

# Governing religious diversity across the world

## Comparative insights

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### Relationship between the nation and religion

Religion and religious diversity appear to be one of the toughest diversity challenges societies face today in their search for identity, equality, and cohesion in an increasingly globalised world. It has been argued that religious identity comprises one of the most important dimensions of discrimination today (Modood, 2013), and indeed religion in certain contexts appears to be a stronger identity register than national or ethnic identity and belonging. Yet, the increased mobility and (super)diversity fostered by globalisation has not seen the realisation of the predicament of the decline of the nation-state, but has rather led to the re-emergence of the nation as a relevant political community and point of reference for identification and belonging (Triandafyllidou, 2017).

In Europe, where the increasingly widespread secular values are often presented as inherently at odds with ‘new’ religious minorities, old paradigms of republicanism or multiculturalism seem to be in crisis, but a new ‘third way’ between *laïcité* and state religion that combines national and religious identity into a plural mix is struggling to emerge (Medda-Windischer, 2017; Ruiz Vieitez, 2016). In India, the approach founded on a ‘deep respect for religion’, in which religious and cultural diversity are acknowledged as constitutional values and where several ethnic and religious minority identities inhabit the same system of institutions, a strengthening of Hindutva in the national discourse has in recent years seen a serious deterioration of the government’s capacity to peacefully manage its diverse population (Mahajan, 2017, 2020).

One question that has been present throughout the different settings, histories, and contexts analysed in this volume is whether, in accommodating religious diversity, one ought better equalise upwards (notably more religion in public life for both majorities and minorities) or equalise downwards (moving towards a more radical secularism that relegates the religious to the private sphere). What are the obstacles that different state-religion relations encounter, and can the struggle to balance freedom of religion with freedom from religion be applied – or even conceived of – similarly in different contexts?

A departing point of this book has been the need to engage in dialogue across disciplines, national contexts, and different notions about what constitutes a desirable model of state-

religion relations. As noted by Modood (2019, pp. 217–218), academic dialogue rather than identity-less reasoning is relevant for multiple reasons: on the one hand, it allows for non-mainstream viewpoints, needs, and cultures to be heard. This, in turn, contributes to a growth of understanding that is genuinely novel and fosters a ‘solution’ or conclusion that is truly open and not the simple product of the strength of a preconceived idea, model, or theory. Finally, an academic dialogue as ‘cooperation under conditions of deep diversity or “multiplicity” requires a “multilogue”’ (ibid.), which is especially important in a volume combining theoretical insights about the need to protect legitimate claims of religious minorities with the existing empirical data on cultural and religious diversity.

The question of accommodating religious diversity has been at the forefront of public debate on immigration and immigrant and ethnic minority integration since the 1990s, but is posed today with renewed urgency by the re-emergence of religiously attributed violence as well as of right-wing attacks targeting religious minorities in South Asia, the MENA and Asia Pacific regions, and Europe. How can we make sense of and study the evolving role of religion(s) in contemporary societies and the relationship of religious communities to state institutions in a systematic way, allowing for comparative analysis while not losing sight of the specificities that inform each case?

The analysis in each chapter is based on a contextual approach: the socio-demographic composition of each country and its historical legacies are outlined with a view to framing the role of religion within this context and the ways in which legal and institutional structures emerged to govern religion and religious diversity – whether that was inherent in the foundations of the state or the result of later population movements. Our contextual approach, though, is not just historical but also appreciates that the law is designed to address as many situations as possible in a homogenous manner. Thus, while addressing the legal frameworks of each country, we need to acknowledge the specificities of actual practice – notably how laws, policies, and even grassroots initiatives are implemented and lived in society. In embarking on such a broad geographical scope of religious governance models, we acknowledge that not only we must recognise the diversity of religions, but also that there are different *relationships* of individuals to religions, including different ways of belonging to a religious community and not only of practising one’s faith in an individualistic way.

In order to capture the diversity of constellations of different approaches while apprehending the dissonances, overlaps, and synergies between them, each chapter has followed a common structure even though flexibility was accorded to allow for highlighting aspects that are unique to each case.

## **A ‘thick description’ of nation-religion relations**

We opted to organise the volume by world regions as such geographical groups of countries reflect certain similarities in shared historical legacies and approaches, even though this should not obscure the significant variation and differences that exist within those regional clusters. The Handbook has been divided into six parts: the first focusses on Western Europe, the second on Southern Europe, and the third on Central and Eastern Europe and Russia, followed by Southeastern Europe (part four). Part Five comprises studies from the Middle East and North Africa region, and Part Six gathers cases from South and Southeast Asia and the Asia Pacific.

Thinking about what we have learnt from these 23 chapters, two dimensions stand out as both descriptive and analytical. First is the relationship between nation and religion: how much is the nation identified with a given religious community and what is the level of

homogeneity in terms of religion in a given country (see Tables 25.1–25.3). Second is the institutional setup with which countries manage such relationships; in other words, the different existing models of religious diversity governance (Table 25.4).

As regards the relationship between the nation and religion, and assuming that we consider the dominant discourses in each country, we distinguish between two aspects: the strength of the ties between the national community and a religion; and whether these ties related to a single religion (a religious majority community) or a set of religious communities that are recognised as part of the national community. Thus, we distinguish between strong and weak ties, and strong plural vs weak plural ties.

In the case of a strong link between the nation and a single religious community, the two are seen as nearly inseparable; religious diversity may be accommodated but is not part of the dominant national narrative. The nation is also understood as the flock in this case, the community of the faithful. Examples of such strong ties can be, for instance, Greece, Turkey, Morocco, and Egypt. In Egypt, for instance, the national ID card includes a person's religious identity, and this was also the case in Turkey until 2017 and in Greece until 2000.

A weak relationship between a single religious community and the nation means instead that religion is recognised as an historical element of the national identity, but the ties are rather weak. This would be the case of the UK, France, or Russia.

Strong plural ties, on the other hand, better reflect the situation in India, Indonesia, and Malaysia, as well as in Lebanon where religion occupies an important, indeed a dominant, position in the national narrative but a plurality of religious communities are accommodated and recognised as important for the national identity.

Finally, cases like Germany, Albania, and Australia would signal weak plural ties; notably, the national identity narratives recognise the existence of multiple faiths and related communities, but the definition of the nation is not strongly predicated on one of those or on the notion of religious diversity as a particular feature or value characterising the nation.

This typology of relations offers a thick description of the different situations in the different countries and world regions, even though some cases may be more challenging to classify than others. Typical examples of this ambiguity may be Italy or Spain where the historical and institutional relationship between the Catholic Church and the nation is strong and has been dominant for a long time, but has been receding in recent decades both because of the decrease in people's religiosity and because of religious minorities emerging as a result of immigration. Another difficult case to classify is Bulgaria where the identification between the nation and Christian Orthodoxy is strong and historically grounded, but given the communist period's suppression of religion and the size and relative importance of the Bulgarian Muslim community, we would rather position the country in the category of weak ties with a single religion rather than with neighbouring Greece, in the strong ties box.

The classification presented in Table 25.1 offers a reading grid of the variety of nation-religion relations surveyed in this volume. We have also grouped the countries per macro-region with a view to checking whether some type of nation and religion relations is characteristic of a given macro-region. Indeed what comes out after a first reading is that in Southeastern Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East it is more common for a single religion to be a strong element that defines a nation (see Gulalp, Gemi, Hellyer, Fahmi, Lahlou, and Zouiten in this volume). Such a relationship existed also in the past in Central and Eastern Europe, but 50 years of communism have loosened this link and significantly affected the level of self-identifications of those populations with historically dominant religious communities (see Vekony, Iliasov, and Raciuc in this volume). Having said this we witness today in the region an effort from

Table 25.1 Relations between the nation and religion

<i>Relationship between religion and nation</i>	<i>Strong ties with a single religion</i>	<i>Weak ties with a single religion</i>	<i>Strong plural ties</i>	<i>Weak plural ties</i>
Macro-regions				
Western Europe		France, United Kingdom, Belgium		Germany
Southern Europe	Greece	Italy, Spain		
Central and Eastern Europe (incl. Russia)		Russia, Hungary, Lithuania, Slovakia		
Southeastern Europe		Bulgaria	Bosnia Herzegovina	Albania
North Africa	Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt			
The Middle East	Turkey		Lebanon	
Asia Pacific				Australia
South and Southeast Asia			India, Indonesia, Malaysia	

Source: Compiled by the authors.

governing parties and conservative circles to bring religion back, usually for their own instrumental political ends (see Vekony, and Iliyasov in this volume).

However, there are exceptions to these cases, as, for instance, in Bosnia Herzegovina a plurality of religious communities is forcefully part of the nation's make up (see Tzvetkova and Todorova in this volume). The same is true for Lebanon (see Taskin in this volume). In Bosnia Herzegovina this plurality and the complex institutional make up that supports it is the result of the dissolution of the federal state of Yugoslavia and indeed symbolises the Balkan realities of the past where religious and ethnic mixity was the rule rather than the exception (Karakasidou, 1997; Todorova, 2009). In Lebanon, by contrast, plurality is the outcome of the historical creation of the nation as part of the process of decolonisation of the Middle East (Calfat, 2018).

Similarly we notice a certain commonality among Western European countries like Germany, the UK and Belgium, historically characterised by one or more dominant religious communities (albeit within Christianity), but where the ties between the nation and religion are nowadays weak both for historical reasons – as religious wars have marked the history of those countries (see Chapters 2, 4, and 5 by Sealy and Modood in this volume), and as a result of their post-war immigration experience and the ensuing cultural and religious diversity. In the case of Belgium, for instance, Sealy and Modood write that ‘a gradual decline of religion’s place in social and political life can be seen from the 1960s to the present day, with a steady decline in those identifying as Catholic, Church affiliation, involvement and attendance, and organization membership’ (Chapter 2, this volume, p. 10). The case of France is more ambiguous as France is today home to the largest Muslim and largest Jewish populations in the European Union, but the dominant historical narrative is rather ambiguous on the positioning of these communities as part of the French nation. Naturally this ambiguity has to do with the concept and practice of *laïcité* and also with more complex issues about the acceptance of Islam and Judaism as properly French (see Sealy and Modood in this volume; Hafidi, 2020).

There are, though, some interesting outlier cases here like Italy and Spain where a strong identification with religion has been a part of the national consolidation process after long periods of authoritarian rule. Catholicism therefore remains deeply intertwined with national identities despite the fascist dictatorships that ended with the end of the Second World War in Italy and with Franco's death in 1975 Spain, discredited such mono-cultural and mono-religious narratives (see also Kosmin and Kysar, 2009; Triandafyllidou, 2001; and Magazzini in this volume). However, the change has been further the result of significant immigration in the post-1989 period, which has changed their demographic composition even though post-migration religious minorities (notably Muslims) are not included in dominant discourses of the nation.

South and Southeast Asia, on the other hand, show a strong similarity in their relation between the nation and religion(s) even if Indonesia, Malaysia, and India differ significantly in their demographic composition, institutional make up, and histories. They do not even share a common religious majority, as one might have argued that the importance of Islam might have dictated a strong relationship between religion and the state. On the contrary we might argue that these three countries have embraced their ethnic and religious diversity and converted it into a concept of national identity in the absence of a dominant national majority group or a dominant religion. As clearly argued by Mahajan in this volume, the traumatic partition of Pakistan from India as part of the creation of the state has marked this country's historical experience and institutional make up, emphasising both the importance of the dominant role of religion in the country's politics and the need to accommodate plurality and embrace it. Similar dynamics have been in process also in Indonesia and Malaysia, testifying both to the role of religion in nation-formation and to the plurality and mixity of the populations that find themselves within the boundaries of a single state after decolonisation (see Mahajan, Ibrahim and Rasid, Boy Zulian, and Bachtiar in this volume). These three countries also share a growing current of religious nationalism which tends to refuge their plural composition and impose a more aggressive stance towards religious minorities. Political parties play a key role in this process as they capitalise on the religious sensitivities of citizens to attract votes. While the case of India may have attracted more international attention in recent years, not least because of communal violence against Muslims, there are similar pressures in Malaysia where the governing party draws into question the secular principles of the Constitution and pushes towards the imposition of sharia (see Ibrahim and Rasid in this volume).

Discussing the role of religion and/or of religious plurality in the dominant discourses on the nation in these different countries would not be complete if we did not consider their actual demographic composition: in Tables 25.2 and 25.3 we have classified the 23 countries studied in this volume according to the size of each country's religious and non-religious minorities. Such categories are of course approximative and discretionary to some extent, as data on religious affiliation is usually not included in official censuses and can be hard to come by. That being said, we believe that they are nonetheless helpful to situate and understand the context and degree of religious homogeneity, and place it in relation with the relationship between state and religion.

In Table 25.2 we distinguish between religiously homogenous countries, where religious minorities account for under 2 per cent of the total resident population; countries with moderate religious diversity, where one or more religious minorities account for 2–10 per cent of the total resident population; and, countries with significant religious diversity in their population, where minorities account for more than 10 per cent of the total population. Where relevant, we also distinguish between countries with a single religious majority community and those with two or more religious communities that have played a dominant historical role.

Comparing Table 25.1 to Tables 25.2 and 25.3, it is striking – if not paradoxical – that the level of religious homogeneity within a country is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for having a strong connection between the nation and a religious majority community. And similarly, the level of religious diversity is not a good predictor of a strong identification between the nation and religious plurality (what we termed above strong plural ties between nation and religion). A correlation can instead be observed between countries that have ‘weak ties’ between national and religious identities (Table 25.1), and the percentage of non-religious minorities in those same countries (Table 25.3).

Overall, while our 23 chapters show that demographic changes cannot be ignored and lead to changes in laws, practices, and even institutions (the role of Islam in Europe or also Australia is telling in this respect and is documented in several of our chapters, as is the increase in the non-religious sector of the total resident population), they do not always suffice for changing the national narrative. Thus, while Greece, Italy, and Spain have seen important changes in their demographic composition during the last 30 years as a result of immigration, in Italy and Spain these have been more readily (even if partly) accommodated in the national narrative compared to Greece. However, in the absence of significant demographic changes affecting the religious composition of the population, and with a significant degree of religious diversity in countries such as Turkey, we have witnessed a strengthening of the ties between religion and the nation (see Gülalpin this volume).

An interesting case is that of Australia where demographic change resulting from post-war migrations has brought religious freedom (and in particular accommodation of religious minorities’ requests in education and employment contexts) centre-stage in the public

Table 25.2 Religious homogeneity of the resident population

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Under 2% of religious minorities</i>	<i>2%–10% religious minorities</i>	<i>2%–10% religious minorities and more than one dominant religion</i>	<i>Over 10% of religious minorities</i>	<i>Over 10% of religious minorities and more than one dominant religion</i>
<i>Macro-regions</i>					
Western Europe		France, Belgium	Germany	UK	
Southern Europe		Greece, Italy, Spain			
Central and Eastern Europe (incl. Russia)	Hungary	Lithuania		Russia, Slovakia	
Southeastern Europe		Bulgaria	Bosnia Herzegovina	Albania	
North Africa	Morocco, Tunisia			Egypt	
The Middle East			Lebanon	Turkey	
Asia Pacific		Australia			
South and Southeast Asia					India, Indonesia, Malaysia

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Note: The term religious minorities includes also minority denominations within a single religious faith.

Table 25.3 Presence of minority groups who declare themselves as non-believers, atheists, or humanists

Countries	Under 2% of non-believers	2%–10% of non-believers	10%–20% of non-believers	Over 20% of non-believers
<i>Macro-regions</i>				
Western Europe				UK, France, Germany, Belgium
Southern Europe		Greece		Italy, Spain
Central and Eastern Europe (incl. Russia)			Lithuania, Hungary, Slovakia, Russia	
Southeastern Europe		Bulgaria, Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina		
North Africa	Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia			
The Middle East	Turkey	Lebanon		
Asia Pacific				Australia
South and Southeast Asia	India, Indonesia, Malaysia			

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Note: This table refers to those communities or organised groups who declare themselves as humanists or atheists or non-believers. Naturally we recognise that this classification is based on imperfect data as, in many countries, religion is attributed by default and generally data available may not reflect the actual beliefs or practices of people with regard to religious matters.

debate. Linking these issues to concepts of human rights and Australian multiculturalism has been fraught with tensions as the dominant narrative has been one of benevolent non-interference of the state to religious matters (see Grossman, Gerrand and Halafoff in this volume), given also that such interference could create tensions between different tiers of government (federal and provincial level).

Combining the two dimensions presented above – notably, the level of religious diversity within the resident population of a given country and the strength of the ties between the nation and a single religious community or a plurality of communities – could be considered as a good indicator of the extent to which the accommodation of religious diversity has been a contentious issue for a given country. Contrary to the expectation that religious controversies might be more heated in those countries that see either a strong national-religious linkage, or a large religious diversity, or both, an analysis of the cases shows that even in countries with weak plural ties and a moderate level of diversity, religion has returned through the ‘back door’ as a contentious issue.

At the same time, we would have expected that countries with strong ties between the national identity and religious plurality and high levels of religious diversity would have smoothed the relative challenges through their institutional make-up and related laws and policies. Conscious of the importance of religious plurality for the nation and of the high stakes involved, we would have expected that countries like India or Malaysia would have worked out the relevant mechanisms and institutions ensuring representation, accommodation, and peaceful coexistence. While a system of institutional ‘religious quotas’ exists in the case of Lebanon, this has not been the case, for instance, in India, which has recently experienced an exacerbation of Hindu nationalism that tends to push the country towards our first column in Table 25.1 – notably towards those countries where the dominant national group identifies with a specific

religion and leaves little room for diversity in the national narrative. On the other hand, it can be argued that in those countries that have included religious identities as a feature of their political system, such as Lebanon and Bosnia and Herzegovina, this has entrenched and crystallised religious segregation (see Tzvetkova and Todorova, and Taskin in this volume).

The institutional make up or the norms and policies of each country, however, are not the product of a rational calculation of costs and benefits, but rather the product of complicated histories, struggles, compromises, and oftentimes also, in the case of North African, Middle Eastern, and Asian countries the result of external interference and more specifically colonialism and post-colonial nation-building. Thus, while the tables in this chapter seek to offer an overview of the demographic and identitarian dimensions of religion and religious diversity in the countries studied, the landscape becomes increasingly complex when turning to their institutional and legal arrangements. Clear patterns are hard to find, and macro-regions do not necessarily offer meaningful clusters.

Outlining a full-fledged theory of secularism goes beyond the scope of this chapter and it is equally beyond our scope to offer a detailed legal and institutional typology of how the 23 countries under study in this volume govern their religious diversity (see also Modood and Sealy, 2019 for a fuller account). Below, though, we offer a basic typology of state-religious institutional relations and of the types of accommodation afforded to religion (whether of majorities or of minorities). Naturally these are ideal types and real country cases are more complex – and these regimes need to be nuanced. The two extreme regimes in this typology are relatively easy to define as in absolute secularism, religion is delegated to the private sphere and politics are totally free of religion. Where religion is accorded a hegemonic position, on the other hand, there is little separation between the political and the religious order. Naturally, different institutional constellations exist in our various countries but it is clear that France is the one closest to the regime of absolute secularism while Morocco or Malaysia are countries closest to a hegemony of religion.

Moderate secularism is typically the regime that prevails across the European continent and in Australia, and implies a significant level of separation between the state and religious institutions although religion remains an aspect of the public domain and there are accommodations to make room for religious faith, not just at the individual but also at the collective level. Moderate secularism is different from the strong presence of religion regime, which signals a quasi-secular arrangement where religious institutions and state are separate but a primary role is symbolically and institutionally accorded to religion as an element that can structure the public space (see also Modood and Sealy, 2019; Triandafyllidou et al., 2019).

With regard to this dimension, our book points to some very interesting variations: while in Morocco religion has a hegemonic position in politics as the King is ‘*Amir al-Mu’minin*’ (Leader of the Faithful), considered by some of the population as the ‘‘Representative of God on earth’’, and is also a ‘Sharif’, or descendant of the prophet (see Lahlou and Zouiten in this volume). Indeed, no other Arab or Muslim head of state is imbued with these qualities and the same is not true for Egypt and Tunisia. Egypt probably currently lies between moderate secularism imposed by its nationalist military authoritarian regime and a primacy of religion regime like Tunisia, where the two sets of institutions are separate but the importance of Islam is also recognised and accommodated in public and political life. Another indication here that can help us classify a country along the moderate secularism vs primacy of religion spectrum can be the existence of religious parties. This is true for the case of Tunisia (see Fahmi in this volume) but such parties are outlawed in Egypt (see Hellyer in this volume).



Table 25.4 Regimes of accommodation of religion and religious diversity

Countries	Absolute secularism	Moderate secularism	Primacy of religion	Hegemonic position of religion
<i>Macro-regions</i>				
Western Europe	France	UK, Germany, Belgium		
Southern Europe		Greece, Italy, Spain		
Central and Eastern Europe (incl. Russia)		Russia, Hungary, Lithuania, Slovakia		
Southeastern Europe		Bulgaria, Albania	Bosnia Herzegovina	
North Africa		Egypt	Tunisia	Morocco
The Middle East			Turkey, Lebanon	
Asia Pacific		Australia		
South and Southeast Asia			India, Indonesia	Malaysia

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Another interesting variation here is to be found between, on one hand, India – a country with an advanced system of political representation of different types of minorities (castes, tribes, and ethnic and religious communities) and strong respect for religion as an aspect of public life – and the case of Malaysia, that can best be characterised as a country where religion occupies a hegemonic position (see Ibrahim and Rasid in this volume) and the intermediate case of Indonesia where freedom of religion is acknowledged but where one must have one of the recognised religious faiths (see Boy Zulian and Bachtiar in this volume). This is particularly interesting as the regime of Indonesia does not outlaw atheism but rather does not conceive that a citizen of Indonesia is not a believer.

Delving a little further into these regimes we need also to acknowledge that among countries belonging to the moderate secularism category we may find similar norms and laws but divergent practices and degrees of accommodation. For instance, Belgium has recognised relatively early a large number of established religions including, for instance, Islam (in 1974) and Christian Orthodoxy (in 1985) – both brought to Belgium by post-war migrations – and has made necessary accommodations for the instruction of religion in schools and for the construction of worship places, even if such changes were at times not properly implemented until the early 2000s. By contrast Germany – where these two religions, and particularly Islam, are also new and the result of post-war labour migrations – has been more reluctant in practice to accommodate religious education or the construction of mosques and practice has varied a lot among the Laender. The practical difficulty of German Muslims to have Islam recognised as a public law corporation in each of the German states, as required by the law given the country's federal structure because of the country's federal structure and the specific requirements established in the law, has resulted in significant shortcomings for Muslims in Germany (like the impossibility to benefit from tax collection and other advantages accorded to religious societies established as public law corporations) (Gesley, 2017). Religious education in schools, however, has been accommodated in several Laender partly thus overcoming the lack of formally recognised status. The case of Germany may be considered as reasonably

successful in accommodating post-migration Muslim minorities (see Sealy and Modood in this volume) compared to that of Italy, where starker implementation problems persist. In this country, despite constitutional provisions protecting freedom of religion, there has been strong reluctance in practice to accommodate minority religious education or the construction of mosques while Muslims in Italy cannot benefit from donations through income tax allocations.

### **The politics of governing religious diversity: towards greater openness or towards closure?**

Historically, religion and politics, church and state have enjoyed various and often very close linkages. Nowadays, a variety of secularism models have been adopted by a number of countries, yet the entanglements of religiosity and politics are seeing a resurgence, and the issue of religious governance is often seen in problematic terms when it comes to addressing the claims and rights of religious minorities.

This situation inevitably raises important issues of both a philosophical and more broadly political and practical nature. How strict should the separation between state and religious institutions be? Can radically different cases (democracies and autocracies, for instance, or secular and non-secular states) be studied using the same concept and interpretative frameworks? What are the criteria for the comparisons we must make? And beyond the struggle for a peaceful coexistence, what can be said to constitute ‘successful’ religious diversity governance?

In this chapter we have looked at the compelling diversity outlined by the different cases of this book by categorising them into two dimensions, which can help us draw some linkages between the various countries and highlight their similarities and dissonances.

One dimension has to do with the relationship between religious membership and the alliance to a nation-state, which can, in turn, be declined into a) the strength of such linkages and b) the demographic composition of each country.

A second dimension, strongly intertwined with the first, is the typology of accommodation regime towards religion and religious diversity adopted by each country.

While there are neither straightforward nor causal conclusions that can be drawn between specific institutional or demographic features and religious governance models, the fact that no single dimension is determinant for the outcome is, in itself, an interesting finding. In this sense, one aspect that emerges from all the different chapters and cases is how religiosity, as any other cultural and identitarian dimension, has the potential to be politicised and instrumentalised.

As states are seeking a balancing act between forms of majority privilege and the challenges raised by new and complex religious pluralism across the world, one of the key questions about the future is how, and to what degree, the socio-economic and geopolitical influences will interact with categories of inclusion/exclusion based on religious identities.

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