religion in international relations	195
	Secularization, and ignoring religion	195
	Religious identity	197
	Religious legitimacy	198
	Religious institutions and mobilization	199
	Transnational religious institutions and other religious actors	200
	Transnational religious issues and phenomena	200
	Faith-based diplomacy	201
	Religious worldviews, ideologies, and beliefs	202
	Conclusions	204
	Discussion questions	204
	Notes	204
	Further reading	205
15.	Conclusions	206
	Linking theory and practice	206
	A theoretical framework to comprehend religion and politics	208
	Bibliography	211
	Index	231

# List of tables and figure

#### Tables

3.1	State control of religion in four post-Soviet Sunni muslim republics	37
5.1	Religious legitimacy in constitutions in 2008	62
7.1	Economic vs. religious protectionism	95
10.1	Official religion policy in 2014	130
10.2	Distribution of official religion policy in 2014	136
10.3	Percentage of countries which support religion—legislating religious precepts	
	in 2014	140
10.4	Percentage of countries which support religion-institutions which enforce	
	religion and funding religion in 2014	142
10.5	Percentage of countries which support religion-entanglement and other forms	
	of support	146
11.1	Percentage of countries which restrict, regulate, and control the majority	
	religion, 2014	153
11.2	Percentage of countries which restrict, regulate, and control the majority	
	religion, 2014	156
11.3	Percentage of countries which discriminate against minority religions, 2014	161
11.4	Percentage of countries which discriminate against minority religions, 2014	165
12.1	Government policies allowed under different types of political secularism	173
13.1	Allowable actions under difference conceptions of religious freedom	184

#### Figure

15.1 A framework for understanding religion and politics	210
--	-----



### Introduction

Religion and politics have been interconnected throughout history. For every ancient political entity for which we have records, religion was intimately connected to politics. This is true of ancient Egypt and Greece as well as the Mesopotamian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Roman empires. This practice continued in the feudal states which followed the fall of the Roman Empire. This is true even of pre-history. The Old Testament records a time when separation of religion and state was unheard of. Each city or nation had its own god. People sought the approval of their gods when they went to war and brought these gods, or symbols representing their gods, with them. When one side was victorious their national religion was often imposed upon the vanquished. The political leaders of some states, such as the pharaohs of Egypt and pre-Christian emperors of Rome, were themselves considered gods.

However, even in the countries described in the Bible, theocracies were rare, and while political and religious power were usually interconnected, they were embodied in separate entities. That is, the political class and the priestly class were strongly dependent upon each other and significantly influenced the other's decisions, but they were usually separate classes. The religious authorities would support the legitimacy of the temporal authorities and the temporal authorities would support the religion both financially and through enforcing the religion's dogma with the power of the state.

In a number of ways things have not changed. Many states still support official religions but in most cases the state and religious institutions are separate entities. Wars are fought over religion, though in recent decades most of them have been civil wars or wars taking place in failed states rather than international wars. While with the possible exception of North Korea, leaders no longer demand to be worshiped, some do claim to be the representatives of their god on earth. Also, the clergy and religious institutions are often involved in politics, at least at the level of lobbying governments to influence political decisions. While separation of religion and state and freedom of religion are prominent in much of the world as an ideology, as demonstrated in Chapters 10 through 13, these interrelated ideologies are arguably more often expressed as an ideal than practiced, even in the Western liberal democracies where the concepts of separation of religion and state and religious freedom originated. Wars between states are also less often overtly about religion, though religious language is still used to justify war.

In fact, all countries support religion in some manner and all but three restrict it in some manner. Given this, it is difficult to tell whether governments are more involved or less involved with religion than they were in the past. In either case religion is certainly sufficiently intertwined with politics that the role of religion in politics is worthy of extended discussion, research, and debate.

#### APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF RELIGION AND POLITICS

This book is intended to explore the intersection between religion and politics in modern times. I provide a discussion of what I consider to be the most important intersections between religion and politics as well as the important bodies of theory on religion and politics in the political science literature and the relevant literatures from other disciplines. I also provide a more practical description of the nature and roles of specific governments in religious politics. I seek to do so in a comparative global context, both providing examples from the four corners of the earth and a theoretical framework that can be applied in a global context.

This book is firmly within the field of comparative politics and places a heavy emphasis on state religion policy. This has two implications. First, the focus is on the actual role religion plays in politics rather than the role it ought to play. For example, political philosophers such as Rawls and de Tocqueville, among many others, discuss the role they believe religion should play in democracy. These philosophies are certainly relevant to questions of how religion influences politics, both because they influence those who practice politics as well as because they help us theorize about how religion does influence politics. However, the question of how religion ought to influence politics is addressed here only in the context of how these theories can help us understand the actual role of religion in politics.

Second, religion's influence on politics manifests through multiple and sometimes overlapping agencies. These include how governments address religion, the political activities of all sorts of religious groups and organizations, and religion's influence on society in general. While this book addresses all of these, the major comparative focus is on state religion policy. This is not intended to imply that these other influences are less important. Rather, no book can include all possible examples. This simply reflects the author's choice of focus.

There are two possible approaches to the comparative study of religion and politics. The first is to focus on theories and trends—that is the general ways in which religion can influence politics. This approach is intended to provide a theoretical toolbox that will give a student of religion and politics the means to analyze religion's intersection with politics in any setting. The second is to examine the facts on the ground and explore the connection between religion and politics in particular places. This volume combines both approaches.

In most of the book I explore theories and important literatures in religion and politics, though two chapters (Chapters 10 and 11) focus on government religion policy in practice. While in the more theory-based chapters, I focus on the theory and trends approach, each of them includes numerous concrete examples which are intended to illustrate these theories and trends. Chapter 2 explores the history of the study of religion and politics—a history that is overshadowed by a long period of time when social scientists mostly ignored religion as a significant political and social factor. I explore how and why this occurred and how it influences our understanding of religion and politics today.

Chapters 3 to 6 explore what I consider to be the four most important avenues through which religion influences politics. Chapter 3 examines religious identity and theories which posit that some religious groups are different or behave differently than others. This type of theory, while limited and problematic in many ways, is also the most common in the political science literature. Accordingly, it provides a good starting point for a discussion of how religion influences politics. Chapter 4 examines how religious beliefs influence political behavior. Its central thesis is that religious worldviews, beliefs, doctrines, and theologies provide a lens through which people can understand the world around them as well as including explicit instructions on how to behave. All of these qualities of religion can potentially have profound influences on political behavior.

Chapter 5 looks at how religion is used to justify and legitimize political actions and policies. At its most basic level, religion can lend legitimacy to governments, political parties, opposition movements, institutions, leaders, policies, and just about any other political actor or phenomenon one can list, as well as undermine their legitimacy. Chapter 6 explores the influence of religious organizations and institutions on how people organize for political activities. While religious institutions are rarely, if ever, built primarily to organize for political activity, they are commonly put to this use. Chapter 6 explores the dynamics of this phenomenon.

The rest of the chapters concentrate on more focused literatures, theories, and issues on religion and politics. Chapter 7 examines a body of theories in political science and sociology which posit that religious politics can be understood as the outcome of rational calculations. While arguably this theoretical discussion might be better placed before Chapter 3, I argue that it is best understood in relation to several of religion's influences on politics and, accordingly, I placed this chapter after my discussion of these influences. Chapter 8 focuses on the phenomenon of religious fundamentalism. While in many ways a unique manifestation of religion, fundamentalism's influences on politics manifest through the four avenues described in Chapters 3 to 6. Chapter 9 uses the theories of the seven preceding chapters to examine how religion influences conflict, war, violence, and terrorism. Religious conflict is one of the most important current issues in the religion and politics literature. This chapter is intended to both examine how religion can influence conflict and provide a concrete example of how the theories and literatures on religion and politics can be applied to aid understanding of a more specific aspect of religion's influence on politics.

Chapters 10 and 11 focus on government religion policy in practice. Chapter 10 examines how governments deal officially with religion and how governments in practice support religion. Official policy refers to the general framework of a government's religion policy and addresses issues like whether a government declares an official religion. Yet the devil is in the details, and all governments in the world provide at least a minimal level of support for religion whether or not they designate an official one. Chapter 11 examines how governments limit religion. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first addresses how governments regulate, control, and restrict the majority religion. The second examines how governments restrict the religious practices and institutions of minority religion. Both types of limitations are common to the extent that they are the norm rather than the exception.

Chapter 12 examines political secularism—the ideology that religion ought to be in some manner separated from some or all aspects of politics and government. While such separation is rare, many political actors subscribe to this ideology. Yet there is little agreement on what this term actually means in practice. Chapter 12 explores this debate, both in theory and in practice.

Chapter 13 provides a similar examination of the concept of religious freedom. Like political secularism, there is no agreement on how the term should be defined or even on whether "religious freedom" is the proper term in the first place. Chapter 13 examines multiple interpretations of this concept and the extent to which governments live up to these multiple and often contradictory standards.

Chapter 14 diverges from the realm of comparative politics and examines the role of religion in international relations. While international relations is considered a separate sub-discipline in political science from comparative politics, I argue that the same concepts which can help us understand religion's influence on politics within states can also help us understand its impact on the relations between states.

Finally, Chapter 15 provides some final thoughts on the role of religion and politics. This includes how the issues discussed earlier in this textbook, especially in Chapters 3 to 6, can be used to build a more comprehensive theory of religion and politics.

Overall, the approach in this volume is intended to give the reader the theoretical tools to understand the intersection between religion and politics anywhere in the world at any point in modern history. I then reinforce this theoretical approach with a discussion of a number of more focused topics in religion and politics, especially government religion policy. Much of the information on government religion policy comes from the Religion and State (RAS) project which, as is discussed in more detail later in this chapter, has collected information on government religion policy for 183 countries and territories.

#### A SOCIAL SCIENCE APPROACH TO RELIGION

There are many possible perspectives that can be applied to the academic study of religion. It is a topic studied by political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists, historians, psychologists, philosophers, and theologians, among others. Each of these disciplines has its own particular set of approaches to understanding the topic of religion, and a particular set of questions around which most research and inquiry revolves. Many of these approaches are not compatible or reconcilable with each other. When studying religion, one must select from them. This book uses a social science approach, relying most heavily on the methodologies of comparative political science and sociology and the questions asked particularly by political scientists, though the insights and queries of other disciplines can also be found in these pages.

What does this mean? Basically, I begin with the assumption that religion is a social institution or phenomenon which strongly influences human behavior. The primary goal of a social scientist is to understand human behavior. Political scientists and sociologists focus on the behavior of groups, with political scientists emphasizing political behavior and sociologists emphasizing social behavior. While the central goal of this book is to understand religion's influence on political behavior, often this is not possible without an understanding of the role of religion in influencing social behavior. In addition, as is seen especially in Chapter 2, the insights of sociologists into religion are essential to understanding its political role because of the interconnections between the social and political. Furthermore, sociological theory on religion is considerably more developed than that of political science. Be that as it may, the central question asked in this volume is how religion intersects with and influences the political.

This approach has some important implications. The first and foremost is that the truth of religious claims is not a question I address. Whether or not a particular religion or belief is true is an important question to theologians, some philosophers, and billions of believers. In contrast, for a social scientist, as long as a belief influences behavior, the truth of the belief is unimportant. That is, social scientists are not equipped to judge which religion is the true religion, and the answer to this question, assuming a definitive answer is even possible in this world, does little to answer the questions we wish to ask. Rather I limit my inquiry in this volume to the question of how religions influence behavior. For the purposes of answering this question, whether or not a religion is in some existential or epistemological sense the one true religion does not matter as long as a person or group believes that it is. It is this belief which influences their behavior, not the truth or untruth of this belief.

Thus, for the purposes of the exercise of applying a social science perspective to understand religion's influence on politics, we must set whatever beliefs we have regarding religion aside. It is not important whether we believe in a religion or believe all religions are no more than social constructions that have no truth to them. That is, one can believe that one's religion is the one true religion or that all religions are false. However, these beliefs are not relevant to social science inquiry. Rather, we must objectively examine how religion influences political behavior without allowing any of these preconceptions to color the analysis. As noted above, this approach is markedly different from that of political philosophy in that it focuses on the observed influences of religion in politics rather than the role many believe it ought to play.

Some of the implications of this perspective can be seen in how social scientists examine religion. For example, let us examine four definitions of religion discussed in Brian Turner's (1991) classic book *Religion and Social Theory*:

- 1. Emile Durkheim's definition: "A unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them."
- 2. Clifford Geertz's definition: "[1] a system of symbols which acts to [2] establish powerful, persuasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by [3] formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and [4] clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that [5] the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic."
- 3. Daniel Bell's definition: "Religion is a set of coherent answers to the core existential questions that confront every human group, the codification of these answers into a creedal form that has significance for its adherents, the celebration of rites which provide an emotional bond for those who participate, and the establishment of an institutional body to bring into congregation those who share the creed and celebration, and provide for the continuity of these rights from generation to generation."
- 4. Peter Berger's definition: "Religion is the human enterprise by which a sacred cosmos is established. Put differently, religion is cosmization in the sacred mode. By sacred is meant here a quality of mysterious and awesome power, other than man and yet related to him, which is believed to reside in certain objects of experience ... The sacred cosmos is confronted by man as an immensely powerful reality other than himself. Yet this reality addresses itself to him and locates his life in an ultimately meaningful order."

What do all of these definitions have in common? They focus on how religion interacts with human behavior. Durkheim focuses on how beliefs and rituals unite people into a community. He also emphasizes in his works how religious practices are the key to maintaining religion and to understanding its role in society. Geertz focuses on how religion influences man's behavior, beliefs, and understanding of the world. Bell's definition includes religion's role in answering existential questions for man, religion's influence on groups' bonds, and the role of institutions in preserving religion. Berger uses a definition of religion which addresses the sacred without actually taking a stand on the truth of any particular conception of the sacred.

All of these definitions also avoid theological questions such as whether there exists a deity or deities and what these deities, should they exist, want of man. They also do not address the truth of any religion nor do they address whether religion is good and moral. As sociological definitions, they take no position on these kinds of questions and rather focus on how religion exists as a social phenomenon or institution that influences human behavior. If they did take a stand on the issue of whether a deity or deities exist, they would likely have to exclude religions like Buddhism and Confucianism—which do not include any gods in their theologies—from being considered religions. If they took a position on morality, they would be engaging in questions of whether a behavior is good or bad rather than trying to understand the causes and consequences of that

behavior. By focusing on how religion influences human behavior we can safely set this and other theological–philosophical controversies aside and focus on the questions that are more central to how religion and the political interact.

Political science definitions of religion are rare. Most political scientists who address the issue simply state one of the existing sociological or philosophical definitions at the beginning of their books or articles, then proceed with their discussions of religion and politics in a manner that does not appear to be heavily influenced by the definitions they have quoted. Yet, based on the principles discussed so far, it is not difficult to construct one. For the purposes of this book I define religion as follows: *Religion seeks to understand the origins and nature of reality using a set of answers that include the supernatural. Religion is also a social phenomenon and institution which influences the behavior of human beings both as individuals and in groups. These influences on behavior manifest though the influences of religious identity, religious institutions, religious legitimacy, religious beliefs, and the codification of these beliefs into authoritative dogma, among other avenues of influence.* 

I recognize that religion is more than this and that a complete definition of religion would include many of its social functions and influences, as described by the sociological definitions cited above, as well as a theological element describing in more detail the nature of religion's source, be it a monotheistic God, a pantheon of deities, nature, or some other supernatural phenomenon or entity. Yet taking a stands on these issues, especially their existential, epistemological, and theological aspects, would be to enter debates that have continued for millennia without adding significantly to the completion of the task of this book—to understand how religion influences political behavior. Accordingly, this definition should be taken as a definition of religion's political role rather than a comprehensive definition of religion.

Yet there is a need to differentiate religion from other ideologies which influence behavior such as nationalism, Marxism, and other political ideologies. For this reason I include the first sentence of the definition. It is possible to claim that other political ideologies are the functional equivalent of religion, and to an extent there is truth in this claim. However, religion is something that is different and distinct. Political ideologies are openly attributed to man—that is no one questions that man created them. Accordingly, man is equipped to reject or revise these ideologies. Religions are attributed to a direct supernatural source such as God. In the minds of believers, this creates an ideology which is not open to question. In addition, most political ideologies do not address a number of the existential issues most religions address. All of this makes religion distinct.

#### THE RELIGION AND STATE DATASET

Throughout this book, and especially in Chapters 10 and 11, I use the Religion and State (RAS) dataset as a source of information and insight. This dataset provides a comprehensive look at multiple aspects of government religion policy for 183 countries and independent territories across the world. This includes all countries with populations of 250,000 people or more, as well as a sampling of less populous countries. While the dataset includes information covering 1990 to 2014, this book's use of the dataset focuses mostly on the information from 2014 and, unless otherwise noted, all references to the dataset refer to the information from that year.<sup>1</sup>

The RAS dataset divides government religion policy into four categories, each focusing on a different aspect of religion policy. The first is whether the government has an *official religion*. This is important because it is a formal declaration of intent. It shows whether a government is officially declaring one religion as the religion which guides the state including its culture, philosophy, and

policy. The manner in which a government declares an official religion or how it declares that it has no official religion is more complicated than might seem to be the case at first glance. I discuss this issue in more detail in Chapter 10.

The second aspect is *religious support* which I examine in detail in Chapter 10. Religious support represents the extent to which governments support a religion in practice. While much of all aspects of government religion policy, including support, is through legislation, in practice governments make policy in many ways other than legislation. This is especially true of non-democratic governments. But even in democracies, government policy can be made by non-legislative decisions on policy by leaders, bureaucratic regulations, and the decisions of national and local officials and courts. The RAS dataset includes all of this in the term "religious support."

Examining religious support is important. Not all governments which have official religions engage in high levels of support for religion, and many governments without an official religion engage in high levels of religious support. Thus, examining religious support adds to our understanding of a state's religion policy beyond what can be gleaned from the mere presence of an official religion. In essence, the official religious category represents a state's official policy, and religious support represents what a state does in practice. The two are certainly related but levels of support vary considerably among states both with and without official religions. For example, Iran and the UK both have official religions. Clearly, their religion policies are not the same. Part of the difference can be found in the extent of religious support in each state. In Chapter 10, I list and discuss 52 ways governments can support religion.

The third aspect of government religion policy I examine is the *regulation, restriction, and control* of religion. This is defined here as all government laws, policies, and practices which limit, regulate, or control the majority religion in a state or all religions in a state. Thus, unlike religious support, this category of policy represents a desire to keep religion within certain bounds. The motivations for this type of policy are diverse. They can include an ideological animosity toward religion as is found in communist ideology. It can represent a desire to limit religion's political power. It can also represent an attempt to harness religion's political power for the benefit of the state. Especially in the latter case, governments may both support religion and regulate it. In Chapter 11, I list and discuss 29 ways governments can regulate, control, and restrict religion.

The final aspect of government religion policy that I examine here is *religious discrimination*. I define religious discrimination as limitations on the religious practices or religious institutions of religious minorities *which are not placed on the majority religion*. This distinction is critical because limiting minority religions exclusively is the result of motivations that are different from those for limiting all religions or the majority religion. For instance, countries that have a policy of maintaining a secular public space, such as France, might limit the public expression of religion for all religions. France did exactly this when it passed a law in 2004 prohibiting public school students and employees from wearing "conspicuous religious symbols," including headscarves, skullcaps, and large crosses. This law was consciously applied to all religions as part of France's secularist tradition and, accordingly, is considered here to be religious regulation. In contrast, a number of regional governments in Germany and Belgium passed similar laws but applied them only to the headcoverings worn by religious Muslim women. This represents a restriction that focuses only on the religious practices of a minority group and, accordingly, is considered here to be religious discrimination.

Religious discrimination also has several potential motivations. It can represent a desire to maintain the superiority of the majority religion. It can occur in the context of social and political conflicts where the two sides belong to different religions. It can be the result of a policy of protecting the indigenous culture from outside influences, including religions that are considered

new to a country. It can also represent a policy of protecting citizens from religions that the government considers dangerous and predatory. For instance, both France and Belgium formed organizations to monitor and limit "cults" in the 1990s after small religious groups orchestrated mass suicides within these countries. However, these organizations quickly evolved into ones that significantly restrict religious minorities that are clearly not a danger to society. I discuss 36 ways governments can restrict religious minorities in Chapter 11.

#### **RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION VS. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

While the terms "religious discrimination" and "religious freedom" seem at first glance straightforward, they are not. Each has multiple possible meanings and interpretations. As noted above, discrimination implies that different groups are treated differently, so any definition of religious discrimination would include this element. However, the content of this discrimination can have multiple meanings. For example, does it include only restrictions on religion itself or can it include any restrictions on religious minorities, even if these restrictions do not in any way limit religious practices or institutions? Political or economic restrictions on a religious minority in a state would be an example of this. In the context of this book, the term "religious discrimination" refers specifically to limitations on the religious practices or religious institutions of religious minorities which are not placed on the majority religion.

"Religious freedom" is an even more ambiguous term. Violations of religious freedom can include all of the various interpretations of religious discrimination discussed above. It can also include any restriction on religious practices or institutions that are placed on everyone in a state. It can also include when a state enforces aspects of the majority religion's doctrine as state law. Yet would restrictions on abortions, despite being religious doctrine for many major religions really constitute a limitation on religious freedom? It is certainly an application of religious doctrine that limits freedom in a citizen's personal life and choices. However, I am unaware of any religion which requires its believer to undergo abortions. Thus, from this perspective it does not in any practical way limit anyone's ability to practice their religion and would, accordingly, not be considered a violation of religious freedom.

There is no correct answer to these questions when defining religious freedom and religious discrimination. The RAS dataset does not include a variable for "religious freedom" and, outside of Chapter 13 where I delve into this issue in detail, I use the term sparingly in this book because of the ambiguity of the concept. I most often refer to "religious freedom" clauses in constitutions because these constitutions often use this term but rarely define it, or when describing the work of other authors who use this term. As I note above, this book uses a specific definition of religious discrimination but this definition is specific to the discussion in this book and others can and do use the term differently.

#### A NOTE ON METHODOLOGY AND CITATIONS

All of the RAS variables were coded (assigned values) based on extensive research by the RAS project, which produced a report for each country. This report used a number of general sources as well as sources specific to each country. Throughout this book I use examples that I draw from these reports. I discuss the procedures for building these variables and data collection in more detail in Fox (2011; 2015).

In order to avoid repetitive citations I list the general sources for these reports in the note which is cued at the end of this paragraph. All subsequent references in this book when discussing the policies of specific governments or specific events refer to sources in addition to these general sources.<sup>2</sup>

#### CONCLUSIONS

The approach to the study of religion taken in this book can be described as organized and analytical. Religion's influences on politics are divided into neat, well-defined categories which are discussed individually. Yet the reality is more complex, with the borders of these categories blending and overlapping. Both politics and religion can be "messy" topics and the study of the two together certainly shares in this trait.

This use of a distinct categorization system is not meant to deny the complexity of the topic at hand. Rather, one of the roles of theory and organization is to simplify a complex topic into a format where it becomes more manageable and understandable. I seek to develop and provide a set of tools that can be applied to better understand religion and politics. I realize that these tools are sometimes imperfect and often simplify a complex set of relationships. Nevertheless I posit that these tools also enable social scientists to better organize information and better understand how religion and politics interact. I ask that the reader understand my efforts to explain religion's intersection with the political in this light.

#### NOTES

- 1 Detailed information on the dataset including how it was collected and a listing of information on each country included in the dataset are available at Fox (2008, 2015, 2016) and the project website at www.religionandstate.org. The dataset itself is also available at this address. For an archive of more general data on religion see the Association of Religion Data Archives at www.thearda.com.
- 2 The following are the general sources for the RAS project which are the basis for the examples and case studies used in this book: Morigi et al. (2003); Amore (1995); Barret et al. (2001); Fox (2008); The Religion at State dataset at www.religionandstate.org; The US State Department's yearly Reports on International Religious Freedom at www.state.gov/g/drl/irf/rpt/; Human Rights Without Frontiers at www.hrwf.net; Amnesty International at www.amnesty.org; the Religion and Law Consortium at www.religlaw.org/countryportal.php; Forum 18 at www.forum18.org/index.php; The International Christian Concern at http://persecution.org/; International Coalition for Religious Freedom at www.religiousfreedom.com/; Freedom House Freedom in the World Report, www.freedom house.org/template.cfm?page=15; United Nations Abortion Reports at www.un.org/esa/population/ publications/abortion; The AWW Abortion report at www.guttmacher.org/pubs/AWWfullreport.pdf; Daniel Ottosson, A World Survey of Laws Prohibiting Same Sex Activity between Consenting Adults, 2009, ILGA, The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association at www. ilga.org/what-we-do/state-sponsored-homophobia-report; "Religious Freedom in the Majority Islamic Countries: Aid to the Church in Need," www.alleanzacattolica.org (Downloaded January 1, 2008); "Handbook on Religious Liberty Around the World," Pedro C. Moreno, ed. (Charlotsville, Va: Rutherford Institute, 1996), and Library of Congress Country Studies, http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/ httoc.html#ht0042.

These sources are not noted further in this book's references but other country-specific sources when used are noted. Also, unless otherwise noted, constitutional clauses are taken from www.thearda.com/internationalData/index.asp.