

Religion and Coalition Politics

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Abstract

The literature holds that coalition-building parties prefer the policy distance of coalition partners to be as small as possible. In light of continued importance of religion in electoral politics cross-nationally, the distance argument is worrisome for minorities seeking political access because many minorities are of different religion than the majority representatives forming coalitions. The authors suggest plurality parties' objectives to demonstrate inclusiveness outweigh the concern over policy distance. They test their hypotheses on a sample of all electorally active ethnic minorities in democracies from 1945 to 2004. The authors find support for their hypothesis that ethnic parties representing minorities that diverge in religious family from the majority are more likely to be included in governing coalitions than are ethnic minorities at large. It is interesting, however, that they also find that minority parties representing ethnic groups that differ in denomination from the majority are less likely to be included in governing coalitions.

Keywords

religion, coalition politics, ethnic minorities

What is the role of religion in determining ethnic minority access to executive coalitions in democracies worldwide? Do majority politicians eschew or appeal strategically to ethnic minorities representing distinct religious

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constituencies? Do politicians seek conflict or cooperation across religious affiliations? These are only a few of the questions that remain unanswered because political science has paid little attention to the role of religion in politics (Wald & Wilcox, 2006, p. 523).¹

At the same time religion is important in daily politics worldwide. This importance is exemplified by incidents such as the controversial election of the arguably Islamist Justice and Development Party to lead the Turkish government in 2002. Similarly, recent uproar in the United States over Republican National Committee chairman Michael Steele's comments about abortion and gay marriage decisions demonstrates the importance of religion to the constituency of a purportedly secular party.

Although it is relatively silent on the question of religion, in the literature on coalition politics

almost all theory-building efforts have at their core the basic spatial-voting assumption that "distance counts." The distance in question is that between a party's position and the position of the government or proposed government, and the assumption simply states that parties prefer this distance to be as small as possible (*ceteris paribus*). (Warwick, 2005, p. 383)

If true, the distance argument in the context of continued importance of religion in politics is worrisome for ethnic minorities seeking political access because many minorities are of a different religion than the majority representatives forming coalitions.

This article asks what effect ethnic minority constituency religion has on the probability that the minority joins an executive coalition. The precise mode of ethnic minority access to the executive varies from country to country and can occur through both an ethnic minority party and a nonminority party. In presidential regimes the executive consists of the president and the president's cabinet. This type of executive coalition is by definition a majority coalition. The executive is generally elected by majority but may include members of specific minority groups in the cabinet.² In the United States, for example, the first Hispanic member in a presidential cabinet was Lauro F. Cavazos, a Democrat who served as Secretary of Education in the Reagan administration from 1988 to 1990. In addition, ethnic minorities in presidential systems can be included as representatives of ethnic minority parties. For example, in 2007 President Chavez created a new Ministry of Indigenous Affairs and appointed as its minister the former president of the National Indigenous Confederation of Venezuela (CONIVE), Nicia Maldonado.

In parliamentary regimes, the executive consists of the prime minister and the prime minister's cabinet. Generally speaking parliamentary executives are coalitions only if the largest party holds a plurality rather than majority. Ethnic minorities can be included in the cabinet as representatives of ethnic minority or nonminority parties. Ethnic minorities may also access the executive through the plurality party. For example, in Estonia, ethnic Russians were represented in the parliament through the Estonian Center Party, which formed the cabinet after the 2003 elections. In the remainder of the article, we use the term *majority* to refer to the ethnic majority constituency whose representative majority/plurality party controls the executive in either presidential or parliamentary regimes. This is in contrast to the ethnic *minority* whose minority party access (or whose access through a nonminority party) is the focus of the article.

The electoral literature, by and large, supports the notion that although industrialized and postindustrialized countries may have undergone considerable political secularization, religion is still a very important determinant of people's electoral behavior (Broughton & Napel, 2000; Layman & Green, 2005; Norris & Inglehart, 2004). The literature on coalitions also suggests that religion is an important policy issue for coalition formation (Gryzmala-Busse, 2001). Generally speaking, the conventional wisdom in this literature is that coalition-building parties prefer to work with other parties whose policy positions most closely align with their own (Warwick, 2005). However, there is no systematic work on precisely how religion affects ethnic minority probability of access across countries. Furthermore, the coalition literature provides little guidance as to how minority religious distance translates into policy distance. For this reason, we examine the power-sharing literature and the literature on American and European electoral politics (Broughton & Napel, 2000; Hartzell & Hoddie, 2003; Higham, 1955/2008; Layman & Green, 2005; Lijphart, 1977) where the idea of whether and how religious distance translates into policy distance is discussed in more detail.

Building on these literatures, we propose some testable hypotheses about the effect of minority religion on the probability that the minority is included in governing coalitions. Specifically, we propose that ethnic minority divergence from the majority in religious family or denomination affects the majority's willingness to form a coalition with the minority. We test the implications of our theory on ethnic minority access to legislative coalitions across democracies worldwide from 1945 to 2004.

Contrary to the coalition distance argument, our empirical results suggest that with respect to minority religion, greater distance is better. In particular, we find that majority politicians favor a strong signal that allows them to

demonstrate their commitment to religious diversity. Thus, parties representing ethnic minorities who belong to different religious families than the majority are more likely to join executive coalitions than are ethnic minorities at large. However, ethnic parties representing minorities whose religion differs only in denomination from majorities are less likely to join governing coalitions than are ethnic minorities at large.

The article is organized into four parts. First, we briefly survey the pertinent literature with a special emphasis on defining the terms and concepts used. In particular, we pay close attention to the discussion of whether and how religious distance translates into policy distance. Second, the article lays out the hypotheses to be tested. The third section follows with a presentation of the variables and the results. We then discuss the implications of our findings in the context of current literatures. We conclude by suggesting a research agenda that examines further the distinctions between divergent religious divides and how these overlap with other cleavages in the society to affect a range of political outcomes.

Literature and Theory

This section discusses the general importance of religion in electoral politics with a particular emphasis on party types and policy distance and suggests some testable hypotheses about the possible impact of religion on minority access to government.

The electoral literature posits that throughout the development of democracies, religion has been instrumental in politics and that religious public policy agendas are promoted through party politics (Kalyvas, 1996; Safran, 2003). In summarizing the effect of religion from a number of case studies of European electoral behavior, Broughton and Napel (2000, p. 203) point out that in empirical analysis of European electorates, “religious effects on voting, even if weakening over time and affecting fewer people than in the past, remain apparent after various statistical controls for other variables have been carried out.” Similarly, in the United States, religion remains an important determinant of voters’ political views (Layman & Green, 2005), and legislators take constituency religion into account when voting on issues (Rosenson, Oldmixon, & Wald, 2009). Cross-regional studies suggest the same. Although industrialized and postindustrialized countries have recently undergone considerable political secularization, religion is still a very important determinant of people’s voting behavior (Norris & Inglehart, 2004).³

It is important that the effect of religion in electoral politics—and by logical extension in coalition politics—does not necessarily occur through

self-identified religious parties. In contrast, the effect of religion may take the form of consistent support for nominally secular parties that are aligned with a religious establishment (Wittenberg, 2006). Indeed, Rosenblum (2003) defines a “religious party” as any party that “[appeals] to voters on religious grounds and [draws its] inspiration from religious values” (p. 25). In this article, we follow Rosenblum’s lead in considering any party as religious that systematically caters to the religion of its constituency but does not necessarily self-identify as a religious party.

Moreover, Rosenblum (2003, p. 31) argues that the

distinction between religious parties and religious party organizations allied to secular parties is not crucial, so long as religious political groups are constituent elements of the party as demonstrated by candidate recruitment, platforms and programs, strategy, coalition building, and so on.

Consequently, in defining the pertinent manifestation of religion for coalition politics, we focus on the religion of a represented social group rather than the political parties themselves.

The idea that social group characteristics rather than party self-labeling define broader societal and political understanding of ethnic minority party attributes is extremely important. This is particularly true when considering the majority party strategy of including ethnic minorities in the executive coalition or excluding them. It is possible that, in the view of the majority, some ethnic minority parties successfully distance themselves from religious views of their ethnic constituency. More commonly, however, we posit that the majorities’ view of ethnic minority religion and religiosity does not distinguish the minority party position from the overall position of the ethnic minority it represents. Balad, the Arab nationalist party in Israel, is a stark example of a party that (rightly or wrongly) cannot distance itself from radical elements in the minority Arab population in the state (Smootha, 1997, p. 224). Since the party’s founding, the leadership has continually proclaimed its commitment to peacefully advocating for the rights of the Arab minority through democratic politics; however, the party has continually been accused of aiding and abetting extremists.⁴

Furthermore, majority builders of all executive coalitions must take into account the religious preferences of their own constituents—even when the builder is a self-proclaimed secular party. For example, in the United States, the Democratic Party is historically thought to cater more to minorities than the Republican Party. Nevertheless, the majority population of the United

States is Protestant. Consequently, all administrations in the United States, including the Democrats, represent (and have to appeal to) the majority of Protestants.

Although the above literature examines the effect of religion on politics broadly, very little is written specifically regarding the effect of religion on access to the executive. This is a serious omission because voters who, through representation in the legislature but not in the government, “have their views advocated but never acted upon may not feel very well represented” (Cox, 1997, p. 227).⁵ Enactment occurs in the executive following political bargaining that determines who gets access. In or aligned with the government, groups can bargain over policy proposed by their coalition partners and get some of their own policy objectives passed into law.

We do know quite a bit about the general workings of coalition formation in the legislature. For example, we know that when a coalition forms in a decision-making body, the winning coalition tends to be as small as possible (Dodd, 1976; Riker, 1962). We also know that in constructing a minimum winning coalition parties care about policy (Axelrod, 1970; De Swaan, 1973) and that minor parties matter (Sartori, 1976). Furthermore, the conventional wisdom holds that coalition builders prefer to minimize policy distance when choosing partners (Warwick, 2005).

A remaining question is how religious distance maps onto the idea of policy distance and the concomitant probability of minority inclusion in the coalition. According to Arend Lijphart (1977), religious differences embody one of many possible political segments that define plural or diverse societies. Lijphart further explains that political conflict depends on the degree to which policy segments overlap or crosscut:

If for example, the religious cleavage and the social class cleavage cross cut to a high degree, the different religious groups will tend to feel equal. If, on the other hand, the two cleavages tend to coincide, one of the groups is bound to feel resentment over its inferior status. (p. 75)

Lijphart also notes that even when cleavages crosscut, certain cleavages, such as religion, may constitute an “overarching loyalty” that fosters cohesion vis-à-vis other segments in society (pp. 81-83).

Thus, in societies where religion is one of several mutually reinforcing cleavages or where religion constitutes an overarching loyalty, the potential for political conflict is higher. To ameliorate the increased conflict potential Lijphart proposes the power-sharing arrangement of consociationalism.⁶ The

theory was developed with respect to countries such as the Netherlands and Belgium, but Lijphart also gives the example of a power-sharing arrangement that was temporarily successful in Lebanon.⁷ It is interesting that the content of the religious divide differs substantially in this sample, from Catholics and Calvinists in the Netherlands to Muslims and Maronite Christians in Lebanon. Therefore, the implication is that irrespective of doctrinal content, the effect of religious distance on increasing political distance is functionally equivalent in the above cases.

By and large, the subsequent body of research on power-sharing and conflict supports the view that identity-related issues such as religion increase and deepen issue divides between groups (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2003, 2007; Hartzell, Hoddie, & Rothchild, 2001; Kaufmann, 1996–1997; Lijphart, 1996; Sisk, 1996). Furthermore, this research does not differentiate between the divisive effects of different types of religious differences (family or denomination) that power-sharing arrangements aim to ameliorate.

The American electoral literature, in turn, offers two views of how religious distance maps onto policy distance. Both perspectives highlight context dependence, and much like the theory about power sharing, the early American electoral literature emphasizes doctrinal differences between sects as a source of policy distance. In contrast, the contemporary literature highlights differences in orthodoxy within sects.

For example, Higham (1955/2008, p. 82) explains that in the late 19th century and again in the early 20th century American Republican Protestant nativists railed against Catholic immigrants as the instruments of “papal subversion.” Catholic Irish and later Italian immigrants were claimed set to replace American Protestants in the labor market and overthrow “American institutions” (p. 82). Along the lines of the idea of overlapping segments in the power-sharing literature, Higham suggests that much of the anti-Catholic sentiment overlapped with a class conflict and “often lacked genuine religious feeling” (p. 182). The conflict was essentially a reaction to the increasing political power of Catholics.

However, immigration at that time was largely European, so the available religious distinction was necessarily between sects. It is not clear, therefore, that in American politics the nature of sectoral differences inevitably generates greater policy distance than religious family distance. Indeed, the recent anti-Muslim sentiment in the United States (Rodriguez, 2008) suggests this is not the case. Rather, consistent with the power-sharing literature, it appears that in American politics religious distance, both sectoral and between religious families, increases policy distance. However, the relevant religious dimensions and specific policy issues contested vary over time.

The notion that religious policy distance is highly context dependent is supported by current American theorizing about religion and politics; however, the emphasis has changed from inter- to intrareligious divides. Following Hunter (1991), Layman and Greene (2005) argue that although the idea of culture wars is exaggerated, voters' religious orthodoxy and commitment are the relevant dimensions to consider in contemporary American politics. Layman and Greene define religious "orthodoxy" relative to religious "progressivism," and they posit the "former is characterized by a commitment to external, definable, and transcendent sources of moral authority, while the latter adheres to a relativistic view of moral authority which changes with historical circumstances and the boundaries of human knowledge" (p. 62). To test the effect of orthodoxy on American politics, Layman and Green use an index of "Catholic Traditionalism," which they create by using survey responses such as "praying the Rosary, confessing to a priest, and believing that the Pope is infallible" (p. 68).

The same line of thinking is found in the current European electoral literature. Broughton and Napel (2000, p. 203), for example, highlight that in Germany and France differences in political preference depend to some degree on the extent to which a voter is "integrated into their church" rather than on the "purely denominational division between Protestants and Catholics." Gryzmala-Busse (2001, p. 90) adds that after economics, "the second dimension in East Central Europe runs along a spectrum from secular/cosmopolitan/liberal to religious/nationalist/authoritarian stances. This world-view dimension dominated the political discourse in Poland from 1991 to 1992 over questions of abortion and religion in schools."

Taking together what we know about minority group religious tradition and coalition politics, and the insights from these literatures about religion and policy distance, what then are our expectations for ethnic minority executive access as a function of the group's religion? Strom (1990) argues that all parties make a cost-benefit calculation in deciding whether to accept an invitation to join a coalition. We assume that such strategic thinking applies to both the majority/plurality parties inviting minority parties into their coalition and the ethnic minority parties deciding whether to accept an invitation. However, since the executive is the route to influence over legislation and policy, we also conjecture that in democracies, politically organized ethnic minority constituencies aim predominantly to access the executive.⁸ Therefore, the majority/plurality party's strategy regarding whom to invite into the coalition is likely more variable, and our hypotheses are formulated with an eye to this actor.

All ethnic groups, majorities and minorities alike, have a predominant religion, though not all members of the group necessarily adhere to that religion. The majority party can, therefore, represent a majority group whose religion differs from or is the same as the religion of the ethnic minority that aspires for inclusion in the executive.

The remaining question concerns the majority's cost-benefit calculation regarding possible inclusion of ethnic minorities belonging to different religious traditions and policy distance. The current notion in the American and the European electoral literature about how religious distance maps onto policy distance between groups (Broughton & Napel, 2000; Gryzmala-Busse, 2001; Layman & Greene, 2005) points to the null hypothesis in this research: If the relevant religious dimension is only orthodoxy within religious families and sects, we do not expect to see systematic differences in the inclusion into coalitions of ethnic minorities as differentiated from the majority by religious family or denomination.

In contrast, Higham's (1955/2008) and Lijphart's (1977) arguments about how religious distance relates to policy distance, or those of the more recent power-sharing literature, are arguments of religious divergence as a proxy for increased policy distance between groups in competition over the relative shares of resources. Furthermore, coalition theory postulates that majority parties prefer coalition partners who are closer in policy. Thus, where religious cleavages are not substantially crosscut and in the absence of consociational institutions, this would lead to the expectation that minorities whose religion differs from the majority are less likely to be included in governing coalitions than are minorities who share a religion with the coalition forming majority. Thus, we propose,

Hypothesis 1: Differences between majority and ethnic minority constituency religious traditions decrease the chances that a government-forming plurality party includes the ethnic minority in the executive coalition.

At the same time, Kellam (2007) suggests that the majority party's interests are restricted to specific dimensions. Furthermore, she argues that as long as a minority party policy distance is close on the dimensions that the majority party anticipates legislating, the party leaders are willing to ignore minority divergent positions on other policies. It stands to reason, therefore, that if a coalition building party (representing the ethnic majority) does not perceive religion as one of the dimensions on which it foresees legislating, a minority coalition partner's religious identity may not matter to the majority party.

Moreover, at least in theory, the nature of democracy is pluralist and inclusive. If minority religion is not an obstacle for access to the executive, a clear signal that a majority party practices inclusion by reaching out to distinct constituencies in coalition building probably plays well on average with core constituents of that party. This is likely true for included ethnic minority groups that share a common religious tradition with the majority (demonstrating willingness to reach across ethnic lines) and even more so if the ethnic minority also belongs to a different religious tradition than the majority.

Last but not least, the proposed solution in the power-sharing literature to the political conflict created by religious cleavages is to include representatives of all relevant cleavages in the government (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2003; Lijphart, 1977). Majority politicians likely recognize the stabilizing effects of minority representation and reach out to religious minorities when building governing coalitions. Consequently, we propose,

Hypothesis 2: Differences between the majority and ethnic minority constituency religious traditions improve the chances that a government-forming majority/plurality party includes the ethnic minority in the executive coalition.

Testing the Effect of Religion

The Data

The specific implications we are testing in this article pertain to the relative effect that the content of one ethnic minority's religion has on the group's ability to achieve access to government vis-à-vis other ethnic minorities.⁹ The data we use in our tests are pooled cross-sections from executive election years in all democracies from 1945 to 2004. The unit of analysis is the electorally active ethnic minority in a given country, following an election. For each country, the number of cases per election year equals the number of electorally active ethnic minority groups in that country. Each case (minority group) is coded as 0 if it is not included in the executive coalition at any point after election T and before election $T + 1$, and 1 if the group is included in the coalition in any year after the first election and before the second.¹⁰

Our data combine and modify variables from two existing data sets. For information on ethnic minority access to government (and for the operationalization of democracy), we use data from *Ethnicity and Electoral Politics* (Birnie, 2007). These data record minority group access to government through ethnic and nonethnic parties, for all electorally active ethnic groups,

in all democracies since 1945. In addition, Birbir surveyed all electorally active groups that passed the population threshold established by Minorities at Risk (MAR) but that were missing from the original MAR data. Following that survey, we added countries to our data for a total of 97 groups in 52 democracies.¹¹

The second set of data we rely on is detailed coding of religious minority and majority group creeds and denominations by Fox (2002, 2004). Our original contribution to this coding is to code the context of majority/minority group religious identity combination variables by country. The variables are described in greater detail below.

The Dependent Variables: Ethnic Minority Access to Government

In defining access to governing coalitions, we follow Birbir (2007), who defines the pertinent governing coalition as the executive coalition. The variables we use record the electorally active ethnic minority's access (or lack of access) to the following executive elections. This variable records two types of access. An ethnic minority party may have explicit and formal access to the cabinet such as the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) in Bulgaria,¹² which is an ethnic Turkish minority party that got into a coalition government in 2001. Alternatively, a member of the ethnic minority group may hold an official position in a nonminority party that is in the cabinet. For example, this was the case for Catalans when Josep Piqué i Camps, a representative of the Spanish Partido Popular (Popular Party or People's Party), served as the minister for foreign affairs from 2000 to 2002.¹³

In the original data, access variables are coded as the number of years since the ethnic group has been in the cabinet.¹⁴ We are interested in the divergent probabilities of access between ethnic groups at any given time. Thus, we have recoded access as a binary variable that records the instances when an ethnic group is in the coalition representing either an ethnic minority party or a nonminority party.¹⁵ We examine the probability of each type of access (through ethnic party or a nonethnic party) separately. The group enters into the data set when an ethnic party runs in an election and remains in the data as long as the ethnic party runs. Alternatively, where there are no ethnic parties, the group enters into the data when a member of the ethnic group represents a nonethnic party in the executive and remains in the data as long as the nonethnic party runs in elections. In a few countries, such as the United States, ethnic minorities are represented only through nonethnic parties. Consequently, we have a greater number of observations (572) for the

variable indicating access through nonethnic parties than for the variable accounting for access through ethnic parties (444).

The Independent Variables: Religious Identity (family and denomination)

Fox (2002, 2004) provides an extensive classification of minority religious affiliations. If 80% of the ethnic minority subscribes to a different religion than the majority, Fox classifies the group as adhering to a minority religion. This difference includes both divergent families of religion and divergent denominations within the same family of religion. Supplementing Fox (2002, 2004) with the World Directory of Minorities (Minority Rights Group International, 1997) we examined religious family and denominations of each ethnic minority group in our data.¹⁶ The divergent religious families we record are Animism, Baha'i, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, and Zoroastrianism.¹⁷

Our objective, in this article, is to account for the religious context surrounding the ethnic minority group's bid to access the executive. Consequently, drawing on our classification of ethnic group religious families, we also coded a binary variable that accounts for whether the ethnic minority religious family is the same or differs from the ethnic majority religion.¹⁸ For example, in Israel the ethnic majority is Jewish whereas the Arab minority is mostly Muslim. The Arab minority in Israel is, therefore, coded as belonging to a different religious family than the majority of Israelis. Hispanics in the United States, in contrast, are predominantly Christian Catholic, thus belonging to the same religious family as the majority Christian Protestants.

Second, we are interested in divergent majority–minority denominations within each religious family (e.g., Sunni and Shi'i in Islam, or Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, and Anglican in Christianity). Therefore, we also classified each minority in the data according to denomination. Next, we coded a binary variable accounting for the denomination of each minority vis-à-vis the majority in each country. This variable is coded as 1 only if the minority belongs to the same religious family but different denomination than the majority. For example, in Northern Ireland Catholics belong to a different denomination than the majority Protestants. Conversely, mostly Sunni Muslim Kurds in Turkey belong to the same denomination as the ethnic majority of Sunni Muslim Turks.

Table 1 lists the religious combinations that we coded.¹⁹ As the table shows, in only two categories do electorally active minorities share a family but differ in denomination from the majority. These categories are Christian/Christian

Table 1. Countries Where Majority/Minorities Adhere to Different Religious Families and/or Different Denominations

Majority religious family (and denomination if same family as minority)	Minority religious family (and denomination if minority belongs to the same family as the majority but a different denomination)	Countries
Christianity (Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox)	Christianity (Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox)	Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Trinidad Tobago, United Kingdom, United States, Yugoslavia
Christianity	Shamanism	Bolivia, Venezuela
Christianity	Islam	Bulgaria, Cyprus, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Macedonia, Malawi, South Africa, Yugoslavia
Christianity	Hinduism	South Africa, Trinidad Tobago
Christianity	Buddhism	United States
Islam (Sunni, Shi'i)	Islam (Sunni, Shi'i)	Bangladesh
Islam	Christianity	Albania, Bosnia, Nigeria
Islam	Hinduism	Bangladesh
Islam	Buddhism	Bangladesh, Indonesia
Hinduism	Islam	India
Hinduism	Christianity	India
Hinduism	Sikhism	India
Hinduism	Animism	India, Nepal
Hinduism	Buddhism	Nepal
Buddhism	Islam	Thailand
Buddhism	Hinduism	Sri Lanka
Judaism	Islam	Israel

and Islam/Islam. In many more cases, the majority and the minority belong to different religious families. In three cases (Bangladesh, Bolivia, and Venezuela) minorities subscribe to both different and the same religious families as the majority. In Bolivia and Venezuela, some of the indigenous population are Shamanist but most are Catholic and were coded as belonging to the same family and denomination as the majority. In Bangladesh, however, the Chittagong Hill tribes include both Muslim and Hindu populations. Furthermore, Muslim Chittagongs are Shi'i, whereas the ethnic majority in Bangladesh is Sunni. Consequently, the Chittagong Hill tribes are coded as belonging to both a different family and a different denomination than the majority.

The numbers of cases in each religious category are too low to compare the effects of specific creed or denomination combinations. However, we aim to elucidate more generally whether *divergence* in family or denomination matters for minority access to executive coalitions. Consequently, the following analysis accounts only for the variables we coded to account for divergent combinations of majority/minority religious family and divergent denominations in a given country.

Control Variables

Little is written about the grievances of religious minority groups that are not related specifically to religion (see Fox, 2002, for an exception). There is, however, good reason to believe that all ethnic minority groups are also affected by exogenous constraints such as national institutions and economic conditions. Indeed, if Varshney (2002) and Wilkinson (2004) are correct, external influences account for a large part of seemingly religious grievances.

However, institutions are a widely cited constraint of ethnic access. In the power-sharing literature institutions also serve to guarantee ethnic access. We do not control separately for power-sharing arrangements because those arrangements take many different forms (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2003). In fact, according to Lijphart (1996), a country can practice power sharing without formally adopting consociational institutions.

Instead, since access to the legislature influences the probability of access to the governing coalition, we control for some of the institutional factors most commonly cited in the literature on ethnic minorities as influencing group's political access to the legislature (Birbir, 2007; Cohen, 1997; Horowitz, 1985, 1990; Lijphart, 1977; Saideman, Lanoue, Campenni, & Stanton, 2002). We include a variable accounting for presidential systems, in reference to parliamentary systems, and two electoral variables accounting for countries that use proportional representation and mixed electoral systems, in reference to countries that use a plurality or a majority electoral system.²⁰ We expect minorities to have greater access to the executive through nonminority parties in presidential systems compared to parliamentary systems. We also expect minorities to have greater access through minority parties under rules of proportional representation and in mixed systems, when compared to plurality systems.

Similarly, economic prosperity is related to group propensity for access (Cederman, Weidmann, & Gleditsch, in press; Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Gurr, 1985; Lipset, 1959). To measure economic effects, we include a variable accounting for GDP per capita,²¹ and we expect greater inclusion of minorities

in the executive as personal wealth increases. The second economic variable we include for control is a measure of aggregate growth of GDP per capita when compared to the prior year,²² and we expect access to decrease as growth contracts.²³

Descriptive analysis of the data indicates that India is an outlier. The number of observations recorded of ethnic minority party access (or lack of access) in India is 72, compared to an average of 7 in the rest of the sample. This is in part a result of the great number of ethnic groups in India than in other countries. Similarly, the rate at which ethnic minority groups achieve access through ethnic minority parties in India (0.05) is quite different from the rate elsewhere (0.31). The corresponding numbers for rate of access through nonethnic parties (in India 0.18 vs. 0.21 in the rest of the sample) support the idea that ethnic groups have a lower probability of access in India than in the rest of the sample. Consequently, we include a control for India in the analysis.

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics for all of the variables used in the analysis. The unit of analysis is the ethnic minority group in a country between any two elections. The dependent variables determine the total number of observations (572 for access to the executive through a nonminority party, and 444 for access through an ethnic party since ethnic parties do not compete in elections in all systems, or they compete in some elections but not all). Availability of the economic variables (554 for GDP per capita and 547 for GDP per capita growth) restricts the sample further.

Results

Bivariate correlations, not reported here, suggest that the effect on minority access of divergence in religious family and denomination differs between nonethnic and ethnic parties. Table 3 examines the correlations in a more rigorous test using logit regression and controlling for other variables. The dependent variable in the first model in Table 3 is the binary variable indicating whether the group gained access to the executive coalition through a minority party at any point between two elections. The first model includes all of the independent variables described above. When comparing the second model to the first, the dependent variable changes to indicate access through nonminority parties whereas the independent variables remain the same.

By and large, the logit analysis confirms that the effects of religious family diverge between minority and nonminority parties. Contrary to Hypothesis 1, that distance makes access less likely, and in support of Hypothesis 2, we find

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics.

Variable	Obs.	M	SD	Min	Max
Access through ethnic party	444	0.272	0.445	0	1
Access through nonethnic party	572	0.234	0.423	0	1
Minority religion is of a different family than the majority religion	572	0.316	0.465	0	1
Minority religious denomination differs from majority denomination	572	0.131	0.337	0	1
Proportional electoral system	572	0.433	0.496	0	1
Mixed electoral system	572	0.103	0.304	0	1
Presidential system	572	0.340	0.474	0	1
Real GDP per capita, current price	554	7685.728	8233.567	133.196	39722.25
Growth rate of real GDP per capita	547	2.464	5.996	-20.882	60.388

that ethnic minorities whose religious family differs from the majority are significantly more likely to gain access through an ethnic party (one-tailed significance) than are minorities who share the same religious family with the majority. In contrast, the minority whose religious family differs from the majority is no more or less likely to gain access through a nonethnic party.

In addition, we examined access of minorities whose religious family is the same as the majority's but differ in denomination. Here we also find a significant effect on representation of minority parties but the effect is negative. Minorities who differ in denomination from the majority are less likely to gain access to the executive. This lends some support to Hypothesis 1 and qualifies the expectations of Hypothesis 2, which suggests that politicians aim to reach across all religious boundaries. It appears that politicians reach across religious boundaries between families of religion, yet they do not extend their reach along a continuum within the same family of religion.

Consistent with expectations, proportional electoral systems significantly decrease the probability that ethnic minorities gain access through nonminority parties and are positively, though not significantly, related to access through minority parties. Mixed systems decrease the probability of access through either type of party when compared to plurality systems. It is

Table 3. Results

	(2)	(1)
	Access through ethnic party	Access through nonethnic party
Minority religion is of a different family than the majority religion (different family of religion) ^a	0.448* (0.267)	-0.243 (0.300)
Minority religious denomination differs from majority denomination ^b	-0.815* (0.452)	-0.347 (0.328)
Proportional electoral system ^c	0.279 (0.291)	-1.369*** (0.263)
Mixed electoral system ^c	-1.270** (0.569)	-1.298*** (0.419)
Presidential system ^d	0.651** (0.288)	0.694*** (0.249)
Real gross domestic product per capita, current price	-1.96e-05 (2.33e-05)	9.25e-05*** (1.43e-05)
Growth rate of real GDP per capita	0.0572*** (0.0198)	-0.00514 (0.0193)
India	-2.214*** (0.575)	0.0386 (0.386)
Constant	-1.128*** (0.298)	-1.457*** (0.269)
Observations	423	547

Logit regression. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

a. Reference category is minority whose religion belongs to the same creed as the majority.

b. Reference category is minority whose denomination differs from the majority denomination within the same creed.

c. Reference category is a plurality electoral system.

d. Reference category is a parliamentary system.

* $p < .1$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.

interesting that, in presidential systems, minorities are significantly more likely to gain access through either minority or nonminority parties when compared to parliamentary systems.

Furthermore, greater personal wealth (measured as GDP per capita) significantly increases the probability that ethnic minorities are included in government through nonminority parties. Growth rates, in turn, increase the probability that minorities are included through minority parties. Minorities in India are significantly less likely to access the executive through minority parties than are minorities elsewhere in the world but no less likely to access the executive through nonminority parties. The above results are robust to an alternate estimation method.

One question that remains concerns the substantive importance of the above results. Coalition formation depends on a myriad of inputs in each country after each election. Therefore, we would not expect any individual variable to have a dramatic effect on either the probability of inclusion or the overall fit of the model. It is important that this is despite the common understanding that, for example, institutions and the economy matter to who governs. Consequently, we posit that the substantive importance of religion is most appropriately assessed relative to the effect of other variables that we consider important.

A common interpretation of the substantive significance of the results examines the change in probability of access for ethnic minorities associated with the individual coefficients of each significant explanatory variable, holding all other effects constant at their mean.²⁴ It is important to remember that any such interpretation depends on the equation specified and should not be taken literally. The most important comparison is the magnitude changes associated with other variables that are commonly thought to matter.

Specifically, belonging to a different religious family than the majority increases the chances 8 percentage points that the group gains access through an ethnic party vis-à-vis other ethnic minorities. In contrast, belonging to a different denomination than the majority decreases the chances that a minority gains access through an ethnic party by 11 percentage points. To compare, a change from a parliamentary to presidential system increases the chances of minority representation through an ethnic party by 12 percentage points. A percentage-point change associated with religion rivaling the institutional effect is, we argue, undeniably and substantively important.

Another interpretation of substantive significance examines the goodness of fit of the whole equation. Here the pseudo- R^2 of the first equation—including measures of the economy and institutions—suggests that jointly all the variables included in the equation improve the prediction of the dependent variable nearly 13%. Of that 13%, minority religious divergence from the majority alone explains nearly 2% of the overall fit and institutional variance explains another 3%.²⁵ Again the overall prediction of access to coalition for an ethnic minority is nearly equally affected by institutions and religion. We submit that from a minority political perspective this influence of religion on the overall fit of the equation is substantial.

Discussion and Conclusion

This article examined the effect of a minority constituency religion on the probability that a religious minority representative participates in the governing

coalition after the election. Our results show that contrary to the conception that people with different religious views do not get along, majority parties evidently make a special effort to reach out to minorities from *different* religious families when building executive coalitions. However, they do so only when the minority is represented through a minority party. This finding suggests that the effort is strategic on the part of majority politicians. When appealing to minorities who belong to a different religious family, the majority politician likely considers whether doing so will garner her or him credit among her or his own constituents for building bridges. To ensure that she or he receives such credit, the best strategy for the majority politician is to appeal to an entity that clearly represents the ethnic minority, that is, a minority party.

Access to the coalition is likely important to the minority for policy reasons, but credit for including minorities may be equally important for the majority, particularly where minority issues are politically salient. Indeed, new research shows that vote choices are influenced by voters' anticipation of postelection coalition politics (Dutch, May, & Armstrong, in press). If this is true, then publicly anticipated collaboration with culturally distinct minorities would be a strategy of choice for majority parties who wish, for example, to mobilize constituents in opposition to ethnocentric far-right parties. This is certainly plausible in West European politics after 1965, where ethnocentric far-right parties have claimed a fair share of the vote (Kitschelt, 1995). Similarly, majority parties that have sympathized with ethnocentric nationalist parties have been known to use postelectoral collaboration with a culturally distinct minority to rehabilitate their own image in Eastern Europe (Birbir, 2007). Although religion is not the only minority characteristic that can accomplish this objective, it is certainly an important one.

These results also qualify the current literatures that discuss how religion translates into policy distance. First, we suggest that in addition to the importance of differences in orthodoxy and commitment (Broughton & Napel, 2000; Gryzmala-Busse, 2001; Layman & Green, 2005), the type of religious divide (denomination vs. family) matters. It is important that we do not discount the significance of orthodoxy. We do, however, suggest that this is not the only relevant religious division in politics today.

At the same time, our results qualify Higham's (1955/2008) observations about early American politics and the more recent power-sharing literature where religion is considered one of the principal cultural differences used to mobilize competing parties. Specifically, the notion is that religious distance, both sectoral and between religious families, increases policy distance. In addition, the power-sharing literature promotes the solution of inclusion to ameliorate the conflict potential of this divide.

Our results indicate that, consistent with these literatures, the type of religious divide has an effect on the perceived policy divide. Furthermore, some of this divide is overcome by inclusion of minorities in the government. It is interesting, however, that our second principal finding is that minorities who differ in denomination from the majority are less likely to join the governing coalition than are minorities at large. The remaining question, therefore, is why majority parties heed the power-sharing solution only with respect to minorities of different religious families and not those who diverge in denomination.

Recent findings in the broader literature about religion and politics highlight the same difference in the probability of minority involvement in political conflict depending on whether the minority differs from the majority in religious family or denomination. Specifically, the theoretical idea of “clash of civilizations”—that in part is religious—reverberated in the study of transnational politics (Fox, 2000, 2002; Huntington, 1996; Jelen & Wilcox, 2002; Juergensmeyer, 2003; Seul, 1999; Stark, 2001). Consistent with our analysis, this idea has not borne out either locally or globally in empirical studies (Chiozza, 2002; Ellingsen, 2000; Fox, 2004; Gartzke & Gleditsch, 2006; Gurr, 1994; Henderson, 2004, 2005; Henderson & Singer, 2000; Roeder, 2003; Russett, Oneal, & Cox, 2000; Tuscicisny, 2004).²⁶

However, Fox (2004, p. 9) finds support for the idea that religion affects domestic conflict as an intervening variable: There are other causes of conflict, but religion affects the process in several ways. Furthermore, and consistent with our finding that probability of collaboration across a religious divide does not apply to groups who differ in denomination, Fox (2004, p. 66) finds that intrareligious clashes (between denominations) account for most of the increase in religious conflict that has occurred since 1980.

Why do minorities who diverge in religious family from majorities have greater access to governing coalitions than do minorities who diverge in denomination? And why are minorities who diverge in denomination more likely to engage the majority in conflict than are minorities who diverge in religious family? Perhaps groups belonging to different denominations within a country tend to be more equal in size than groups belonging to different religious families. Size equivalence might create a greater sense of political competition and reluctance to collaborate politically. Possibly, groups' denominational differences are more likely reinforced by other cleavages than are groups' religious family differences. Alternatively, Satana, Inman, and Birnir (2012, forthcoming) suggest that religion possibly assumes greater political significance where it is the predominant or the only cultural characteristic that differentiates a minority from a majority. Maybe groups that differ in

denomination rather than religious family are more often crosscut by other cleavages, leaving religion as the overarching cleavage on which political mobilization takes place. We submit that these questions about the effect of the differences between divergent religious divides as they relate to a variety of political outcomes are fruitful venues for further study.

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Notes

1. Focusing mostly on American politics, Wald and Wilcox (2006) explain that the absence of religion is particularly notable in empirical analyses, although the subject has experienced an upsurge in interest since the 1980s. However, with the exception of Jonathan Fox's scholarship, it is fair to generalize that empirical analysis of the effects of religion is wanting in cross-national studies.
2. There are exceptions such as Bolivia, but generally speaking the majority elects presidents.
3. Furthermore, religion stabilizes votes in maturing democracies (Birmir, 2007; Norris & Inglehart, 2004).
4. See "Israel Disqualifies" (2009).
5. Representation, in turn, is, according to Cox (1997, p. 226), typically defined in terms of policy advocacy.

6. Under consociational arrangements, each social segment is included through a grand legislative coalition of political leaders. All segments also have mutual veto over policy and a high degree of autonomy, and legislators are elected through proportionality.
7. The Lebanese consociational system functioned successfully over 30 years until the outset of the 1975 civil war.
8. It is important that we do not observe invitations and rejections directly. The underlying assumption, therefore, is that the rate of access is a fair metric of the rate of invitation.
9. The ability of ethnic minorities to access the government is arguably different from the ability of ethnic majority/plurality groups to do so. To hold constant as many such ethnic majority/minority differences as possible, our research design evaluates the impact only of religious family and denomination of one ethnic minority religion vis-à-vis the impact of religion for the control group of another ethnic minority. Consequently, our research design *does not* address the question of the absolute effect of religion (family and denomination) on the potential of an ethnic minority to access governing coalitions vis-à-vis all political constituencies in a country, some of whom may be part of the ethnic majority but are represented by small parties.
10. The states where ethnic minority party access changed (minority was excluded or added) between elections are Bolivia, Bosnia, Finland, Nepal, Pakistan, South Korea, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and Switzerland. The states where minority inclusion through a nonethnic party changed between elections are Austria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, India, Israel, Macedonia, New Zealand, Romania, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Turkey, Thailand, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Venezuela.
11. Birnir's universe of cases is based on the Minorities at Risk (MAR) data and includes coalition information for 70 groups in 39 democracies, from 1945 to 2004. To isolate the effect of ethno-nationalism, Birnir excludes Muslims in India and Hindus in Bangladesh because MAR classifies these groups as religious groups. Both groups are electorally active, and we have added them to our data. Furthermore, Birnir surveys all electorally active ethnic minorities that she argues should be included in MAR because they meet all the criteria of large (more than 1% of the population or 100,000) "minorities at risk." We have added the groups that we confirmed are electorally active. We also take ethnic representation in the cabinet through a nonethnic party as sufficient evidence of minority group mobilization. To keep with Birnir's definition of democracy, we eliminated Fiji and Guyana.
12. In most cases we rely on a party's self-definition for classification as ethnic. This coding is fairly straightforward. Some exceptions include Bulgaria where

ethnic parties have been illegal but the MRF is commonly recognized as the Turkish minority party. In the data set, MRF is coded as ethnic. Another problematic case includes the United Democratic Front (UDF) in Malawi, which has represented both the Yao and the Lomwe ethnic groups. In adding this case, we consulted Africa specialists John McAuley and Kim Dionne, who concur that the UDF is more like an ethnic party than a national pan-ethnic party. In addition, the party has recently split along ethnic lines with the UDF representing the Yao and the Democratic Progressive Party supported by the Lomwe. Consequently, we code the UDF as an ethnic party. So as not to overweigh the importance of Malawi, we count ethnic group access through the UDF only one time in any given year.

13. These are in most cases ministries, but there are exceptions such as the appointment of the Roma leader Gheorghe Raducanu to head the new office for Roma affairs after the 2000 election in Romania (Birbir, 2007).
14. Because of concerns about autocorrelation—as access between election years is the best predictor of access between election years—we reconfigured the original annual data. Since there is no theoretical reason to believe access after election T predicts minority group access after election $T + 1$, we count access once only for each election period.
15. One caveat is that the dependent variables accounting for access record only descriptive representation and not substantive representation. In no way does descriptive representation guarantee that substantive representation occurs (Wilkinson, 2004). However, recent cross-national analyses on women suggest that changes in descriptive representation do result in changes in policy initiated and passed (Schwindt-Bayer, 2006). We posit that the effects of descriptive ethnic and religious representation remain to be studied further.
16. We have included Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the majority is Bosniak (Sunni Muslim) but Croats (Catholic) and Serbs (Orthodox) are minorities. In contrast, Fox classifies Bosnia and Herzegovina's majority as "Islam, Other or Mixed."
17. For further classification, see, for example, <http://www.adherents.com/>.
18. Although most groups in electoral democracies can be classified as having a predominant religion, very few minorities are primarily defined in religious terms.
19. In a few cases, Fox classifies the minority group as belonging to various denominations. In those cases we coded the combination variable as 0.
20. We used International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) database on electoral systems.
21. The line of reasoning here is the modernization thesis (Lipset, 1959).
22. This variable focuses on economic scarcity and relative deprivation (Cederman, Weidmann, & Gleditsch, in press; Gurr, 1985).

23. The source for our economic variables is the Penn World Tables (Heston, Summers, & Aten, 2009). The 2003 values for Serbia-Montenegro are those listed for Montenegro, as the countries did not separate until 2006, but values are not given for Serbia in 2003.
24. See Long and Freese's (2006, p. 211) "prchange."
25. This interpretation reflects numbers in alternate specifications not reported here, where we excluded either the variables denoting religion or the variables denoting institutions.
26. Authors testing both at the interstate and intrastate levels do find some association between religion and conflict, but their theoretical expectations differ from Huntington's (Ellingsen, 2000; Fox, 2002, 2004; Henderson, 1997; Seul, 1999; Tuscisny, 2004). Many scholars studying the subnational effect of religion hold that the content of religion is exogenous to the root causes of domestic political conflict (Chiozza, 2002; Henderson & Singer, 2000; Petito & Hatzopoulos, 2003; Russett, Oneal, & Cox, 2000; Varshney, 2002; Wilkinson, 2004).

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