

Codebook for Pew Research Center's global restrictions on religion data

Background

In December 2009, Pew Research Center released “Global Restrictions on Religion,” the first in a series of annual reports on a data-coding project that seeks to measure levels of government restrictions on religion and social hostilities involving religion around the world.

The reports use two indexes to rate nearly 200 countries and self-governing territories on their levels of restrictions and hostilities. The Government Restrictions Index (GRI) is based on 20 indicators of ways that national and local governments restrict religion, including through coercion and force. The Social Hostilities Index (SHI) is based on 13 indicators of ways in which private individuals and social groups infringe upon religious beliefs and practices, including religiously biased crimes, mob violence and efforts to stop particular religious groups from growing or operating. The reports include data on the number and types of documented incidents of religion-related violence, including terrorism and armed conflict.

As of December 2024, the Center had published 15 reports on global restrictions on religion, analyzing a total of 16 years' worth of data (the first two reports covered a total of three years, from 2007 to 2009). Each report has included an appendix listing country-level scores on every indicator for the time period covered by the report. In order to provide social science researchers and the general public with easier access to the data, the Center now has released the full downloadable Stata dataset, an open-source CSV dataset, a text file explaining the study and the contents of the dataset release, a text file noting rounding discrepancies, and this explanatory document (“Codebook”).

The Codebook explains the data-coding process, sources of information and construction of the indexes. It details some methodological changes that have been made since the project began, and it briefly describes efforts by the Center to assess potential sources of measurement bias. It includes an annotated version of the questionnaire used to code data throughout the project, with definitions of key terms and scoring procedures.

The data is presented as a semiwide-format dataset, in which each row is a country-year observation (e.g., “Afghanistan, 2007”). The columns contain all of the variables presented in the Center's annual reports on restrictions on religion that comprise the GRI and SHI, as well as some additional variables analyzed in separate studies. The dataset currently contains data from 2007

through 2022; as additional years of data are coded, the dataset will be updated.¹ The data also can be explored interactively through [Pew Research Center's website](#).

To allow for reliable analysis of trends over time, Pew Research Center has tried to keep the coding procedures as consistent as possible from year to year. However, some changes have been necessary, mainly due to the availability of information sources. The changes are detailed below.

The Codebook proceeds in three parts. First, it explains the methodology and coding procedures used to collect the data. Second, it discusses the Government Restrictions Index and Social Hostilities Index, including what they measure and how they are calculated. Finally, it describes each of the variables included in the dataset, along with answer values and definitions of key terms.

Overview of procedures

The methods used to assess and compare restrictions on religion were developed by former Pew Research Center Senior Researcher Brian J. Grim in consultation with other members of the Center's staff, building on a methodology that Grim and Professor Roger Finke developed while at The Pennsylvania State University's Association of Religion Data Archives.² The goal was to devise quantifiable, objective and transparent measures of the extent to which governments and societal groups impinge on the practice of religion. The findings were used to rate countries and self-governing territories on two indexes that are reproducible and can be periodically updated.

This research goes beyond previous efforts to assess restrictions on religion in several ways. First, the Center has coded (categorized and counted) data from a variety of sources, including reports by the U.S. State Department; the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief; the Council of the European Union; Human Rights Watch; the International Crisis Group; Freedom House; and Amnesty International, to mention just a few. Center coders have looked to the sources only for specific, well-documented facts, not opinions or commentary.

Second, Pew Research Center staff have used extensive data-verification checks that reflect generally accepted best practices for such studies, such as double-blind coding (coders do not see

¹ Initially, Pew Research Center analyzed data on religious restrictions for 12-month periods from July 1 to June 30 (e.g., July 1, 2009-June 30, 2010). The mid-year to mid-year time frame was used from 2007-2010. In 2011, the time frame for the analysis shifted to calendar years, in part because most of the primary sources used in the study were then based on calendar years. For the sake of simplicity, this Codebook and the accompanying dataset use calendar-year designations only. For example, the baseline year of the study (mid-2006 to mid-2007) is reported as 2007. Users should keep this in mind when working with data from years prior to 2011.

² Refer to Grim, Brian J., and Roger Finke. 2006. "[International Religion Indexes: Government Regulation, Government Favoritism, and Social Regulation of Religion](#)." *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion*.

each other's ratings), inter-rater reliability assessments (checking for consistency among coders) and carefully monitored protocols to reconcile discrepancies among coders.³

Third, the coding has taken into account whether the perpetrators of religion-related violence were government or private actors. The coding also has identified how widespread and intensive the restrictions were in each country.

Fourth, one of the most valuable contributions of the indexes and the questions used to construct them (read the [section on the coding instrument](#) in the [Methodology](#)) is their ability to chart change over time.

Countries and territories

The 198 countries and territories covered by the data contain more than 99.5% of the world's population.⁴ They include 192 of the 193 member states of the United Nations, as of 2022, plus six territories: Kosovo, Hong Kong, Macao, the Palestinian territories, Taiwan and Western Sahara. Reporting on these territories does not imply any position on what their international political status should be, only recognition that the de facto situations in these territories require separate analysis.

Although the 198 countries and territories vary widely in size, population, wealth, ethnic diversity, religious makeup and form of government, the coding does not attempt to adjust for such differences. Less wealthy countries are not scored differently from wealthy ones. Countries with religiously diverse populations are not “expected” to have more social hostilities than homogeneous ones, and democracies are not assessed differently from authoritarian regimes.

The primary and secondary sources indicate that the North Korean government is among the most repressive in the world, including toward religion. But because independent observers lack regular access to North Korea, the sources are unable to provide the kind of specific, timely information that forms the basis of this data. Therefore, North Korea is not included on either index.

Information sources

Pew Research Center initially identified 18 widely available, frequently cited sources of information on government restrictions on religion and social hostilities involving religion around

³ Inter-rater reliability assessments were conducted using weighted Cohen's kappa in R.

⁴ The reports initially included Northern Cyprus as a separate territory. This was discontinued beginning in 2010, reducing the number of countries and territories included in the report to 197. After South Sudan separated from Sudan in 2011, the number of countries and territories in the report returned to 198. This dataset does not include data for Northern Cyprus.

the world. Since the inception of the project, however, some information sources have been discontinued or have not been updated; new sources have been substituted to compensate for these changes.

The primary and secondary sources, which are listed below, include reports from U.S. government agencies, several independent, nongovernmental organizations and a variety of European and UN bodies. Although most of these organizations are based in Western countries, many of them depend on local staff to collect information across the globe. Pew Research Center does not use the commentaries, opinions or normative judgments of the sources; the sources are combed only for factual information on specific policies and actions.

Primary and secondary sources

1. Country constitutions or basic laws
2. U.S. State Department annual Reports on International Religious Freedom
3. U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom's annual reports
4. UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief reports
5. Human Rights First (2007, 2008)
6. Freedom House reports (2009-onward)
7. Hudson Institute's "[Religious Freedom in the World](#)" edited by Paul Marshall (used for 2007-2012 studies)
8. Human Rights Watch topical reports
9. International Crisis Group country reports and database
10. United Kingdom Foreign & Commonwealth Office annual reports on human rights
11. Council of the European Union's annual reports on human rights
12. Global Terrorism Database (2013-2020)
13. European Network Against Racism "Shadow Reports" (2007-2018)
14. UN High Commissioner for Refugee reports
15. U.S. State Department annual Country Reports on Terrorism
16. Anti-Defamation League reports
17. Amnesty International country reports
18. U.S. State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices
19. Uppsala University's Uppsala Conflict Data Program, Armed Conflict Database (beginning in 2009)
20. Human Rights Without Frontiers "Freedom of Religion or Belief" newsletters (beginning in 2010)
21. U.S. National Counterterrorism Center's Worldwide Incident Tracking System (WITS) (2009-2011)
22. UN High Commissioner for Refugees Population Statistics Database (beginning in 2017)
23. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre's Global Internal Displacement Database (beginning in 2017)

Sources with information on the situation in the United States

1. The U.S. Department of Justice’s “Religious Freedom in Focus” newsletters and reports (2007-2020)
2. FBI Hate Crime Reports
3. American Civil Liberties Union (beginning 2021)

Two major areas in which data sources have changed are religion-related terrorism and war. Pew Research Center initially relied on the information on terrorism and war in the U.S. State Department’s reports and the International Crisis Group’s reports. Starting in 2009, researchers added two new sources: the U.S. National Counterterrorism Center’s Worldwide Incident Tracking System (WITS) for data on religion-related terrorism, and Sweden’s Uppsala University Conflict Data Program’s Armed Conflict Database for data on religion-related war. The U.S. government discontinued WITS in 2011, and beginning in 2012, the coding project reverted to using the U.S. State Department’s reports for data on religion-related terrorism, while continuing to use the Uppsala database to track religion-related war.

In 2013, the Center also began using data from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) maintained by the University of Maryland’s National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. Since the University of Maryland database is also a source of information for the U.S. State Department’s “Country Reports on Terrorism,” Pew Research Center staff sought to ensure that no terrorism incidents were double-counted between the two sources. GTD data was not available beyond 2020, so researchers relied on sources we typically use for our annual studies to code religion-related terrorism, including the International Crisis Group’s CrisisWatch Database and the U.S. State Department’s annual “Country Reports on Terrorism.”

Another area in which data sources have changed is human rights reports. Human Rights First’s reports have not been updated since 2009, so annual Freedom House reports were substituted beginning in 2009. Additionally, the Hudson Institute’s “Religious Freedom in the World” publication edited by Paul Marshall has not been updated since its 2007 release. To provide more recent data, Human Rights Without Frontiers’ “Freedom of Religion or Belief” newsletters were substituted starting in 2010. Finally, Amnesty International’s country reports were not available for 2013 and 2018, so coding for those two years occurred without them.

The coding instrument

Pew Research Center staff developed a battery of questions, similar to a survey questionnaire, about various types of government restrictions on religion and social hostilities involving religion. Each year, coders consult the primary and secondary sources to answer each question separately

for each country. While the U.S. State Department’s annual “International Religious Freedom Reports” generally contain the most comprehensive information, the other sources provide additional factual detail that is used to settle ambiguities, resolve contradictions and help in the proper scoring of each question.

The questionnaire, or coding instrument, generates a set of numerical measures on restrictions in each country. These numerical measures are used as variables in the analysis done for the annual restrictions reports.

The coding process requires the coders to check all the sources for each country. Coders determine whether each source provides information critical to assigning a score, provides supporting information but not critical additional facts, or provides no substantive information on that particular country. Multiple sources of information are available for all countries and territories with populations greater than 1 million. Most of the countries and territories analyzed by Pew Research Center are multisourced; only small (predominantly island) countries have a single source, namely, the U.S. State Department’s reports.

Coding the United States presents a special problem since it is not included in the U.S. State Department’s annual “International Religious Freedom Reports.” Accordingly, Pew Research Center coders also looked at reports from the U.S. Department of Justice and the FBI on violations of religious freedom in the U.S. in addition to consulting all the primary and secondary sources, including reports by the UN, Human Rights Watch, Freedom House, the International Crisis Group and the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office – many of which contain data on the U.S. The U.S. Department of Justice discontinued publishing its “Religious Freedom in Focus” newsletters after 2020, so researchers looked for religious freedom court cases documented in 2021 on websites such as the American Civil Liberties Union.

The coding process

Pew Research Center employs strict training and rigorous coding protocols to make its coding as objective and reproducible as possible. Coders work directly under an experienced researcher’s supervision, with additional direction and support provided by other Center researchers. Each year, a new group of coders undergoes an intensive training period that includes a thorough overview of the research objectives, information sources and methodology.

Countries are double-blind coded by two coders (coders do not see each other’s ratings), and the initial ratings are entered into an electronic document (coding instrument) that includes details on each incident. The coders begin by filling out the coding instrument for each country using the

information source that has the most comprehensive information, typically the U.S. State Department's "International Religious Freedom Report." The protocol for each coder is to answer every question on which information is available in the initial source. Once a coder has completed that process, they then turn to the other sources. As new information is found, this also is coded and the source duly noted. Whenever ambiguities or contradictions arise, the source providing the most detailed, clearly documented evidence is used.

After two coders have independently completed the coding instrument for a particular country, their scores are compared by a researcher. Areas of discrepancy are discussed at length with the coders and are reconciled to arrive at a single score on each question for each country. The data for each country, including the answers and substantiating evidence, is logged into a database.

After all countries are completely coded and all answers and substantiating evidence are logged, the coders and supervising researchers compare the scores from the most recent year with those from the previous year. They identify scores that have changed and review the substantiating evidence for each year to determine whether the change is substantive or a result of coding error, such as information that has been overlooked. In cases in which the change is found to result from coding error, the coders change their scores accordingly.

On several of the questions measuring social hostilities (SHI_Q_6, SHI_Q_7, SHI_Q_8, SHI_Q_9, SHI_Q_10, SHI_Q_11, SHI_Q_12 and SHI_Q_13), coders are instructed to look not only at the current annual coding period but also at two prior years of data to assess whether hostilities in those prior years have a continuing impact on religious tensions. For example, a major outbreak of violence between religious groups, a violent attack on an individual who has switched religions or a highly publicized honor killing may have a chilling effect on religious activity that extends beyond a single year. Accordingly, coders are instructed to take into account up to three years' worth of information in the coding for these questions.

During the first years of coding, the coding instrument continually was evaluated for possible defects. The wording of the questions was designed to be precise, comprehensive and objective, so that, based on the same data sources, the coding could be reliably reproduced by others. In subsequent years, the definitions of some key terms have been elaborated in an effort to ensure consistency from year to year, resulting in annotations to the coding guidelines used by the data coders. But no substantive changes have been made in the wording of the questions that constitute the Government Restrictions Index or the Social Hostilities Index since publication of the first religious restrictions report in December 2009.

The sources used in the coding sometimes provide differing descriptions of the same situation or incident. Coders generally have found few cases in which one source flatly contradicts another on a critical issue of fact. When significant contradictions do arise – such as when sources provide widely differing estimates of the number of people displaced due to religion-related violence – the source that cites the most specific and authoritative documentation is used. The coders are instructed to disregard broad, unsubstantiated generalizations regarding abuses and to focus on reports that contain clear, precise documentation and factual details, such as names, dates and places where incidents occurred.

Pew Research Center also uses inter-rater reliability tests to assess the quality of the data. These tests assess the extent to which the two coders for each country agree on the data they code. Inter-rater reliability scores are computed by comparing the coders' independent, blind ratings. These inter-rater reliability tests are a common measure of the quality of data and coding instruments; the inter-rater reliability scores generally have been near or above 0.7, which is considered an acceptable level.

Restriction of religion indexes

Pew Research Center uses two 10-point indexes – the Government Restrictions Index (GRI) and the Social Hostilities Index (SHI) – to rate 198 countries and territories on their levels of restrictions. As noted above, the GRI is based on 20 indicators of ways that national and local governments restrict religion, including through coercion and force. The SHI is based on 13 indicators of ways in which private individuals and social groups infringe on religious beliefs and practices, including religiously biased crimes, mob violence and efforts to stop particular religious groups from growing or operating.

In addition to measuring countries' levels of restrictions and hostilities involving religion, the reports analyze changes in restrictions on an annual basis. The reports categorize the amount of change in each country's scores in two ways, numerically and by percentile. First, countries are grouped into categories depending on the size of the numeric change in their scores from year to year on the two indexes: changes of 2.0 points or more in either direction, changes of at least 1.0 point but less than 2.0 points, changes of less than 1.0 point, or no changes at all.

Second, the restrictions reports categorize the levels of government restrictions and social hostilities in each country by percentiles. As a benchmark, the reports use results from the baseline year of the study (2007). Scores in the top 5% on each index in the baseline year were categorized as "very high." The next-highest 15% of scores were categorized as "high," and the

following 20% were categorized as “moderate.” The bottom 60% of scores were categorized as “low.”

Pew Research Center reports all figures in the restrictions reports and datasets to one decimal place. However, the calculations of the GRI and SHI often result in numbers beyond one decimal place, which can have implications for the presentation of countries’ index scores and countries’ assignments to levels of government restrictions and social hostilities. It also could affect assessments of index score changes for a given country between years. As a result, there may be a few minor discrepancies if users of this dataset attempt to recreate the indexes from the component variables.

Government Restrictions Index

Coding multiple indicators makes it possible to construct a Government Restrictions Index of sufficient gradation to allow for meaningful cross-national comparisons. An additional advantage of using multiple indicators is that it helps mitigate the effects of measurement error in any one variable, providing greater confidence in the overall measure.

Pew Research Center codes 20 indicators of government restrictions on religion. These 20 items are added together to create the GRI. In two cases (GRI_Q_19 and GRI_Q_20), these items represent an aggregation of several closely related questions (for details, refer to the discussion of variables at the end of this Codebook).

The GRI is a fine-grained measure created by adding the 20 items on a scale of 0.0 to 10.0, with 0.0 indicating very low levels of government restrictions on religion and 10.0 indicating extremely high levels of restrictions. The 20 questions that form the GRI are coded in a standard scale from 0.0 to 1.0 point, while gradations among the answers allow for partial points to be given for lesser degrees of the particular government restriction being measured. The overall value of the index is calculated and proportionally adjusted – so that it has a maximum value of 10.0 and a possible range of 0.0 to 10.0 – by dividing the sum of the variables by two.

A test of whether the 20 items are statistically reliable as a single index produced a scale reliability coefficient above 0.9 for each year from 2007-2022.⁵ Since coefficients of 0.7 or higher are generally considered acceptable, it is appropriate to combine these 20 items into a single index.

⁵ Scale reliability tests were performed using Cronbach’s alpha in Stata.

Social Hostilities Index

In addition to government restrictions, violence and intimidation in societies also can limit religious beliefs and practices. Accordingly, Pew Research Center staff track more than a dozen indicators of social impediments on religion. Once again, coding multiple indicators makes it possible to construct an index that shows gradations of severity or intensity and allows for comparisons among countries.

The Social Hostilities Index is constructed by adding together the 13 indicators based on a scale of 0.0 to 10.0, with 0.0 indicating very low impediments to religious beliefs and practices and 10.0 indicating extremely high impediments. The various questions that form the index are coded in a standard scale from 0.0 to 1.0 point, while gradations among the answers allow for partial points to be given for lesser degrees of the particular hostilities being measured. The indicators are added together and set to have a possible range of 0.0 to 10.0 by dividing the sum of the variables by 1.3. Three of these items (SHI_Q_1, SHI_Q_4 and SHI_Q_5) represent an aggregation of several closely related questions (for details, refer to the discussion of variables at the end of this Codebook).

As with the GRI, various types of violence and intimidation are combined on the SHI. A test of whether these 13 items are statistically reliable as a single index produced a scale reliability coefficient of 0.85 or higher each year from 2007-2022. Since coefficients of 0.7 or higher are generally considered acceptable, it is statistically appropriate to combine these items into a single index.

Overall restrictions

Pew Research Center also analyzes overall restrictions on religion, which take into account both government restrictions and social hostilities to provide a broader sense of the limits on religious belief and practice in a country. A country's overall level of restrictions for a particular year is its maximum level on either index (the GRI or the SHI) for that year. For example, if a country had high government restrictions and low social hostilities, it would have high overall restrictions; if it had low government restrictions and moderate social hostilities, it would have moderate overall restrictions.

Changes in overall levels of restrictions are calculated for each country by comparing its scores on both indexes (the GRI and the SHI) from year to year. When a country's scores on the GRI and the SHI change in the same direction (both increased or both decreased), the greater amount of change determines the category. For instance, if the country's GRI score increased by 0.8 and its SHI score increased by 1.5, the country would be put into the overall "1.0 to 1.9 increase" category.

When a country's score increases on one index but decreases on the other, the difference between the amounts of change determines the grouping. For example, if the country's GRI score increased by 2.0 and its SHI score decreased by 1.5, the country would go into the overall "0.1 to 0.9 increase" category. When a country's score on one index stays the same and its score on the other index changes, the amount of change in the latter index is used to assign the category.

Regional medians

The religious restrictions reports include median index scores for five geographic regions: the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and sub-Saharan Africa). Replication of these median scores may result in slightly different numbers, based on the rounding procedures used in different statistical software packages. The countries included in each region are listed in the reports.

How examples are coded

Examples of each type of government restriction or social hostility are generally counted in a single measure on the GRI or SHI. For instance, a restriction on proselytizing (sharing one's faith with the intent of persuading another to join the faith) is not also counted as a restriction on conversion (an individual changing their religion). In some situations, however, an individual restriction or hostility may be part of a broader set of restrictions or hostilities. For instance, a mob attack by members of one religious group on an individual of another religion may be an isolated event and counted just under question SHI_Q_2: "Was there mob violence related to religion?" However, if such an attack triggers repeated attacks between religious groups, it also might be an indication of sectarian or communal violence, which by definition involves two or more religious groups facing off in repeated clashes. In such a case, the mob attack also would be counted under question SHI_Q_3: "Were there acts of sectarian or communal violence between religious groups?"

Religion-related terrorism and armed conflict

Terrorism and war can have huge direct and indirect effects on religious groups, including destroying religious sites, displacing whole communities and inflaming sectarian passions. Accordingly, Pew Research Center staff tally the number, location and consequences of religion-related terrorism and armed conflict around the world, as reported in the same primary and secondary sources used to document other forms of intimidation and violence. However, war and terrorism are sufficiently complex that it is not always possible to determine the degree to which they are religiously motivated or state sponsored. Out of an abundance of caution, the studies do not include this data in the GRI. They are factored instead into the index of social hostilities

involving religion, which includes one question specifically about religion-related terrorism (SHI_Q_4) and one question specifically about religion-related war or armed conflict (SHI_Q_5). In addition, other measures in both indexes are likely to pick up spillover effects of war and terrorism on the level of religious tensions in society. For example, hate crimes, mob violence and sectarian fighting that occur in the aftermath of a terrorist attack or in the context of a religion-related war would be counted in the SHI, and laws or policies that clearly discriminate against a particular religious group would be registered on the GRI.

For the purposes of this study, the term “religion-related terrorism” is defined as premeditated, politically motivated violence committed against noncombatants by subnational groups or clandestine agents that have some identifiable religious ideology or religious motivation. It also includes acts carried out by groups that have a nonreligious identity but target religious personnel, such as clergy, or religious sites, such as a synagogue or mosque. Readers should note that it is the political character and motivation of the groups, not the type of violence, that is at issue here. For instance, a bombing would not be classified as religion-related terrorism if there was no clearly discernible religious ideology or bias behind it unless it was directed at religious personnel or a religious site.

For the 2013-2020 coding years, the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) was used to find information on religion-related terrorism. The GTD’s classification of terrorist incidents counts attacks on military targets as terrorism. For 2021 events, we did not count attacks on police or military targets, because they would not qualify as noncombatants.

Religion-related war or armed conflict is defined as armed conflict (a conflict that involves sustained casualties over time or more than 1,000 battle deaths) in which religious rhetoric is commonly used to justify the use of force, or in which one or more of the combatants primarily identifies itself or the opposing side by religion.

Changes in the coding

During the years Pew Research Center has been collecting data on global restrictions on religion, a few changes have been made in the coding procedures. While Pew Research Center staff have endeavored to keep the procedures as consistent as possible, some adjustments were necessary, mostly due to changes in sources or improvements in database management.

Consolidating to a new database

For the first few years of data collection, information on the number, type and location of incidents of government force and social violence toward religious groups, as well as deference to religious

authorities in matters of law, were coded at the province level. Each year, the province numbers were summed and put into separate country-level files. In 2010, Pew Research Center staff began creating a database that integrated all province- and country-level data on religious restrictions. During this process, Center staff reviewed any discrepancies between the province files and the sums that had been transferred to the country files and made appropriate corrections. The adjustments were relatively minor and had negligible impact on countries' index scores – on average, less than 0.005 points on the 10-point indexes. Beginning with the 2012 data (analyzed in 2013), the Center stopped coding data at the province level; all data is now coded at the country level.

Consolidating the restrictions data into the database also entailed a review of the data on harassment of religious groups. In particular, instances of harassment from 2007 had been stored as answers to open-ended questions; in a few cases, they were recoded to match the categories used in subsequent years.

Changing time period of analysis

Initially, Pew Research Center staffers coded the restrictions data for 12-month periods from July 1 to June 30 (e.g., July 1, 2009-June 30, 2010). Beginning in 2011, the data collection shifted to a calendar year (e.g. Jan. 1, 2011-Dec. 31, 2011). The shift to calendar years was made, in part, because most of the primary and secondary sources used in the studies are based on calendar years.

Because of the shift in time frame, the data does not include incidents that occurred during the period from July 1, 2010, to Dec. 31, 2010. While this misses some incidents that occurred during the second half of 2010, events that had an ongoing impact – such as a change to a country's constitution or the outbreak of a religion-related war – were captured by the coding. Researchers carefully reviewed the situation in each country and territory during this six-month period and made sure that restrictions with an ongoing impact were not overlooked.

Impact of changes in coding procedures or sources

Some of the year-to-year differences on the indexes could reflect minor changes in coding procedures or changes in the information sources. For example, the coding shows a decrease in GRI_Q_3 (“Taken together, how do the constitution/basic law and other national laws and policies affect religious freedom”) between the baseline year of the study and the following year that appears to have been the result of a change in the way the question was coded. During the first year coded (2007), the coders were more likely to give countries the highest possible score on this question (indicating the national government does not respect religious freedom) than in either of

the two subsequent years. A post-coding review found that coders initially were more likely to code the presence of a few restrictions on religious freedom by the government as a “1.” Starting in 2008, however, coders had a higher bar for coding “1” on this question: The presence of restrictions alone was not sufficient; there also had to be clear harassment or abuse of religious groups or individuals. This standard has been applied in all subsequent years. However, those who use the religious restrictions dataset should be cautious when analyzing changes in GRI_Q_3 in the initial years of the study.

Among the areas where changes in the sources likely had an impact is religion-related terrorism (SHI_Q_4). Some year-to-year increases in this component of the Social Hostilities Index could reflect the use of sources that provide greater detail on terrorist activities than the sources used in the first few years of the study, as discussed above in the [section on information sources](#). However, because Pew Research Center consistently used the U.S. State Department’s “Country Reports on Terrorism” as a source in all years of data collection, the overall coding of religion-related terrorism should generally be comparable from year to year. Still, those who use the dataset should be cautious in drawing conclusions from minor changes in SHI_Q_4.

Finally, there was a change in the early years of the study in the instructions for coding two variables on the Government Restrictions Index: one measuring constitutional or basic law provisions protecting religious freedom (GRI_Q_1) and one measuring constitutional qualifications or contradictions of those protections (GRI_Q_2). As a result of a review of coding procedures, these variables were retrospectively back-coded so that the instructions to the coders for the 2007-08 period matched the protocols used starting in 2009. This resulted in small changes to the 2007 and 2008 GRI scores; as a result, the scores included in this dataset vary from those reported in the baseline year of the study.

Social harassment and intimidation coding

Beginning with data for 2017, researchers updated the way social harassment and intimidation of religion is calculated. There are six components that encompass the question SHI_Q_1: “Were there crimes, malicious acts or violence motivated by religious hatred or bias?” The six components include harassment/intimidation, property damage, detentions/abductions, displacement from homes, physical assaults and deaths (refer to SHI.Q.1.a in [Appendix D](#) and SHI_Q_1_Extent in this Codebook and dataset). For the “harassment/intimidation” measure, researchers made an update to count “limited” harassment as 0.5 points and “widespread” harassment as 1.0 point for data covering 2017 onward. “Limited” means infrequent or isolated and indicates that the harassment seems unlikely to continue. “Widespread” does not necessarily mean the whole country, but it could be present in certain regions, have potential of spreading to

other regions, affect several groups, indicate a substantial uptick in the number of cases of abuse, or indicate a possible campaign against a certain religion(s) or practices.

The other five components of SHI_Q_1 are coded as “Yes” (1.0 point) or “No” (0.0 points) based on whether incidents in each subcategory occurred. Compared with the previous method, this update to coding “limited” and “widespread” intimidation and harassment resulted in a change of no more than 0.1 points to the SHI score of 53 countries in 2017.

Potential biases

There are several potential biases in the data that Pew Research Center has identified and sought to assess, conducting various kinds of tests and sensitivity analyses, some of which have been published independently.⁶

As noted earlier in the Codebook, North Korea is not included on either index. The sources used for this study indicate that the North Korean government is among the most repressive in the world, including toward religion. But because independent observers lack regular access to North Korea, the sources are unable to provide the kind of specific, timely information that forms the basis of this study.

This raises two important issues concerning potential information bias. The first is whether other countries that limit outsiders’ access and that may seek to obscure or distort their record on religious restrictions were adequately covered by the sources used in the coding. In the early years of the study, researchers reviewed the coding of several limited-access countries and found information on those countries in multiple sources. Each of the limited-access countries also was covered by other secondary quantitative datasets on religious restrictions that have used a similar coding scheme, including earlier years of coded U.S. State Department report data produced by Grim at The Pennsylvania State University’s Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA) project (four datasets); independent coding by experts at the Hudson Institute’s Center for Religious Liberty using indexes also available from ARDA (one dataset); and content analysis of country constitutions conducted by the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty (one dataset). Pew Research Center staff used these datasets for cross-validation. Thus, contrary to what one might expect, even most countries that limit access to information tend to receive extensive coverage by groups that monitor religious restrictions.

⁶ Grim, Brian J., and Richard Wike. 2010. “[Cross-Validating Measures of Global Religious Intolerance: Comparing Coded State Department Reports with Survey Data and Expert Opinion](#).” *Politics and Religion*. Also read Grim, Brian J., and Roger Finke. 2006. “[International Religion Indexes: Government Regulation, Government Favoritism, and Social Regulation of Religion](#).” *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion*.

The second key question – the flip side of the first – is whether countries that provide freer access to information receive higher scores simply because more information is available on them. As described more fully in the [Methodology in the baseline report](#) (“Global Restrictions on Religion,” published in December 2009 and covering the period from 2007 to 2008), Pew Research Center staff compared the length of U.S. State Department reports on open-access countries with those of more limited-access countries. The comparison found that the median number of words was approximately three times as large for the limited-access countries as for the open-access countries. This suggests that problems in open-access countries are generally not overreported in the U.S. State Department reports.

Only when it comes to religion-related violence and intimidation in society do the sources report more problems in the freer-access countries than in the limited-access ones. However, the Social Hostilities Index includes several measures – such as SHI_Q_8 (“Did religious groups themselves attempt to prevent other religious groups from being able to operate?”) and SHI_Q_11 (“Were women harassed for violating religious dress codes?”) – that are less susceptible to such reporting bias because they capture general social trends or attitudes as well as specific incidents. With these limitations in mind, it appears that the coded information on social hostilities is a fair gauge of the situation in the vast majority of countries and a valuable complement to the information on government restrictions.

Data on social impediments to religious practice can more confidently be used to make comparisons among countries with sufficient openness, which includes more than nine-in-ten countries covered in the coding. A 2010 analysis by Grim and Richard Wike, Pew Research Center’s director of global attitudes research, tested the reliability of the U.S. State Department reports on social impediments to religious practice by comparing public opinion data with data coded from the reports in previous years by Grim and experts at The Pennsylvania State University. They concluded that “the understanding of social religious intolerance embodied in the [U.S.] State Department reports is comparable with the results of population surveys and individual expert opinion.”⁷

Another possible source of information bias may arise from the use of U.S. State Department reports and other English-language sources that, in turn, are often based on local media accounts. Do the sources used in the coding fairly and accurately reflect what has been reported by local media in other languages? Or is important information effectively lost in translation?

⁷ Refer to Grim, Brian J., and Richard Wike. 2010. “[Cross-Validating Measures of Global Religious Intolerance: Comparing Coded State Department Reports with Survey Data and Expert Opinion](#).” Politics and Religion.

To assess this – albeit in a limited fashion – the Center assigned native-Spanish-speaking staff to analyze the content of articles with reports of government restrictions on religion and social hostilities involving religion from the Mexican daily newspaper La Jornada. The analysis covered time periods identical to two covered by this study: the baseline year (2007) and the fourth year of this study (2010).

La Jornada articles were initially selected for analysis if the title made some reference to religion, and then the article itself was coded using the same GRI questions and SHI questions used in the study. Specifically, the content analysis of La Jornada articles examined 18 of the 20 questions in the GRI and all 13 questions in the SHI. (The two GRI questions excluded from the analysis were GRI_Q_1 and GRI_Q_2, because they both relate only to the country’s constitution, rather than to actions of the government or activities of social groups and individuals.)

The expectation at the outset of this analysis was that a Mexican daily newspaper would contain many more reports of religious restrictions and hostilities than the English-language sources used by the Center in its cross-national coding. However, the analysis found that the coded news from La Jornada was largely consistent with coding using the study’s primary and secondary sources.

While a similar comparison for other countries might not yield the same results – especially in countries where press freedom is more limited – this analysis provides some confirmation of the reliability of Pew Research Center’s coding across years.

Additional variables

From time to time, Pew Research Center has collected information on additional questions (or variables) that are not included in determining scores on the Government Restrictions Index or Social Hostilities Index. These include a question on whether a country has laws banning blasphemy, apostasy or defamation of religion.⁸ These questions and their answer values are also included in the dataset for this study.

⁸ Refer to Pew Research Center’s blog post from Jan. 25, 2022, “[Four-in-ten countries and territories worldwide had blasphemy laws in 2019.](#)”

Public dataset: Government Restrictions Index and Social Hostilities Index

To assess the level of religious restrictions and hostilities around the world, Pew Research Center devised two indexes:

- **Government Restrictions Index (GRI):** Based on 20 indicators of ways that national and local governments restrict religion, including through coercion and force. It ranges from 0.0 to 10.0, from the lowest to highest level of government restrictions.
- **Social Hostilities Index (SHI):** Based on 13 indicators of ways in which private individuals and social groups infringe upon religious beliefs and practices, including religiously biased crimes, mob violence and efforts to stop particular religious groups from growing or operating. It ranges from 0.0 to 10.0, from the lowest to highest level of social hostilities.

This section provides question wording, answer values and definitions of terms. The section generally follows the presentation of the questions in the “Summary of results” section of the annual religious restrictions reports; where necessary, it explains how the dataset deviates from the “Summary of results.”

Variables for the Government Restrictions Index

GRI_Q_1: Does the constitution, or law that functions in the place of a constitution (basic law), specifically provide for “freedom of religion” or include language used in Article 18 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

0= Yes

0.50= The constitution or basic law does not specifically provide for freedom of religion but does protect some religious practices

1.00= No

This question measures the presence or absence of provisions protecting religious freedom in the country’s constitution or basic law. This definition is based on Article 18 of the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”

GRI_Q_2: Does the constitution or basic law include stipulations that appear to qualify or substantially contradict the concept of “religious freedom”?

0= No

0.33= Yes, there is a qualification

0.67= Yes, there is a substantial contradiction and only some religious practices are protected

1.00= Religious freedom is not provided in the first place

This question builds on GRI_Q_1, measuring whether the constitutional provisions are limited by other provisions. A “qualification” means that religious freedom is provided but some limit is set, such as allowing for religious freedom as long as there is “public order.” A “contradiction” means that religious freedom is provided, but only for some people and/or in some circumstances; it also can mean that a country’s laws or government actions cannot contradict the precepts of a certain religion.

GRI_Q_3: Taken together, how do the constitution/basic law and other national laws and policies affect religious freedom?

0= National laws and policies provide for religious freedom, and the national government respects religious freedom in practice

0.33= National laws and policies provide for religious freedom, and the national government generally respects religious freedom in practice; but there are some instances (e.g., in certain localities) where religious freedom is not respected in practice

0.67= There are limited national legal protections for religious freedom, but the national government does not generally respect religious freedom in practice

1.00= National laws and policies do not provide for religious freedom and the national government does not respect religious freedom in practice

This question is an overall measure of the state of religious restrictions in a country, based on the information sources used in the study. The coding for this question takes into account the opening statements in the U.S. State Department’s “International Religious Freedom Reports,” which discuss the overall extent to which the country’s government protects religious freedom. It also includes the coders’ aggregate assessment of the level of religious freedom in the country.

GRI_Q_4: Does any level of government interfere with worship or other religious practices?

0= No

0.33= Yes, in a few cases

0.67= Yes, in many cases

1.00= Government prohibits worship or religious practices of one or more religious groups as a general policy

This question measures whether – and to what extent – the government interferes with religious groups’ worship or religious practices. A “few cases” means only one or two isolated situations, while “many cases” means more than two situations or one situation that affects many congregations or groups, but falls short of a general government policy prohibiting the worship or religious practices of one or more religious groups. “Worship or religious practices” includes active worship, such as at a religious service; it also includes private religious practices, such as prayer or other daily activities and rituals that are governed by religious beliefs.

GRI_Q_5: Is public preaching by religious groups limited by any level of government?

0= No

0.50= Yes, for some religious groups

1.00= Yes, for all religious groups

This question includes restrictions on public preaching that involve activities in a public setting, such as houses of worship or other settings where the preacher interacts with the public. It can also include restrictions on outdoor prayer meetings and other forms of preaching that do not occur inside a church, synagogue, mosque or temple. It does not include worship that is private in nature, such as prayer in a residence.

GRI_Q_6: Is proselytizing limited by any level of government?

0= No

0.50= Yes, for some religious groups

1.00= Yes, for all religious groups

This question includes restrictions on efforts by religious groups or individuals to persuade others to join their faith. Examples include outright bans on proselytizing by some or all groups, as well as incidents in which security forces or other government officials attempted to stop an individual or group from proselytizing.

GRI_Q_7: Is converting from one religion to another limited by any level of government?

0= No

1.00= Yes

This question includes outright bans on conversion, as well as government policies that effectively limit conversion, such as restrictions on changing one's religion on official identify cards.

GRI_Q_8: Is religious literature or broadcasting limited by any level of government?

0= No

1.00= Yes

This question includes limits on internet use. It also includes extensive restrictions on literature, broadcasting or internet use that do not exempt religious groups.

GRI_Q_9: Are foreign missionaries allowed to operate?

0= Yes

0.50= Yes, but with restrictions

1.00= No

Foreign missionaries are representatives of religious groups engaged in proselytizing or development work. Restrictions include limits on missionaries' activities, as well as things that affect their ability to enter a country (e.g., visa quotas). If sources indicate missionaries can work in a country only in an unofficial capacity, this implies they are not allowed to freely work in the country.

GRI_Q_10: Is the wearing of religious symbols, such as head coverings for women and facial hair for men, regulated by law or by any level of government?

0= No

1.00= Yes

This question measures restrictions on the wearing of religious symbols, including head coverings, beards, hair styles, jewelry and clothing. "Any level of government" includes public schools.

GRI_Q_11: Was there harassment or intimidation of religious groups by any level of government?

0= No

0.50= Yes, there was limited intimidation

1.00= Yes, there was widespread intimidation

This question includes eight components that look at the harassment of specific religious groups.

GRI_Q_11_Christianity: Was there harassment or intimidation of Christians by any level of government?

0= No

1.00= Yes

GRI_Q_11_Islam: Was there harassment or intimidation of Muslims by any level of government?

0= No

1.00= Yes

GRI_Q_11_Buddhism: Was there harassment or intimidation of Buddhists by any level of government?

0= No

1.00= Yes

GRI_Q_11_Hinduism: Was there harassment or intimidation of Hindus by any level of government?

0= No

1.00= Yes

GRI_Q_11_Judaism: Was there harassment or intimidation of Jews by any level of government?

0= No

1.00= Yes

GRI_Q_11_Folk_Religions: Was there harassment or intimidation of adherents of folk, ethnic or tribal religions (including followers of African traditional religions, Chinese folk religions, Native American religions and Australian Aboriginal religions and others) by any level of government?

0= No

1.00= Yes

GRI_Q_11_Other_Religions: Was there harassment or intimidation of adherents of other religions (the Baha'i faith, Falun Gong, humanists, Jainism, Rastafarianism, Scientology, Shintoism, Sikhism, Daoism, Tenrikyo, Wicca and many other religions) by any level of government?

0= No

1.00= Yes

GRI_Q_11_Unaffiliated: Was there harassment or intimidation of people who are religiously unaffiliated by any level of government?

0= No

1.00= Yes

Harassment or intimidation refers to a government offense against a religious group or individual due to their religious identity, including physical coercion or singling someone out with the intent of making their life or religious practice more difficult. Harassment/intimidation also includes negative public comments or characterizations about religious groups by government officials, legislators or members of the ruling political party. "Limited" means infrequent or isolated and indicates that the harassment seems unlikely to continue. "Widespread" does not necessarily mean the whole country, but it could be present in certain regions, have potential of spreading to other regions, affect several groups, indicate a substantial uptick in the number of cases of abuse, or indicate a possible campaign against a certain religion(s) or practice(s). Questions about the harassment of specific religious groups are presented as dichotomous (Yes/No) variables in the dataset because it is often difficult to determine the extent of harassment of discrete religious groups.

GRI_Q_12: Did the national government display hostility involving physical violence toward minority or nonapproved religious groups?

0= No

1.00= Yes

This question measures government acts or policies that result in violence against religious groups by government actors or are intended to result in violence. Arrests that do not involve physical abuse still are counted as physical violence. The question specifically focuses on minority religious groups or religious groups that are not approved by the government.

GRI_Q_13: Were there instances when the national government did not intervene in cases of discrimination or abuses against religious groups?

0= No

1= Yes

This question measures inaction by governments in the face of social hostilities directed at religious groups or individuals. Countries are coded as “Yes” only if sources indicate the government could have acted but did not. This includes reported instances of security forces witnessing social abuses without intervening to protect the victims and instances of abuse being reported to government officials who refused to take action.

GRI_Q_14: Does the national government have an established organization to regulate or manage religious affairs?

0= No

0.33= No, but the government consults a nongovernmental advisory board

0.67= Yes, but the organization is noncoercive toward religious groups

1.00= Yes, and the organization is coercive toward religious groups

This question measures whether there is a governmental entity focused on regulating religious groups’ activities and affairs. The organization or departmental office must have been created specifically to deal with religious affairs, but it can be part of a larger governmental office. The question also covers government-run umbrella organizations that are made up of religious organizations. In this question, “coercive” means that the government organization acts in a heavy-handed way to regulate religious activities.

GRI_Q_15: Did the national government denounce one or more religious groups by characterizing them as dangerous “cults” or “sects”?

0= No

1.00= Yes

This question measures instances in which the government specifically uses terms such as “cults,” “sects” or “deviant” to denounce certain religious groups. This includes statements by legislators and members of the ruling political party, as well as statements by government officials.

GRI_Q_16: Does any level of government formally ban any religious group?

0= No

1= Yes

GRI_Q_16_Reasons: Does any level of government formally ban any religious group? If so, what is the rationale for the ban?

0= No

0.33= Yes, security reasons stated as rationale

0.67= Yes, nonsecurity reasons stated as rationale

1.00= Yes, both security and nonsecurity reasons stated as rationale

This question measures official government bans on religious groups or cases where the government in effect makes a religious group's existence illegal. Security reasons include appeals to public order, national security and concerns about unrest. Nonsecurity reasons include appeals to cultural/religious values or integrity, or accusations of nonviolent criminal activity. GRI_Q_16 and GRI_Q_16_reasons are presented together in the "Summary of results" section of the religious restrictions reports as GRI_Q_16.

GRI_Q_17: Were there instances when the national government attempted to eliminate an entire religious group's presence in the country?

0= No

1.00= Yes

This question includes active harassment of and violence against religious groups intended to remove a group from the country or kill all members of the group. It also includes widespread limitations on a religious group's ability to worship or operate in a way that effectively eliminates the group's presence.

GRI_Q_18: Does any level of government ask religious groups to register for any reason, including to be eligible for benefits such as tax exemption?

0= No

0.33= Yes, but in a nondiscriminatory way

0.67= Yes, and the process adversely affects the ability of some religious groups to operate

1.00= Yes, and the process clearly discriminates against some religious groups

This question measures the various ways governments register religious groups. This can be done in a nondiscriminatory manner, in which religious groups follow the same procedures as nonreligious groups that want government benefits or recognition. Registration also can be done in a manner that adversely affects religious groups but does not single out any specific groups. This includes bureaucratic issues that prevent groups from registering, which, in turn, prevents them from operating freely. Finally, registration can be done in a discriminatory manner. The registration process can be discriminatory if only religious groups of a certain size can register, or if some religious groups are singled out (for instance, by repeatedly being denied the chance to register, or by needing to obtain approval from other groups before they can register).

The following set of questions measure government use of force toward religious groups.

GRI_Q_19: Did any level of government use force toward religious groups that resulted in individuals being killed, physically abused, imprisoned, detained or displaced from their homes, or having their personal or religious properties damaged or destroyed?

0 = No

1 = Yes

GRI_Q_19_Extent: How many cases of government force were there?

0.00= None

0.20= 1-9 case(s) of government force

0.40= 10-200 cases of government force

0.60= 201-1,000 cases of government force

0.80= 1,001-9,999 cases of government force

1.00= 10,000+ cases of government force

GRI_Q_19_Property_Damage: Did any level of government use force toward religious groups that resulted in individuals having their personal or religious properties damaged or destroyed?

0.00= None

0.20= 1-9 case(s) of property damaged or destroyed

0.40= 10-200 cases of property damaged or destroyed

0.60= 201-1,000 cases of property damaged or destroyed

0.80= 1,001-9,999 cases of property damaged or destroyed

1.00= 10,000+ cases of property damaged or destroyed

GRI_Q_19_Detentions: Did any level of government use force toward religious groups that resulted in individuals being imprisoned or detained?

0.00= None

0.20= 1-9 case(s) of individuals imprisoned or detained

0.40= 10-200 cases of individuals imprisoned or detained

0.60= 201-1,000 cases of individuals imprisoned or detained

0.80= 1,001-9,999 cases of individuals imprisoned or detained

1.00= 10,000+ cases of individuals imprisoned or detained

GRI_Q_19_Displacements: Did any level of government use force toward religious groups that resulted in individuals being displaced from their homes?

0.00= None

0.20= 1-9 case(s) of individuals being displaced

0.40= 10-200 cases of individuals being displaced

0.60= 201-1,000 cases of individuals being displaced

0.80= 1,001-9,999 cases of individuals being displaced

1.00= 10,000+ cases of individuals being displaced

GRI_Q_19_Abuse: Did any level of government use force toward religious groups that resulted in individuals being physically abused?

0.00= None

0.20= 1-9 case(s) of individuals being physically abused

0.40= 10-200 cases of individuals being physically abused

0.60= 201-1,000 cases of individuals being physically abused

0.80= 1,001-9,999 cases of individuals being physically abused

1.00= 10,000+ cases of individuals being physically abused

GRI_Q_19_Deaths: Did any level of government use force toward religious groups that resulted in individuals being killed?

0.00= None

0.20= 1-9 case(s) of individuals being killed

0.40= 10-200 cases of individuals being killed

0.60= 201-1,000 cases of individuals being killed

0.80= 1,001-9,999 cases of individuals being killed

1.00= 10,000+ cases of individuals being killed

This set of questions measures the severity of government force related to religion in society. This includes incidents where individuals were imprisoned or detained (arrested, convicted, waiting appeal or appeal has been overturned), displaced from their homes (deported or denied entry or return), physically abused (including any physical impact on the person), killed, or involved in incidents in which their personal or religious property was damaged or destroyed (property defaced, confiscated, closed or raided). Arrests that do not involve physical violence are still counted in this question. Ongoing displacements that occurred as a result of earlier use of force by governments toward religious groups are counted. Ongoing issues with the restitution of religious property are counted as well. These questions are presented together in the “Summary of results” section of the religious restrictions reports.

The following set of questions measure various aspects of government favoritism toward some or all religious groups.

GRI_Q_20_1: Does the country’s constitution or basic law recognize a favored religion or religions?

0= No

1.00= Yes

This question measures whether a country’s constitution or basic law mentions that the government favors a particular religion or religions), or favors any specific religion’s practices or beliefs. This includes designating a religion as the official religion of the country, as well as broader applications, such as favoring Islamic law or courts or recognizing Christian or Buddhist principles.

GRI_Q_20_2: Do all religious groups receive the same level of government access and privileges?

0= All religious groups are generally treated the same

0.25= Some religious groups have minimal privileges unavailable to other religious groups, limited to things such as inheriting buildings or properties

0.50= Some religious groups have general privileges or government access unavailable to other religious groups

0.75= One religious group has privileges or government access unavailable to other religious groups, but it is not recognized as the country's official religion

1.00= One religious group has privileges or government access unavailable to other religious groups, and it is recognized by the national government as the official religion

This question measures government favoritism through privileges or government access. This includes government funding, concordat agreements with the Vatican and similar agreements for other religious traditions, and special access to hospitals or other government institutions. It also includes situations in which the official religion does not have to register but all other religions do.

GRI_Q_20_3: Does any level of government provide funds or other resources to religious groups?

0= No

0.50= Yes, but with no obvious favoritism to a particular group or groups

1.00= Yes, and with obvious favoritism to a particular group or groups

This question is a composite measure of the following component questions (GRI Q_20_3_a through GRI Q_20_3_c). Favoritism in government funding of a religion or religions occurs when preferential treatment of one or more religious groups puts other religious groups at a clear disadvantage. Funding can include subsidies or in-kind contributions such as land or property. Funding also can include subsidies or in-kind contributions to organizations run by religions (e.g., hospitals, schools, media organizations, etc.). If any of the component variables receives a score of 0.5, but none has a score of 1.0 (indicating no obvious favoritism), the country would receive a score of 0.5 for GRI Q_20_3. If any of the component variables of GRI Q_20_3 receives a score of 1.0 – indicating obvious favoritism – the country would receive a 1.0 for GRI Q_20_3. “No obvious favoritism” exists when all religious groups are treated equally. It also may exist when there is a proportional balance in funding according to the size of each religious community in a country, as long as there is a clear mechanism for or commitment to assuring a proportional balance of funding.

GRI_Q_20_3_a: Does any level of government provide funds or other resources for religious education programs and/or religious schools?

0= No

0.50= Yes, but with no obvious favoritism to a particular group or groups

1.00= Yes, and with obvious favoritism to a particular group or groups

This question is a component of GRI_Q_20_3.

GRI_Q_20_3_b: Does any level of government provide funds or other resources for religious property (e.g., buildings, upkeep, repair or land)?

0= No

0.50= Yes, but with no obvious favoritism to a particular group or groups

1.00= Yes, and with obvious favoritism to a particular group or groups

This question is a component of GRI_Q_20_3.

GRI_Q_20_3_c: Does any level of government provide funds or other resources for religious activities other than education or property?

0= No

0.50= Yes, but with no obvious favoritism to a particular group or groups

1.00= Yes, and with obvious favoritism to a particular group or groups

This question is a component of GRI_Q_20_3. The question refers to funding or in-kind contributions for a wide range of activities, including worship, charity work, radio broadcasts and other media activities, as well as payments for religious leaders' wages.

GRI_Q_20_4: Is religious education required in public schools?

0= No

0.50= Yes, by at least some local governments

1.00= Yes, by the national government

The question above refers to situations where students are required to have religious education, as well as situations where parents or students must obtain permission or waivers to withdraw from religious classes.

GRI_Q_20_5: Does the national government defer in some way to religious authorities, texts or doctrines on legal issues?

0= No

1.00= Yes

The question above measures the influence of religious authorities or religious law in governance. This includes situations where the government defers to a religion or religions to manage something that applies to all citizens, such as registering births and deaths. It also includes situations where religious courts or religious bodies have input into a country's policymaking or legislative process.

GRI_Q_20_1 through GRI_Q_20_5 are presented together in the “Summary of results” section of the religious restrictions reports as GRI_Q_20.

Variables for the Social Hostilities Index

The first set of questions (with the prefix SHI_Q_1) measure various crimes, malicious acts or violence motivated by religious hatred or bias.

SHI_Q_1_Harassment: Has there been any harassment or intimidation of religious groups by social groups motivated by religious hatred or bias?

0=No

0.5=Yes, there was limited social harassment

1.00=Yes, there was widespread social harassment

SHI_Q_1_Property_Damage: Has there been any destruction of personal or religious property motivated by religious hatred or bias?

0=No

1.00=Yes

SHI_Q_1_Detentions: Have there been any detentions or abductions motivated by religious hatred or bias?

0=No

1.00=Yes

SHI_Q_1_Displacements: Has there been any displacement of individuals from their homes motivated by religious hatred or bias?

0=No

1.00=Yes

SHI_Q_1_Assaults: Have there been any physical assaults motivated by religious hatred or bias?

0=No

1.00=Yes

SHI_Q_1_Deaths: Have there been any deaths motivated by religious hatred or bias?

0=No

1.00=Yes

SHI_Q_1_Extent: Were there crimes, malicious acts or violence motivated by religious hatred or bias?

0 = No

0.08 = Yes, limited harassment

0.17 = Yes, widespread harassment (one type of social hostility)

0.25 = Yes, limited harassment and one other type of social hostility

- 0.33 – Yes, two types of social hostilities
- 0.42 = Yes, limited harassment and two other types of social hostilities
- 0.5 = Yes, three types of social hostilities
- 0.58 = Yes, limited harassment and three other types of social hostilities
- 0.67 = Yes, four types of social hostilities
- 0.75 = Yes, limited harassment and four other types of social hostilities
- 0.83 = Yes, five types of social hostilities
- 1.00=Yes, six types of social hostilities

SHI_Q_1_Extent is a summary variable that captures the hostilities identified in questions involving six types of social hostility (*SHI_Q_1_Harrassment*, *Property Damage*, *Detentions*, *Displacements*, *Assaults*, *Deaths*) into a single measure indicating the severity of religious hatred or bias in each country. Countries can have multiple types of hostilities. A country receives 1/6 point (0.17 point) for each type of hostility that occurred that year. For *SHI_Q_1_Harassment*, starting in coding year 2017, the country could receive 0.5/6 point (0.08 point) to capture more limited incidents of harassment or 1/6 point (0.17 point) for widespread harassment. The scores on this question are cumulative; a country with two types of malicious acts could score 0.33 for that period and a country with all six types in a year could score 1.00. Prior to 2017, *SHI_Q_1_Harassment* only received 0.00 or 1.00 point.

“Limited” means infrequent or isolated and indicates that the harassment seems unlikely to continue. “Widespread” does not necessarily mean the whole country, but it could be present in certain regions, have potential of spreading to other regions, affect several groups, indicate a substantial uptick in the number of cases of abuse, or indicate a possible campaign against a certain religion(s) or practice(s).

SHI_Q_1_Extent is referred to as *SHI.Q.1* in “[Appendix E: Results by country.](#)” Two related variables, *SHI.Q.1.a* and *SHI.Q.1.b*, appear in the summary of results ([Appendix D](#)).

The following set of questions measure harassment or intimidation of specific religious groups by individuals or social groups. The results are reported in the religious restrictions reports and dataset, but they are not shown in the “Summary of results” for the Social Hostilities Index.

SHI_Q_1_Harass_Christianity: Was there harassment or intimidation of Christians motivated by religious hatred or violence?

- 0= No
- 1.00= Yes

SHI_Q_1_Harass_Islam: Was there harassment or intimidation of Muslims motivated by religious hatred or violence?

0= No

1.00= Yes

SHI_Q_1_Harass_Buddhism: Was there harassment or intimidation of Buddhists motivated by religious hatred or violence?

0= No

1.00= Yes

SHI_Q_1_Harass_Hinduism: Was there harassment or intimidation of Hindus motivated by religious hatred or violence?

0= No

1.00= Yes

SHI_Q_1_Harass_Judaism: Was there harassment or intimidation of Jews motivated by religious hatred or violence?

0= No

1.00= Yes

SHI_Q_1_Harass_Folk_Religions: Was there harassment or intimidation of adherents of folk religions motivated by religious hatred or violence?

0= No

1.00= Yes

SHI_Q_1_Harass_Other_Religions: Was there harassment or intimidation of adherents of other religions motivated by religious hatred or violence?

0= No

1.00= Yes

SHI_Q_1_Harass_Unaffiliated: Was there harassment or intimidation of religiously unaffiliated people motivated by religious hatred or violence?

0= No

1.00= Yes

Harassment or intimidation refers to an offense against a religious group or person by social groups or individuals, including physical coercion or singling someone out with the intent of making their life or religious practice more difficult. Negative public comments or characterizations about religious groups also constitute harassment. The questions about the

harassment of particular religious groups are combined into SHI.Q.1.a in the “Summary of results” section of the religious restrictions reports and SHI_Q_1_Harassment in this dataset.

SHI_Q_2: Was there mob violence related to religion?

0= No

0.50= Yes, but no deaths were reported

1.00= Yes, and deaths were reported

In addition to large-scale mob violence, this question includes incidents in which a group of people attack an individual or group as a result of tensions relating to religion.

SHI_Q_3: Were there acts of sectarian or communal violence between religious groups?

0= No

1.00= Yes

This question measures sectarian or communal violence between religious groups. This involves two or more religious groups facing off in repeated clashes. This question measures broader or longer-lasting hostilities than SHI_Q_2.

SHI_Q_4: Were religion-related terrorist groups active in the country?

0= No

1.00= Yes

SHI_Q_4_Extent: If the answer to SHI_Q_4 was “Yes,” how extensive was the terrorist groups’ activity?

0= No

0.25= Yes, but their activity was limited to recruitment and fundraising

0.50= Yes, and their activities included violence that resulted in some casualties (1-9 injuries or deaths)

0.75= Yes, with violence that resulted in multiple casualties (10-50 injuries or deaths)

1.00= Yes, with violence that resulted in many casualties (more than 50 injuries or deaths)

This question measures religion-related terrorism, defined as politically motivated violence against noncombatants by subnational groups or clandestine agents with a religious justification, intent or target. At times, terrorist groups might not have explicit religious motivations but simply target religious people or groups. Terrorist groups include those recognized by a U.S. government source or included in the U.S. State Department’s “Country Reports on Terrorism.” Types of terrorist activities include the following incident categories: personal or religious properties damaged or destroyed (property defaced, confiscated, closed or raided); people imprisoned or detained (includes those kidnapped or otherwise detained by

terrorists); and people displaced from their homes, physically abused, injured or accosted (includes any physical impact on a person) or killed. *SHI_Q_4* and *SHI_Q_4_Extent* are presented together in the “Summary of results” section of the religious restrictions reports as *SHI.Q.4*.

SHI_Q_5: Was there a religion-related war or armed conflict in the country?

0= No

1= Yes

SHI_Q_5_Extent: If the answer to *SHI_Q_5* was “Yes,” how extensive was the religion-related conflict?

0= No

0.25= Yes, with fewer than 10,000 casualties or people displaced

0.50= Yes, with tens of thousands of casualties or people displaced

0.75= Yes, with hundreds of thousands of casualties or people displaced

1.00= Yes, with millions of casualties or people displaced

These questions measure the presence of religion-related war, defined as armed conflict (involving sustained casualties over time or more than 1,000 battle deaths) in which religious rhetoric is commonly employed to justify the use of force, or in which one or more of the combatants primarily identifies itself or the opposing side by religion. Conflicts occurring along a religious cleavage, even if religion is not driving the conflict, are counted as religion-related war.

*These questions include the following incident categories: people imprisoned or detained; people displaced from their homes (including both internally and externally displaced persons); personal or religious properties damaged or destroyed; and people physically abused, injured or accosted or killed. *SHI_Q_5* and *SHI_Q_5_Extent* are presented together in the “Summary of results” section of the religious restrictions reports as *SHI.Q.5*.*

SHI_Q_6: Did violence result from tensions between religious groups?

0= No

0.33= There were public tensions between religious groups, but they fell short of hostilities involving physical violence

0.67= Yes, with physical violence in a few cases

1.00= Yes, with physical violence in numerous cases

*This question refers to tensions among religious groups or tensions over religious beliefs. This question is broader than *SHI_Q_3* and *SHI_Q_2*, as it includes tensions that do not involve physical violence. “A few cases” means only one or two isolated situations, while “numerous*

cases” means more than two situations or an ongoing situation. A country receives a 0.33 for this question if sources indicate there is active hostility among religious groups that does not involve physical violence, such as reports of name-calling or discrimination in employment or housing. This question includes information covering the previous two years, as explained earlier in the Codebook.

SHI_Q_7: Did organized groups use force or coercion in an attempt to dominate public life with their perspective on religion, including preventing some religious groups from operating in the country?

0= No

0.33= Yes, at the local level

0.67= Yes, at the regional level

1.00= Yes, at the national level

This question measures the existence of social groups such as hate groups or other organizations that advance a particular view on religion through force or coercion. This includes religious groups attempting to control all religious activity in the country. It also includes attempts by groups hostile to religion (or to certain religious groups) to drive out a religious group or limit the public expression of religion. This can involve violence, but it does not necessarily indicate widespread religious hostilities, as groups can use nonviolent coercive means. This question includes information covering the previous two years, as explained earlier in the Codebook.

SHI_Q_8: Did religious groups themselves attempt to prevent other religious groups from being able to operate?

0= No

1.00= Yes

This question measures activity by religious groups that is intended to limit the activities of other religious groups, which may not necessarily involve violence. This includes hate groups that have a religious element and cases where members of established or existing religions try to shut out other religious groups. This question includes information covering the previous two years, as explained earlier in the Codebook.

SHI_Q_9: Did individuals or groups use violence or the threat of violence, including so-called honor killings, to try to enforce religious norms?

0= No

1.00= Yes

This is a measure of a particular type of violence that is intended to enforce religious norms or punish individuals in society for breaking religious norms. An example is so-called “honor killings,” but the question also captures violence, or the threat of violence, that is not directed toward women. Acts of violence that are motivated by a religious point of view with the intent of forcing others to submit to that viewpoint are included in this question. This question includes information covering the previous two years, as explained earlier in the Codebook.

SHI_Q_10: Were individuals assaulted or displaced from their homes in retaliation for religious activities, including preaching and other forms of religious expression, considered offensive or threatening to the majority faith?

0= No

1.00= Yes

This question measures violence against individuals for religious activities viewed as offensive or threatening to the majority faith. This includes people being abused or displaced by nongovernmental actors due to breaking religious norms or converting to other religions, and attacks on minority religious groups for religious practices disliked by the majority religious community. This question includes information covering the previous two years, as explained earlier in the Codebook.

SHI_Q_11: Were women harassed for violating religious dress codes?

0= No

1.00= Yes

This question measures harassment of women over religious dress. This includes women being harassed for wearing religious dress and women being harassed for not adhering to religious dress codes. The question is not limited to acts of violence; harassment that falls short of violence is counted as well. This question includes information covering the previous two years, as explained earlier in the Codebook.

SHI_Q_12: Were there incidents of hostility over proselytizing?

0= No

0.50= Yes, but they fell short of physical violence

1.00= Yes, and they included physical violence

This question measures social hostilities, including acts of violence, related to proselytism. Proselytizing is an effort by religious groups or individuals to persuade others to join their faith. This question includes information covering the previous two years, as explained earlier in the Codebook.

SHI_Q_13: Were there incidents of hostility over conversions from one religion to another?

0= No

0.50= Yes, but they fell short of physical violence

1.00= Yes, and they included physical violence

This question measures social hostilities, including acts of violence, related to conversion. This also includes accusations of forced conversion. This question includes information covering the previous two years, as explained earlier in the Codebook.

Additional restrictions variables

The following variables were coded in the years indicated, but they are not used in the Government Restrictions Index or Social Hostilities Index; the variables were analyzed separately. Their distinction from the questions in the indexes is indicated by the “X” in the title of the variable.

GRX_22_Blasphemy: Does any level of government penalize blasphemy?

0 = No

1 = Yes

GRX_22_Apostasy: Does any level of government penalize apostasy?

0 = No

1 = Yes

GRX_22_Hate_Speech: Does any level of government penalize hate speech?

0 = No

1 = Yes

GRX_22_Criticism_of_Religion: Does any level of government penalize criticisms or critiques of a religion or religions?

0 = No

1 = Yes

The questions with the prefix GRX_22 measure the presence of specific laws limiting blasphemy, apostasy, hate speech or criticism/critique of religion. “Blasphemy” refers to remarks or actions considered to be contemptuous of God or the divine. “Apostasy” refers to abandoning one’s faith. “Hate speech” refers to disparagement of the members of religious groups. And “criticism/critique” refers to disparagement or criticism of particular religions or religion in general. The questions are not part of the Government Restrictions Index.