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Introduction

The post–Cold War era has been one of contradictory expectations regarding the role of religion in world politics. Proponents of the secular modernist worldview have long projected their aspirations for a postreligious world. In its most extreme iteration, one may have believed that the growth of cultural liberalism, economic prosperity, procedural democracy, and scientific achievement must be met with the decline of atavistic and divisive social and political ideologies (Fox, 2015; Gorski & Altinordu, 2008). As such, the fall of the Iron Curtain and the collapse of the Soviet Union should have heralded a new era of peace and secular enlightenment.

Quite to the contrary, the competition between religious and secular political actors to influence government policy has become an increasingly more prominent feature of politics in both the West and non-West (Fox, 2015, 2019, 2020). More concerning has been the global resurgence of bloody, ostensibly identity-based civil wars and separatist insurgencies, from the Balkans to the Middle East and North Africa to the Caucasus and East Asia that seemingly characterized the 1990s and 2000s. As secular ideological and otherwise superpower-supported proxy warfare fell to the wayside, religious and ethnic ideological conflict have displaced them in terms of both their duration and lethality (Walter, 2017; Toft, 2021; Basedau et al., 2022). Arguably among the most globally destabilizing conflicts of this period have been those involving and in response to nonstate violent fundamentalist religious actors, whether al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, the Islamic State (Da'esh), or the Lord's Resistance Army (Dunn, 2010; Hoffman, 2004; Raineri & Martini, 2017; Tamm, 2016; Zenn, 2020), to say nothing of religiously inspired foreign fighters who have flooded into far-flung conflict zones, from Afghanistan to Syria to Ukraine (Hegghammer, 2010; MacKenzie & Kaunert, 2021; Mishali-Ram & Fox, 2022; Pokalova, 2019).

Among the most fascinating observations regarding religious conflict in the past thirty years has been its great heterogeneity. Despite average levels of religious discrimination and outright oppression increasing worldwide, in democratic and nondemocratic contexts alike, the extent to which

aggrieved groups actually mobilize to demand redress vary widely. For instance, Muslims and Jews across the West express grievances over perceived Islamophobia (Obaidi et al., 2018) and anti-Semitism (Fox & Topor, 2021), respectively. Christians, in turn, are among the most restricted religious minorities in the world (Fox, 2020) and often express grievances. Yet whereas some deeply oppressed religious minorities have engaged in sustained insurgencies, prompting even more massive repression by their host states (e.g., Muslims in Chechnya or Rakhine, Myanmar), others have suffered similar levels of state repression despite engaging in much less violent resistance (e.g., Uyghurs in China) or none altogether (e.g., Christians in Pakistan).

Addressing this puzzle, this book raises key questions about why and under what conditions religious minorities express grievances regarding their treatment by the state and society at large and what they choose to do about it. Whether religious minorities are even capable of or motivated to engage in collective organization is one matter. How they choose to engage when mobilized—whether through peaceful protest, resort to spontaneous violence such as rioting, organized violence including terrorism, or outright rebellion—is another.

These questions are far from simple, and we do not pretend to have uncovered all the answers. We, however, propose that the most systematic manner to understand observed patterns requires a multistep approach, first identifying under what conditions religious minorities express different kinds of collective grievances, and second understanding how different grievances and associated structural conditions translate to different mobilizational strategies. So parsed, we can better understand why some groups mobilize when others do not; why some resort to violent methods while for others peaceful protest is sufficient; and hopefully in the process gain greater understanding on how to avoid such violent situations altogether.

Accordingly, in this study we examine the conflict and mobilization behavior of religious minorities between 2000 and 2014. Drawing on classic grievance theory (Gurr, 1993a, 1993b, 2000) which was originally developed to explain ethnic conflict, we argue that deprivation, discrimination, and inequality (DDI) lead to the formation of grievances over these issues which, in turn, leads to conflict behavior including protests, riots, and violence. Of course, other factors including a groups capacity, opportunity structure, and regime, among many others, also play important roles.

In this chapter, we outline why we feel using the lens of grievance theory is important and how our arguments fit into the larger literature focusing

primarily on the domestic conflict and civil war literature as well as the religion and conflict literature. More specifically, this chapter proceeds as follows. First, we discuss why grievance theory is important. Second, we examine the intellectual history of our study. Third, we discuss our original data collection. Fourth, we summarize our findings and their limitations. Finally, we outline the structure of our study.

In the rest of this book, we further develop these themes as well as present evidence showing that grievance theory's explanation for political mobilization, protest, and conflict by minorities provides a good explanation for the behavior of religious minorities.

Grievances and Common Sense, or Why Grievances Are Important

That grievances are a central cause of violence and conflict is common wisdom. It is not difficult to find examples of this common wisdom across politics, the media, and culture. For example, journalist Richard Engel argues that "only a few ingredients need to combine to create an insurgency . . . The recipe is, simply, a legitimate grievance against a state, a state that refuses to compromise, a quorum of angry people, and access to weapons."[1] Poet Robert Frost states that "poetry is about grief. Politics is about grievance."[2] In his Letter From a Birmingham Jail, Martin Luther King Jr. stated,

> In spite of my shattered dreams, I came to Birmingham with the hope that the white religious leadership of this community would see the justice of our cause and, with deep moral concern, would serve as the channel through which our just grievances could reach the power structure.[3]

However, we cannot always rely on common wisdom. Karl Deutsch (1963) argues in his article "the limits of common sense" that common sense is not always reliable and often contradictory. For example, common sense has it that birds of a feather flock together but also that opposites attract. Our common sense can show us relationships and patterns that are real but "it

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[1] https://www.thepostemail.com/2018/06/10/dont-you-feel-it-anger-and-frustration-are-everywhere/.
[2] https://allupdatehere.com/robert-frost-quotes/.
[3] https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html.

is also true that we can understand in our fertile imagination very many relations that do not exist at all" (Deutsch, 1963, p. 53). For this reason, if we want to take our insights seriously "we must test them. We can do this by selecting . . . data, verifying them [and] forming explicit hypotheses as to what we expect to find. And we then finally test these explicit hypotheses by confrontation with the data. In the light of these tests we revise our criteria of relevance" (Deutsch, 1963, p. 53).

The role of grievances in conflict is a good example of this phenomenon. There exists a debate in the literature where some argue that grievances are central to understanding the causes of violence conflict, and civil war, particularly when it involves minorities. Others argue that grievances are irrelevant and other factors such as greed, resources, opportunity, and mobilization drive conflict.

This study delves into this issue by taking Deutsch's advice and engages in a data driven test of the hypothesis that grievances are a central cause of conflict among religious minorities. More specifically, we examine the conflict behavior of religious minorities using a new and innovative data collection, the Religious Minorities at Risk (RMAR) dataset. Our findings show that grievances do matter and are an integral part of the conflict process for religious minorities. Our tests that demonstrate this, we argue, are as rigorous and comprehensive as Karl Deutsch would have demanded. This is in part because RMAR contains more detailed cross-country data on more minorities than has existed before. This is true not only for religious minorities, but for any type of minority.

Our central argument is that this conflict behavior is driven by a two-stage process where DDI causes the minority to form grievances and these grievances, in turn, influence conflict behavior. This model follows the work of Ted. R. Gurr's (1993a, 1993b, 2000a) development of a similar model for ethnic conflict based on his Minorities at Risk (MAR) project which inspired RMAR's project name. However, RMAR applies this model to religious minorities and, we argue, provides some important methodological improvements over that foundational work.

While the empirical study of domestic unrest and civil war dates back six decades and the empirical study of religion and conflict dates back to the 1990s, these issues and their intermingling with religion are far older than that. For example, chapter 2, verse 3 of the Jewish religious text *The Ethics of the Fathers*[4] states, "Be careful of the government, for it will befriend a man

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[4] The Ethics of the Fathers is a Jewish religious text with sayings attributed to prominent Rabbis who lived between 200 BCE and 200 CE.

only for its own needs. It appears to be his friend when it needs him but will not stand with him in the time of his distress."[5] This ancient piece of wisdom contains two observations directly relevant to our study. First, people seek redress from governments but often receive no such redress. Second, governments are independent actors that follow their own interests. This verse also implies that governments are often the source of people's distress.

The empirical study of domestic conflict and civil war has long recognized and addressed these principles. More specifically, it has long recognized that governments discriminate against minorities and these minorities often seek redress for their grievances over this discrimination as well as DDI from other sources. When these minorities do not receive this redress, they often engage in conflict.

However, there is little agreement over the details of this process. In fact, there are fundamental debates over basic issues. We situate this study at the center of these debates and aim to examine them from a new perspective, both theoretical and empirical, using the RMAR data, which is the first conflict dataset to focus on religious minorities while others either focus on ethnic groups or use the country, rather than groups, as the unit of analysis. For this reason, particularly in Chapters 3 and 4, we discuss this debate with two goals in mind. First, to situate our arguments and findings within this debate. Second, to integrate the empirical literature on religion and conflict into this debate.

For example, as we discuss in more detail in Chapter 4, among the prominent debates in the field is one where one side holds that grievances motivate conflict. The other side argues that grievances are ubiquitous across minorities and, therefore, do not differentiate between groups that engage in conflict behavior and these who do not. Rather, what matters is a group's capacity to engage in political mobilization. A third perspective argues that grievances are relevant, but they are synonymous with DDI and, therefore, only DDI need be measured. While it is unlikely that any single study can settle this debate, we provide important new evidence that grievances matter. DDI and grievances may be ubiquitous, but they are not uniform across religious minorities. They vary and this variation predicts both nonviolent and violent conflict behavior by religious minorities and, we argue, by implication other types of minorities. Also, we find that DDI heavily influences grievances, but this relationship is far from automatic.

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[5] Translation by the authors.

That being said, capacity also matters. Group capacity influences both the grievance formation process and conflict behavior by religious minorities. However, this is not a process that, as some argue (e.g., Fearon & Laitin, 2003; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Tilly, 1978), does not involve grievances in any meaningful way. Rather the capacity, resources, and opportunity factor is tied up intimately with both how grievances are formed and how grievances influence conflict behavior. Thus, we diverge from a trend in the conflict literature which has it that only one explanation must be correct. Rather, we argue it is both grievances *and* capacity that matter.

A Brief Intellectual History of Our Study

This study straddles two academic literatures. The first focuses on domestic conflict and civil war with an emphasis on conflict behavior by minorities. The second is the religion and politics literature that studies conflict and violence. While both literatures involve studies which use both empirical-quantitative methodology and classical comparative politics approaches, this study is situated firmly in the empirical-quantitative element of these disciplines. While we discuss the relevant previous studies in later chapters, particularly Chapters 3 and 4, it is important to take a step back from the particulars of the findings of these literatures and examine how our study fits into the larger picture.

The Domestic Conflict and Civil War Literature

While the history of the empirical study of domestic conflict and civil war is likely familiar to many readers, we posit that a discussion of this history in this chapter and our reexamination of the debates within that literature in Chapters 3 and 4 are important for several reasons. First, our study makes fundamental claims regarding these debates, which makes a review of the debates and their origin story essential for both situating our study, its arguments, and its findings in this literature as well as explaining why all of this is important. We believe this review must include a discussion of how these arguments developed over time to properly accomplish this goal.

Second, our arguments and findings are deeply embedded within this body of theory to the extent that they can only be fully appreciated within their context. Third, as we very much take sides in this debate, we feel that a fair presentation of all aspects of the debate is an essential element in explaining why we argue that grievances matter. For example, when we argue grievances matter, this invokes a large body of theory and argument that debates this very issue, including quite a few which posit that the entire grievances argument is invalid and offer alternative theories. Accordingly, any study claiming that grievances would be remiss if it did not address and counter these arguments and theories head on, as we do in Chapters 3 and 4.

Fourth, within this literature there are many different conceptions and definitions of DDI and grievances. In order to understand our arguments and findings it is important to understand how our uses of these concepts are similar and different from previous uses. In particular, the distinction between individual-level grievances and group-level grievances is key to our arguments and, we argue, key to understanding previous studies of civil war and conflict.

Fifth, we argue that there are many common misconceptions about this literature. Understanding this is essential to appreciating the import of our study. For example, as we discuss in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4, much of the evidence presented in this debate is not as it appears. This is because many studies that purport to measure DDI and grievances actually use other measures which, we argue, are questionable surrogates for these phenomena. Sixth, this literature contains important and influential critiques of previous studies based on the theoretical tradition we follow in this study. Our discussion of these critiques and why we feel they do not apply to our study is critical to justifying its validity. Seventh, we posit that this discussion is essential for readers who are less familiar with this literature.

Consequently, our critical review of this literature is aimed at influencing how the reader sees and interprets this literature in light of the arguments and findings we present in this study. That is, we see this review as a conversation with the relevant previous studies and arguments intended to form a new synthesis, which views the findings and arguments from these studies from a new perspective drawn from the theoretical context and empirical findings of our study.

Empirical studies of the causes of domestic conflict and civil war date back to the 1960s. This is around the time of political science's behavioral revolution when a new generation of researchers began to apply the scientific method of

formulating falsifiable hypotheses and testing them with empirical data. One of the earliest theories in this literature was relative deprivation (RD) theory, which posited that when a group compared itself to some point of comparison and found its situation lacking, this could lead to violence, conflict, rebellion and revolution. The most influential formulation of this argument was Gurr's (1970) argument that DDI can cause frustration, which leads to anger, which leads to violence. For Gurr (1970) this DDI was mainly caused by a gap between "value expectations" and "value capabilities." He wrote, "value expectations are the goods and conditions of life to which people believe they are rightfully entitled. Value capabilities are the goods and conditions they think they are capable of attaining or maintaining, given the social means available to them" (Gurr, 1970, p. 13). The larger this gap, the more likely it will cause frustration and anger, which leads to aggression and violence.

While there are many intellectual strands and theories within the larger domestic conflict and civil war literature, RD theory and the work of Ted R. Gurr is the strand that most influences our study from among this larger body of theory. During the 1970s and 1980s, RD was a popular theory due to its face validity. That is, the intuition that DDI inspires civil war, rebellion, and revolution "ought" to be correct. This is because it was based on common wisdom. It was the basis for hundreds, perhaps thousands, of published studies in peer review forums during this period (Brush, 1996; Lichbach, 1989; Rule, 1988).

As is the case with many popular theories in academia, it has its critics. While there were numerous theoretical critiques, which we discuss in more detail in Chapter 3, the most important critique was empirical. Specifically, the empirical literature, the vast majority of which focused on economic DDI, simply did not support the theory (Brush, 1996; Fox, et. al., 2017; Lichbach, 1989; Osborne & Sibley, 2013; Rule, 1988; Smith et. al., 2012).

Gurr (1993a, 1993b, 2000a) accepted these findings but did not give up on the proposition that DDI can lead to conflict, violence, rebellion, and revolution. He took these findings as a flaw not in this central concept but in how it was originally theorized and tested. He created the MAR project which transformed and updated his approach to the relationship between DDI and conflict in at least four ways, all of which fundamentally influence the present study.

First, he chose to focus on ethnic minorities. This focus was exceptional at the time because for much of the post–World War II era modernization theory which was influential in political science predicted, among other

things, that tribalism in the form of ethnicity and religion was becoming a thing of the past. It was seen as disappearing due to process inherent in modernity (Fox, 2002a, 2004). More specifically during this period,

> many social scientists, especially political scientists, argued that modernization would reduce the political significance of ethnicity. They argued that factors inherent in modernization, including economic development, urbanization, growing rates of literacy and education, as well as advancements in science and technology, would inevitably lead to the demise of the role of primordial factors like ethnicity in politics. While the modernization literature usually dealt with ethnicity in general, its predictions were also intended to apply specifically to religion. In fact, modernization theory predicted that the same factors which were believed to be causing the demise of ethnicity would lead to the process of the secularization of society. (Fox, 2002a, p. 33)

Second, this focus on ethnic minorities was also methodologically revolutionary. Previously nearly all cross-country empirical studies used the country as the unit of analysis. MAR used the ethnic minority as the unit of analysis. Thus, each country had multiple ethnic minorities which were studied individually. This recognized that the status of a specific minority and its behavior could be different than that of other minorities in the same country. While this insight may seem obvious, no previous cross-country events data conflict study had been constructed at the group level.

Third, Gurr (1993a, 1993b, 2000a) reformulated his theory. He argued that DDI causes a group to form grievances. As we discuss in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4, these grievances are qualitatively different from the frustration and anger individuals feel as theorized by RD theory. Rather these are grievances expressed at the group-level by leaders, organizations, and representatives in a format intended to seek redress for these grievances. This makes them more politically relevant. It is these grievances, according to Gurr, that begin the process that leads to conflict. Thus, conflict is a two-stage process, the first is DDI leading to grievances and the second is the grievances launching the conflict process.

The theory was also more sophisticated in that it took into account other factors. Perhaps most importantly, it incorporated other theory strands, such as mobilization literature, which argues that conflict is driven by opportunity, resources, and capacity. It recognized the role of regime and a wide variety of traits of ethnic minorities. It also created multiple dependent

variables for violence and peaceful protest in order to examine the causes of different types of mobilization and conflict behavior.

Fourth, Gurr (1993a, 1993b, 2000a) explicitly expanded his measurement of forms of DDI and grievances beyond those addressing economic issues. He looked at economic, political, and cultural DDI, as well as grievances. His model also looked at beliefs in past autonomy (both mythical and real) among an ethnic minority and how it spurred demands for autonomy. He also looked at the stress on minorities caused by demographic, ecological, and migration factors.

The diverse analyses of the MAR dataset largely support this model (e.g., Gurr, 1993a, 1993b, 2000; Sorens, 2009).[6] However, this theory also attracted theoretical, methodological, and empirical critiques, which we describe in more detail in Chapter 4. As a result the MAR project has experienced a slow demise.

In this book we follow all of these innovations as we focus on grievances expressed by minorities, albeit religious ones, and test multiple types of DDI, grievances, and conflict behavior. In doing so we revive Gurr's original concepts that minorities are a useful unit of analysis and, using our RMAR data, that a two-stage approach—from DDI to grievances and grievances to conflict behavior—provides a better theoretical framework to understand why and how minorities mobilize than those that neglect this intermediate step of grievance formation and expression. The main difference between MAR and RMAR is that RMAR focuses on religious minorities, and unlike MAR, which included only some ethnic minorities, RMAR includes all religious minorities that meet a minimum population threshold. Other than the MAR and RMAR datasets, no major cross-country data collection has been based around this theoretical foundation or measured group-level grievances. Thus, we argue that this study of RMAR constitutes the most methodologically sound test of the grievance argument to date.

The Religion, Violence, and Conflict Literature

The empirical religion and conflict literature began more recently but heavily influences this study. The same theories that predicted the demise of

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6 See also Ayres & Saideman (2000); Akbaba & Tysas (2011); Birnir & Satana (2013); Birnir et. al. (2017); Fox (2002a, 2004); Ishiyama (2000); Jenne et al. (2007); Saideman & Ayres (2000); Saideman et al. (2002); Tsutsui (2004).

ethnicity also predicted the demise of religion. This likely deterred the empirical study of religion and conflict for several decades (Fox, 2015, 2018). As a result, the first empirical studies of violence and conflict that took the religion factor into account were published in 1997 (Fox, 1997; Rummel, 1997; Walter, 1997).

During this early period, Fox (1997, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2000d, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2003a, 2003b, 2004) published a series of studies based on the MAR dataset with additional variables measuring the impact of religious DDI, grievances, legitimacy, and institutions on the conflict behavior of 105 ethnoreligious minorities. This research program used Gurr's model. It confirmed the model in that religious forms of DDI cause religious grievances. However religious grievances only increased the extent of rebellion where autonomy issues were also present in a conflict. Subsequent to these studies, it was over a decade before the empirical literature produced a study which included a variable explicitly measuring religious grievances.

In contrast, most other early studies used only religious demography variables. One focused specifically on religion and conflict (Ellingsen, 2005). The rest were written in the context of Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory (Henderson & Singer, 2000; Roeder, 2003; Tusicisny, 2004) or focused on another cause of conflict but included a religious demography variable as a control or a measure of diversity (Collier & Hoeffler, 2002; Ellingsen, 2000; Reynal-Querol, 2002; Rummel, 1997; Walter, 1997).

Beginning in 2005, studies began to appear that included variables measuring religion's relevance to conflict (Pearce, 2005), whether groups involved in the conflict made religious demands of some kind (Bercovitch & Darouen, 2005; Svensson, 2007), and whether a conflict involved religious outbidding (Toft, 2007). After this, studies on religion and conflict using a wide variety of variables became more common. These studies measured religious DDI, ideology, beliefs, incompatibilities, demands, and outbidding as well as demography variables. Much of it theorized that grievances are important to the conflict process, but none explicitly measured grievances.

This changed with the development of the Religion and Conflict in Developing Countries (RCDC) dataset, which examines the role of religion in conflict in 130 developing countries in Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and sub-Saharan Africa between 1990 and 2010. RCDC uses the country year as its unit of analysis rather than a minority but is the first cross-country study since the MAR project to explicitly include a grievance

variable. This variable is a general grievances variable which measures "whether or not a religious community feels discriminated against" (Basedau et al., 2016, p. 239). The study found these grievances to influence the onset of interreligious and theological conflicts. As we discuss in the next section, the RCDC dataset is a precursor to the data used in the present study.

Thus, this study diverges somewhat from the bulk of previous religion and conflict studies. Unlike the demographic-based studies we do not assume that religious identity or diversity alone causes conflict. Also, we do not focus on religious ideology. Rather we argue that conflict behavior by religious minorities is caused at least in part by DDI and grievances.

This lack of empirical focus on ideology is not because we feel it has no influence. Rather, it is because we argue its influence is at the subgroup level. There is diversity within most religious populations on a wide range of factors, including, but not limited to, intensity of belief, how they interpret their religion, and their willingness to apply their religious beliefs and ideology in the political domain. Thus, it is difficult to identify any consistent stand on these three issues among any religious population as a whole, including religious minorities, precisely because there is little agreement on them. Surveys and experiments may identify their effect, but they are typically confined to very small and probably not universally representative samples (e.g., Hoffmann et al., 2020; Basedau et al., 2022). Higher levels of agreement on these issues can be found at the organizational level. That is, like-minded members of a group form an organization that represents their beliefs, but these organizations tend, in practice, to represent only some members of the group which places them at the subgroup level of analysis. As we discuss in Chapter 4, this is implicit in the religion and conflict's empirical literature as most studies which focus on ideology use organizations as their unit of analysis.

DDI and grievances are factors more appropriate to the study of religious minorities. DDI is often directed at the minority in general. However, as we discuss in more detail in Chapter 2, DDI is related to religious ideology because religious ideology is one of the prominent motivations for religious DDI. Grievances, as we conceive and operationalize them, are demands for redress expressed by group representatives, which makes them politically relevant. This has significant continuity with the empirical religious and conflict literature since other common variables in that literature include the presence of religious issues and demands which include demands for redress of grievances. Thus, these variables are related to grievances but do not explicitly measure them.

The Religious Minorities at Risk (RMAR) Dataset

This study uses the RMAR dataset to examine the dynamics and causes of conflict behavior by religious minorities. RMAR constitutes the combined efforts of two projects, the RCDC project and the Religion and State-Minorities (RASM) project. In this section, we provide an overview of the genesis and the content of the RMAR dataset.

The Genesis of RMAR

RMAR is the result of a confluence of serendipity between two projects which initially developed separately. The Religion and State (RAS) project was designed to study government religion policy. From its beginning, it included a wide variety of variables looking at how governments support religion, restrict and regulate the majority religion, and engage in DDI against minority religions (Fox, 2008, 2015). Over time it developed a module known as the RASM dataset which, unlike RAS's focus on the state as the unit of analysis, focuses on DDI against religious minorities using the minority as the level of analysis. The project developed complex detailed variables measuring DDI both by governments and society which we describe in more detail in Chapter 2 (Fox, 2016, 2020; Fox & Topor, 2021).

As noted, the RCDC project focuses on religious conflict behavior. Its original version did not include DDI variables except for differences in economic status of religious groups but does include grievance variables. The major initial publications based on both datasets appeared around the same time (Fox, 2016; Fox & Akbaba, 2015a; Fox & Akbaba, 2015b; Basedau et al., 2016). The projects joined forces to produce a study that recoded RCDC to the minority-level in the 130 countries covered in the project. Basedau, Fox et al. (2019) used this data in what became the pilot study for RMAR. It showed that the RASM DDI variables did predict grievances generally, but grievances themselves (again measured generally) did not predict violence (in the form of organized state based or nonstate conflict). Based on this pilot, the projects jointly collected the RMAR dataset.

RMAR is in some respects also a direct descendant of MAR. The government based DDI variable in RASM—governmental religious discrimination (GRD)—began as a variable developed by Fox (2002a) to measure discrimination in his MAR-based studies of ethnoreligious conflict. The variable

structure which identifies and codes multiple types of DDI separately then combines them into a larger DDI index is the same structure used by Gurr's MAR project for many of its DDI variables. This is not a coincidence since Fox's data was developed originally as part of a dissertation supervised by Gurr and Fox was one of the research assistants for the MAR project. This variable structure transferred to RAS and eventually RASM adding multiple components to the GRD variable and developing a similar societal religious discrimination (SRD) variable, both of which are included in RMAR as its primary DDI variables.

The RMAR Dataset

The RMAR dataset includes data on 771 religious minorities in 183 countries and covers 2000 to 2014.[7] This includes all countries with a population of at least 250,000 and a sampling of smaller countries. It uses the minority as the unit of analysis and includes all minorities that meet a population threshold of at least 0.2 percent of the country as well as smaller Christian minorities in Muslim-majority countries, Muslim minorities in Christian-majority countries and Jewish minorities in both Muslim-majority and Christian-majority countries.[8] RMAR defines a religious minority as a religious group which is a different religion or a different denomination of the same religion as the majority religion. Examples of the latter include Orthodox Christians in a Catholic-majority country and Shi'a Muslims in a Sunni Muslim-majority country.

Thus, RMAR is the first cross-national, events-data, minority-conflict behavior dataset that uses religious minorities as the level of analysis. It is different from MAR as well as other ethnic group-based data collections such as the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) dataset in several important respects. First, it focuses on religious rather than ethnic minorities. Second, it includes all minorities within its universe of analysis which meet a minimum population cutoff. MAR originally included ethnic minorities which were either politically active or subject to DDI. Later versions of MAR included a sampling

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[7] The RAS dataset component of RMAR covers 1990 to 2014, but the RCDC component covers only 2000 to 2014.

[8] Robustness checks for all models examined in this book confirm that excluding groups below this threshold has no significant impact upon neither our variables of interest nor our analyses. These models are provided in the Appendix.

of other ethnic minorities but no version included all ethnic minorities. This resulted in some methodological critiques we describe in more detail in Chapter 4. However, as RMAR is fully inclusive, these critiques do not apply. Third, the time-period included in MAR and RMAR differ.

RMAR uses coding procedures developed originally by Gurr (1993a, 1993b, 2000a). Each country in the dataset was assigned to a coder who produced a report on the larger religion–state and government religion policy in the country, which included treatment of religious minorities. The reports are based on a wide range of sources including (1) government reports such as the US State Department International Religious Freedom reports, (2) reports on religious freedom and related issues by intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations and the European Union, (3) country reports on political developments such as quarterly reports by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) and yearbooks such as the Africa Yearbook, (4) reports by advocacy groups such as Human Rights Without Frontiers and Forum 18, (5) a search for media sources both on the internet and in the Lexis-Nexis database, and (6) government documents such as constitutions and laws. If available (7), we also referred to secondary data in the form of scholarly articles and books. Information on conflict behavior is based on these sources. This report was the basis for the DDI codings. A separate coder used this report and other sources such as well-recognized conflict databases such as the UCDP dataset, and the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) to code the grievance, capacity, and conflict behavior variables. Thus, the data is based on a wide variety of sources. All codings were supervised and verified by the project's primary investigators (PIs) Jonathan Fox and Matthias Basedau.[9]

We discuss the structure of the variables we use in the study in Chapters 2, 3, and 5 where they are initially used. This discussion also includes descriptive information of the variables' distributions.

Looking at the bigger picture, RMAR includes the following characteristics which are in combination unique. First, it uses the religious minority as its unit of analysis. Second, it includes all relevant minorities, not just a sample. Third, it includes multiple DDI and grievance measures, and it measures different types and intensities thereof. Fourth, it includes measures for other factors such as group capacity. Finally, it includes multiple variables

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[9] For a more detailed discussion of data collection and reliability for RMAR see, Fox (2020) and Fox et al. (2018) as well as Basedau, Fox, et al. (2021).

for conflict behavior including both violent and nonviolent mobilization. We argue this provides an unprecedented opportunity to examine the conflict behavior of religious minorities.

Theory and Findings

Our core theoretical argument and empirical finding is that grievances matter. It is a simple argument. We argue, following Gurr (1993a, 1993b, 2000a), that DDI causes groups to form group-level grievances which are expressed by group leaders, representatives, and organizations in a manner seeking to redress these grievances. These grievances, in turn, motivate mobilization for conflict and conflict behavior.

While this theory has been present and debated in the literature for decades, we posit it is one that has not been satisfactorily tested, or at least not tested to everyone's satisfaction. As noted, the only previous direct tests of this theory were performed using the MAR data looking at the conflict behavior of ethnic minorities. This data has been heavily criticized for methodological flaws. While, as we discuss in Chapters 3 and 4, we disagree with much of this criticism, the criticism has been accepted by much of the relevant academic community, many of whom support competing theories. Thus, correct or not, this criticism of MAR has undermined the face validity of its claims.

The RMAR dataset provides a new view of grievance theory as well as a fresh start for it for three reasons. First, it does not have the methodological flaws attributed to MAR by its critics. Second, it focuses on religious rather than ethnic minorities. Thus, not only does RMAR provide a new and better test of grievance theory, it also constitutes the most comprehensive and systematic test to date of the conflict behavior of religious minorities. Third, the empirical results presented in this study provide essential new understandings in the precise paths by which DDI can lead to grievances and grievances can lead to conflict behavior.

The latter is particularly important because, while grievance theory is at its core simple, its application in practice is complex for two reasons. First, there are multiple types of both DDI and grievances, each having their own influences on the process. That is, each type of DDI influences the multiple types of grievances differently, and each type of grievance influences the multiple types of conflict behavior we examine differently. We summarize our key empirical findings in Figure 1.1.
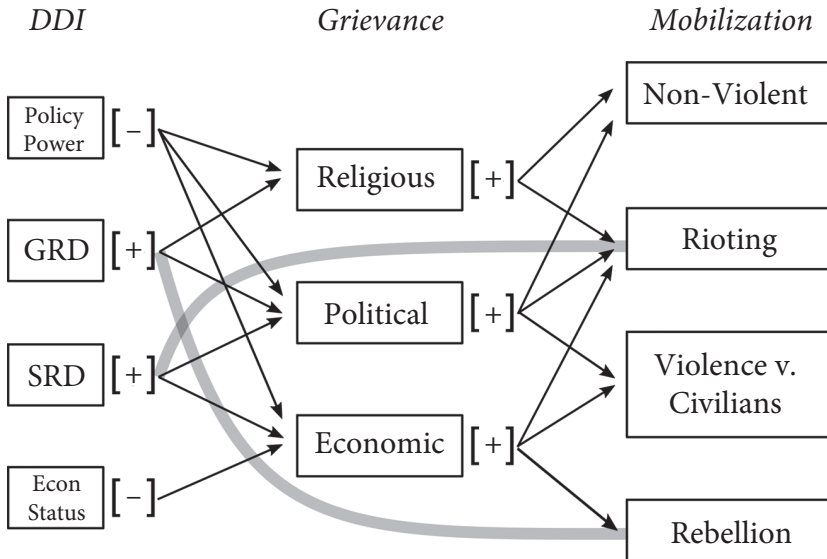
DDI *Grievance* *Mobilization*

Figure 1.1 Predicted Causal Pathways: DDI to Grievance to Mobilization

We find that GRD (governmental religious discrimination) predicts levels of political and religious grievances but not economic grievances. However, SRD (societal religious discrimination) predicts levels of political and economic grievances but not religious grievances. Finally, whereas inclusion of minorities in policy-making processes (the inverse of political deprivation) tends to decrease all grievance types, improved economic status (the inverse of economic inequality) seems to primarily diminish economic grievances. Thus, while we confirm that DDI leads to grievances, specifics matter. This is particularly interesting because, as we discuss in Chapters 3 and 4, many consider the link between DDI and grievances automatic. If one is present so must be the other. On a superficial level, our findings show this to be true in that each type of DDI causes some type of grievance, and all types of grievance we examine are predicted by some type of DDI. However, when breaking both DDI and grievances into types, we find that distinct pathways between the specific types of DDI and grievances emerge. In addition, while a relationship exists it is by no means automatic as there are numerous cases where DDI and grievance levels do not match. Thus, the general principle holds but the devil is in the details and these details are critically important for understanding the grievance formation process. This, we argue, is an insight absent in many parts of the literature, particularly among critics of grievance theory.

The link between grievances and conflict behavior is, if anything, more complex. We examine the impact of religious, political, and economic grievances on nonviolent political mobilization and three types of violence—rioting, violence against civilians (most of which would be considered by most analysts to be terrorism), and organized rebellion (frequently labeled "intrastate armed conflict"). Nonviolent mobilization is defined as events where minority members organize peacefully in order to voice grievances. These can include demonstrations, rallies, strikes, press conferences, campaigns, boycotts, or dialogues. They are predicted by political and economic grievances but not religious grievances.

Rioting—which includes riots and other unorganized violence by group members—is the only type of violence predicted by all three types of grievances measured by RMAR. Organized violence is predicted by political and economic grievances. Religious grievances actually predict a reduced intensity in organized violence. Finally, economic grievances weakly predict rebellion. However, more intense political and religious grievances predict lower likelihoods of rebellion. It is important to note that unlike rioting and organized violence, the incidence of rebellion among religious minorities is so rare that this may be a statistical artifact.

We argue that these findings for conflict behavior are explained by a government's desire and ability to address grievances. We posit that as a minority's conflict behavior becomes more intense, a government has greater incentives to address these grievances to avoid domestic instability. However, some grievances are simpler to address than others. Religious grievances, as coded by RMAR, are essentially complaints over religious DDI such as restrictions on religious practices and institutions, which is exactly what is measured by GRD. Addressing them requires little more than repealing the offending policy. This has some cost as these types of restrictions are rarely present without significant political constituency supporting them, but changing such policies usually requires no more than passing a law or changing bureaucratic regulations. Political grievances involve issues of political exclusion and marginalization. These issues can be addressed, but they are procedurally more difficult to address than the issues raised by religious grievances. Redress often includes provision of political representation, recognition of religious authority in civil matters, or forms of group self-determination—from communal self-governance to territorial autonomy. It also involves politicians from the religious majority ceding a portion of their power and influence. This accommodation of grievances most commonly

occurs before conflict. However, if and when violence does occur, this usually results in the hardening of states' restrictive policies and actions.

Finally, economic grievances are often based on long-term economic marginalization. While some economic DDI may be due to government policies, much of it is due to societal attitudes and prejudice which are more difficult to address. That is, a country can pass a law banning discrimination in the workplace and education, for example, but this rarely results in true equality and certainly is even less likely to achieve this goal in the short term. Even assuming good intentions and societal cooperation—an uncertain assumption at best—redressing long-term economic DDI takes considerable political will and time.

This link between grievances and conflict behavior is made even more complicated because some forms of DDI appear to directly influence conflict behavior even beyond grievance formation, albeit to a more subtle degree. SRD makes rioting more likely. We argue this is because SRD constitutes discreet incidents of harassment, violence, and goading of minorities. Such incidents can cause collective anger, which can result in spontaneous forms of violent protest, that is, rioting. It has less influence on organized and purposeful violence. GRD makes rebellion more likely. We believe that in this case GRD is acting as a proxy for repressive governments, which successfully repress nonviolent mobilization and violence not reaching the level of rebellion, making rebellion the only possible outlet.

In sum, the DDI to grievances to conflict process is theoretically simple but in practice complex. Specific types of DDI and grievances have different influences on different types of conflict behavior. Nevertheless, we find the basic model to be valid.

The second element of the complexity of this model is that it is not only DDI and grievances that matter. Much of the civil war and domestic conflict literature tends to take an exclusivist approach wherein if one theory is correct, the other must be wrong. We take a different approach that allows for and recognizes multiple influences on conflict behavior.

As we discuss in more detail in Chapter 4, a broad literature posits that group opportunity, resources and capacity are what determines levels of conflict. That is, conflict is not determined by DDI and grievances but, rather, those who are most able to mobilize are the ones who are most likely to engage in conflict. Yet a significant challenge faced by much of recent scholarship in this regard is an empirical inability to differentiate between group-level discrimination and group-level mobilizational capacity, As we

explain at various points in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. projects like the EPR dataset operationalize discrimination against ethnic minorities in terms of relative exclusion from, access to, and control over state executive power apparatuses, "disregarding access to legislative and judicial institutions" (Vogt et al., 2021, p. 5) for "politically relevant ethnic groups." This approach, in essence, limits analysis only to those groups likely to have relatively high mobilizational capacities.

By contrast, our study investigates all religious minorities that meet a low demographic threshold (0.2 percent of the total population as well as a sampling of smaller minorities of general scholarly interest). We then directly measure both explicit governmental and societal discrimination against specific religious minorities, as well as collective expression of grievance by these specific minorities, measurements previously collected (to a less complex degree) only by the Minorities at Risk project. Finally, we separately measure whether these minority groups are (1) politically organized outside of government, (2) politically represented in a country's legislature, and (3) exercise influence over executive policymaking. We argue that by disaggregating group-level discrimination and grievance from measurements of political power, we can better understand the above detailed measures not merely as proxies for political deprivation but as directly indicative of group organizational capacity.

Having done so, we confirm that group capacity indeed significantly influences grievance formation and conflict behavior, however these effects augment rather than exclude the influence of DDI and grievances. In the grievance formation process, we find two capacity variables to be particularly influential. The presence of minority organizations increases the levels of all three types of grievances. Thus, groups which have the capacity to organize political parties and organizations to represent their interests are more likely to seek redress. This finding is unsurprising. However, groups which are included in the government and, thus, have the power to influence policy express lower levels of all three types of grievances. We believe that this is because when a group can influence policy from within a government, there is less of a need to publicly seek redress of grievances. As Grzymala-Busse (2015) argues, when religious organizations are able to influence policy behind closed doors, this is more effective than open politics such as the public expression of grievances.

In contrast to policy power's deep influence on the grievance formation process, it has little direct influence on the conflict process except that it may

reduce the likelihood of rebellion. Though this finding, while logical for the same reasons as described above, has marginal significance. The presence of group organizations predicts nonviolent mobilization, rioting, and organized violence but not rebellion. Group representation in government—which measures only the presence of elected representative, not influence on policy—influences all forms of violent behavior measured by RMAR. Finally, groups which are a larger proportion of the population are more likely to engage in nonviolent mobilization as well as all three forms of violent behavior.

Thus, capacity matters. Yet the capacity argument has been tested multiple times, so this finding in isolation is not new. Our findings, including this one, are new, however, in at least six ways when examined in the larger context of this study. First, DDI and grievances matter in addition to capacity, and as it seems grievances matter more for protest and conflict than the underlying DDI variables. Second, the influence of DDI and grievances is primarily through a two-stage model with grievances mediating most, but not all, of the influence of DDI on conflict behavior. Third, our multitheory approach yields better results than arguments that one theory precludes the validity of others. Fourth, our findings are not subject to the methodological critiques that have been applied to previous grievance-based studies. Fifth, the capacity factor is intimately tied up in the DDI to grievances to conflict model, especially at the grievance formation level. Thus, including DDI and grievances in capacity arguments has, we argue, more than additive value.

Finally, our findings all apply to religious minorities. This study constitutes the most comprehensive examination of conflict behavior by religious minorities to date. Neither the general literature on domestic conflict and civil war nor the religious conflict literature contains many studies that focus on religious minorities. In fact, most of the previous cross-country empirical studies of religious minorities, and all of them that include grievance variables, include among their authors at least one of this study's authors. As we discuss in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4, these previous studies are based on data that is more limited and less comprehensive than the RMAR dataset.

All of this raises an interesting issue. Despite many claims that religion has a unique influence on conflict, we find that the behavior of religious minorities is largely consistent with behavior typically theorized to match the interests and behaviors of other, primarily ethnic, minority types. The DDI to grievance to conflict model in which group capacity plays a critical role is certainly not unique to religious minorities. What is unique is the

role of religious DDI and grievances. That is, even though religious DDI and grievances play a role that is analogous to other types of DDI and grievances, religious grievances and DDI include unique elements. These can be found both in their content and their idiosyncratic influence on the path to conflict. We demonstrate that each type of DDI and grievances is unique. Thus, religion adds a unique element, just as the autonomy issue does for ethnic minorities (Gurr, 1993a, 1993b, 2000a).

Put differently, each type of minority has its own traits, which makes it unique and will influence the process by which they mobilize for conflict. This is true of religious and ethnic minorities as well as others based on sexuality, gender identity, and other bases for identity. Each will have its unique issues and grievances and will experience different constellations of DDI. This makes each identity type unique. In addition, each type of DDI and grievance will forge unique paths to conflict. However, we posit that all of these paths will follow the general pattern of DDI to grievances to conflict.

Research Strategy and Structure

In Chapter 2, we begin with a discussion of DDI and grievances. These are the central causal variables in our model. We discuss how RMAR defines and measures these concepts. We provide descriptive statistics for these variables as well as illustrative examples of the many components of these measures. We also discuss the theoretical background of these concepts.

Chapter 3 examines the first stage of our two-stage model, the influence of DDI on grievances. It begins with a discussion of the evolution of theories which posit a link between DDI and grievances. We find that while this is a much discussed and debated topic, tests of this relationship are rare. In fact, much of the literature simply assumes this relationship exists to the extent that DDI variables are sometimes considered nearly synonymous with grievances. We also discuss the many different conceptions of grievances and how variables based on these different conceptions can have different influences on conflict dynamics. As noted, we find that while DDI does cause grievances the paths between DDI and grievances depend much upon the specific types of DDI and grievances in question.

Chapter 4 is devoted to the theoretical debate over the link between grievances and conflict behavior. In particular, we dive deeply into the empirical branches of grievance theory, its critics, and proposed alternative

theories as well as the religion and conflict literature. We demonstrate that there is considerable disagreement over the grievance theory literature, and this disagreement includes both theoretical and empirical elements. We also demonstrate that while our study is well situated within these literatures, it offers a unique analysis of the conflict behavior of religious minorities, including the religious influences on this behavior. Chapter 5 provides the empirical testing of the RMAR data on the link between grievances and conflict behavior, which we describe in the previous section.

Chapter 6 summarizes and discusses the theoretical, empirical, and political implications of our findings. Again, we find that grievances matter in a manner consistent with our two-stage model, but that capacity also plays an important, interrelated role. The results are complex, and likely in some specifics unique to religious minorities, but we argue our two-stage model should be generalizable in many respects to the conflict behavior of other types of minorities. Religion, in the form of religious DDI and grievances, also matters. We do not claim that this study is the final word on the topic. However, we do claim it provides sufficient evidence to require that grievances be taken seriously in models seeking to explain domestic conflict and civil war, especially when involving minorities.