

Does Religion Is Detrimental To Human Rights?

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Abstract

Human rights and religions: this has been a topical question ever since religion came to the forefront of current events. Religious believes, in fact, integrally connected with the protection of human right and influential social forces in many societies, which, as a result has become a controversial issue whether religions practices promote or constrain human rights. Does religion is detrimental to human rights is critical in both philosophical and legal question. The paper analyses that religion are detrimental to human rights, in two main respects. First, human rights outcomes tend to be worse in highly religious societies, particularly in countries where citizens report attending religious services frequently. Second, Muslim-majority nations offer less respect for and protection of human rights compared to other nations. Moreover, where religiosity is increasing, human rights are suffering.

The paper highlights the degree of a society religiosity to its expected respect for economic and social right, women's right, civil and political right. There exist the philosophical contributions of world major religions and practical contractions in realization of Human rights especially the women rights. The paper is divided into two parts, part one deals with philosophical contribution of major religions towards realizing human rights norms and part two highlights the practical contradictions of religion in realizing human rights

Keywords: Religion, Human Rights, Access to justice, women rights

Introduction

The human rights are inherent and intrinsic of human beings and its recognition is as old as the human civilization. The concept of human rights was the issue of the concept of non-discrimination on the basis of race, colour, creed, sex, age, class, language, national, origin and political belief. Human rights should be a matter of concerns to all of us especially, to the poor and disadvantaged people. What was happening in practice is that right to life and livelihood of marginalized people have been systematically ignored and downgraded.

Human Rights are of tremendous significance in the contemporary world. Human rights may be viewed as an ongoing attempt to define human dignity and to create human culture in future for society. The word 'human,' encompasses all men, women and children born on this global earth. The basic definition is: "Human rights are those rights, which every person possesses and should be able to enjoy, simply because they are human beings." In the language of United Nations Center for Human Rights – "Human Rights could be generally defined as those rights which are inherent in our nature and without which we cannot live as human beings."

Out of the philosophical and religious teaching, what are the rights that all human beings are suppose to have? There are, of course, no absolute agreement, but there are certain rights that have been accepted by a large number of people at the dawn of the twenty first century. Some basic human rights include: right to life; right to liberty; right to property; right to privacy; equal treatment before the law; freedom of speech; freedom of religious worship; freedom from torture; freedom from cruel and inhumane punishment; freedom from discrimination; freedom of movement and residence; right to education; right to an adequate standard of living.

The contemporary human rights include: welfare rights, such as the right to unemployment insurance, old-age pension, medical services, holidays with pay etc.,. The socio-economic inequality, that persists in the third world countries is pregnant with many scars on the human society such as chronic poverty, shortage of food stuffs, inequitable distribution of wealth, scarcity of potable water, slum dwelling, prostitution, awful gender discrimination, religious acrimony, forced displacement, acute unemployment, etc. The above situation is the result of serious backwardness of contemporary society: Regional chauvinism, linguistic fanaticism, religious bigotry, casetism, ideological perversion, boundary disputes, inter- state river water problems, terrorist tendencies, and so on are the outcome of narrow mindedness of the people. The scope of human rights in the contemporary context is wide and far reaching.

Review of Literature:

A review of well-known scientist Stephen Hawking's final book on, "**Brief Answers to the Big Questions**" is a very interesting book relevant with the topic of this paper. The author chosen to study the Stephen Hawking was

recognized as one of the greatest minds of our time, moreover, the first chapter of the book states that "Is There a God?" It is an ancient conflict, and debated over thousands of years. It is the debate among the great scholars and lay man at different levels.

The book is divided into ten chapters, each posing a different question. Three are open-ended: "What is inside a black hole?", "How did it all begin?" and "How do we shape the future?". The other seven are all yes/no questions, such as "Is there a God?", "Is time travel possible?" and "Will we survive on Earth?", all of which seduce the reader into thinking there will be easy answers. He provides his personal views on our biggest challenges as a human race, and where we, as a planet, are heading next. Each section will be introduced by a leading thinker offering his or her own insight into Professor Hawking's contribution to our understanding. In essence, this book will stand as Hawking's manifesto. Optimistic, upbeat and visionary, it sees science – and scientific understanding – as vital for the future of humanity.

The review of "**Christian Traditional Values Prefiguring the Development of Human Rights**" by Daniel Golebiewski emphasis on Christians believe that God has given every human being a special dignity that should not be violated by anyone and has called all to the responsibility of protecting human rights, as well as the social conditions necessary for human dignity. Although Christians generally accept the main tenets of the UDHR—though never without qualifications—they do not consider this universal document as superior to the values of the spiritual word found in their scripture. Ultimately, regardless whether human rights or religious values, uniting and interconnecting civil and political, economic and social, individual and collective human rights can

provide a harmonious social life on both the national and international levels. In simpler words, whatever works in protecting human life and security is what the international human rights system needs.

The review of another article on “**Economic Rights and Justice in the Qur'an**” by Zehra F. Kabasakal Arat outline the compatibility of Islam with the international human rights norms has been a continuous topic of debate. Diversity in Islam inevitably leaves all arguments inconclusive. She compares the text of the Qur'an, which is the highest authority in Islam, with the International Bill of Rights (IBR) by focusing on economic rights and justice. The Qur'an and the IBR seek an egalitarian economic system that sets restrictions on the use of property. This article draws attention to the Qur'anic verses' emancipatory promise, which is also embedded in the IBR, but is often undermined by the privileged of both Muslim-majority and in other states.

The research works done by David L. Cingranelli & Carl Kalmick on the topic, “Is Religion the Enemy of Human Rights?”, which provides the basis for this paper. The article argues that Governments supply different levels of protection for different human rights, in part, because the members of their societies demand protection of some rights, but not all rights for all members of society. The authors argue that societal religiosity is an important factor reducing the level of societal demand for many human rights. Using quantitative indicators of societal religiosity and respect for human rights, the findings of this study show that (a) most human rights practices are worse in societies where citizens are more religious and (b) Muslim majority nations provide less respect for almost all human rights. The findings of the research work would be of more debatable by the religious scholars.

Research Methodology:

The research paper is doctrinal in its methodology as it entails a critical, qualitative analysis of legal materials, and also uses the literature review to support the opinions. Doctrinal research has been defined as an analytical study in which the authors had used facts already available and analyzes these to make a critical evaluation of the material. The compatibility of philosophy of the three major religions (Christian, Islam and Hindu) of the world with the International Bill of Rights (IBR) where tried to address in this doctrinal research.

Part I

Philosophical Contribution of Major Religions towards Human Rights Norms

Although engaging in a lengthy debate on these issues is not within the purpose of this paper, it is relevant and important to discuss where Christian, Islam, Hinduism as present within their scriptures stands on individual rights. Almost all the religions in the world empower people to become human and to share their humanity with one another.

The defense of human rights that is enshrined in many National Constitutions throughout the world is rooted in western philosophy. However, many of the world's religions, have been around much earlier than philosophy, they offer a better defense of human rights than philosophy. From the religious point of view, every human being is a divine being and is entitled to dignity, liberty, equality and other basic rights.

1.1. Theological Reflections on Human rights: Christianity

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Holy Bible, Galatians 3: 28)

In the view of the Christian religion over human rights, Holy Bible, has been preaching as follows: **“Love thy neighbour as thyself.”** This had greatly influenced the western tradition to respect human rights. One of the central definitions of ethical system is: **“Don’t do unto others what is hateful to you, The God will know. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”** These golden teachings of Jesus Christ fore shadowed the concept of human rights.

According to Christian doctrine, human life is a gracious gift from God and, therefore, holy prefiguring UDHR’s Article 3 of the right to life. Hence, the human being created in the image of God is meant to be “God’s representative” on earth, who acts caringly and compassionately. By having an inherent dignity in the eyes of God, the human being must not only respect the other but also respect the sanctity of human life. Christians argue that humans have rights not because they are part of the natural order, but because God created them. Likewise, Jesus also teaches the “Golden Rule”: “In everything do to others as you would have them do to you.” Regarding the right to life, in short, Christians believe that all should oppose torture and inhumane treatment, also found in Article 5 of the UDHR, based on God’s creation and Jesus’s teachings.

In other words, in relation to Article 21 of the UDHR, a “good government” forms when a relationship exists between the state and its citizens. On the one hand, citizens have the obligation to give allegiance to the state.

Christians adhere that God is the best model for a just judge—he is “not partial and takes no bribe and always stands by the innocent. After all, Christians believe that God, not state courts, will judge the individual standing before his throne during the end of days. In fact, Jesus himself upholds the sanctity of God’s Law by declaring that not one part of it should fail. Hence, Christians regard the following directions needed to have just, humane judicial proceedings.

First, humans are equal before the law, which is advocated on the Article 7 of the UDHR. Secondly, the prosecution requires at least two witnesses to testify. Thirdly, for God is impartial, the judge, having carefully examined all the evidence, must rule with complete impartiality and without prejudice, as well as without bribes, all of which can be similarly found in UDHR’s Articles 10 and 11. Lastly, both nationals and foreign residents must come under the same penal system. In essence, these judicial directions indicate, once again, that God wishes for all humans to treat one another in his likeness.

For instance, Jesus’s teachings or his followers’ actions have no support for the use of violence towards social reforms. As an example, Jesus discourages his disciples from the use of the sword but rather to live at peace with all; if humans ignore this fundamental principle, they can never achieve social reform. Although one can argue that Jesus has a revolutionary character because he challenges the status quo of his own times, he accomplishes his mission not through political action but rather on spiritual grounds.

On the Labour rights, Christianity provides general direction on labour, “the labourer deserves to be paid. Labour must be an act that becomes “holy and acceptable to God.” Lastly,

employers should give their employees a day or two to devote themselves to God and/or to rest—these day(s) should be a benefit, not a burden, to the employer and employee.

Hence, the principle that an employee cannot continuously work but needs rest from his labors has proved to be essential to one's physical and mental state in line with Article 24 of UDHR on the right to rest and leisure.

1.2. Theological Reflections on Human rights: Islam

Holy Quran, has illustrated the concept of human rights as, "All men are brothers and that non-Muslims should be treated with no less dignity and respect for their personality than Muslims. No Discrimination against all persons, whether black or white or whatsoever."

The first and the foremost basic right is the right to live and respect human life. The Holy Quran lies down: "Whosoever kills a human being without (any reason like) man slaughter, or corruption on earth, it is as though he had killed all mankind". The compatibility of Islam with the international human rights norms has been a continuous topic of debate. Diversity in Islam inevitably leaves all arguments inconclusive. The governments of Arab and other Muslim-majority countries do not reject human rights. In fact, many of them have ratified, although often with reservations, a number of international human rights treaties. The former US President George W. Bush, who consider "moderate Islam" to be compatible with the "Western norms" of democracy and human rights.

Muslim majority countries typically accept the responsibility of implementing the treaties as long as each provision is in compliance with the Islamic Shari'a. However, Shari'a is not a fixed and settled code; Shari'avaries in time and space depending on the religious scholars'

interpretation, as well as the understanding of political leaders and local people. The author of this article have had practical experiences, the understudying of sharia is different in Afghanistan and Ethiopia.

Abul A'la Mawdudi argues that Islam not only recognized human rights at least ten centuries before the West, but also offered a stronger foundation because the rights in Islam are given by God not by a temporal being like a king or an assembly. His list of "basic" Islamic human rights include the rights to life, the safety of life, a basic standard of living, freedom (from slavery), justice, the right to co-operate or not to co-operate, equality of human beings, and respect for the chastity of women. He further delineates fifteen "rights of citizens in an Islamic state," which include the following: the security of life and property; the protection of honor; the sanctity and security of private life; the security of personal freedom; the right to protest against tyranny; freedom of expression; freedom of association; freedom of conscience and conviction; protection of religious sentiments; protection from arbitrary imprisonment; the right to basic necessities of life; equality before law; rulers not above law; the right to avoid sin; and the right to participate in the affairs of state.

Although the Qur'an recognizes individual ownership of property, the ownership is not absolute, and how it can be accumulated and used is subject to restrictions. The actual ownership belongs to God. Human beings are entrusted with the care of wealth on earth, both provided by nature (God) and produced by human labor. Several verses remind of the divine creation and reiterate the divine ownership of the worlds. While God provides for all people and invites them to freely enjoy His bounty, shares of the wealth are not distributed evenly. In fact, the unequal distribution of wealth and property is presented

as the will of God. As the actual possessor of the great bounty, "He gives to whom He wills" and some gifts "exceed others." Since the inequality in wealth and rank is purposeful, how the advantaged people dispose of their wealth is subject to God's judgement: "it is He who has made you successors upon the earth and has raised some of you above others in degrees [of rank] that He may try you through what He has given you". Noting "Islamic Law is in favor of the profit motive but against interest on loans," Ali A. Mazrui claims that Prophet Mohammad followed elements of "a mixed economy encompassing both socialist and neo-capitalist tendencies."

What is often overlooked is the fact that rights and responsibilities, as expressed in the Qur'an, on both spiritual and social levels, lie with the individual (with the exception of punishment of capital crimes). Inheritance rights and property ownership are assigned to the individual. Marriage is a contract between two individuals, and the partners keep the ownership of their individual properties separate. Orphans hold their property rights as individuals. Women participate in the legal process as individuals, separate from their husbands—they can sue, or be sued, serve as witnesses, and be parties to contracts. Thus, contrary to the common belief, one can argue that Islam, as expressed in the Qur'an, is not a religion against individualism. It embraces individualism by holding each person responsible to both God and to other members of society.

These instructions have been repeated in the Holy Quran in another place saying: Do not kill a soul which Allah has made sacred except through the due process of law. The Prophet has declared homicide as the greatest sin only next to polytheism. The Tradition of the Prophet reads: "The greatest sins are to associate something with God and to kill human beings."

This is a very important and valuable right which Islam has given to man as a human being. The Holy Quran has laid down: "do not let ill-will towards any folk incite you so that you swerve from dealing justly. "Be just; that is nearest to heedfulness" Stressing this point the Quran again says: "You who believe stand steadfast before God as witness for (truth and) fair play". This makes the point clear that Muslims have to be just not only with ordinary human beings but even with their enemies. Muslims therefore, cannot be unjust to anyone. Freedom of expression is an important and fundamental human right in Islam. Quran discusses it briefly. There are many verses of Quran which describe freedom of expression its importance and principles. The basic principle of Quranic conversation is good talking. As Allah says in the Holy Quran "And speak fairly to the People." Quran describes the freedom of expression as fundamental right but also points out the principles and limitations of freedom of expression for peaceful and humble society.

1.3 Theological Reflections on Human rights: Hinduism

Hinduism, the dominant religion in India also supports the idea of human rights. Vedic commands, include, non-violence and social justice (helping the poor), both central theme to human rights. Hinduism, has preached the doctrine of the kinship of the whole world, meaning thereby that human beings are all kith and kin of one family. The apt ancient Sanskrit text, which embodies these concepts, is reproduced below:

"I seek no kingdoms nor heavenly pleasure nor personal salvation since to relieve humanity from its manifold pains and distresses is the supreme objectives of mankind."

Buddha, had taught to honor parents, brothers, sisters, children, other relatives and other persons in the society. Regard for human dignity is the basic social message of Buddhism. Buddhism as a philosophical theme, as well as a moral way of life, has been concerned with spiritual salvation, whereas human rights aims at natural salvation. According to Guru Nanak (Sikhism), **"no one was superior or inferior simply because of his/her birth."** He said, **"How could we consider her (women) inferior to men who has given birth to the kings?"** He also adds **"God's Grace is showered, where the lowly ones are cared for."** These thoughts have strengthened the respect for human rights.

The ancient Hindu jurists differed from their western counterparts on matters relating to rights, obligations to the State etc., Indian classical writers, in fact anticipated many of the modern problems, much earlier than the western writers. However, Indian scholars made no conceptual formulation of the notion of rights against somebody or the **'rights versus duties.'** The Indian Concept of **"Dharma" (Dharma means morality, is 'path of life')** was very comprehensive and it included several political concepts, such as: **rights and duties of the ruler and the ruled, the problem of obedience, the question of resistance,** and so on.

However in reality, Many Indians, both inside and outside the Dalit community, have attributed such persisting discrimination to Hinduism. During the movement for independence, leaders such as Mohandas Gandhi and B. R. Ambedkar placed opposition to untouchability at the center of the struggle. Opposition to caste more generally, however, was a minority view that was largely sidelined. At independence, the Indian government consciously chose to target untouchability in particular rather than caste in general. Thus the Indian Constitution, adopted in 1949, abolishes untouchability (as well as human trafficking and forced labor) but merely

prohibits state discrimination on the basis of caste (as well as religion, race, sex, or place of birth) and assures equality before the law and nondiscriminatory access to public places and facilities and public employment.

In contemporary India, the home of the vast majority of the world's Hindus, Hinduism functions as both a support for and an impediment to the exercise and enjoyment of internationally recognized human rights. The Hindu tradition has proven no impediment to independent India's sustained and vibrant, if deeply imperfect, tradition of democratic political rule. Caste continues to be mobilized by the privileged to perpetuate their privilege. Hindutva has become a powerful support for discrimination and communal conflict. Hinduism, however, in recent decades has also come to be mobilized in ways incompatible with human rights. Continued repression of Dalits is often justified (or at least rationalized) by appeals to Hindu scripture and tradition and Hinduism has been mobilized by right-wing nationalists, under the label of Hindutva ("Hinduness"), exacerbating the recurrently violent "communal" struggles between "Muslims" and "Hindus."

Part II Practical Contradictions of Religions in realizing Human Rights

Some argue that human rights come from God or at least are grounded in religious faith. Others have noted that the ideologies of religion and human rights differ in their sources, the bases of their authority, and even in their substantive norms, so the teachings of religious organizations support some human rights norms and conflict with others. The minimally good life is the focus point of human rights, the Christian philosophy also teaches the same idea. We argue that societal values, attitudes, and beliefs affect decisions by national politicians about which human rights to protect and which

ones to ignore. Religiosity is one important factor directly affecting citizen demands for various human rights, which, in turn, helps explain variations in national human rights practices.

In other countries, members of the religious majority often persecute minorities with the apparent blessing of their governments (e.g., in Myanmar and Iraq). Additionally, far right political parties advance religious extremist policies in many countries with increasing political success (e.g., in Israel, and Germany). In many Caribbean, Central American, and African countries, sexual minorities are oppressed with the strong backing of both Christian and Muslim religious leaders.

In many predominantly Muslim countries, public policies do not provide equal social, economic, or political rights to women, do not treat women as equal to men in giving testimony in court, and criminalize blasphemous forms of literature and art. All of the world's major religions contain doctrines that have been and are being used to subjugate women. Partly as a result of this increase in religiosity, religious intolerance has increased, freedom of the press has declined, the right of the people to assemble has been restricted, intolerance of vulnerable minorities including immigrants and sexual minorities has increased, and the right of people to participate in their government has deteriorated. Any kind of discrimination is racist, scientifically wrong, legally invalid, morally condemnable and socially unjust.

Some Muslim politicians and scholars, on the other hand, consider democracy and human rights as alien notions imposed by the West as a ploy to maximize Western interests and undermine the sovereignty of their states or the value of Islam. The Islamic Shari'ah prohibits Muslims from converting to any other religion. This prohibition of apostasy is based on what is

stated in the Qur'an 'if anyone desires a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him; and in the hereafter he will be among the losers'. In fact, apostasy under the rules of the Shari'ah is punishable by the death penalty. This is without doubt contrary to the freedom of religion guaranteed by Article 18 of the ICCPR.

Increasing religiosity is a potentially big problem for human rights in developing countries. Survey research shows that religiosity is increasing in most developing countries, while the citizens of wealthier countries are becoming less religious. Exposure to the teachings of organized religion often reduces citizen demands for human rights protection, because most religious institutions undermine the crucially important human rights belief that all humans are equal. All religious organizations claim that members of their in-group are superior to the members of all other religions and to all non-believers in God. When individuals regularly expose themselves to teachings of religious institutions, they are more likely to adopt religious teachings as their own beliefs.

Religious organizations encourage the expression of this need by providing a basis for social identity and by sometimes portraying members of out groups as immoral, sinful, and dangerous to the social order. To reinforce this social identity, faith leaders usually discourage dating or marrying non-members through religious education programs, youth ministry, and marriage preparation. Organized religions generally resist the focus of the human rights movement on the individual's autonomy, freedom, and rights. Instead, religions are likely to emphasize the individual's duties and obligations as necessary to promote the welfare of the larger community. They often oppose human rights norms such as free speech, participatory decision-making, and even freedom of religion. Even more recently,

religions often have sided with authoritarian, repressive regimes. In addition, many all modern religious organizations emphasize top-down decision making rather than democracy and the empowerment of members.

One reason that Muslim majority countries have less respect for some human rights is that the interpretations of the meaning of some human rights differ between majority Muslim societies and most others. Many scholars have argued that the concept of human rights originated in the West. The list of human rights included in the International Bill of Human Rights and the interpretations of those rights reflect what the governments of Western states wanted.

The research study reveals that “high societal religiosity is associated with low respect for women’s rights” further, in states with a high level of religiosity, there also is likely to be a relatively low level of demand for political rights and liberties such as freedom of speech and press, freedom of assembly and association, and the right to participate in government. Until the eighteenth century, religion was closely identified with the divine right of kings, not with democratic revolutions. On the other hand, the fastest growing Christian groups in the world are Pentecostals and evangelicals, who are not hierarchical.

Most indigenous religions also are not hierarchical, nor are Buddhism, Hinduism, Sufism, or folk religions. Moreover, though totalitarian regimes have often aligned themselves with religious organizations, their greatest resistance sometimes comes from organized religious groups. The research study reveals that the high societal religiosity is associated with less respect for civil and political rights.

The empirical research conducted in various countries by the David L. Cingranelli & Carl Kalmick had raised the questions like “How often do you attend religious services?” The attendance variable included in our analysis is the percentage of respondents in each nation who claimed to attend services at least once per month. In 2010, it ranged from 8 percent (Sweden, Russia, and Estonia) to 96 percent (Nigeria and Rwanda). The other survey question used in this project to measure religiosity is “Do you consider yourself to be a religious person?”

Table : Highest / Lowest Attendance and Countries with the Most / Least Religious People

Attendance (75% or more)	Attendance (20% or less)	Religious Person (75% or more)	Religious Person (20% or less)
Rwanda	Sweden	Ghana	Japan
Morocco	Estonia	Georgia	China
Nigeria	Azerbaijan	Nigeria	Azerbaijan
Ethiopia	Uzbekistan	Rwanda	Sweden
Ghana	Japan	Kyrgyzstan	South Korea
Bahrain	Norway	Armenia	Thailand
Philippines	France	Poland	Norway
Malaysia	Russia	Columbia	Germany
Guatemala	Taiwan	Turkey	New Zealand
Mali	Hungary	Peru	Netherlands

*** Bold type indicates a Muslim majority nation.

Sources: David L. Cingranelli & Carl Kalmick (2019)

The above study reveals that high Attendance was associated with worse government respect for human rights. The other indicator of religiosity, Religious Person, had no effect on respect for Women's Economic Rights. Attendance did not affect the level of Prevention of Domestic Violence towards Women, but societies with a higher percentage of Religious Persons provided less Prevention of Domestic Violence towards Women. This is the only instance where having a high percentage of religious persons was related to worse protection of any of the human rights examined in the research study. They study also reveals that the Muslim Majority countries provide less respect

for human rights—in this case women's economic rights and women's protections from domestic violence. Muslim Majority countries also provide less protection of Women's Political Rights.

The bottom-up perspective acknowledges that societal religiosity can be fueled from the top, but it posits that the causal force exerted by citizens over politicians is stronger than the influence exerted by politicians over citizens. A top-down perspective on human rights protection would emphasize that political leaders often stoke religious and other forms of nationalism to attain and maintain their power.

For example, the Prime Minister of India has fueled Hindu nationalism. His reinforcement of Hindu nationalist sentiments has led to anti-Muslim violence by vigilante groups and probably has encouraged police and other security forces to engage in discrimination against Muslim citizens as well. Brian Grim and Roger Finke have found that when governments like India's promote one religion over others, there tends to be an increase in societal persecution of religious minorities by religious majorities. However, Hindu nationalism including antipathy towards Muslims existed long before the Prime Minister used it for his personal political purposes, and Hindu nationalism is likely to continue long after he leaves office.

Conclusions:

The findings of this paper suggest that religion is an enemy of human rights, because human rights practices are worse in highly religious societies. More specifically, the findings show that more exposure to religious teachings is correlated with poor government human rights practices. They are consistent with previous research at the individual level showing that more religious people are more intolerant and close minded.

The findings strongly suggest that high exposure to religious teachings cause a lower level of government respect for most human rights. A high level of societal religiosity tends to reduce public demand for human rights protection, which, in turn, affects the amount of effort domestic politicians devote to protecting various rights. Theological and moral perspectives offered by religious institutions shape a wide variety of human rights-relevant values, attitudes, and beliefs including government's role in the redistribution of wealth, limits on individual freedom, toleration of deviance, the severity of criminal punishment, proper gender

roles, and the value of human life. Exposure to religious teachings undermines the idea that all humans are equal, the most fundamental human rights idea, and it may reinforce the human need to belong to a group and a proclivity to hate rival groups.

To achieve global justice, establishing a link between faith and internationally recognized human rights is crucial. In order to have a continuous dialogue, "We must pursue a strategy of internal transformation of perceptions of the religion, culture, or ideology in question to achieve reconciliation between belief systems."

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