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**Divine Politics: A Comparative Analysis of Religious Influence on
Immigration Policymaking Among the Contemporary Case Study
Nations of the United States, Turkey, and India**

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ABSTRACT

In hopes of dispelling common misconceptions surrounding the legitimacy of religious discourse in politics, this research paper aims to comparatively analyze secularism and national identity politics via immigration policies in three countries. Using the United States, Turkey, and India as case studies, this paper contextualizes the aforementioned research interests within immigration policy creation that varies among each country. More specifically, a case study's respective secular context, cultural background, and political environment were notable factors in determining the level of religious appeal within politics and policy. The standard for which the countries were analyzed was with respect to constitutional secularism and modern-day political leadership.

This work relied on primary research in order to arrive at data-based conclusions. The primary research in question encompassed various interviews across a range of academic scholars whose expertise focused on the case study nations; supplementary research included official language of relevant immigration policies that assisted with my data analysis. It is ultimately concluded that despite the influence that religious nationalism has on constructing national identity, more frequent displays of religious rhetoric do not inherently lead to restrictive immigration policies, as in the case of Turkey. Moreover, a nation's secular identity is fragile, and varied political interpretations allow for religious nationalism to shape policy agenda despite secular applicability in constitutional writing. Although policy recommendations prove difficult when targeting deeply ingrained societal identities, political leadership and subsequent policies should consider a secular balance in which free religious expression exists without imposing rigid religious national identities to a polity.

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INTRODUCTION

The conflict between a national religious identity and secular government policymaking has existed since nation-state formation among countries from different civilizations, cultures, and political systems. The historical background of a recognized nation provides much insight regarding the legitimization of religion within political discourse and public policy. This can be studied, for example, by comparing countries with state-sponsored religions and self-identified secular countries. While some countries -- particularly many concentrated in the Middle East and Northern Africa -- have state religions that dictate religious criteria for legislation and other governmental practice, other countries officially specify the separate identities of religion and state (Kishi, Katayoun, et. al., 2017). Even among some 'secular' nations, however, religious preferences that are dictated by a population's predominant religion seep into the policy realm. Countries with such preferences are commonly both European and predominantly Christian, with religious preference also noted in Latin and South America (Kishi, Katayoun, et. al., 2017). Understanding this key difference between state-sponsored religion and 'secular' nations with strong religious preference is important when questioning the role of religion in national identity-building, especially as it concerns national identity and immigration policymaking. Using the subsequent socio-historical context and contemporary qualitative data, I intend to explain the 'hows' and 'whys' of religious influence on policymaking in the United States, Turkey, and India, with a specific focus on recently implemented immigration policy.

The prevalence of the term 'secular' occurred fairly recently, and "it was only in the nineteenth century that the word 'secular' came to be associated with 'secularists' who espoused a doctrine of 'secularism' -- that is, the belief that religious institutions and values should play no role in the temporal affairs of the nation state" (Keddie, 2003). The term had only emerged

earlier in predominantly Catholic Western European countries during the eighteenth century European Enlightenment (Jacob, 2019). The idea of secularization as a Western concept is not only evidenced by the word's etymology, but is also particularly noted in its adoption among Western sociological theory concerning society's gradual progression towards modernization. Weber's understanding of modernization defined this *disenchantment* as "the historical process by which the natural world and all areas of human experience become experienced and understood as less mysterious; defined, at least in principle, as knowable, predictable and manipulable by humans; conquered by and incorporated into the interpretive schema of science and rational government" (Jenkins, 2000). Despite religion's unwelcome role in widely accepted modernization theory, countries with state religions or strong religious preference have been able to modernize and develop into prominent members of the global economy (Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d). The political and sociological history of the words 'secular' and 'secularism' is needed to present an accurate examination of the context to which my target countries developed secular constitutional language.

This research begins by defining 'secularism' within the context of Western civilization, and explores further the conflict presented when the Eurocentric concept contrasts with non-Western countries such as Turkey and India. I will discuss themes related to nation-building, historic religious identity, and internal conflict between religious and secular demographics within these countries' populations. By beginning my paper with this historical background analysis, I am helping answer *why* -- despite cultural, political, and demographic differences -- my target countries were able to identify as constitutionally secular. In order to understand secularism's direct conflict with national identity and globalization, I am focusing specifically on the scope of immigration policy within these three countries. Given that the time frame

encompassing the history of secularism for these countries is relatively wide, I choose to discuss contemporary forms of immigration policy that have been recently enacted in order to observe recent shifts in religious tone of national political discourse.

The focus of my research is directed on three countries in particular: the United States, India, and Turkey. While these countries expand upon the aforementioned variables such as culture, demographic composition, and differing government systems, they also are identified as constitutionally secular -- whether at the nation's conception or as addenda that later modified the respective constitutions. This constitutional secularism provides a standard for which I am able to conduct this comparative analysis, and ultimately allows me to assess characteristics that expand beyond legal acceptance of a state religion. Despite legal precedent outlining the nature of religion within the political and policy spheres, religious revivalism, populist rhetoric, and internal divide has helped introduce (or re-introduce) religion into policymaking. After shifting from my theoretical discussion on defining secularism, I will focus on case studies of these three countries to identify: 1) whether religion has been increasingly prevalent in domestic politics within these states and 2) if religion has been increasingly present in policymaking, what factors have contributed to this rise of religious influence? An understanding of these questions will lead me to analyze specific immigration policies within each country that may have had religious connotations, or may have been drafted using religious arguments to support the policy. These immigration policies and policy challenges include Executive Order 13780 (2017), *Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States*, India's Citizenship Amendment Act of 2019, and the Turkish integration of Kurds and Syrian Arabs during and after the 2015 Refugee Crisis. All policies have been implemented recently, and as such add relevance to the time frame of my research question and supported arguments.

I will conclude by discussing the current trajectory of religious influence among these constitutionally secular nations, and provide recommendations on how to navigate secularism and religious coexistence in a globalized world. I believe that my research is important because it not only provides insight towards the existing landscape of contemporary global politics, but also outlines challenges that one may identify as preventing the development of inclusive policymaking among these modernized countries. The aim of this paper is not to provide an argument for a secular or nonsecular policymaking process, but rather present accurate information that keeps a reader informed about underlying factors that create an environment for which these types of policies are implemented. As such, I believe that policy recommendations regarding a contentious topic such as religious beliefs might be counterproductive toward the aim of my research, which is to inform and initiate further discussion related to the topic.

BACKGROUND

THE UNITED STATES

Since the country's conception, religious pluralism has been a key tenet of the social dimensions of religion within the modern political landscape. Religious pluralism was historically embedded in the country by the first colonists to arrive in the pre-modern United States, as each colony and regional area adopted forms of religion respective to the religious background of those settlers. More specifically, "the New England colonies formally designated the Congregational (Puritan) Church as their official faith; Maryland was at one time officially a Catholic colony; most southern colonies officially established the Anglican Church (the Church of England, which later became known as the Episcopal Church in the United States)" (Fowler et. al, 2014). Waves of immigration later became prominent sources of increased religious pluralism in the United States during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Despite this, "Protestant domination of society produced an unofficial, cultural Protestant establishment" (Fowler et. al, 2014). This Protestant establishment became relatively pronounced in the political landscape within these centuries, and it continues to hold political influence within present-day American political culture.

In order to understand the sustained influence of religious following in the United States, it is important to analyze its resistance to periods of Enlightenment-era thinking and industrialization. Religious following in the United States was, "in one respect, the great exception to the rule of secularization in the Western industrialized nations" (Allitt, 2003). The secularization theory that posited a correlation between secularism and industrialization during the European Enlightenment did not find sustained success within already existing American religious culture. Industrial growth, particularly pertaining to the late nineteenth century and

early twentieth century, coexisted alongside religious following in the United States. This contrasted the rising impact of modern secularization theory in Europe, and “the rest of the nineteenth century witnessed a dramatic rise in church membership and the amount of money spent on church structures” (Moore, 1989). As the nation grew wealthier and more powerful in respect to economic output and political influence, religion began to adapt to innovations that helped further expand its influence beyond local communities. This existed in the form of adopting business-like practices that oversaw the growth of religious funding, as well as adapting to relevant technology such as the radio and television in order to expand their following among the American population (Allitt, 2003). Consumerism marked the advent of religion in the United States as a business form, and the combination of religious pluralism and technological innovation in the twentieth century gave rise to religious market theory. Religious market theory combines the economics of an expanding U.S economy with the rise of religious diversity in the country, and highlights the consistent competition between religious “markets” and secular institutions. This interreligious and secular competition presents itself as a competitive market for “members, attention, money, and resources” (Stolz, 2010). The rise of this competitive market among religious individuals in the United States has been credited with the rise of evangelism and the presence of Megachurches -- a combination of capitalism and religion as it has merged today.

The movement that defined contemporary perceptions of the separation of Church and state arrived during the so-called *Kennedy era*, in which the Catholic Presidential nominee used the secular rhetoric to quell the anti-Catholic sentiment reflected among American voters at the time. The subsequent years of the Kennedy Administration introduced new landmark Supreme Court cases to further separate the spheres of public life with its close integration with religion

(Silk, 2007). Some of these Supreme Court cases include *Engel v. Vitale (1962)*, which decided that states are unable to hold prayers in public schools due to a violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. *Engel v. Vitale (1962)* preceded, and perhaps partially influenced, the decision in *Lemon v. Kurtzman (1971)*, which argued that the First Amendment prohibited state funding of non-secular, non-public education. Religious pluralism and the individualism of religion in the United States ultimately prevented institutional secularism from permeating the national discussion on individual religious rights. Individual religious rights continue to be protected through Supreme Court rulings that favor free religious expression in respect to individual practice.

What is also noted is the ‘regionality’ of the various interpretations of religious expression and freedom in the United States. The so-called ‘separationists’ that argued for the exclusion of religion in the public sphere concentrated on the clauses in the *federal* Constitution that indicated a stronger separation of these religious ideals. Despite federal precedence, however, *state* Constitutions varied on the level of religious references present in their own governing papers -- particularly in many preambles of state Constitutions. Of all 145 state Constitutions amended and replaced since 1776, “sixty-one percent contain references to God in their preambles. In most cases, these preambles invoke God as the source of good government, appeal to God for help with good governance, or give thanks to God for the blessings of good government” (Hammons, 2013). Religion was another topic delegated to states, and American federalism is the unique quality within the U.S government that complicates the nature of religious expression and individual freedoms.

As mentioned prior, waves of immigration throughout the twentieth century introduced a wider range of plurality to the religious landscape of the United States. By 1945, the most

predominant religious groups included Jews, Catholics, and the variety of split factions among Protestants (Allitt, 2003). During this time, the term ‘Judeo-Christian’ was coined to describe the then-nature of the American religious heritage, transforming the country from one that regards only traditional Protestantism to a nation that was beginning to acknowledge the growing diversity of religious backgrounds among its citizens. The beginning of the use of religion to promote policy or political agenda began with the Carter Administration, when then-President Carter repeatedly referenced his Baptist ideals to promote a liberal policy agenda that resulted in white evangelical backlash throughout the 1980s (NYTimes, 2018). By then, President Reagan had formed an unofficial alliance with the white evangelical community, representing the opposition against social change in the country. The potency of political representation in Washington reinforced religious expectations from the electorate, and further solidified the appeals to religion that have since been included in political campaigns.

In modern twenty-first century demographics, the number of American adults that reported self-identifying as Christian had declined since the beginning of the twentieth century, and the rise of individuals reporting being unaffiliated or of other minority religious groups had risen (Pew Research Center, 2019). Atheism, or being unaffiliated with a particular religious denomination, has historically been met with antagonism in the United States. The exclusion has been marked by history and public opinion, most particularly during the Cold War against the USSR. Atheism was often used to complement public perception of communism, and they “came to be systematically associated with each other, conflated into the common figure of the Anti-American enemy” (Barb, 2011). Atheism’s rising acceptance in recent years indicates a slow welcome of atheists and atheism into the perception of American ‘national identity,’ which, for many years prior, had always included religious (particularly Christian) elements.

Under the former Trump Administration, policies were implemented to sustain the traditionally Christian identity of the United States. More emphasis on protections of religious liberties was a tactic used to promote political interests of the Trump voter bloc, despite former President Trump's dissociation with the identity of a devout religious leader. Discussed further within this research are the implications of the so-called 'Muslim Ban,' or the final version of the travel restrictions placed by the Trump Administration on predominantly Muslim countries via Executive Order 13780. Religious nationalism in the United States has gained heightened recognition during recent periods of political polarization, rendering the relevance of religion when shaping electoral decisions increasingly important to study and understand.

TURKEY

The time period predating Turkey's transition to secularization began with the Tanzimat reforms, or the Ottoman Empire's attempt to stymie the decline of the empire via the adoption of Western modernization ideals. The Tanzimat period beginning in 1839 was the introduction of modernization to the nation, and the transition to a modern nation-state was the first step in applying civic participation and the notion of 'citizenship' to a former Empire and its subjects (Kawtharani, 2013). Constitutionality was divided precisely among two primary ideas, "collective, national participation in the government and a limiting of the sultan's power and . . . constitutional rights of the individual within the community" (Kawtharani, 2013). It was not until the 1856 *Hatt-i-Hümayun*, however, that an imperial edict was issued by the Sultan Abdülmecid, who emphasized the equality of all individuals in the Ottoman Empire -- specifically outlining the equal rights of non-Muslims as the focal point of the edict (Davison, 1963). The era of Tanzimat reform ultimately ended in 1876, when the *Kanun-i Esasi* became the first Ottoman

Constitution, introducing a constitutional monarchy and bringing the Ottoman Empire closer to what is now considered the modern Turkish Republic.

Turkish secularism, or *laiklik*, was not adopted until the establishment of this modern republic; although the Tanzimat reforms initiated discussion about citizenship rights and civil liberties, the religious institutions represented within the Ottoman Empire continued to exist despite the reform promoted by high-ranking individuals in the empire. The implementation of Turkish secularism, *laiklik*, was a result of the war for Turkish independence and the election of Mustafa Kemal (Kemal Atatürk). The adoption of a series of constitutional changes in 1924 allowed Turkey's governing legislative body, the National Assembly, to elect a President and approve a Premier and Cabinet. Upon his election as President of the newly formed republic, Mustafa Kemal began to initiate the reforms intended to spur modernization in Turkey. Kemal Atatürk's leadership -- under the auspices of the Republican People's Party -- inspired a political ideology known as Kemalism, which utilized six principles in order to diminish the influence of religious institutions and impose complete modernization of Turkish society: nationalism, republicanism, secularism, reformism, populism, and etatism (Çelik, 2018). The adoption of secularization signified a rejection of the Islamic law that governed the country throughout the previous Ottoman Empire -- an Islamic law which had later been replaced with Western frameworks for civil, penal, and commercial structures in the country. Secularism tightened state control of religious affairs, sometimes even using state institutions as a mode of regulating and directing the role of religion within society. This was most evidenced by the creation of the *Diyanet* in 1924. The *Diyanet*, or the Directorate of Religious Affairs, is responsible for the management of places of worship and overall religious education of the public (Ulutas, 2010). There exist varied interpretations of the role of the *Diyanet*, and "whereas some secularists have

criticized the *Diyamet* for being an obstacle to the complete application of ‘secularism’ in Turkey, some religious people have considered it a secularist tool to control and restrict religious observance” (Ulutas, 2010). The *Diyamet* is a unique characteristic of Turkish secularism, and to some, represents the authority that the Turkish government retains over religious practice in order to delegate it to the private sphere. Although the *Diyamet* was intended to assert state control over religious affairs throughout all of Turkey, the institution primarily espoused Sunni Muslim ideals, indicating a persistence in unifying Turkish identity under Sunni Islam. This religious identity recalls the Ottoman Empire’s previous existence as a caliphate for many centuries prior to its abolition with the creation of the Turkish Republic. Despite this, nationalism inspired by the founding principles of Kemalist ideology is secular, showing a “marked difference from contemporary Middle-Eastern nationalism which is, for the most part, intertwined with religion” (Kili, 1980).

Turkish secularism thrived under the unofficial alliance between Turkish military officials and the Turkish elite. The one-party system established under Kemalism guaranteed political rule for these social classes, and in return, “the socio-political system of Turkey was guaranteed by the military powers and the economic resources of the *laik* elite” (Celik, 2018). As such, much criticism of the enforcement of Turkish *laiklik* is derived from the authoritarian practices of the Kemalist state, more specifically, the decades-long one-party governance and suppression of Islamists in the political sphere. The one-party rule of the Republican People’s Party lasted from its establishment in 1924 to the introduction of a multi-party system in Turkey, in 1945. By then, party leadership had shifted to former Premier İsmet İnönü following the death of Mustafa Kemal in 1938. Although İnönü had adopted the similar Kemalist ideology espoused by the Republican People’s Party after Kemal’s death, İnönü felt pressure to liberalize Turkey after

World War II. More specifically, liberalization was inspired by “external factors such as the signing of the United Nations Charter, and Turkey’s need to adjust her political regime to political philosophies made dominant by the victory of the democracies in the second World War” (Karpaz, 1959). International developments and political alliances throughout (and after) the war ultimately drew Turkey closer to Westernization, and further identified the need for democratic reform in the country. By the end of 1945, political leadership had acquiesced to the idea of opposition party formation, and on January 7th, 1946, former Prime Minister Celal Bayar founded the primary opposition party, the Democratic Party (Karpaz, 1959). The elections of 1950 saw a rise to power of this newly formed party, and the introduction of this multi-party system began to question the Kemalist secular principles that had homogenized Turkish culture and society. The social divide between the secular elite and the more religious masses was further exacerbated by policies that attempted to “justify some popular notions and symbols of Islam and stress historical continuities (the significance of the Ottoman Empire in Turkish history)” (Aydin, 2007). Retaining power for the elites meant overt control of Turkey’s secular identity, fighting against the opposition party’s encroachments on the secular ideals that had been prominently espoused by the former Republican People’s Party. Alliances between the Turkish elite and the military were intended to ensure the continuation of Kemalist secularism, and a series of military coups in Turkey, beginning in 1960, partially suppressed the fruition of fully-formed opposition parties. The recent 1997 coup, which ultimately dissolved the Islamist Welfare Party that had electorally risen to power, was a turning point for the development of modern Turkish political parties. One of the former members of the Islamist Welfare Party, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, later went on to form the Justice and Development Party (AKP), and remains the current President of the Turkish Republic.

The introduction of the AKP to the political party landscape in 2002 contradicted conventional wisdom surrounding Turkish secular identity. More specifically, the AKP promoted policies that loosened religious restrictions, allowing religion to enter more subtly into the public sphere. This was evidenced by the removal of headscarf bans in universities, higher excise taxes on alcohol consumption, and the appointment of religious conservatives in politically representative positions. Political legitimacy of the party among varied social classes was granted by Erdoğan's support of democratic reforms for Turkey; among the most unifying reforms backed by Erdoğan were 1) Turkish access to EU membership, and 2) expansion of social services for the Turkish masses (Taşpınar, 2012). EU membership swayed Turkish elite by promising Westernization, and as such, the legitimacy of the party was sustained despite previous trends of dissolving parties that threatened Kemalist secularism. The emergence of the AKP questions the ability of integrating pro-religious policies with Turkish secular identity, and allows Turkey to craft its respective democratic identity.

Immigration policies under Erdoğan, particularly as they relate to the 2015 Refugee Crisis, are inherently tied to the question of EU membership and EU-Turkish relations. Modern immigration policy in Turkey differs greatly from that of years prior:

In the 1990s, Turkey used to have an outdated, incomplete and largely ad-hoc policy towards immigration into the country, including asylum, regular and irregular migration and border management. By 2011, the picture is quite different: in all domains, different reform packages have been passed recently, and a comprehensive new immigration policy has been drafted (Tolay, 2012).

The early 2000s introduced the first of a series of reforms intended to modernize and improve visa regulations and citizenship laws according to Schengen standards. An official Asylum and Migration Unit was created in 2008 to delegate responsibilities related to migration and asylum

into the country (Tolay, 2012). The 2015 Refugee Crisis strengthened the level of EU-Turkish cooperation in reforming these asylum and migration policies with respect to the steady flow of migrants arriving in Europe. At the EU-Turkey summit in November 2015, a Joint Action Plan was activated to attempt to reduce the arrival of ‘irregular’ crossings into the Aegean Sea. One of the most important provisions of the agreement was the provision that required migrants to remain in Turkey, where they would await an asylum application result for EU countries. The introduction of an influx of migrants with varying ethnic and cultural backgrounds is later examined in relation to Turkish religious identity and AKP policies regarding migration and immigration reform.

INDIA

Indian secularism, as originally encoded within articles in the Indian Constitution, was designed to respect the high degree of religious pluralism among the Indian population. India’s population is incredibly diverse, with over 23 officially recognized languages and religious affiliations that includes Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and Sikhs. Examining this demography at a microlevel further exposes regional and tribal diversity among the 1 billion people residing in the country. Following independence, the newly formed Indian state attempted to establish a country that represented the diversity among all of its citizens. Among this framework provided in the Indian Constitution, religious affiliation was examined in the context of protecting religious freedoms and unifying the Indian people.

Although the word ‘secularism’ was not explicitly stated in constitutional writing at the time, the 1949 Indian Constitution included key provisions introducing a series of protections for Indian citizens. Constitutional articles encompassed thematic concepts typical of a liberal democracy: individual liberties, citizenship, and religious institutionalization within the state.

Religious freedom as expressed in these articles, however, was often contradictory to the anti-discriminatory models emphasized in each clause. In particular, Article 25 and Article 15 highlighting religious freedom and citizenship include the following clauses:

Individual freedom of religion

Art. 25

(1) Subject to public order, morality and health and to other provisions of this Part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion.

(2) Nothing in this article shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the state from making any law --

(a) Regulating or restricting any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice

(b) Providing for social welfare and reform or the throwing open of Hindu religious institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of Hindus.

No state discrimination on grounds of religion

Art. 15

(1) The state shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.

(4) Nothing in this article or in clause (2) of article 29 shall prevent the state from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

(Smith 1981).

So despite the initial sequence of clauses that espoused principles rooted in religious pluralism, the Indian Constitution continued to operate in the Hindu context of the population majority. Moreover, the lack of an explicitly identified secular identity allowed for frequent interaction between religion and state institutions. Today, the Indian government continues to retain specific control over particular facets of religious life in India. This is most noted in the administration

and regulation of religious institutions in India, particularly Hindu religious institutions (Cheema, 2017). This government administration of public Hindu religious institutions takes place in the form of Hindu members in the Council of Ministers, employees assigned to specific temples via board members, or even as sources of income for state governments (Acevedo, 2013). The Indian government also oversees religious matters through the establishment of state entities such as the National Commission for Minorities and localized Departments of Religious Affairs. These institutions allow for the government to formally recognize religious groups labeled as ‘minorities’ in India’s religious context, and implement “quasi-judicial powers to look into complaints of religion-based discrimination against members of minority communities. . . [along with managing] socio-religious matters and welfare schemes pertaining to religious minorities” (Tahmood, 2011). As evidenced above, India adopts a unique interpretation of secular identity with respect to its historical and cultural context, similar to other case study nations discussed in this paper.

The most prominent political party in an independent India had been, for a period of time, the Indian National Congress, or the Congress Party. The Congress Party guided by India’s first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, was the first to govern under secularly-modeled articles in the 1949 Indian Constitution. Nehru’s secularism was inspired by his non-commitment to any specific religion, but rather the diverse nature of the Indian population. According to Nehru, the fundamental characteristic outlining Indian secularism is “the granting of equal status to all religions in India” (Rajasekhariah, 1987). An India governed by Nehru emphasized secular ideals across social strata as well, in which a political structure existed so as to not allow religious differences to impose social inequalities on the Indian public. The nature of secular implementation in India remained unchanged until 1976, when the word ‘secular’ was officially

added to the preamble of the Constitution by the Indira Gandhi-led government. Despite this addition, which has been argued to be primarily symbolic, the secular model is contested even more in contemporary politics by the rise of nationalist parties. The Congress Party ultimately continued to dominate the political arena in India until 1977, when the party was defeated for the first time in general elections since independence. Since then, the governing political parties have diversified to include more nascent political movements and coalitions.

The citizen question has always presented challenges in India, where developing “a common citizenship along individualistic lines among a people whose legal and political institutions have for many centuries been based on socio-religious groups” (Smith, 1981). The all-encompassing nature of the idea of common citizenship is threatened under hostile majority-minority relations; in particular, current state and electorate interactions with the Muslim minority population emphasize the changing dynamics of the state-religion relationship as it relates to the notion of an Indian citizen. The emergence of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), an offshoot of the Jan Sangh Party and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), in 1980 represented the political beginnings of Hindu voter mobilization through the use of party support for Hindu nationalist movements (Basu, 2018). The BJP was ultimately elected to serve as a part of a coalition government in 1999, and in 2014 the BJP was able to win more than double the percentage of votes compared to the well-established Congress Party. Hindu nationalism aggravates Hindu-Muslim relations in India by opposing the distinct identity of Indian Muslims. The political movement does not entirely reject the presence of Muslim minorities in India, however it does promote the desire to advance Muslim ‘assimilation’ into Indian society; this assimilation is primarily acquired by:

- 1) accepting the centrality of Hinduism to Indian civilization; 2) acknowledging key Hindu figures such as Ram as civilizational

heroes, and not regard them as mere religious figures of Hinduism, 3) accepting that Muslim rulers in various parts of India destroyed the pillars of Hindu civilization, especially Hindu temples, and 4) making no claims to special privileges such as the maintenance of religious personal laws, nor demand special state grants for their educational institutions (Varshney, 1993).

The limitations of Hindu nationalist acceptance of the Muslim minority population are rooted in socio-political submissiveness, and enforcing these standards across a large population, even a minority population, remains difficult. Recent changes in party governance and the implementation of Hindu nationalist-inspired public policy draw the political landscape closer to an increasingly hostile environment modeled after these ideals. Tying Indian identity with Hinduism and Hindu nationalism has been a primary consideration for Prime Minister Modi, whose government passed legislation in 2019 intended to reform previously established Indian citizenship policy. The legal writing prohibited Muslim immigration from neighboring predominantly Muslim countries, despite permitting immigration access to other religious minorities. Changes in contemporary immigration policy in India, especially as they relate to the dynamics of the 2019 Citizenship Amendment Act, are further examined in this research to expose the vulnerabilities surrounding Hindu nationalism as the currently dominant political movement in the country.

LITERATURE REVIEW

THEORY

Secularism and Secularization Theory

The notion of ‘secularization’ and secular societies exist as multi-dimensional interpretations for which to define the relationship between religion and state governments. The history of the term ‘secular’ as a theoretical breakthrough related to societal progression and modernity points to a Christian, European context, in which secularism operated in relation to Western culture and religions (Martin, 1969). The European Enlightenment that dominated intellectual discourse in 17th and 18th century Europe attempted to shy away from the ecclestial grip that the Catholic Church held over European governments. “For its contemporaries it was then, and for modern scholars it is now, an intellectual movement distinguished by critical, analytic, and scientific concerns and by claims that the power of reason could improve the human condition” (Withers, 2008). The greater emphasis on reason during this Age of Enlightenment was also inspired in part by the preceding ‘European Wars of Religion,’ which, to Enlightenment scholars, identified religion as a primary source of the political and societal instability present in that epoch (Dominguez, 2017). Enlightenment-era views of secularism emphasized the separation of religious entities and state governments, however modern definitions expand on the term, broadening the definition to include characteristics of religious liberty and equality. In all, secularism today encompasses the following interpretations of the concept:

Separation of religious institutions from the institutions of the state and no domination of the political sphere by religious institutions; freedom of thought, conscience, and religion for all, with everyone free to change their beliefs within the limits

of public order and the rights of others; no state discrimination against anyone on the grounds of religion or non-religious world view, with everyone receiving equal treatment on these grounds (Copson 2019).

While some schools of thought perceive secularism to signify the correlation between rationalism and political stability, others hinge on the idea of secularism as a form of protection from religious discrimination -- particularly for religious minorities among a nation's demographics. The varying definitions of secularism allow for more room for interpretation, which in turn leads to varying perspectives regarding the role of secularism in contemporary democracies.

The "Christian, Western European dynamic of secularization became globalized with the expansion of European colonialism, and with the ensuing global expansion of capitalism, of the European system of states, of modern science, and of modern ideologies of secularism" (Casanova 2006). The conditions that spurred the advent of secular ideologies struggled to exist outside of the Western world because this exportation of Western ideals confronted vast differences in culture, political governance and policy, and religion. It is important to note that the application of secularization theory and secularism within government in Eastern cultures was seen through a Western perspective, given the origins of the concept and secularism's original applicability to Western European countries. Modernization was typically viewed as something that existed in conflict with religion, as modernization prioritized 'rational' thought beyond religious realms that existed within cultural and political spheres of other governments. "Putting it concisely: Until very recently, when one tried to understand modernity, there was only one case to deal with -- the West and its effects on the rest of the world. Or, if one prefers: Modernization and Westernization were virtually identical processes" (Berger, 1999). Secularization in a Western context focalized less on protecting individual religious liberties, but

was rather more dependent on the fear of a repressive religious state that would infringe on political and social freedoms. “In this respect, the typical adversary of such a non-Western religious state is not secularism as such but Westernization, marked by its decadence and its alleged destruction of indigenous traditions and identities, including those associated with religion, or, more specifically, with the “true religion” (Falk, 2001). The push against secularization in Eastern countries was therefore not a result of secularism’s rejection of religious values within the realm of governance, but rather a rejection of the Western secular ideology that infringed on the existing political balances in these respective countries.

“Secularism . . . functions more explicitly in these [non-Western] countries as a principle of order than it does currently in the West, where it is part of the cultural debate but is rarely invoked by political leaders or even articulated as directly relevant to controversies about public policy” (Falk, 2001). Two of the secular countries which I have chosen to evaluate are Turkey and India, and both add context related to the difficulty of adopting secular ideals amidst a strong culturally diverse religious background. The established standard among all evaluated countries (the United States, Turkey, and India) is the nature of their respective constitutions; all constitutions in these nations have adopted secular language to indicate the extent to which religion can participate in public -- and particularly national -- environments. Secularism within constitutional writing, however, does come with certain limitations to the extent at which it can enforce this secularism beyond public institutions. The interconnectedness between secularism and a country’s societal and cultural framework renders the absolute separation of church and state a much more difficult task (Halikiopoulou, 2007). The delicate balance that secularism holds within religion-state interactions and the private life of citizens is consistently challenged vis-à-vis the application of secular language to constitutional writing. “The secularist assumption

that religion is relegated to the private sphere . . . became problematic with constitutional law not only because of the pressures from increasingly aggressive religious interests, but also, in part, due to the increasing constitutionalization of . . . the social system” (Sajó, 2008). As such, despite the secular language within my case studies’ constitutional writing, religion continues to remain a prominent force in political discourse and policy in each of these countries. In explaining further the conflict between secularism and the public/private social sphere, Ahmet T. Kuru reflects on state policies on religion to identify two different forms of secularism: passive secularism and assertive secularism.

Passive secularism, which requires that the secular state play a “passive” role in avoiding the establishment of any religions, allows for the public visibility of religion. Assertive secularism, by contrast, means that the state excludes religion from the public sphere and plays an “assertive” role as the agent of a social engineering project that confines religion to the private domain (Kuru, 2007).

When applying these theories to the passively secular United States, for example, Kuru outlines “accommodationism” and “separationism” as the two streams of passive secularist thought; while accommodationists argue that state-religion relationships are within secular limitations because they do not promote a formal “establishment” of a state religion, separationists are more likely to view any state-religion contact as a violation of national secular ideals (Kuru, 2007). The implementation of state policies on religion are very much dependent on the social fabric of the specified country. Establishing secular policies often poses a challenge among modern, liberal democracies which typically are conglomerates of varied ethnic and religious backgrounds. The paradox in these liberal democracies ultimately exists between espousing the democratic values of equal representation and the freedom of religious expression beyond the private realm.

Nationalism, National Identity, and Immigration Policy

Immigration policy, a subset of one country's wide range of domestic policies, is unique in its intrinsic ties to international affairs and events that occur beyond national boundaries. Immigration policy at its core has inherently been exclusionary. The policies dictate movement across state borders, and the complexities of such policies have only been enhanced as a result of an increasingly globalized world order. The policies' ability to determine who is permitted within a state's confines is ultimately tied to perceptions of national identity, or an 'us vs. them' mentality. One of the most contemporary theories on nationalism and its origins explores the idea of imagined communities, or nations that are inherently bound together by an imagined sense of political identity. This political identity lies within the confines of the nation being both limited and sovereign. Together, this perceived unity forms the so-called 'imagined community' that gives ideation to these political identities that form the nation-state.

The nation is imagined as limited because even the largest of them has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations . . . it is imagined as sovereign because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the hierarchical dynastic realm . . . Finally, it is imagined as a community, because regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship (Anderson, 1981).

Anderson theorized these imagined communities through an anthropological lens, in which he analyzed various internal human interactions -- including cultural and dynastic relationships -- in order to construct the limitations of his nationalism theory. Likewise, other academics explore related internal and external factors that expand upon previously established understandings of national identity. When examining the formation of the nation-state, the idea of national consciousness was evidenced as one of the initial steps needed to create the community in which

the nation-building process began. The unity created by this national consciousness was the effect of “certain constantly recurring forces: state power, religion, language, social discontents, and economic pressures” (Seton-Watson, 1977). Seton-Watson cites religion and language as being the crucial elements that create distance between the ruling class and a majority populace within a country. He notes that this distance, or perceived distinctness created by the aforementioned sociological factors, paved the way for national consciousness based on societal divisions. When placed in the context of conflicting social hierarchies, national consciousness as a form of rebellion against the ruling class is highly applicable to nation-building post-independence movements.

Nationalism and national identity in the modern context, however, differ from the national consciousness present within nation-building processes. Representative democracies are characterized by tolerance and equal representation among constituents, all of which contribute to elected leadership which ideally adopts policy agendas that reflect the interests of this mix among a democracy’s populace (annenberghclassroom.org, 2021). This democratic framework is questioned, however, with the presence of a dominant national group, or a constructed national identity, which commands the direction of policies that are relevant to the nation. As such, “The enjoyment of citizenship rights, effective participation in political processes, and the expression of cultural differences are contingent on the economic and political interests of the dominant national group” (Mostov, 1994). Mostov (1994) continues by arguing that the political dominance of this national group leads to marginalization for minority members of the electorate, which would then contribute to the continued exclusion of less dominant community members within the democracy. As it pertains to my research, one of the most defining characteristics of this national group dictating politics and policy is a common religious belief.

This dominant societal group is thus more likely to have similar interpretations of secularism in society as well, granted that the state-religion relationship is within the boundaries of not fully establishing a state-sponsored religion.

With regards to immigration policy and national identity, scholars have traditionally framed immigration policies in response to perceived cultural or economic threats. Much of the hostility toward inclusive immigration policies is rooted in the perceived threat that immigrants pose to “self-interested access to scarce economic resources or the preservation of cultural homogeneity and dominance” (Young, Loebach, Korinek, 2018). In another examination of this hostility toward increased immigration, scholars study the perceived threat of immigration against what they recognize as social identity theory. The ‘social identity’ in question within their research is that of an ‘American Identity,’ or a recognized set of values which comprise a social group (Mangum, Block Jr., 2018). The social dynamics at play for this national identity construction find “that a significant portion of anti-immigrant sentiment can be explained by perceptions among the majority about whether immigrants want to become American, and whether they seek to blend into U.S society” (Mangum, Block Jr., 2018). The literature later continues to identify several sociological traits that defined this so-called ‘American Identity,’ which referred strongly to both ascriptive and affective components ranging from language, values, and customs, to affection and respect for American institutions (Mangum, Block Jr., 2018). The authors apply their social identity theory to the United States given that the U.S population is the focus group for the theory’s applicability to research specificities, however the complexities of social identity have been studied in the analytical lens of nationalist thought in my case study countries as well. Although each of my case study countries will have different ascriptive and affective values that construct the social concept of their national identities, the

social identity theory, along with economic and cultural theoretical considerations, help understand the direction of contemporary immigration policies influenced by these ideals -- particularly dominant religious ideals.

My research intends to fill a specific niche within the cross-comparative analysis of secularization theory and national identity theory among different countries, more specifically through the application of this analysis to immigration policies applied in these countries. Some of my cited sources reference secular formation within my selected countries, but instead of focusing on a policy area, their writing prioritizes theoretical application to nation-building. In my paper, I take the aforementioned secularization theory and study its role in each state's historical context and relevance to contemporary policymaking within the immigration policy realm. With this relevant secularization history in mind, I then transition to studying the creation of national identity and its foundational basis in immigration policymaking. Existing literature and theory point toward the criterion of a social identity in which citizens of a country imagine themselves as members of a unified group or community. When taking into consideration religion as a component of this social identity, it renders religious-based exclusionary immigration policies more likely. My research examines all theoretical backgrounds (both relative to secularization and national identity), as well as internal contemporary politics within each case study country in order to gain an understanding of the state-religion relationship in policymaking.

METHODOLOGY

Within this section I discuss the types of data collection methods conducted to arrive at my conclusions and analyses of the respective immigration policies. Due to the academic nature of my research, as well as the fact that my research is less centralized on personal experiences with the targeted policies in mind, the bulk of my data is only able to be acquired through interviews with subject matter experts and analysis of existing data on the topic. Although the research question itself explores religious influence in three countries -- the United States, Turkey, and India -- the data collection also requires substantial historical context and understanding of key terms and highlighted policies. This will cover a wide range of expert interviews and sample texts that focus specifically on providing these comprehensive analyses for each country, and from which data will then be applied to my three targeted policies: United States Executive Order 13780 *Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States*, the Citizenship Amendment Act (2019) in India, and Turkish policymaking in response to the 2015 Refugee Crisis.

As stated prior, the conclusions drawn from my research are not policy recommendations per se, particularly given the fact that the interpretation of religion's role in governance is a predominantly subjective matter. I will address the implications and expected design of alternative, secular policies, however the intent of my research is to provide insight on political, historical, and sociological factors that contribute to the implementation of religiously influenced policies in specific countries. I use my selected qualitative research methods to investigate further the notion of secularism within these selected countries, the role of religion in state-building processes for each country, and religious influence on policymaking -- particularly recently implemented immigration policies. I speak with experts studying the intersection of

politics and religion, which in turn can lead to data that can be applied to my analysis of these specific policies.

My argument for the use of these different qualitative sources is explained below when I discuss the merits of each qualitative research method. Each data source provides a unique interpretation of my research topic, and helps spark further discussion related to the subject matter at hand. My analysis of relevant text allows me to include peer-reviewed data to support my research findings, and the engagement with primary sources through expert interviews provides information beyond the published works of academic writers. Both sources of data complement each other to provide a holistic analysis of my policy research topic. Although focusing exclusively on these types of data collection methodologies has the potential to isolate quantitative data methods that can be included in my research, I believe that the qualitative research methods that I utilize throughout the data collection process best reflect the descriptive detail from which I create the basis of my work.

The system through which data are retrieved in a qualitative research approach is regarded as being unique. The reliance on the collection of non-numerical primary data such as words and pictures by the researcher who serves as an instrument himself makes qualitative research well-suited for providing factual and descriptive information (Daniel 2016).

In order to justify the qualitative research methods used in my research, I turn to established research that compares and contrasts the benefits of using qualitative research in respect to quantitative research methods. The data collected within policy research is typically as multifaceted as the field of public policy itself; the qualitative research methods employed in my data collection ensure that I capture the wide range of data needed to conduct a thorough comparative analysis of my specified case study countries.

Justification of Target Countries, Policy Area Focus, and Key Policies

My research focuses on analyzing the effects of religious influence on immigration policymaking, with special attention placed on constitutionally secular countries such as the United States, Turkey, and India. The topic had been narrowed from a previous research question which aimed to study broadly the relationship between secularism and policymaking in countries where a monotheistic religion is the predominant faith. Establishing a standard for which countries could be analyzed was ultimately important because of the complexity of the different ways in which each country had integrated religion into the political sphere; I ultimately decided to focus my research question on the United States, Turkey, and India because of the diverse religious practices in each nation, as well as the fact that all of these countries have secular language adopted into their respective Constitutions.

Immigration policy is the policy area focus of my research because of current political environments that indicate that religion could have played a significant factor in outlining specific policies. Within the countries that I am researching, I noted that the rise of populism and religious identity of political parties, or religious nationalism, existed as commonalities between the nations, and I wanted to explore these characteristics more in depth. This led to identifying the three immigration policies that I am researching within each country, which range from refugee/asylum policy to citizenship law. These three policies -- United States Executive Order 13780 *Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States*, the Citizenship Amendment Act (2019) in India, and Turkish policymaking in response to the 2015 Refugee Crisis -- had the possibility of being analyzed from different perspectives with respect to the political environment in which they were enacted.

Literary Analysis

The literature that I cite among my literature review and subsequent data findings encompass a wide variety of topics situated within the realm of secularism, historical context of countries, and immigration policy. I was able to collect the sample text while researching the interviews that I wanted to conduct, as well as through research databases that allowed me to access secondary sources from academic journals specializing in my topic. The research databases used ranged from JSTOR, Google Scholar, and Academia.edu, and any resource that I could find that was available for my citations and supporting evidence in my research. I then supplement the secondary sources with an analysis of any primary sources that I could find relating to the policies at hand, including official drafts of the policies and any reports from relevant global or domestic institutions. The following list of primary resource literature supplements my interviews, and allows me to draw conclusions with respect to each case study.

Title	Date	Relevant Case Study Country
Citizenship Amendment Act (2019)	12/12/2019	India
Executive Order 13780: Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States	03/06/2017	United States
President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan Hagia Sophia Speech	07/10/2020	Turkey
The Constitution of India (1949)	11/26/1949	India
EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan: Refugee Crisis	11/29/2015	Turkey

I use this literary analysis to explain any historical context, sociopolitical factors, and, most importantly, deconstruct specific details regarding each immigration policy I explore in my thesis.

The analysis of these types of primary sources also appeals to the comparative case study approach that I utilize throughout my research in order to provide a qualitative analysis of the policies and domestic politics in each country. A case study research approach is typically used in qualitative research design for broadly contextualizing a research question, and for focusing on the various conclusions that can be drawn from collected data rather than limiting the scope of the research. A case study research design is highly applicable to policy research for two reasons, “it provides a vehicle for fully contextualized problem definition [and] . . . case studies can illuminate policy-relevant questions and can eventually inform more practical advice down the road” (Pal, 2005). In conjunction with the interview data that I collect, the findings that I report in my research are drawn from the comprehensive design of the selected research methods. The data encompasses the unique characteristics of each case study nation and relevant resources that pertain to the information I am analyzing.

Interview Data Collection

My supplementary form of data collection was conducting brief interview discussions with leading academic experts for each country presented in my research. These experts were identified through cited academic research for my paper, as well as by having established connections to relevant policy research organizations or journals. I was able to expand my prospective interviewee list before and during the course of my research; upon speaking with more academic experts, I was able to broaden my list of prospective interview sources. When thinking about potential bias that could present itself within the interviews, I made an attempt to

remove any predetermined opinions on the question of whether religion should be a present force in politics. Rather, I allowed the interviewees to guide the discussion on the basis of their existing research and established expertise in the topic. The following list of interviewees have contributed their time and resources to advance this research:

Academic	Date	Research Interests
Dr. Allen Hertzke, University of Oklahoma	01/08/2021	Religion and Politics, Global Religious Freedom, American Government
Dr. Ahmet Öztürk, London Metropolitan University	01/24/2021	Theories of Nationalism (Turkey), Ethnicity and Identity, Religion and Global Politics
Dr. Andrew Whitehead, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis	01/29/2021	Christian Nationalism, Religion and American Politics
Dr. Mehmet Gurses, Florida Atlantic University	02/02/2021	Ethnic and Religious Conflict, Kurdish Politics, Islamist Parties in the ME
Dr. Sean Dowdy, University of Chicago	02/07/2021	Religious Pluralism in India
Dr. Greg Goalwin, Aurora University	02/08/2021	Religious Nationalism in Turkey, Immigration Policy
Dr. Sumit Ganguly, Indiana University, Bloomington	02/26/2021	Comparative Politics (South Asia, Southeast Asia) Ethnopolitics, Secularism
Dr. Amrita Basu, Amherst College	04/12/2021	Hindu Nationalism, Democracy in India, Ethnic Identity
Dr. Thomas Blom Hansen, Stanford University	04/13/2021	South Asia/Southern Africa Political Life, Ethno-Religious Identity, Violence and Urban Life

Dr. Nukhet Sandal, Ohio University	04/14/2021	Religion and Politics, Conflict Transformation, Foreign Policy
Vatsal Naresh, PhD Candidate, Yale University	04/15/2021	Democratic Theory, Political Violence, Constitutionalism

For each interview, I arrive with a small set of predetermined questions that will be typically related to any papers that the expert may have written, or any research projects that they may have conducted. I prepared a limited list of questions as well, given that the conversational style of the interview will build upon follow-up questions and the direction with which the interviewee intends to guide discussion. The questions that I predetermined were all related to the concepts that I explored in my theoretical framework, or that I have researched for related historical and contemporary background information within each case study. After completing each interview, I transcribed each interview in order to have primary material that is available for my citations within my data findings. The transcription process entails using the otter.io platform to receive an automated transcription, and then labeling each interview according to the topic and case study nation discussed. The data collected from the interviews correspond to the arguments I make throughout my paper, and, if applicable, also introduce data that perhaps elaborate on new corollary arguments or questions. After the proper coding of all interview data that was collected, the transcriptions were reviewed and applied appropriately throughout my research paper when needed. As evidenced by literature discussing the organization of qualitative data, “coding is a way of . . . essentially indexing or mapping data, to provide an overview of disparate data that allows the researcher to make sense of them in relation to their research question” (Elliot, 2018). Due to the slightly informal nature of the interviews, in which questions varied depending on academic expertise and the flow of discussion, it was important to determine an

encompassing method for which to systemize the range of data collected. The interviews have been separated according to relevance to each case study country, and emerging themes were tracked with respect to each case study silo. Despite similar areas of research interests among interviewees, academic fields varied, and interviews were conducted with professors in Political Science, Public Policy, and Anthropology departments. Keywords that I analyze in my study include: religious nationalism, secularism, immigration policy, religious conflict, religious national identity, and any reference to modern political parties. In order to alleviate the research constraints associated with interviewee availability and willingness to organize an interview, I supplemented the primary source interviews with primary sources related to relevant legislation, speeches, and policy drafts. Using an adequate combination of the aforementioned qualitative research methods, I was able to collect the evidence needed to investigate in depth my specified research question.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the comparative research conducted on the countries that served as my case studies -- the United States, India, and Turkey -- I find that analyzing religion and politics within contemporary immigration policy requires the application of historical context to current trends within the respective policy spaces of each country. With that in mind, the two factors for which I analyzed my case study countries are therefore the following: 1) secularism in nation-building, historical development, and policymaking, and 2) religious national identity and immigration policy. I discuss my findings on the pre-existent conflict between secular ideals and cultural differences in each country, and later use those findings to segway into its lasting legacy on modern-day religious influence on policymaking. Although the two points of analysis often converge throughout findings and theoretical application, I believed it would be best to segment these factors in such a way that I would be able to linearly explain the progression of religious influence in these separate case studies.

Historical Development of Secularism in Policymaking within Case Studies

I found the historical secular context in each nation important for understanding the integration of secularization theory as it relates to each country. It is evident through existing sources that this varied application of secularization theory in each case study is a primary contributing factor to the acceptance of religious practice in contemporary political circles. This historical background of secular theory within each country differs depending on many different factors, however the most prominent indicator thus far of the adoption of secular language in governments' Constitutions was cultural acceptance. The secularization process, particularly in the case study countries that did not pertain to Western culture such as Turkey and India, was

more contested due to internal resistance caused by cultural backlash. In order to prove this, I observed the etymology and theoretical background of the secular concept, which indicates that secularism had strong Western origins, particularly from Western European countries. The internal resistance to secularism did not inherently lie in its rebuttal against religious ideals in governance, but rather national identity that felt threatened by the presence of Westernization in politics (Berger, 1999). These Eastern governments that eventually adopted secular constitutional language often enforced stricter penalties on religious expression in the public sphere, which, in modern interpretations of secularism and its protection of religious freedoms, was often contradictory against the secular language's original purpose. This was most evident in Turkey, for example, with the passage of the Tanzimat reforms after the fall of the theocratic Ottoman Empire. These reforms intended to modernize the Turkish Republic vis-à-vis secular policies (as in accordance to secularization theory), however these same policies remain contested today, in particular with the current government control of President Erdoğan's AKP Party.

The interpretation of secularism is also subject to change with respect to the form of governance within a specified country. In some democracies, secular language and application has strongly clashed with the protection of religious freedoms, religious plurality, and religious expression in the public sphere (Bader, 2007). This is due to the fact that assertive secular ideals in government do not give preference to a determined religion in its political processes, and do not typically tolerate an individual's religious convictions in the public and social sphere. The relationship between the state and religion is also varied in respect to the religion in which it operates contextually; in discussing secular models across different case study countries, it was noted in an interview with Dr. Mehmet Gurses, an expert in ethnic and religious conflict at Florida Atlantic University, that,

When you compare India to the United States to Turkey, one of them is Hindu majority, the other is Muslim majority, the audience Christian majority. [You must] also keep in mind the historical trajectories, and the very nature of these essentially different faiths and religions. When we talk about religion and politics, oftentimes we base our arguments based on an ethnocentric or Eurocentric understanding of religion and politics. Whereas Islam [for example] has historically interacted with politics quite differently than Christianity (Gurses, 02/02/2021).

As a result, each case study country adopts its own interpretation of secularism, which provides a basis for which religion interacts in the public sphere. The applicability of a Western secularism model is largely dependent on cultural frameworks that exist within these countries, and this is most evident through institutional interactions and civic support of this secularism. It is found that despite varied secular models in each case study country, contemporary political rhetoric such as the rise of populism, as well as the ever-present relationship between religion and nationalism, have given way to increasing intertwinement of religion and policymaking.

Religious National Identity and Immigration Policy

The way in which the incorporation of religion in national identity formation has been bolstered by domestic politics within my case studies has been observed as well. This trend has occurred typically through the political stances of the governing parties within these countries -- the parties who are notably led by populist leaders. The formation of national identity itself poses many theoretical questions on the collective community within a nation, and what values are emphasized as markers of this national identity. It is found that these range from visibly expressed characteristics such as language, values, and customs, to more internally expressed characteristics such as appreciation and respect for state institutions (Mangum, Block Jr., 2018). In particular, this research focuses on the religious identification of the specified national identities in each of my case studies, and tries to analyze the perceived hostilities towards

‘outsider’ religious affiliations among immigrants to these countries. With this relationship between nationalism and religion, I understand the extent to which conflicting religious interests are perceived as a threat to a dominant national group, and ultimately the level to which this perceived religious threat becomes evident through contemporary immigration policies. The strong scholarly evidence that religion and nationalism are intertwined then leads to trying to understand the political potency of this relationship; one example of strong religious nationalism within a democracy can be Turkey, where democratic elections have brought the country closer to more Islamic ideals (Myhill, 2015). By outlining national identity theory and key immigration policy considerations within national borders of a country, this research highlights the antagonism (or acceptance) behind the religious cultural identity of a country and the perceived immigration threat from those of different religious backgrounds. It has been established that religion does indeed play a role in immigration policymaking through research that pinpoints three frameworks for which to study this relationship as well: the ethnoreligious framework, religious restructuring, and minority marginalization (Knoll, 2009). The ethnoreligious perspective analyzes religious tradition as it relates to an individual’s religious beliefs. These religious traditions would then prioritize the specific religious teachings when looking to develop a formal stance on immigration policy. Religious restructuring looks toward religious service attendance and level of authority granted to religious leaders when helping guide personal immigration policy stances. Finally, minority marginalization gives preference to currently existing religious minorities within a national perspective, who are then more likely to sympathize with these marginalized groups [immigrants] and will therefore adopt more liberal immigration policy stances. Although the relationship between religion and national identity had been previously established through other key research, Knoll (2009) is able to segment these

religious markers within a community to better understand the variance among immigration policy stances. Despite analyzing contemporary immigration policies that are hostile towards increased immigration, establishing the intersecting relationships between religion, national identity, and immigration policy stance has been important in order to best apply and comparatively analyze these case studies. These factors, of course, differ largely depending on the history, cultural background, and demographic characteristics of each country.

Case 1: The United States

Regardless of its applicability on the federal level, secularism in the United States had ultimately become further fragmented when contextualized on the state level after its initial insertion into the U.S. Constitution. For states, they “all had their own constitutional provisions on religion. In some cases, they were religious liberty protections, protections for a freedom of conscience exercise. In other cases, they were a mild establishment of religion, or state support for religion” (Hertzke, 01/08/2021). Federal protections were needed to guarantee the liberties of religious expression among the religious pluralism represented by colonial settlers. Despite this, however, religious regionalism separated religious groups geographically, and individual forms of secularism developed within these geographical regions under the auspices of the dominant religious groups. Thus, relative to other nations in which secular models or language was adopted, the United States applied a form of secularism that was more passive in nature, in which religious expression within the public sphere did not starkly contrast both legal and cultural perceptions of religion in relation to individual liberty.

Religion has historically existed as a national identity marker throughout the history of the United States. A religious identity had been present in nation-building processes related to

group identity formation; “religion was a key part of understanding group identity and understand[ing] who they were. . . religion has always been a powerful identity marker for groups to create an us versus them and encourage cohesion” (Whitehead 01/29/2021). Religious cohesion existed since the arrival of colonists in the United States, and many times, was used to legitimize the violent Westward expansion that transformed the country into a predominantly white and Protestant population. Christianity informally imposed itself as the religion of the majority, and its political representation has been frequently contested in modern history because of The Establishment Clause, which states, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof” (U.S. Constitution, 1787). The framework that emerged out of this religious cultural dominance and continued to fluctuate during historical periods of change was a framework of Christian Nationalism. This cultural framework inherently intertwined a Christian religious identity with what the dominant majority perceived to be representative of a typical citizen: white, male, and native-born. The Christianity in question was exclusively of a Protestant denomination, and influxes of non-Protestant Christian immigrants throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reinforced this belief that conflated the ideal citizen with the individual that embodied the aforementioned characteristics. In the context of rapidly changing demographics, this image of the citizen becomes threatened in the eyes of those seeking to protect their nature of civil existence.

Despite the trend of religious minority growth, the Christian majority that continues to exist in the United States has had exceptional success with inserting its religious dominance in political discussion. This was most evident during the 2016 Presidential campaign, in which then-candidate Donald J. Trump repeatedly appealed to a Christian-nationalist base that ultimately helped carry out a victory in the 2016 Presidential elections. The common theme

present in these nationalistic appeals was the idea of loss of power or control. As discussed throughout a conversation with Dr. Andrew Whitehead, an Associate Professor of Sociology at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis,

During his candidacy, Trump at times explicitly played to Christian nationalist sentiments by repeating the refrain that the United States is abdicating its Christian heritage . . . While Trump directly referenced the Christian nation myth periodically, his various supporters and endorsers also made the connection between voting for Trump and the United States as a Christian nation (Whitehead, et. al 2018).

The political campaign categorized Christianity in America as an entity that needed to be protected, and that Christianity was an American identity marker that was under continual assault. The defensive rhetoric was successful at bringing this religiosity to the White House; white Christians -- most notably Evangelicals and Catholics -- overwhelmingly supported former President Trump in the 2016 Presidential elections. The voter margin was highest for white Evangelicals, where “fully eight-in-ten self-identified white, born-again/evangelical Christians say they voted for Trump, while just 16% voted for Clinton” (Pew Research Center, 2019). The populism that defined the Trump presidency was saturated with religious preferences which favored the Christian nationalists that comprised a large portion of his voting bloc. As such, the Trump Administration’s policy agenda often included Christianity and religion in its design -- ranging from foreign aid to immigration policy itself.

One of the most poignant immigration policies touted by former President Trump during his campaign and the first one hundred days of his presidency was the colloquially-known Muslim ban of 2017. Formally, the first policy enacted was known as Executive Order 13769, titled ‘Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States.’ The immigration policy was conceived in late 2015 on the campaign trail, emerging as a loud

response to current events involving Islamist terrorist groups and the Obama Administration's attempts to counteract islamophobic sentiments that had been rising since September 2001. When then-President Barack Obama called for solidarity and tolerance toward Muslim constituents, Trump used this opportunity to contradict the social values espoused by the sitting Administration to appeal to voters who felt threatened by the possibility of Muslim integration into American culture and society (Khan, et. al, 2019). After its enactment, Executive Order 13769 (Muslim Ban 1.0) faced court challenges in response to some provisions present in its original writing, which expedited a 90-day ban on citizens entering from seven predominantly Muslim countries: Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan Syria, and Yemen. Throughout 2017, the travel 'Muslim' ban had been revised three times, resulting in its final form as a 'Muslim Ban 4.0' that expanded upon the previous list of countries and began to deny entry to refugees as well (NILC, 2019). The determinations found in these legal cases that rendered this immigration policy difficult to legitimize was the vague language surrounding its defense of national security and the policy's discriminatory basis. The subsequent Executive Order 13780 was similar in nature but with minor adjustments to the technical aspects of the policy; it was not until the enactment of the 'Muslim Ban 3.0,' or Presidential Proclamation 9645, that the Supreme Court finally upheld the statutes presented in the policy's language in *Trump v. Hawaii (2018)*. Although previous court decisions had notably identified this policy as violating the Establishment Clause of the U.S Constitution, the Supreme Court instead focused on the separation between Executive authority and incendiary statements made by then-President Trump himself. As Chief Justice Roberts further detailed,

Plaintiffs argue that this President's words strike at fundamental standards of respect and tolerance, in violation of our constitutional tradition. But the issue before us is not whether to denounce the statements. It is instead the significance of those statements in

reviewing a Presidential directive, neutral on its face, addressing a matter within the core of executive responsibility. In doing so, we must consider not only the statements of a particular President, but also the authority of the Presidency itself (Roberts 2018).

The Court's affirmation of travel restrictions favorably viewed language that prioritized national security concerns, despite overlooking the exclusionary rhetoric that often accompanied the enactment of these policies. The decision established precedent over the Trump Administration's efforts to curtail immigration from countries deemed antithetical to the America that those voters had envisioned. As follows, many Trump Administration immigration policies adopted undertones of national security intent, however *Trump v. Hawaii (2018)* was the first Supreme Court ruling that rejected the notion that religiously targeted language did not violate the Establishment Clause through its accompanying immigration policies.

Despite changes in political leadership and policy objectives, the precedent established by Supreme Court rulings and previous legislative actions under former President Trump have the ability to inspire nationalist policy in the near future. Legitimizing these exclusionary types of immigration policies under the pretense of advocating for national security interests provides a blanket cover for public policy that continues to protect the Christian nationalist identity in the United States. The continuation of these ideals will depend largely on the demographic change taking place within the country, and ultimately the scope of national religious identity in the coming decades.

Case 2: Turkey

The creation of a predominantly Sunni Muslim country was inspired, partly, by shrinking minority populations as a result of pre-Republic migration movements. After speaking with Dr. Goalwin, an expert in religious nationalism in Turkey and Professor at Aurora University, the

shift towards this Sunni Islam predominance was examined further, emphasized by, “there's been sort of a systematic -- some state-sponsored and intentional, some not -- movement towards a sort of religious homogenization” (Goalwin, 02/08/2021). An important migration movement at the apex of the establishment of the Turkish State was the Greco-Turkish population exchange, in which Greek-Orthodox Christians living in Turkey were forcibly resettled to Greece while Muslim populations in Greece relocated to Turkey. The migration was not only a means to avoid ethnic conflict resulting from the Greco-Turkish war, but also intended to homogenize and repopulate the respective countries. In relation to the theoretical basis for these migration patterns, nationalist sentiment was outlined in the discussion with Dr. Goalwin, in which he stated, “as with a lot of nationalist movements, there are many different strands. . . a part of it is a sort of religious nationalism. . . there is evidence of a lot of those immigration decisions being made in the 1950s and 1960s on the basis of religion” (Goalwin, 02/08/2021). Although the Turkish Republic was established as a secular country, the religious homogenization created prior to this type of government offered conditions that informally tied Sunni Islam with Turkish identity. Even more so, these early homogenization movements inspired by religious nationalist sentiment were integrated into immigration policy, particularly with regards to foreign relations.

Legitimizing Turkish religious identity was also important within state institutional functions as well. This was emphasized even more after the creation of the Turkish Republic, in which religion developed an institutional relationship with the state vis-à-vis the creation of the Diyanet. Dr. Ahmet Ozturk, a professor at London Metropolitan University specializing in nationalism and Islam, explained that the Diyanet was a pseudo continuation of religious institutions present throughout the former caliphate, stating, “the Presidency of Religious Affairs, which is called the Diyanet. . . in one way or another replaces this Byzantine religious institution

management” (Ozturk 01/24/2021). These regulatory bodies were modeled after traditional religious institutions, predating the Turkish Republic and assuming some inspiration from previous eras within Byzantine and Ottoman history. While the Turkish government exhibited largely restrictive policies on the public display of religion, the government was able to continue to construct the Turkish identity after independence through the creation of state-sanctioned bodies. The proliferation of Sunni Islam ideals by the Diyanet, despite strict models of French laïcité within Turkish Constitutional authority, inadvertently guided Turkey toward a more religiously homogenous population. As a result, the majority of today’s Turkish population, around 70% of the population, is Sunni Muslim -- solidifying the presence of this religious ideology in Turkish identity (Ozturk, 01/24/2021).

The creation of a multi-party system in Turkey was pivotal in Turkish political dynamics, particularly the organization of campaigns and voter engagement. For the first time, nascent political parties, separate from the decades-long rule of the Kemalist party, “realized that religion could be something that could be converted into votes, or the popular vote” (Ozturk, 01/24/2021). The recognition of religious communities as potential political allies was not dependent on a particular ideology, but rather, the development of a political relationship with religion was an investment across the political party spectrum. Ultimately, the Turkish political landscape in the 1940s symbolized the advent of an ‘Islamization’ of Turkish politics, despite the secular statutes laid forth years prior by Kemalist reform. Representation of religious political interests later inspired the National Outlook Movement, or a series of Islamist political parties that appealed further to religious voters and contextualized religion within public policy. Parties inspired by this religious movement, however, continued to emphasize the divide between Western Turkish elites and traditional rural voters. The culmination of the ‘Islamization’ within

political parties has been the rise to power of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, a result of a religious voter bloc drawn toward the prospect of political representation. President Erdoğan does not only rely on religious voters for political success, however, but rather a coalition between ultra-nationalists and secularists in Turkey. By “bringing ultra-nationalists and secularists together into his coalition, he is hoping that when he’s gone, the changes he has introduced will last. This is a big question mark, because the Turkish State and Turkish society have never been that polarized” (Gurses, 02/02/2021). Building coalitions and unifying voters under varied political appeals are strategies that have allowed President Erdoğan to retain power over time, further establishing permanency of his nationalist policy agenda.

A self-proclaimed ‘Conservative Democrat,’ Erdoğan had typically embodied pro-EU, pro-liberalism, and pro-free market economic policies. It was not until later in his presidency that he began to adopt a more authoritarian perspective, using the tools of nationalism and Islamism to advance policy objectives (Ozturk 01/24/2021). These religious undertones present in AKP policy agenda range from foreign policy to the establishment of cultural and religious patrimony. A more recent example of this has been President Erdoğan’s decision to revert the Hagia Sophia into a religious building, rather than sustain the museum status given to the structure under Kemalist secular reform in 1934. The justification for the reversion of the Hagia Sophia was given in a public speech, and Erdoğan utilized rhetoric to present the decision as a non-controversial topic. These phrases included, “The resurrection of the Hagia Sophia demonstrates that the Turkish nation, Muslims, and all of humanity still have something new to tell the world. . . It is the strongest answer ever given to the brutal attacks against our symbols and values across the Islamic world” (President Erdoğan, 07/10/2020). Regardless, the

acknowledgement of religious pluralism was noted throughout Erdoğan's address, and is just one example of his self-identity as an Islamist, yet Democratic authority figure in Turkey.

An important component of AKP political promises was the admission of Turkey into the European Union, and at the beginning of his leadership, President Erdoğan strived to place Turkey as a full candidate for EU membership. Although previous reforms had permitted Turkey to become a viable candidate for EU membership, it was not until the 2015 Refugee Crisis that there began to appear a reconfiguration of EU-Turkish relations. Turkey's intermediary role as a point of entry for Syrian and Kurdish refugees attempting to access European territory provided President Erdoğan with political leverage against the EU. The peak of the European Refugee Crisis during the 2010s began to place immigration at the forefront of Turkish politics, particularly with respect to these EU-Turkish relations. The numbers of refugees within Turkish borders swelled, and "as of today [Turkey] is hosting about three to five million refugees, primarily from Syria, and the vast majority of those refugees are Sunni Arabs. There are some Kurds, but the Kurds make up only a minority within this large refugee population" (Gurses 02/02/2021). Tensions between the Sunni Muslim Turkish religious identity and religious identities of migrants was therefore minimal, and in regards to assimilation with respect to religious characteristics, many refugees are able to do so successfully. The extent to which new refugees were able to assimilate in Turkey is described below, with Dr. Gurses placing particular emphasis on societal factors needed for the assimilation of immigrants in a new country, saying,

The Turkish state is going to acquire [around] three to four million new Turks. They are getting a Turkish education, they're all being given Turkish identity cards, and about half a million of these adult refugees have been provided with Turkish citizenship. They are increasingly assimilating into the Turkish culture to learn Turkish (Gurses, 02/02/2021).

It was further discussed that President Erdoğan's immigration approach amidst the refugee crisis adopts two different forms of significance: firstly, as a political weapon against the EU, with repeated threats of "opening the gates," and secondly, as a form of mass integration of a new generation of nationalist voters who eventually may assimilate in Turkey and sustain AKP policies. As such, the migration of new refugees to Turkey has not been met with exclusionary resistance from Erdoğan. Within the refugee crisis contextual background, the design of immigration policy is that of assimilation. Strategic placement of new migrants in Turkey allows for repopulation efforts, and ultimately, the long term aim of unifying Turkey under a common religious characteristic: Sunni Islam. In sum,

The non-Turks in Turkey, [those] ethnically non-Turks, are significantly more nationalist than the Turks themselves because [they] have to prove [themselves] on a daily basis as loyal members of the State and society. As I said, a vast majority of them are Sunni Turks, and Erdoğan's government is using them as a weapon against Europeans to extract more resources. He's also using them to Turkify, and Sunni-fy, as I should say, certain localities within Turkey, and these people are going to be hardcore, loyal supporters of the Turkish State in the long run. A vast majority of them are probably going to stay in Turkey (Gurses, 02/02/2021).

President Erdoğan's immigration policies throughout this crisis differ from the United States and India in that religion has provided a common factor between immigrants and Turkish citizens. Within Turkey, ethnic differences in terms of immigrant assimilation are not as divisive as previously thought, but it is important to note that a religious component inspired the movement toward a 'Turkification' of these individuals. As a result of integrative immigration policies such as these, forthcoming generations of Turkish citizens will be further consolidated by the Sunni Muslim identity, ultimately overshadowing other ethnic religious groups that may threaten the

Islamic Turkey that Erdoğan continually strives to attain.

Case 3: India

Although religious divisions have existed culturally as an element of the fabric of Indian society for an extended period of time, it was not until the political legitimization of these divisions that contemporary Indian politics can be able to be contextualized. A reference point at which the beginning of religious friction in modern India can be analyzed is the advent of the census in the late nineteenth century. The British compartmentalization of the ethnic and religious diversity in India created a more dynamic relationship between social identity and politics, and political labeling of the Indian citizen was more widespread at the moment of citizen classification through the national census. The two primary social divisions outlined by Dr. Thomas Blom Hansen, Professor of Anthropology at Stanford University, “were driven by numbers, both in terms of absolute demographic numbers, and then forms of representation, or how you make your voice heard and felt” (Blom Hansen, 04/13/2021). Although the census aggravated tensions between religious groups as a result of these associated numeric values, cultural divisions, particularly those related to caste and social hierarchies, played a role in widening the divide between religious groups as well. As such, internal struggles over political representation and majority demography were present prior to the secular references within the original Indian Constitution. The secular discussion -- as well as the creation of secular identity -- in India was primarily dominated by the political hegemony of the Congress Party, or the controlling political party during all major constitutional reforms promoting secular ideals. As previously mentioned, these reforms included the drafting of the original Constitution, as well as the eventual incorporation of the word ‘secular’ into constitutional language. Since its

establishment, the definition of Indian secularism has morphed into various interpretations, some of which are often rendered political arguments by Hindu nationalist parties. Among those arguments is the concept of ‘pseudo-secularism,’ which exists as a critique of the Congress Party’s application of secularism within Indian law and culture. The Congress Party used the Gandhian model of secularism which “is a set of recognition of religious pluralism and respect for all religions in the public sphere” (Basu 04/12/2021); implying the falsehood of this form of secularism vis-à-vis the usage of the term ‘pseudo-secularism’ is a political weapon used by Hindu nationalist groups to criticize the self-claimed Congress Party appeasements to minority religions. These so-called concessions played well into nationalist fear tactics, and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a Hindu nationalist paramilitary group and ideological parent of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), argued against Gandhian versions of religious tolerance, saying “that [this] kind of notion of Hindu tolerance has led to Hindu subjugation, [primarily] because Hindus historically were dominated by Muslims” (Basu, 04/12/2021). In the *belief* that the Congress Party was making appeasements to minority groups, “playing favor for Muslims, giving them [Muslim citizens] concessions, giving affirmative action to lower caste groups” (Blom Hansen, 04/13/2021), Hindu nationalists appealed to the social divisions already in existence, and ultimately transformed this conflict into political authority.

Hindu nationalism in the seat of political power is not exceptional to the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who came in power first in 2014, and later again in 2019. The effectiveness of Modi’s populist political messaging was manifested in 2019 election results, in which the BJP was uniquely able to capture votes across various castes. Among topics discussed throughout the interview, Dr. Amrita Basu, Professor of Political Science and Sexuality, Women's and Gender Studies at Amherst College, highlighted key differences between BJP

politics now compared to BJP policy agenda at the time of party emergence. More specifically, the BJP's recent emphasis on reshaping the idea of the Indian citizen was placed in historical context with relation to party politics in the 1990s. Throughout that time period, the Hindu nationalism embodied by the BJP, alongside the RSS, did not have much political power at the federal level. Regionally, however, the BJP was able to influence local politics in order to expose the anti-Muslim sentiment rooted in Hindu nationalist ideology. An example of an RSS/BJP-perpetrated event which escalated religious tensions was the 1992 demolition of the Babri Masjid mosque in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, India. The mosque had remained a contested site by Hindus who believed that the mosque had been built upon the birthplace of the Hindu deity Ram; as such, to Hindu nationalists, the mosque represented an encroachment of Islam upon the sanctity of Hindu spaces. The Modi government is a continuation of the rhetoric espoused at the beginning of the party's emergence, however, now the BJP is able to use political power to formally enact policy agenda. Dr. Basu emphasized that in the past, "[the BJP] did not actually tamper with the Constitution. The current government has done this both in its actions in Kashmir, this [Citizenship] Amendment Act, and various other things. And so it is a much more far reaching Hindu nationalist effort initiative" (Basu, 04/12/2021). Unlike leaders such as former President Trump and President Erdoğan, Prime Minister Modi embraced his role as an ideological representative of religious nationalism, uninhibited by the secularism delineated in the Indian Constitution. Similar to Trump and Erdoğan, however, Modi was able to utilize populism and charismatic power to achieve political potency and implement nationalist policy.

When redefining the Indian citizen, the BJP has targeted a two-pronged approach of both drafting immigration policy and amending constitutional writing. The constitutional amendments and subsequent Supreme Court decisions assign permanency to the policy changes, thus ensuring

that the Hindu nationalist sentiment remains viable beyond changes in leadership. The apex of this immigration policy agenda has been the recently enacted Citizenship Amendment Act of 2019. In order to understand the origins of the Citizenship Amendment Act, it is important to analyze first the anti-immigrant movements in the Indian state of Assam. Fueled by anti-Bangladesh sentiment and rapid migration growth, the first amendment to the Citizenship Act of 1955 in the Indian Constitution (since its implementation) became known as the Assam Accords. The Assam Accords of 1985 symbolized “what [had] originally [been] born in this kind of anti-Bengali domination emerged in the 1980s and 1990s as anti-Bangladeshi immigrant sentiment. So immigration became the new kind of legal shibboleth to distinguish between the wanted citizen and the unwanted denizen” (Dowdy, 02/07/2021). Dr. Dowdy, a Collegiate Assistant Professor at the University of Chicago, elaborated further on the national expansion of the Assam National Register of Citizens, which later became the basis for the 2019 Citizenship Amendment Act.

[The Assam NRC] provide cutoff dates for what group people could live in the boundaries of the administrative state of Assam. And if anyone migrated after these dates, they would be considered an illegal foreigner and this would have to be [resolved] in a legal fashion. . . The BJP, along with its militant wings in the RSS, decided that they were going to introduce a bill on the basis of NRC, Assam's National Registry of Citizens, and apply it to the entire country (Dowdy, 02/07/2021).

The Citizenship Amendment Act of 2019 acted primarily as an exclusionary immigration policy against Muslim immigrants from neighboring countries. Drawing upon Hindu nationalist aggression towards Muslims, the immigration policy includes provisions that establish a precedent of discriminating immigrants on the basis of religion. The immediate rejection of citizenship applications from Muslim immigrants was not the only controversial component of the policy, however. Its reliance on documentative proof of long term residency in India allowed

for substantial questioning of anyone suspected to be residing illegally in India, and Indian Muslims, singled out on the basis of religion, are more often asked to prove citizenship rights. As such, a degree of separation between the citizenship rights of Indian Hindus and Indian Muslims began to appear, even if many Indian Muslims considered India an ancestral home. A further complication amid the implementation of this immigration policy is the lack of documentative proof of residency and citizenship among vulnerable communities. As evidenced by Dr. Basu, “the people who are most likely not to have citizenship papers are those who are poor, those who have been displaced (often displaced because of natural disasters), and often women” (Basu, 04/12/2021). The selective nature of determining the applicability of the Citizenship Amendment Act of 2019 on individuals presents an outward display of anti-immigrant sentiment, particularly anti-Muslim sentiment from the far-right Hindu nationalist ruling parties. The precedent determined by Prime Minister Modi’s BJP government has ultimately undermined the Indian secular identity established by Nehru and continued through its Gandhian models. Current trends of populist movements, as well as the complete immersion of religious identity in Indian politics, foresees little change in terms of the creation of inclusive immigration policy. The model of Hindu dominance in Indian culture and society, adopted by the BJP, continues its path in securing the longevity of its nationalist policy agendas, particularly those that determine the definition of the Indian citizen.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

As evidenced by my research, there exists no clear uniformity among secular democracies. These countries vary in regards to nation-building processes, cultural backgrounds, and most importantly, constitutional histories and legislative frameworks. Drafting policy recommendations that consider all differences among case study nations is challenging because of difficulties in implementation plans, varied applicability, and internal resistance in the face of polarized politics. Implementing policy that directly addresses or attempts to regulate a personal characteristic, religious affiliation, will ultimately encounter resistance among different stakeholders in the political arenas of these respective countries. Establishing an aggressive form of secularism within the policymaking process, especially as it relates to immigration policy, conflicts directly with the religious national identities molded throughout a nation's history. These national identities have been further emboldened vis-à-vis nationalist rhetoric and the rise to power of charismatic leaders. The nature of secularism changes in respect to the national context in which it is placed, adopting various legislative and political interpretations. As such, pure secularism as a policy recommendation intended to address equitable and unbiased immigration policies will likely be ineffective. Instead, I offer two important shifts in national discourse that I believe will be necessary to create immigration policies that are not drafted in response to religious biases.

1. Create a balance between passive and assertive secularism within these constitutionally secular nations, particularly in light of ethnic and religious diversity present in each country

From the analyzed case studies, I have found that secularism operates in either a more passive or assertive role within a respective legislative framework. Within Turkey, an aggressive

form of secularism virtually outlawed and penalized religious expression; in turn, this created resentment in part by those who advocated for religious expression in the public sphere. This backlash was one of many factors leading to the rise in popularity of political parties that advocated for these religious rights, one of which includes the AKP Party under Erdoğan. Similarly, forms of secularism that prioritize the protection of religious pluralism and religious rights have allowed for a greater proliferation of religion in politics. This has often drawn the ire of those who are strong proponents of more restrictive secularism, and who argue for a complete separation of state and religion. Although constitutional changes are limited to amendments or state formation processes, this balanced form of secularism can be adopted via legislative standards that are applied in respect to common or civil law that is present within these case studies. The aim is to apply a form of secularism that is more neutral and less prone to incite conflict between secularists and religious advocates. This is in hopes that by restructuring the guidelines that regulate the state-religion relationship, religion would no longer be a point of conflict that results in hostility towards those of a religious practice or those non practicing. The recognition of a diverse religious landscape requires a form of secularism that rejects Western/Eurocentric ideals and embraces modernity while respecting religious expression.

The implementation of these changes, of course, will be limited to the electorate and the political characteristics of the leaders that they elect. Legislative changes, particularly ones regarding culture or political identity, are unlikely to result from change in political leadership. My research has emphasized the interconnectedness of religion and its role in state processes, which is a cultural factor ingrained deeply within national history. A change in secular form will likely have to confront previously established constitutional language, which would be another difficult challenge to surmount. Nevertheless, public recognition of the various secular

interpretations will broaden public discourse in regards to the role of religion in the public sphere.

2. Formulate policy that diversifies political representation of the respective religious landscape, which could perhaps lead to a slow reshaping of the religion and national identity relationship

Political representation that is more representative of a country's religious diversity could help mold a national identity that is inherently more inclusive, and rejects cultural frameworks that isolate a specific religion when describing the citizen. A more inclusive national identity could reframe policymaking without regards to nationalistic ideals that are constructed on the basis of religion, race, or ethnic identity. Immigration policies that had been traditionally exclusionary based on cultural factors, particularly religion, would be able to adapt to the representation that is offered within these countries at a political level. Political representation and religious advocacy ultimately legitimize the presence of those who are traditionally excluded from the perception of national identity. A political majority that embodies the historically exclusive identity of a nation will continue to advocate for and propose immigration policies that seek to preserve this identity.

The most pressing limitation in regards to this recommendation is cultural change, which is prone to resistance and very restricted in pace. The shifted understandings of national identity would most likely have to be the result of generational progress, especially under the pressure of globalization and rapidly changing demographics. Disallowing the promotion of a specific religion in the political sphere, however, has the potential to encourage political representation from those belonging to marginalized religious groups.

3. Promote reductions of harmful nationalist rhetoric among political leadership, allowing for more malleable ideals surrounding citizenship, national identity, and religion

Rhetoric, especially as it pertains to populist leadership, is an effective tool for mobilizing an electorate. More often in these case studies it is noted that language from respective political leaders helps revive nationalist sentiment in ways that do not consider evolving dynamics of diverse populations amidst the backdrop of twenty-first century globalization. Rather, nationalist rhetoric emboldens key identity markers that have been historically considered as defining the ‘citizen’ -- one such marker includes religion. In order to broaden the scope of citizenship in each country, a delicate balance must be found between freedom of expression and dangerous political rhetoric. Permitting harmful language when promoting policy agendas establishes a precedent that allows political leaders to apply this rhetoric to discriminatory policies. Active political recognition of the boundaries between exclusionary/hateful rhetoric and free expression would hopefully allow for less weaponized nationalism, particularly along religious lines.

A generational reconstruction of citizenship and national identity could potentially lead to policymaking that is not framed using theoretical assumptions and artificially created boundaries. Assuming the changes in reframing of policies and resistance to harmful political rhetoric are implemented by future political leadership, defining citizenship and ‘the citizen’ can be more inclusive over time. As other policy recommendations note, resistance to change is inevitably tied to cultural and societal shifts. The aforementioned changes are likely to interact well with one another, and time can only tell if such changes are possible in current political climates within each case study.

CONCLUSION

Understanding religion as a component of the political identity has long been a question of theory in relation to historical events. Throughout history, religion has adopted various roles within politics and policymaking, particularly in regards to the case studies that are analyzed in this paper. Through the comparative analysis, it is found that the characteristic differences among these countries were stronger determinants of the role of religion in policymaking, despite all three case studies remaining constitutionally secular. The historical role of religion, both in relation to state forms of secularism and the national identity of the citizen, has produced a strong resistance to change in regards to the religious landscape of each country. The protection of this religious identity has been enforced through immigration policy in all three countries, in which either a policy aims at restricting access to religious outsiders or aims to integrate outsiders into the dominant religious national identity. A resurgence in religious sentiment in politics and policymaking can also be accredited to the political environment in which it occurs; religious nationalism has thrived among political leadership that has frequently cited nationalist rhetoric in relation to religious identity. The initial hypothesis proposed that these dominant religious histories and identities, combined with contemporary religious nationalism in politics, would lead to more exclusionary and restrictive immigration policies in each case study country. Through the analysis of recent immigration policies, as well as conversations with academic experts, it is found that the hypothesis is only partially supported. Although some countries -- such as the United States and India -- have enacted restrictive immigration policies in response to religious nationalist ideals, another case study, Turkey, has prioritized the assimilation of new migrants in order to bolster political support and mold these individuals in the linguistic, cultural, and religious image of a Turkish citizen.

Previous literature that analyzes secular theory, national identity theory, and policy frameworks rarely apply these theories to case studies, let alone case studies that research the broad spectrum of politics and policymaking on a global scale. This paper attempts to do so by combining this literature and studying it in relation to contemporary politics. In an increasing globalized world, national identity struggles against secular models designed with respect to nation-building processes in each country. As such, the proliferation of such religious-based political discourse is an important factor to study when analyzing twenty-first century nationalism. Research studying the intersection of religion, politics, and policymaking has not only been relevant among political movements within each case study country, but also is important when thinking ahead to future political trends and immigration policies that resist change related to globalization. This paper aims to apply the same policy question across different cultures, demographics, and secular models in order to convey the difficulty in studying these topics from one case study to the next; by encompassing a variety of diverse perspectives, this research paper responds to the policy question in ways that pertain uniquely to each case study. The applied theory and characteristic differences can then be analyzed in the context of other countries or future research considerations.

Although this paper contextualizes political theories in regards to immigration policy, the highlighted religious politics and nationalism can be studied with respect to other policy fields as well. Using similar theoretical frameworks and research methods, the research study conducted in this paper has the potential to analyze policy areas beyond immigration policy. Historically, political environments continually are subject to change, however. With current and future political trends in mind, research related to religion and public policy is rich with opportunities to expand upon existing literature and add to academic discussion.

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