How Ordinary People View Muslim Group Rights in Europe: Significant ‘Gaps’ Between Majorities and Muslims?

Taking four countries—Britain, the Netherlands, France and Germany—with distinct state approaches and public debates over accommodating Muslims, we study the views of ordinary people from the majority and Muslim populations on Muslim group rights. We compare their responses to questions on mosque-building, teachers wearing religious symbols, and religious classes in schools, to determine whether there is a significant ‘gap’ between the majority and Muslim minorities. Findings show significant ‘gaps’ between the majorities and Muslims over Muslim group rights in all countries, with the majorities less supportive. Importantly, it is a shift by the majority population against Muslim group rights that produces this ‘gap’ as the question moves from provision for Christians to Muslims, while Muslims hold similar views over rights for Christians and their own religion.

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