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“Weapons of the Meek: Political Parties and Religious Influence on Policy”

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## **Weapons of the Meek: Political Parties and Religious Influence on Policy**

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How does religion influence politics? For all their concern with the sacred and divine, religious groups have been adept players at secular and pragmatic politics: legitimating monarchs, shaping public morality, exerting control over education and the welfare state, or simply securing a favorable legal status. Yet in the modern era in predominantly Christian countries, churches are far more constrained, and cannot act alone. Religious bodies do not have direct access to policymaking or legislatures. Legal and institutional firewalls stymie even powerful churches with rows of loyal adherents. Clerics do not stand for office, and church delegates do not sit in legislatures, governments, or administrative bodies.

How, then, can such actors—Christian churches in modern democracies<sup>1</sup>—obtain their preferred policy outcomes? Mobilizing the faithful and issuing moral pronouncements can indirectly lead politicians to adopt church preferences: but in influencing policy directly, churches rely on political parties. Parties represent and channel voter demand, serve as potential coalition partners for churches, and propose and pass policy. For churches, political parties thus offer three mechanisms of potential influence: translating popular electoral demand for church involvement into policy, forming coalitions with sympathetic political parties that exchange policy concessions for electoral campaigning, and incurring “debts of gratitude” that newly democratic governments owe to their erstwhile religious sponsors. Electoral coalitions with powerful churches, especially, have emerged as a dominant explanation (Warner 2000, Donovan 2003). In such coalitions, churches mobilize the support of their faithful for political parties, and in exchange obtain policy concessions from the government parties they helped to bring into office. For example, the Christian Democratic Party (*Democrazia Cristiana*, DC) relied on the

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<sup>1</sup> I focus in this paper on Christian churches, chiefly the Roman Catholic Church, in Europe and North America. The broader analysis includes countries for which the International Social Science Programme collected data on national identity and religion: Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany (East and West), Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Philippines, Portugal, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, and US.

public support of the Roman Catholic Church to keep the DC in power for nearly five decades after World War II in Italy (Hanley 1994, Kalyvas 1996, Warner 2000, Donovan 2003.)

Yet there are reasons to doubt these accounts. I argue here that explicit coalitions with political parties can instead be a sign of relative church *weakness*, not strength. Among the “weapons of the meek” available to religious groups, overt political coalitions are costly and relatively ineffective. Far better is gaining direct access to secular institutions of policymaking: the ability to propose and vet policy directly through joint commissions, obtain extensive parliamentary and ministerial consultation, vet officials, and even run sectors of the state. Only a few churches, however, can claim such access: those with high moral authority.

Moral authority in this context goes beyond the churches’ authority on life and death and familiar religious ritual, such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals that is widespread even in very secular countries.<sup>2</sup> When backed and reinforced by *the fusion of national and religious identities*, the moral authority of churches is no longer limited to theology or to ritual—but becomes a powerful political resource, with churches embodying national interest.

Churches with such high moral authority are seen as impartial, trusted, and credible representatives of *national* interest. This trust placed in a church does not mean popular demand for church influence on politics, but it does indicate a widespread identification of the church with the common good. Where they hold high moral authority and can ensure the survival of the regime by appealing to the entire nation, churches can gain direct institutional access to policymaking. Where they do not wield such moral authority, they can still form partisan coalitions that reward individual parties and represent narrower constituencies—but then they depend on the parties’ winning office, and lose moral authority itself as a result of their overt politicking.

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<sup>2</sup> Church of Norway, 2002. “Church Should be a Place to come to during Life’s Greatest Events,” <http://www.kirken.no/english/news.cfm?artid=6605>, accessed October 17, 2013.

While the existing literature has focused on the exchanges between churches and incumbents (Donovan 2003, Gill 1998, Htun 2003, Meier 2001, Warner 2000), I shift the focus to how society recognizes and responds to these contracts: and how the strategic choices of the churches feed back into their stocks of their politically most relevant resources, their moral authority. At the same time, however, in contrast to the literature interest group coalitions and democratic pressure, this account focuses not on ballot boxes but on the back rooms of politics: the hidden deals and covert pressure that are both effective and less costly to those who wield them (Berry 1977, Hansen 1980, Hertzke 1988, Skocpol 1995, Wilson 1995, Wald, Silverman, and Fridy 2005).

Below, I examine the variation in church influence on policy in Section I. Section II examines the competing explanations. Section III provides an alternative model, and section IV shows four cases that illustrate the mechanisms of coalitions and institutional access. Section V tests these propositions on a broader sample of Christian democracies. Section VI concludes.

### **I. Variation in Church Influence on Policy**

The influence of organized religion on politics varies greatly. Christian churches hold similar, theologically-grounded preferences across several policy domains. The five examined here are: education, divorce, abortion, same sex marriage and stem cell technology (including assisted reproduction and embryonic stem cell research). The Roman Catholic Church has the same stance on these issues in all countries where it is active. Conservative Protestant churches share many of these stances, though they have differed on divorce and stem cell research. Yet despite these similar preferences, churches vary widely in their ability to set the debate and get their preferences enacted. Table 1 summarizes this variation.

TABLE 1 HERE

Thus, similarly religious societies have very different patterns of religious influence on politics. These differences hold even among countries with similar levels of religiosity (as measured by levels of professed religious belief, patterns of attendance, and denominational loyalties.) Ireland and Italy are both nominally Catholic countries, yet the impact of the Church on policy outcomes is very different, with the Irish church setting both the terms of political debates and influencing their outcomes in ways the Italian church has struggled to. Similarly, the Roman Catholic Church in Poland has had a great influence on public policy, while in equally Catholic Croatia it has been unable to shape public debates or policy outcomes.

Moreover, religion influences politics whether or not the public wants it to.<sup>3</sup> In all the countries examined, the majority of respondents oppose the influence of churches on politics: and three-quarters of respondents reject it where the churches have been especially influential, as in Ireland, Poland, or the Philippines. Church-preferred policies are legislated despite a consistent lack of popular support, and in the face of enormous popular opposition to religious influence on politics.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, piety is insufficient, and popular demand is minimal—yet religious influence on politics still occurs, in both new and developed democracies. We thus need an account of the churches as political actors, and the channels of this influence. But if churches have no direct role as legislators, and if popular demand is insufficient to explain policy outcomes, how do religious groups influence policy?

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<sup>3</sup> Other surveys have confirmed these results: for example, an average 50% of respondents wanted the Church to have less influence on politics throughout the 1990s and 2000s in Poland, and 78% respondents did not wish the Church to be politically active. *CBOŚ. 2007. "Opinie o działalności Kościoła,"* Komunikat z Badan, Warsaw, March 2007. In Italy, only 32% of respondents agreed that religion should have influence on the state (Fisher 2004.) In the United States, 70% of respondents do not want churches to endorse political candidates. (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2002 "Americans Struggle with Religion's Role at Home and Abroad," available at <http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/150.pdf>, accessed August 7, 2008.)

<sup>4</sup> Moreover, these World Values Surveys data represent the low end of the estimates; surveys undertaken by the International Social Science Programme show even higher rates of rejection of religious influence on votes and governments.

## II. Existing Explanations: Representation, Coalitions, Debts

The existing literature suggests that churches can use several tactics to translate their preferences into policy: a) channeling mass demands, either through political parties or directly by organizing protests, collecting signatures, and mobilizing affiliated organizations (Castles 1994, Fink 2009), b) “contracting” with political parties by explicitly exchanging electoral mobilization in favor of these parties for policy concessions (Warner 2000), and c) invoking “debts of gratitude” from the new democratic governments where the churches had earlier protected the opposition under an authoritarian regime (Htun 2003, Gill 1998). All three accounts rely on political parties as the critical partners.

One explanation focuses on the popular *demand* for religion and religious influence on politics, and the conditions that foster such demand. Thus, Norris and Inglehart (2004) argue that greater levels of social and economic deprivation increase religiosity, since they lead individuals to seek comfort and security in religion. Lower economic development should correlate with higher participation and belief. The resulting levels of religious belief and participation then also create (or at least correlate with) the demand for religious influence over policy. Given religion’s traditional concern with morality, such constituencies should be especially receptive to religious incursion into public policy issues framed as “moral” (Mooney 2001, 16.) Religious participation and belief should also correlate with a greater demand for religious influence in politics, and with higher levels of such influence. Political parties here act as loyal representatives of religious constituencies demanding church influence.

A second explanation focuses instead on the alliances formed with political parties. Churches and political parties exchange policy concessions for electoral support contingent on asset specificity (can churches get the same good elsewhere?), transaction costs (would it be less costly for churches to supply their own politicians?), market uncertainty (how stable and popular

an ally is the party?) and core competencies (what are both the parties and the churches good at doing?) (Warner 2000.) Churches thus pursue alliances with parties that have the highest expected probability of translating preferences into policy, at the lowest cost to the churches. Parties, in turn, will pursue these alliances depending on their need for electoral support, their ideological self-conceptions, and the structures of the churches they face (Warner 2000, 12.) In other words, where we see church influence on politics, it is the result of contract-like exchanges of votes for policy concessions between churches and parties.

Such potential partners are not necessarily obvious. As Stathis Kalyvas noted, “the presence of large Catholic populations in a country is analytically and empirically insufficient for predicting the emergence of a common Catholic identity in politics, even less the formation of a political party” (Kalyvas 1996, 10). One set of candidates might be the Christian Democratic parties: but these parties have had a historically uneasy relationship with churches, and preferred to assert autonomy and pursue broad, cross-class coalitions whenever possible. Empirically, electoral support for Christian Democratic parties is not tied to either policy influence of the churches, or to popular religiosity: there is little correlation across countries or over time (Grzymala-Busse, 2010).

Moreover, the mechanism of contracting is unclear. When political parties enter government coalitions in parliamentary regimes, their survival in office is a result of their joint efforts. If a party withdraws its support, the government falls, and all parties face the arduous process of new elections or forming a new government. Once churches mobilize their support on behalf of parties, however, there is little to keep the party from renegeing on its promises: it may well decide that it can find other means of mobilizing voters in the future, as the Italian Christian Democrats did in the 1950s and 1960s.

A final explanation for church influence on politics relies on a model of exchange between secular and religious actors *over time*. Analyses of religious influence on policy have emphasized the “debt of gratitude” political parties may have (Htun 2003.) Thus, governments acquiesce to church demands, especially in new democracies, because they “feel indebted” to the churches for the years of rhetorical and physical protection (Htun 2003, 102.) In new democracies, where churches have earlier protected democratic dissidents, such parties then reward the churches with policy concessions once they are elected into office. Where the churches were either neutral, or on the side of authoritarian governments, we would expect few little church influence on politics once democratic governments are in power (Juergensemeyer 1994). However, political gratitude is notoriously short-lived and fragile: once church protection is no longer needed, there is no need to heed church preferences. We need an account of some sort of a sustaining mechanism that would continue to create incentives for political parties to translate church preferences into policy well into the democratic era.

Thus, churches can be very influential, and clearly need secular political allies to legislate their preferences. Yet church success in influencing policy does not rely on popular demand, mobilization on behalf of a political party, or a grateful former protégé.

### **III. The Role of Moral Authority**

To play a political role, churches do not live by theology alone, or even their ability to regularly fill their pews with a faithful society. Instead, to enter the political arena and shape policy, churches rely on a specifically political form of *moral authority*: the perception that churches stand on the side of national interest and the public good. Moral authority is conceptually distinct from religiosity: religious observance, affiliation, or belief. That said, religiosity is a precondition: without those full pews, churches have a hard time convincing politicians or society that they represent broad national interests.

The force of this moral authority relies on the perception that churches are faithful representatives and loyal defenders of society as a whole: the “nation”, rather than of narrower regional, partisan, or sectarian interests. Moral authority can originate in contemporary efforts by the church to protect national interests, but it most frequently stems from the churches’ historical defense of the nation against a colonial power or an alien regime, and the subsequent fusion of national and religious identities (as in Poland or Ireland.) Historical conflict between the “nation” and its opponents gave the churches the opportunity to act as the defenders of national identity and cohesion. Where the church shielded the nation, patriotism fused with religious loyalty, and the churches gained resonance within society. Moral authority thus imbues the institutional church with a powerful voice within society, and establishes the churches as trusted representatives of public national interest.<sup>5</sup>

Yet precisely because it relies on the perception that the churches are *national* representatives and defenders, this moral authority is a powerful but brittle resource. If churches appear partisan, narrowly self-interested, or taking sides of regional or local constituencies rather than “representing the nation,” they risk dissipating this valuable resource. Once they establish moral authority, churches have to tend it carefully—and here, explicitly supporting, or even aligning with, a political party (rather than claiming to represent national or universal moral interests) can backfire. If a church ties itself closely to a particular government or sub-national group, rather than the defense of the organic nation, its claims of universal morality and national protection are immediately suspect. Sponsorship or explicit mobilization on a behalf of individual parties can thus have a perverse effect. Since a healthy flock of the faithful is an important resource, churches can directly mobilize the faithful and pressure politicians through mailings, signatures, referenda, and public demonstrations. They can do so without losing moral

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<sup>5</sup> Such moral authority is distinct from the demand on church influence on politics: it is not the support for church policy preferences, but a recognition of the church’s role as a representative of national interest.

authority, so long as their claims are credibly based on theology and on the national interest: but once churches dirty their hands with partisan, regional, or sectoral politics, whether through coalitions or direct mobilization, they are far less credible in their claims of representing the interests of the nation. Paradoxically, to remain politically successful, churches have to appear to be above the political fray.

Accordingly, rather than relying on fickle electorates or less-than-reliable partisan alliances, churches prefer to have direct input into policymaking: in effect, share sovereignty with secular politicians. Such direct input, which I term *institutional access*, includes the formulation of legislative bills, participation in government and parliamentary committees, vetting state officials, and in some contexts, controlling state sectors such as education, the welfare system, and health care. The key advantage of such institutional access is that it does not appear partisan—and that it remains largely covert. Specific policy pressure takes place behind the closed doors of ministries and high offices, with personal meetings taking the place of public demonstrations or exhortations, while public activities, such as ministering to the sick, are hardly partisan. Such access can also be long-lasting, and persist even despite the transformation of a political regime from a communist autocracy to post-communist democracy: for example, in Poland, a joint commission established by the communist regime with the Church still meets regularly, nearly seventy years later. Above all, churches appear non-partisan and relatively unsullied by politicking, and yet can directly shape policy. Institutional access is covert and more diffuse and durable (controlling education, for example, allows the Church to inculcate generations of citizens with specific loyalties and identities). Coalitions are visible, negotiated on a policy-by-policy basis, and associate the church with a specific partisan option. Not surprisingly, churches

would prefer to obtain institutional access.<sup>6</sup> For precisely these reasons, however, secular politicians are loathe to share sovereignty. Institutional access is thus costly for the state, but highly desirable for the church. Coalitions are less costly for the state, but far less desirable for the church.

Yet institutional access is a price regimes are willing to pay, if the benefits are high enough: for example, if politicians stand to lose office because the very regime or nation-state they have created will collapse, taking them along. For this reason, institutional access is often granted to churches in foundational moments—after a regime collapse, upon gaining state independence, when building a brand-new democracy, and in critical elections (where the vote determines the future of the regime, not just who the incumbent will be)—in short, when a fragile secular state needs extensive support (and may not have the capacity itself to run some sectors, such as education). This is the story of the new Irish Free State handing over both education and welfare policy to the Church in the 1920s—and of the British Crown handing over the same sectors to the Church in Québec after 1840 and the expulsion of the Liberal elites. As result, churches can gain enormous policy influence during times of upheaval and instability, such as regime transitions—precisely when institutional and policy frameworks are transformed.

Churches also obtain institutional access when their high moral authority can prevent fratricidal conflict: this was the case in communist Poland, where both after the protests of 1956 and the enormous mobilization of 1980-1 the Church gained not only policy concessions, but greater authority over its assets, continued contacts with high-ranking communist officials, and policy input through several joint committees. In exchange, the Church calmed down a furious populace and prevented violence and bloodshed in the name of national peace and survival.

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<sup>6</sup> In more formal language, churches prefer to influence policy at minimum cost. Their ranked preferences are having their preferences legislated without participation in politics, followed by directly participating in policymaking, exchanging electoral support for policy concessions through partisan coalitions, and lastly, not influencing politics.

Thus, churches can resolve dramatic national crises, and the fact that the secular actor cannot survive without church involvement makes the price of institutional access worth paying. Even if such crises occur rarely, and institutional access emerges only periodically, they are an enormous opportunity for churches to gain policy influence—without losing their stock of moral authority. Subsequently, church policy influence through these institutional channels depends on their moral authority: if moral authority declines, the access may remain but policy concessions will be more difficult to obtain.

Where they start off with lower moral authority by dint of a more compromised past, the churches' options are constrained. They are not trusted as broadly, and not as *national* representatives, even if specific constituencies might trust them. They are thus unable to address major social crises, and secular actors are unwilling to pay the price of institutional access. Churches can still expend moral authority to influence policy, but policy influence now depends on narrower coalitions with allied political parties willing to work with a given church, with all the problems of credible commitment and backlash that they entail. Partisan coalitions are overt and partisan affairs, and churches are easily accused of narrow political interests rather than saving the souls of the nation and the public good. Policy gains come at a steep price: what moral authority churches possess is eroded by partisan alliances and by overt politicking. Ironically, then, already weaker churches become weaker still when they attempt to exert political influence. These churches are “tragically dependent” on political parties: they rely on the very political coalitions that undermine their attractiveness as coalitions partners. They start off with less, and obtain their goals at much higher costs to their stock of moral authority.

#### **IV. Coalitions and institutional access in practice**

To illustrate how moral authority translates into policy influence in the domains of abortion, divorce, education, same sex marriage and stem cell research, I compare the Irish and

Italian cases. In both, over 90% of the population declares itself to be Catholic, and over half the population attends religious services more than once a month. In both, over 60% of the population oppose religious influence on politics, and over 75% oppose such influence on votes. Yet despite these similarities, the Roman Catholic Church has had varied success in influencing policy, as summarized in Table 2 below, which also includes other comparable cases.

Table 2 HERE

### *Ireland*

The central role of the Catholic Church in the emergence of an independent Ireland and in stabilizing the new republic gave it enormous moral authority in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Independence in 1922 meant considerable cooperation between the church and state. After the 1937 Union with Britain, “close identification between Irish nationalism and the Catholic religion developed, and nationalists defended the prominent role accorded the church in areas of public policy” (Kissane 2003, 75.) Catholicism became the core pillar of an Irish, as opposed to an English, identity, and the Church actively promoted the intertwining of national and religious identities (Taylor 2007, 153). In the name of protecting the Irish nation, the Catholic Church was heavily involved in policing the moral and political spheres, and in fact argued successfully the two were the same (Keogh 1986, Smith 2004, Girvin 2002, Whyte 1971).

While the bishops were often ambivalent about the Republicans, they supported the cause of Irish national aspirations (and their fusion with Catholicism), resulting in both moral leadership and institutional access after 1922 as “nationalists defended the prominent role accorded the church in public policy” (Kissane 2003, 75, Andersen 2010, 17). Both main governing parties subsequently enacted the church’s preferences: Fianna Fáil, whose politicians demonstrated their religious credentials by reproducing Church rhetoric and sustaining its policy preferences, and the socially more moderate Fine Gael, which governed with the center-left

Labour Party. This elite consensus “effectively drained Irish politics of a clerical–ant clerical dimension...disputes over the role of the Catholic church largely disappeared from mainstream political debate” (Conway 2006, 171).

In the decades that followed, the church repeatedly framed abortion, divorce, and education as its purview, and the restrictions on these domains as a matter of the moral health of the nation. The church publicly argued that its mission was to protect the Irish nation, and its moral values, but much of its *direct* influence relied on institutional access. Church opinions were regularly sought both officially, and in informal consultations between politicians and clerical officials. Beginning with the writing of the Constitution, Church officials and interests were explicitly represented, with the future Archbishop of Dublin John Charles McQuaid helping to write the first draft of the article on religion, church, and state, as well as provide advice on the drafting of other articles of the constitution (Keogh 2007, 101-2.) The 1937 Constitution identified the common good with religious criteria, and accorded the Church a special position, blurring governmental and church roles in education, family law, and the welfare state. It was not until 1972 that the official legal relationship between the church and state was abolished in a referendum (Chaves and Cann 1992, 282.) Furthermore, the Church assumed nearly full control over education, hospitals, welfare, and juvenile justice institutions, making it an effective partner in governance—and constraint—on whatever government was in office (Inglis 1998, chapter 3 and 122ff, see also Larkin 1984, 121).

Education illustrates both Church authority, and the mechanisms of its replication over time. Attempts by the British government to introduce a non-denominational educational system in 1900s was frustrated by “an alliance between the new Sinn Fein party and the Catholic hierarchy” (Kissane 2003, 75) in the name of Irish national identity and values. The Catholic church was subsequently able to insist on its primacy, both through loyal cabinet ministers, and

through informal pressure. Ministers of Education were inevitably observant Catholics, and the pervasive argument of both secular and religious authorities was that neutrality would translate into bias against belief. The result was that from the 1930s onwards, the Church controlled primary schooling and the administration of juvenile justice. The Council of Education, established in 1950, was an official advisory government to the Department of Education, and a quarter of its members were Catholic religious figures, as was its chair (Coolahan 2003, 139.) The Council confirmed the primacy of the Catholic Church in education, with the 96% of primary schools operating under denominational patronage. Among the “Rules for National Schools,” published in 1965, Rule 68 stated that “of all parts of a school curriculum Religious Instruction is by far the most important” and that “a religious spirit should inform and vivify the whole work of the school.” The Church’s role was not openly questioned until the 2010s, when demographic changes and immigration prompted a new Programme on Patronage and Pluralism to review the Church’s role in education. The committee included explicitly secular advocates, and eventually called for divesting the Church of patronage and the removal of Rule 68 (Coolahan 2003, Hussey et al 2012.) By this point, however, the Church itself did not object to the divestment: with fewer and fewer monks and nuns, the Church had difficulty staffing the schools itself, and had long turned to secular teachers. Given the financial and personnel burdens of administering the educational system, the review did not overturn church preferences.

The Church also relied on its moral authority directly. Throughout the 20th century, the Church successfully framed several issues as matters of fundamental morality, with politicians of all stripes picking up and amplifying the religious language in public debates and policy justifications. The extensive consultations and the Church’s fundamental role in creating the initial legal framework meant that abortion, education, and divorce policies all accorded with Church preferences. When these were challenged, even more confident than its Polish

counterpart, the Church further instigated and influenced mass referenda. One such referendum in 1983 made abortion, which was illegal, unconstitutional as well. The Catholic Church and the Pro-Life Amendment Campaign (PLAC) exerted heavy pressure on the electorate, and “the result was clearly a vindication of the Catholic Church’s authority and demonstrated the vulnerability of the political process to a campaign orchestrated by well-organized interest groups” (Kissane 2003, 81.) A 1992 referendum, on the heels of the notorious “X case” (where a raped girl was not allowed to travel to England for an abortion) resulted in the freedom to travel—but with no further provisions for legalizing access to abortion. It was not until 2002 that an attempt to introduce tougher penalties on doctors for abortion failed in a popular referendum, and not until 2013 that the government finally clarified what was meant by a “threat to the mother’s life,” the allowable circumstance for abortion.

Yet here again, once the Church’s support was neither imminently needed nor its access institutionalized, policies could depart from Church preferences. When courts rather than politicians or voters decided policy outcomes, for example, the Church was less successful: in 2002, High Court decisions ended the ban on contraception, the proscriptions on homosexuality were reduced, and no-fault divorce became a possibility. Timing once again became an issue: not only because the Church had lost a great deal of its moral authority with the pedophilia and child abuse scandals that emerged in the 1990s, but because social and legal acceptance changed dramatically: homosexuality itself was illegal until 1993 (and delegalized against Church opposition)—but by 2011, two thirds of the population was in favor of same sex marriage. If no politician wanted to introduce abortion to Ireland, by 2012 the challenge was “to find a prominent politician prepared to oppose gay marriage out loud” (*The Irish Times*, 14 July 2012.) On the issue of assisted reproduction and stem cell technology, however, politicians were considerably more reticent, as were professional associations (McDonnell and Allison 2006,

825.) Much as with abortion, and as a legacy of the X case itself, a legislative vacuum resulted: the government never legislated directly on stem cell research (despite a 2009 High Court plea to do so), or on the legal status of embryos, without which such technology was left in a legal limbo.

*Italy:*

Italy appears to be the stereotypical Catholic country, with churches at every corner and strong traditional religiosity. The Vatican is located in Rome, and pope after pope until 1978 and John Paul II was inevitably Italian. Yet beneath the façade of a Catholic state, the relationship between the church and state has been a complicated one. The Roman Catholic Church (and specifically, the Vatican) was opposed to the reunification of Italy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, forbade Catholics from participating in the new democracy on the pain of excommunication, and vehemently fought any attempts to constrain the power of the Vatican. It could thus never claim to speak for the “Italian nation” or be above local or partisan interests, and, for all the stereotypes of a religious and Catholic Italy, never gained the moral authority of the church in Ireland or in Poland.

The arc of the coalition between church and governing party in Italy from 1948 to 1994 began with a trade of electoral support for policy concessions, and ended with backlash against this contract. In the postwar Italian democracy, the Italian Church allied itself with the Christian Democratic (DC) party: the Church mobilized its flock to stem communist popularity, its main perceived threat. As one analyst put it, “the Church wanted guarantees of influence and of anti-Communism, and it was beginning to appear that the DC would be able to offer both” (Warner 2000, 108.) In turn, the DC relied on the Church’s mobilizational capacities to compensate for the party’s meager organizational resources after the war (Pollard 2008, 123). The Church threw its support and organizational strength behind the party beginning with the 1948 elections. The Church subsequently supported the DC throughout its rule, largely because no other party was

both conservative and credible. In exchange, the DC financed Catholic hospitals, seminaries, schools, and Catholic cultural, educational, and social activities (Ignazi and Welhofer 2013, 38.)

Despite this marriage of convenience, the Italian Church achieved far less than it had sought. The Christian Democrats first sought coalitions with the “unacceptable” Socialists (PSDI), Liberals (PLI) and Republicans (PRI) after 1948 even after achieving absolute majority, to “reduce the effects of ecclesiastical pressure [on the] government” (Pollard 2008, 119.) They then also began to seek mechanisms that would make the DC more autonomous of the Church. Specifically, the DC began to rely on patronage, which obviated the need for the Church’s organizational mobilization of the voters and thus “severed its direct link to the Catholic hierarchy” (Gundle 1996, 60, see also Furlong 1996, 60, Donovan 2003, 101, and Pollard 2008.) The inclusion of the Lateran Pacts in the Constitution privileged the Church, but the 1984 revision of the Concordat formally separated church from state, and ended Church privilege. The DC sought to make itself more autonomous of the Church, even as it often failed to deliver on the Church’s stated goals.

In four out of the five policy areas examined, the Church obtained far less than it sought. As early as 1946, the Church was angered by the Christian Democratic government’s laxity in including the sanctity of marriage in the constitution, and allowing labor the right to strike (Clark, Hine, and Irving 1974, 336, Warner 2000, 119.) Subsequently, a 1974 divorce referendum produced a majority in favor of new and permissive legislation, as did an abortion referendum in 1981 (which only reaffirmed the liberal law on abortion passed in parliament in 1978, much to the Church’s consternation and vituperation). Italian Church leaders have not even confronted the issue since (Thavis 2004, diMarco 2009, 13.) While the Church continued to run most preschools, religious education continued to be optional, and did not become a part of the regular school curriculum (unlike post-1989 Poland, for example.) Much of the Church’s

influence over education, such as it was, predated the coalition, and by 1984, the Concordat revision ended compulsory religious teaching in schools (although most parents chose optional religious education for their children in school, Donovan 2003.) In many ways, the harder the Church tried, the less it achieved through its coalition—yet it had nowhere else to turn. After 1994, and the sobering experience of the DC's fall from power, the Church did not form an electoral coalition with one of the parties in the newly bipolar Italian party system. Instead, the Church turned to appealing to individual MPs, irrespective of their party affiliation, as a way of influencing policy. It was unable to change much in abortion, divorce, or education, issues that by that point had been decided as far as the electorate and the parliament were concerned.

In one area, however, the church was able to influence policy: stem cell research and other bio-ethical policies. In the late 1990s, a veto by Catholic MPs over bio-ethics legislation “resulted in a legislative vacuum, since regulation itself was seen as state recognition of, and participation in, immoral practice” (Donovan 2003, 112.) The Church preferred this outcome to lenient legislation. However, the veto backfired: scientists were now free to experiment, with controversial results such as the implantation of embryos in postmenopausal women, for example. It was not until 2001 and the return of a center-right government that a more restrictive bill was proposed, and received bipartisan cooperation in 2004 that was partly mobilized by Church efforts. Subsequently, the Church persuaded enough voters to stay home to invalidate the 2005 referendum that would have liberalized the legislation. It did so through mobilization at masses and appealing to individuals, rather through either a political coalition or institutional access. In doing so, it relied on voter passivity, rather than on moral authority and the ability of the Church to speak for the nation.

## **V. Further tests**

To evaluate the core argument that institutional access underpins church influence, I both provide a simple formal model and a statistical test. Churches can invest that authority on behalf of secular governments and political parties. In exchange for the churches' support, governing political parties can offer the churches a share of policymaking authority. This share can take the form of institutional access to the secular state, or partisan coalitions. The former is covert and shares sovereignty between the church and the state—the latter is visible, more uncertain (since parties lose elections) and associates the church with a specific partisan option, which undermines the church's moral authority. Both sides have something the other wants: the church wants to change policies, the state needs church support. The tradeoff is that institutional access is costly for the state (because it shares policymaking authority), but highly desirable for the church. Coalitions are less costly for the state, but far less desirable for the church.

A simple model formalizes this interaction between secular incumbents and religious actors. A crisis occurs in the prehistory of the game, such as a regime collapse, the founding of a new-nation state, or an economic crisis.

The church has  $M$ , moral authority, which we can think of as its ability to mobilize social support on behalf of its goals or other actors. Moral authority is a function of the church's non-political behavior, and its reputation for representing broad, non-partisan interests. Thus, overt partisanship will cost it moral authority.  $M$  is inherited from the past at some value  $M_{t-1} \in [0,1)$ .

The secular actor (which we can think of as an incumbent regime or an individual governing party) enjoys the benefits of office.<sup>7</sup> Without church support, the secular actor remains in office with probability  $p$ . With church support, the secular actor remains in office with probability  $p + (1-p) \delta_A M_{t-1}$  where  $\delta_A$  is the rate at which the Church retains its moral

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<sup>7</sup> Typically, the secular actor prizes both policy and officeholding; rather than disaggregating these into two separate parameters, I collapse them here into one and normalize to 1. The central concern is with the authority over policymaking, and the willingness to make concessions to hold onto it.

authority  $M_{t-1}$ . (Subscript A refers to the retention rate when the Church has institutional access, and X refers to the retention rate when the Church is in a coalition.) This formulation means both that a) the probability of staying in office increases with the moral authority of the church; that is, powerful churches contribute more to the secular actor's political survival, and b) church support does not guarantee the survival of the secular actor.

In times of crisis, the secular actor, such as an autocratic regime or a governing democratically-elected political party, turns to the church for support to stay in office. It offers either institutional access A or an overt coalition X to the church.<sup>8</sup> The church either accepts the offer or rejects it. The entire sequence is shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1 HERE

If the church refuses to cooperate, it retains its level of moral authority, such that  $M_t = M_{t-1}$ . The state remains in power with probability  $p$ .

Accepting X, or a coalition with a secular actor, is costly for the church: both because it signals that the church is allied to a particular political option, and because it ties the church's future to a partisan actor who may or may not be around for much longer. Therefore, when the church accepts X, or a coalition, it loses moral authority,  $M_{t-1}$ , such that it obtains  $X + \delta_X M_{t-1}$ , where  $\delta_X \in (0,1)$ .  $\delta_X$  measures how much moral authority the church retains after accepting X, and this formulation implies that a coalition with the state reduces a church's moral authority but churches with initially greater levels of moral authority retain more of it after a deal. The church will always reject an offer of  $X = 0$ , so that we can interpret that offer as the state not approaching the church ( $\mathcal{W}$ ). The state, in turn, gives up X, but it obtains the church's support,

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<sup>8</sup> Because the state moves first, and cannot offer voter support to the church, the church does not choose to rely on voter demand to produce its preferred outcome. If the church was the first mover, and if the goal was policy rather than sharing authority, the church could a) mobilize voters, b) initiate a partisan coalition, or c) demand institutional access.

so that it gets a payoff of  $p + (1-p) \delta_X M_t - X$ , where  $(1-p) \delta_X M_t$  reflects the church's contribution to the secular actor's survival.

If the church accepts  $\mathcal{A}$ , or institutional access, it gains authority over policy without publicly becoming involved in politics. It obtains the payoff  $\delta_A M_{t+1} + \mathcal{A}$ , where  $\delta_A \in (0,1)$ . Because it does not involve explicit politicking, the church retains its existing moral authority  $M_{t+1}$  at a higher rate than it would in a coalition:  $\delta_A > \delta_X$ . The state again obtains the church's support, which is now more valuable, because the church retains more of its moral authority, but it has to give up  $\mathcal{A}$ , so that its payoff is  $p + (1-p) \delta_A M_t - \mathcal{A}$ . In this model,  $\mathcal{A}$  is an exogenously fixed amount, since the amount of institutional access tended to be similar across the empirical cases.

To solve for the subgame perfect Nash equilibrium of the game, we proceed by backwards induction. The specification of an equilibrium requires a move by the state; what the church would do if offered a coalition; and what the church would do if offered institutional access. The equilibria are derived and specified in the Appendix. To summarize, the game has three possible equilibrium outcomes: the church accepts an offer of institutional access; the church accepts a coalition; and the state does not seek the support of the church. Institutional access is most likely to be offered to churches with high levels of moral authority, when accepting a coalition is very damaging to the moral authority of a church, or when the state is in a deep crisis.

Figure 2 demonstrates the different equilibrium outcomes of the game for a combination of two of important parameters: moral authority and the probability of state survival.<sup>9</sup> The figure demonstrates three key points. First, churches with higher levels of moral authority are more likely to be offered institutional access than a coalition. Second, as the state becomes more independent of the church in securing political survival, and/or as the moral authority of the

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<sup>9</sup> The other parameters are set at .99 for delta A, .2 for p, and .3 for A.

church is less compromised by accepting a coalition, only churches with the highest levels of moral authority are approached with an offer of institutional access. Third, coalitions are most likely to be offered to churches with intermediate levels of moral authority in times of political crises and/or when the moral authority of the church is not going to be compromised too much from accepting a coalition.

Two lines delineate the relevant conditions. The solid line delineates where the state would prefer offering institutional access; to the right the solid line, the state would be better off granting institutional access than offering a coalition or living without church support. The area below the dotted line shows where the state would prefer offering a coalition, such that the church accepts the offer, to offering nothing to the church and foregoing church support. Above the dotted line, by contrast, the state would be better off staying without church support than making a coalition offer that is sufficiently large for the church to accept. As the graph indicates, if the moral authority of the church were to be harmed severely by accepting an offered coalition, the state would be better off staying without church support – compensating the church for its lost moral authority would be too costly and a church with little remaining moral authority would be less useful in securing political survival.

Figure 2 HERE

Together, these two lines create four areas in the graph. As a result, in area 1, the state does not approach the church, since the church lacks sufficiently high moral authority and the state is sufficiently safe without the church's support. In area 2, the state would still prefer offering institutional access, but here a coalition is even worse than no support by the church. The area is relatively small, and does not exist once  $p$  reaches a value of about .7. This makes sense intuitively: at high levels of  $p$ , the state is independent of the church in terms of its political survival and hence is not willing to give up its authority; only churches with very high levels of

moral authority are approached by the state. In area 3 the state prefers offering institutional access to a coalition, which is better than no support by the church. Finally, in area 4, the church does not have sufficiently high levels of moral authority to make an offer of institutional access worthwhile to the state; however, the state is sufficiently insecure in its political survival to offer a coalition to the church.

#### *Statistical Test*

The larger sample provides a snapshot of the accumulated impact of moral authority and institutional access on religious policy influence. Here, I specify several different OLS models on a sample that includes all countries for which public opinion data offers a proxy for moral authority.<sup>10</sup> The models test both independent and conditional impact of moral authority, popular demand for church influence, explicit coalitions between political parties and churches, and institutional access controlling for economic development (log GDP) and the prevalence of Catholicism within a given country. An obvious caveat here is the very small sample size (observations range from 24 to 29.)

The outcome of interest, *policy influence*, is measured with the index of church ability to set the terms of political debates and policy outcomes across five domains (education, divorce, abortion, stem cell research, and same sex marriage). In each of the five policy domains, organized religions can obtain 1 point for influencing rhetoric, and 1 for influencing policy, for a possible total of 10. If secular politicians accept and use language first formulated by identifiable churches (“sanctity of life,” “natural law demands” etc), political rhetoric is coded as 1. If secular politicians adopt the policy recommendations of churches *in response to church demands*, policy

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<sup>10</sup>The dependent variable is an additive index that is bounded (values span from 0 to 10), which usually calls for using ordered probit that allows us to model the latent continuous metric underlying the ordinal responses and to model how the independent variables affect the probability of moving from one ordinal category to the next. However, probit uses up additional parameters and the coefficients are more difficult to interpret, since interpretation requires the comparison of probabilities or odds ratios. Since both OLS and ordered probit regressions generated nearly identical results (the predicted values correlate at .99 (@.000 *p* value), I use OLS.

influence is coded as 1. Here, churches frequently used non-governmental organizations to make their case. If these NGOs are proxies: sponsored and vetted by the churches, policy influence is coded as 1. If they are allies, sharing members and goals with churches but not necessarily strategies, policy influence is coded as 0.

The proxy for *moral authority* is the fusion of national and religious identities, measured the percentage respondents who consider the dominant religion in their country to be important or very important to national identity.<sup>11</sup> While an imperfect proxy, it taps into the historical relationship between churches and their representation of national interests, and the favorable reputation that specific religions gain as a result. Fusion is distinct from religiosity, or religious observance. I measure religious observance by using self-reported church attendance data (a more demanding measure than either belief in God or denominational affiliation, though still subject to positive reporting bias), policy influence with an index of church ability to set the terms of political debates and policy outcomes across five domains, economic development with a log of GDP, and Catholicism by the percentage of population estimated to be Catholic. I include these models with binary measures of explicit political party-church coalitions and institutional access.<sup>12</sup> To measure demand for church influence on politics, I rely on an item from the 1998-2004 World Values Survey: agreement with the statement “religious leaders should influence government.” Other data comes from the 2003 International Social Science

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<sup>11</sup> The ISSP collected this data for Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany (East and West), Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Philippines, Portugal, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, and US.

<sup>12</sup> “Institutional access” is also a binary variable, coded 1 if an organized religion gained formal representation in national legislative bodies, joint episcopal-parliamentary commissions, ran a ministry or a ministerial sector funded from the state budget, was consulted formally during policymaking, or exercised vetting powers over national appointments, and 0 otherwise. Both “coalitions” and “institutional access” were coded using contemporary press and scholarly historical accounts. Neither fusion nor institutional access correlate particularly strongly with coalitions: at -.07 and -.039, and with very high *p* values (.72 and .84, respectively) that suggest we cannot reject the null hypothesis that fusion, institutional access, and coalitions are simply related by chance. Fusion and institutional access correlate strongly at .54 (.003 *p* value), a substantively and statistically much stronger relationship.

Programme (fusion and demand for religious influence), 2000 Penn World Tables (GDP), and the 2006 CIA Factbook (prevalence of Catholicism).

To summarize the results, moral authority and the institutional access it produces are consistently associated with policy influence, even taking into account economic development, prevalence of Catholicism, church-party coalitions, and popular demand for church influence. Further, it is unlikely that we have the causation reversed, and that influence on politics promotes moral authority or the fusion of national and religious identities: both because fusion/authority precede influence on politics, by decades and sometimes by centuries, and because if vast popular majorities object to church influence on politics, it is unlikely that it would strengthen the church's standing in society, or increase its popular moral authority.

How do the competing explanations far against each other? The regression results are consistent with the proposition that *institutional access* is a powerful form of policy influence. The “institutional access” variable is both substantively and statistically significant across the different specifications, as the regression results in Table 2 show. In Model 1, fusion, attendance, and institutional access are all strong correlates to policy influence. Strikingly, once we include all independent variables in Model 3, both fusion and attendance lose their statistical and substantive significance, and institutional access emerges as the critical correlate of policy influence.

#### TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

The impact of institutional access remains even after controlling for numerous likely confounders, such as religiosity, economic development, popular demand for policies, and denominational profiles. The conditional impact of institutional access on fusion is estimated in Model 2. Since interaction term coefficients are difficult to interpret with coefficients alone I graph the marginal impact in Figure 3.

## FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

*Institutional access* has a positive marginal impact on policy influence across all levels of fusion. This conditional impact of institutional access, becomes statistically significant at a point when roughly 30% of poll respondents state that the dominant religious tradition is an important part of national identity. In short, for a range of values, the institutional access obtained by churches, such as legislative consultations, membership in joint parliamentary commissions, vetting of public officials, lobbying channels, and so on, has a positive marginal impact on the churches' ability to obtain their policy preferences—and increasingly so. That said, an important caveat here is that since there are relatively few observations at the very lowest and very highest levels of national-religious fusion, the larger confidence interval in those areas may reflect lack of observations rather than a substantively weaker relationship.

*Coalitions between churches and political parties* do not appear to correlate to church policy influence, either in a simple additive model or when interacted with fusion. The additive Model 5 shows that coalitions do not correlate to influence, and much as with demand. Even a stripped-down model that only includes coalitions and the controls (not shown) similarly fails to show either substantive or statistical significance. Further, the impact of coalitions does not appear to be conditional on fusion, as Model 6 suggests (the same results hold if coalitions are interacted with religiosity). Once again, for greater ease of interpretation, I graph the results. Figure 4 shows that coalitions have no impact at any level of religiosity: the confidence interval always includes 0.

## FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE

The *demand for religious influence on government* does not appear to be a determinant of church influence, as in Models 3 and 4. These results are robust to using both WVS survey questions, and ISSP survey questions that explicitly ask respondents to agree that organized religions

should influence votes and incumbents. Even in bare-bones models (not presented here) that included popular demand for influence and the controls (but excluded fusion), demand is neither substantively nor statistically significant: nor did including religiosity change the picture. Even when given the most latitude to do so, demand for religious influence has no bearing on actual church influence on politics. If the other independent variables are included, as in Model 3, demand continues to be very poorly correlated to church influence.

TABLE 4 HERE

Finally, *religiosity*, as measured by attendance at religious services, is a significant predictor of policy influence. In nearly every specification, attendance is correlated to religious influence on politics. This makes sense in light of the idea that moral authority is predicated on religiosity: a church cannot claim to represent the nation if few people are its members or faithful. It loses both substantive and statistical significance once we include institutional access in the models, and even more so once other independent variables are included. Tables 4 and 5 the models where the impact of religious attendance is statistically and substantively significant.

TABLE 5 HERE

Yet even once we take attendance into account, fusion of national and religious identities has an independent impact on policy outcomes. Even more importantly, once we include measures of institutional access, both attendance and fusion lose some of the substantive and statistical strength of their association to policy influence. This suggests that the impact of fusion and religiosity is *mediated* through institutional access as the critical channel of influence. However, the strong conditional relationships discussed earlier suggests that institutional access *moderates* the relationship between fusion and policy influence: in other words, changes the slope of the fusion-policy influence relationship.

That said, since religiosity underpins *all* forms of religious influence on politics (whether through coalitions, demand, or institutional access), the effect of fusion may be conditional on religiosity. A secular society may be less likely to respond to church claims to represent its interests, and is less likely to be seen as credibly doing so by secular politicians. In other words, religiosity can modify the impact of the fusion of religious and national identities on public policy. Therefore, I interact fusion with religious observance in Model 7, and obtain the marginal effects of fusion on the churches' policy influence, conditional on religious observance.

The main finding here is that fusion matters more where fewer people go to church. At higher levels of church attendance, the impact of fusion is no longer conditional on religiosity. The marginal effect of fusion is strongest at *lower* levels of church attendance. While fusion has an unconditional impact on policy influence in nearly all specifications, its conditional impact is limited to those cases where religiosity is above roughly 30%. This is consistent with the notion that at high levels of religiosity, politicians might be anxious about a religious electorate's reaction and formulate policies in anticipation of such backlash. The results show in Table 4 show that the interaction term between observance and fusion has a very slight substantive effect, but this obscures the changing impact of fusion across different levels of religiosity. Figure 5 shows that marginal effects of fusion conditional on religiosity are positive but become statistically insignificant at higher levels of religiosity, beyond around 30% weekly church attendance. This is not the result of a few powerful outliers: 45% of the observations are at these lower levels of religious attendance<sup>13</sup> where fusion has a marginal positive effect.

FIGURE 5 ABOUT HERE

## VI. Conclusion

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<sup>13</sup> The "attendance" variable ranges from 9% to 86% of respondents attending services more than once a month. The mean is 37% and the median is 32%.

As the case studies and the broader sample both show, moral authority underlies the political influence of churches. At higher levels, this moral authority makes institutional access possible—at lower levels, it facilitates explicit coalitions with political parties. Secular actors, whether political parties or governments, concede some of their policymaking authority in exchange for the support of churches that allows these secular actors to survive politically. Moreover, partisan coalitions explicitly rely on competitive political parties: institutional access does not, because it is possible in the absence of party competition, as in the case of the Polish communist regime. From this perspective, coalitions with political parties are neither the predominant nor the most effective way for churches to obtain policy influence.

Partisan coalitions undermine the churches' moral authority as national representatives, and moral authority can also crumble when churches do not live up to representing the nation in other ways (for example, when the definition of the nation itself changes, as it did in Quebec in the 1960s). But precisely because religiosity is distinct from moral authority, necessary but not sufficient for moral authority, even open politicking by the church need not affect popular piety, church attendance, or individual behavior (Zubrzycki 2006, 222.) Such loss of moral authority, however, has an impact on the churches' ability to influence policy: it may not mean policy reversals, but it greatly limits future policy gains. The institutional access can continue, but the influence it channels will decrease. Moral authority thus both establishes institutional access—and then sustains policy influence.

While this analysis is limited to Catholic monopolies, the relevance of moral authority is not. The difference is that in religiously diverse societies, no one denomination can claim the mantle of national representative—but religion itself can become important to both national identity and to policy outcomes, as has been the case in the United States, where a broad “Judeo-

Christian ethic” supplanted a Protestant identity in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and was then used by both religious entrepreneurs and politicians to justify public policy.

Three other sets of implications follow. First, the source of moral authority in the fusion of national and religious identities leads us to re-examine the importance of nationalism as a legitimating force—those churches that took the side of the nation in a conflict against a colonial domination or an alien regime could draw upon moral authority. The churches’ earlier actions (and the careful interpretation and inculcation of these histories), often in face of repression and persecution, legitimated their self-representations as the agents of national interests. Scholars of nationalism, with notable exceptions (Smith, Juergensmeyer), have tended to overlook how religion and national identity can symbiotically draw on each other and create mutually strengthening mechanisms. For that reason as well, a second implication is that the “nation-state” comprises two distinct identities and loyalties, which may very well stand in opposition—and the churches that choose the side of the nation, as in Poland, Lithuania, Croatia, the Philippines, or in Ireland, gain far greater secular influence than those that choose the side of the state, as in Italy, France, or the Czech Lands.

Finally if we take churches seriously as interest groups (Warner 2000), then one implication is that political boiler rooms—informal consultations, covert legislative proposals, and hidden vetting of officials—offer a far more powerful influence on democratic policymaking than ballot boxes—electoral mobilization and support of political parties. They do so not only because they offer direct access—but because they allow a covert influence that is far less costly to the image of the churches as disinterested, nonpartisan, advocates of a divinely inspired moral order that serves the national interest.

**Table 1. Variation in Church Influence in Predominantly Christian Democracies<sup>14</sup> on Policy Across Five Policy Domains since 1900: Education, Divorce, Abortion, Same-Sex Marriage and Stem Cell Technology.**

Country	Influence	% rejecting religious influence on policy	Level of fusion
Ireland	9	72	58
Philippines	9	76	84
Chile	8	68	54
Austria	7	80	53
Poland	7	81	75
United States	7	51	66
Italy	5	68	52
Slovakia	4	71	50
Croatia	4	79	n/a
Spain	4	73	44
W. Germany	4	71	37
Australia	3	74	37
Bulgaria	3	79	76
Hungary	3	70	43
Portugal	3	89	66
Switzerland	3	69	39
Latvia	2	72	23
Canada	1	67	54
Denmark	1	84	33
Finland	1	58	23
New Zealand	1	73	38
Slovenia	1	73	32
UK	1	65	35
Czech Rep.	0	74	29
E. Germany	0	73	13
France	0	82	17
Netherlands	0	60	13
Norway	0	64	20
Sweden	0	52	17

Influence: 1 for each policy domain in which the churches either set the terms of the policy debate or explicitly obtained their preferred outcome since 1945. Range: 0 to 10. Mean: 3.40. Standard deviation: 2.97.

% Rejecting Influence: World Values Survey, 1995-2008, % responding that religious organizations should NOT influence politics. 2003 ISSP data for Australia, New Zealand, and Switzerland: % responding “religious organizations should NOT influence government.”

Level of fusion: % responding that it is “Important to be [Dominant Religion] to be [National Identity].” 2003 ISSP data.

<sup>14</sup> Countries for which public opinion poll data is available in the International Social Science Survey Program. Other European countries that were not included in the survey: Belgium, Estonia, Greece, Iceland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, and Romania.

**Table 2 Church Influence on Policy Debates and Outcomes:**

	<b>Ireland</b>	<b>Italy</b>	<b>Poland</b>	<b>Slovakia</b>
Abortion restricted? <sup>15</sup>	2	0	2	0
Divorce restricted?	2	0	0	0
Religion in schools? <sup>16</sup>	2	2	2	2
Stem cell research restricted?	2	2	1	1
Same sex marriage prevented?	1	1	2	1
<b>Summary score:</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>

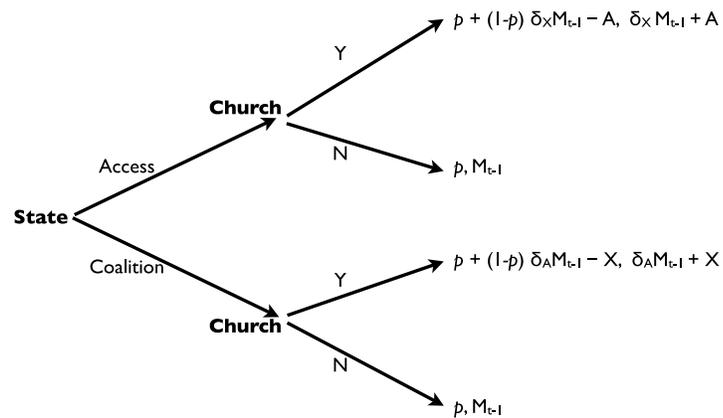
**Scoring: 1 point for framing debate, 1 point for obtaining policy outcome, total 10 points possible.**

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<sup>15</sup> Abortion is defined as “unrestricted” if abortion is available freely up to 12 weeks of pregnancy. It is “restricted” if access is more constrained, either at the national level or across sub-national units.

<sup>16</sup> Either the state funds religious schools, or mandatory religion/ ethics classes are taught in public schools.

**Figure 1. Model of Church-State Interactions**



M: moral authority of Church

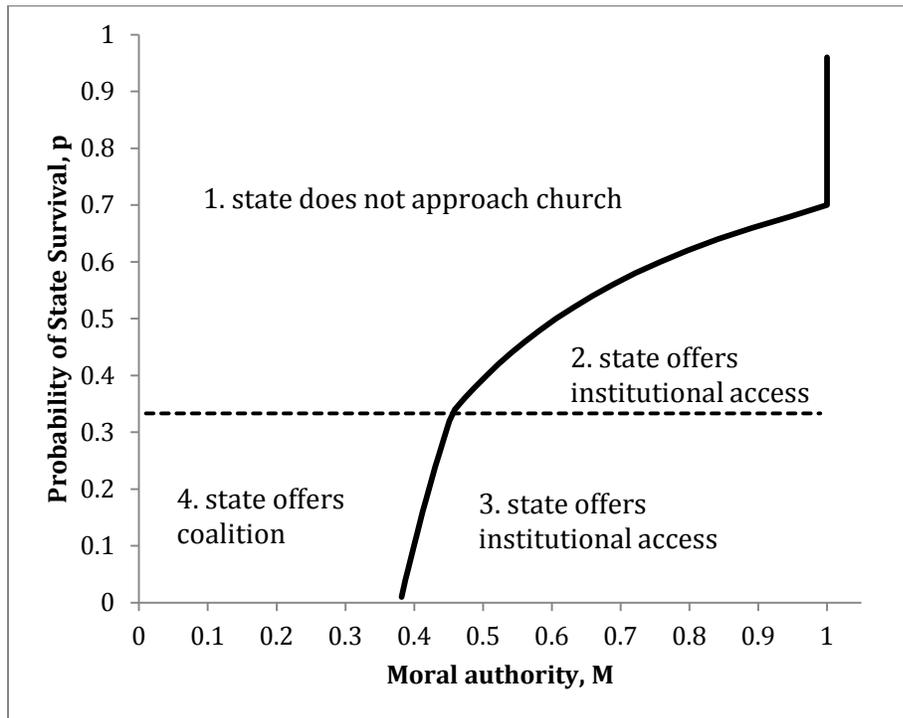
X: coalition offer made by secular state to church, concession made by state

A: institutional access given by a secular state to church, concession made by state

$p$ : probability of secular actor remaining in office *without* church support

$\delta_X$  and  $\delta_A$ : retention rate of M for Church if it enters into coalition or obtains institutional access, respectively.

**Figure 2: Equilibrium outcomes as function of moral authority and state survival**



**Table 3. Institutional Access: OLS Regressions, Policy Influence as DV**

	Model 1: Institutional	Model 2: Inst. Access	Model 3: Fusion   All
additive			
	Access		
fusion	0.046* (0.02) [0.05]	0.045* (0.02) [0.06]	0.029 (0.03) [0.27]
attend	0.053** (0.02) [0.04]	0.045* (0.03) [0.10]	0.042 (0.03) [0.15]
logGDP	-0.378 (0.56) [0.51]	-0.214 (0.60) [0.72]	-0.881 (0.68) [0.21]
Catholic	0.009 (0.01) [0.39]	0.011 (0.01) [0.30]	0.013 (0.01) [0.34]

institution	1.442** (0.66) [0.04]	0.721 (1.07) [0.51]	2.424** (0.83) [0.01]
institution*fusion		0.018 (0.02) [0.40]	
demand			-0.015 (0.04) [0.71]
coalition			-0.593 (0.63) [0.36]
constant	2.476 (5.92) [0.68]	0.991 (6.20) [0.87]	9.218 (8.17) [0.28]

---

Obs	28	28	24
R-sqr	0.84	0.85	0.87

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\* p<0.10, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01  
(standard errors in parentheses)  
[p levels in brackets]

**Table 4. Demand and Coalitions: OLS Regressions, Policy Influence as DV**

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	Model 4: Demand	Model 5: Coalition	Model 6:
Coalition Religion			
fusion	0.052* (0.03) [0.07]	0.048* (0.02) [0.06]	0.057* (0.03) [0.05]
attend	0.069** (0.03) [0.04]	0.077*** (0.03) [0.01]	0.074** (0.03) [0.01]
logGDP	-0.461 (0.69) [0.51]	-0.286 (0.65) [0.67]	-0.227 (0.67) [0.74]
Catholic	0.008 (0.01) [0.58]	0.003 (0.01) [0.83]	0.004 (0.01) [0.76]

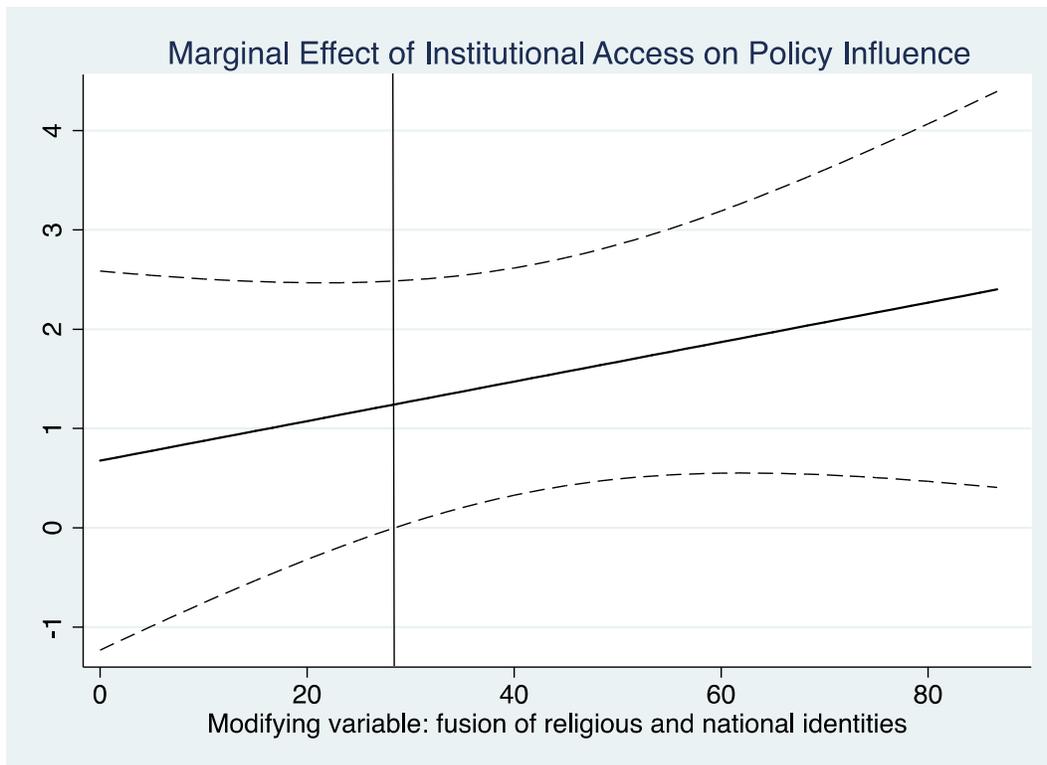
demand	-0.034 (0.04) [0.43]		
coalition		0.066 (0.62) [0.92]	0.985 (1.44) [0.50]
coalition*fusion			-0.022 (0.03) [0.49]
constant	5.377 (7.99) [0.51]	1.423 (6.94) [0.84]	0.515 (7.13) [0.94]
-----			
Obs	25	29	29
R-sqr	0.79	0.79	0.80
-----			
* p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01			

**Table 5. The impact of Religiosity: OLS Regressions, Policy Influence as DV.**

	Model 6: Fusion	Model 7: Fusion   Religious Attendance
-----		
fusion	0.048* (0.02) [0.05]	0.063** (0.03) [0.02]
attend	0.077*** (0.03) [0.01]	0.152** (0.06) [0.03]
logGDP	-0.309 (0.60) [0.61]	-0.697 (0.67) [0.31]
Catholic	0.003 (0.01) [0.80]	-0.002 (0.01) [0.87]
attend*fusion		-0.001 (0.00) [0.21]
constant	1.687	4.401

	(6.35)	(6.62)
	[0.79]	[0.51]
-----		
Obs	29	29
R-sqr	0.79	0.81
-----		
* p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01		

**Figure 3. Marginal effect of Institutional Access on Policy Influence**



**Figure 4. Marginal effect of Coalitions on Policy Influence**

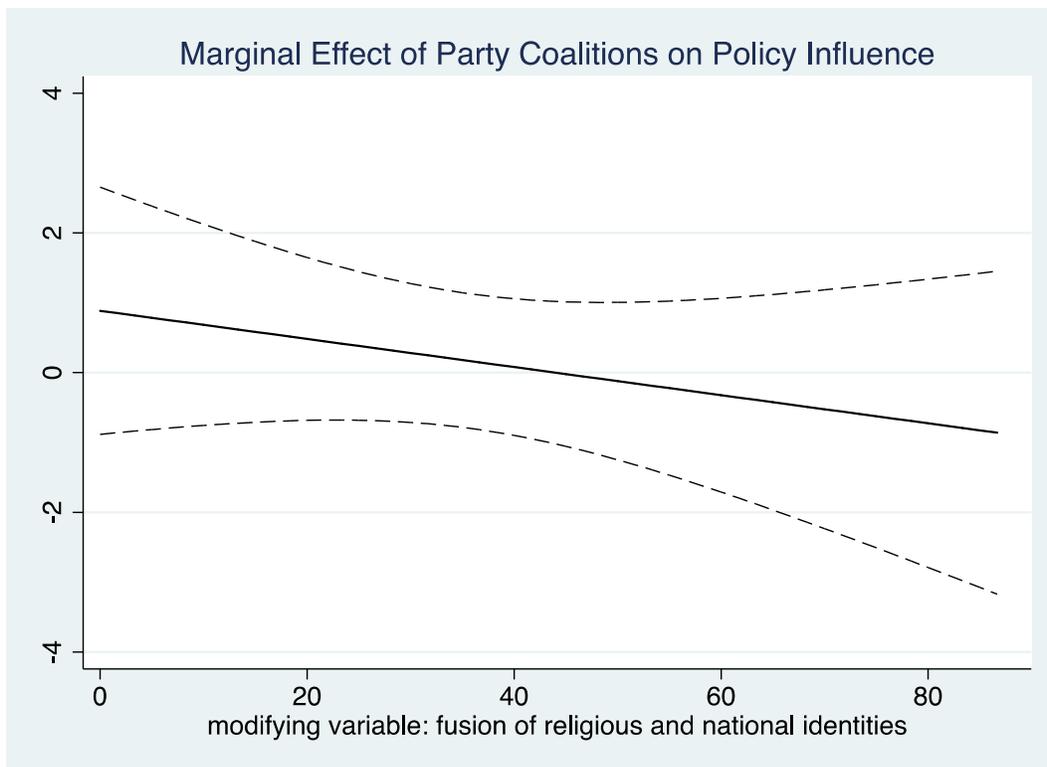
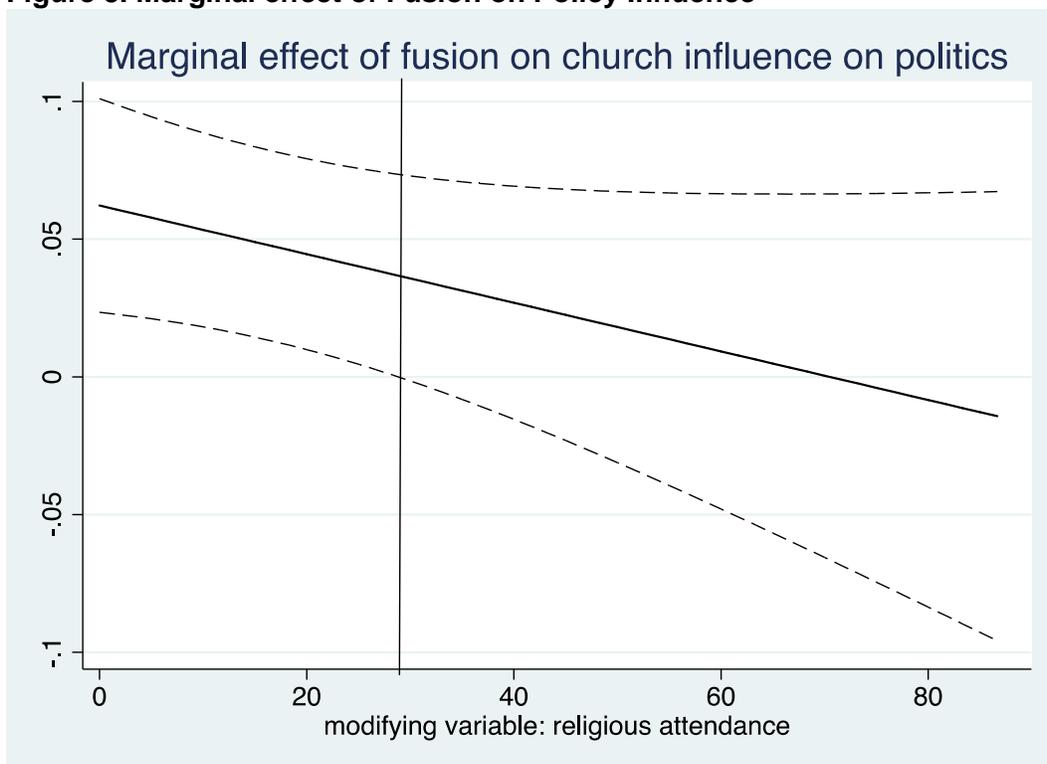


Figure 5. Marginal effect of Fusion on Policy Influence



## Appendix: Equilibria and Derivations

The church will accept an offer  $X > 0$  if and only if the offer is sufficient to offset the church's loss of moral authority, such that  $X \geq (1 - \delta_X) M_{t-1} \equiv X'$ . The state, in turn, prefers offering  $X'$  and having the church accept to offering  $X = 0$  and having the church reject if:

(Condition 1)

$$p + (1-p) \delta_X M_{t-1} - X' \geq p \text{ (the coalition will increase the likelihood of survival for the state).}$$

Substituting  $X' = (1 - \delta_X) M_{t-1}$  yields

$(1-p) \delta_X M_{t-1} - (1 - \delta_X) M_{t-1} \geq 0$  (the church's contribution to state survival is greater than the loss of moral authority it suffers), which reduces to

$$(2-p) \delta_X \geq 1$$

In contrast, if  $(2-p) \delta_X < 1$ , the state would rather offer the church  $X = 0$  and live without church support, rather than making an offer sufficiently large to gain the church's acceptance. Thus, we have two scenarios:

I. If  $(2-p) \delta_X \geq 1$ , the state has the choice between offering  $A$  (which the church accepts) and  $X'$  (which the church also accepts).

II. If  $(2-p) \delta_X < 1$ , the state has the choice between offering  $A$  (which the church always accepts) and  $X = 0$ , which the church rejects.

I. In scenario I,  $(2-p) \delta_X \geq 1$ , the probability of state survival  $p$  without church support is sufficiently small, and  $\delta_X$  the church's retention of its moral authority in a coalition, is sufficiently large. In this scenario, the state prefers offering  $A$  to  $X'$  (and in turn offering  $i'$  to no church support) iff:

(Condition 2)

$$p + (1-p) \delta_A M_{t-1} - A \geq p + (1-p) \delta_X M_{t-1} - X' \text{ (the payoff for the state for the church accepting access is greater than for the church accepting a coalition)}$$

and

$(1-p) (\delta_A - \delta_X) M_{t-1} + (1 - \delta_X) M_{t-1}$  (the difference in the church's retention of moral authority between access and coalitions *and* the loss of the church's moral authority under a coalition are equal or greater than the size of the institutional access),

or, put differently:

$$M_{t-1} \geq \frac{A}{(1-p)(\delta_A - \delta_X) + (1 - \delta_X)}$$

If both conditions (1) and (2) hold, the state offers institutional access to the church in the subgame perfect Nash equilibrium; the church accepts institutional access.<sup>17</sup>

If condition (1) holds and (2) fails, the state offers a coalition  $X'$  to the church in the subgame perfect Nash equilibrium; the church accepts any offer  $X \geq X'$  and would accept institutional access if offered (which does not happen.)

Therefore, churches with larger levels of moral authority will be offered institutional access; while churches with lower levels of moral authority will be offered a coalition, as condition (2) shows, and as long as (1) holds. The size of coalition benefit  $X'$  increases as the moral authority of the church does.

II. If condition (1) fails, so that  $(2-p)\delta_X < 1$ , the state would be better off offering  $X = 0$  than offering  $X'$  and having the church accept. The state thus has to weigh the option of offering institutional access against living without church support. The state prefers offering institutional access iff:

(Condition 3)

$p + (1-p)\delta_A M_{t-1} - A > p$  (the value of church institutional access to the state is higher than its probability of survival without church support)  
or, put differently:

$$M_{t-1} \geq \frac{A}{(1-p)\delta_A}$$

The state offers institutional access to the church, and the church accepts, so that the equilibrium outcome in this case is the same as above. When condition (1) fails and condition (3) holds, the state offers institutional access to the church; the church accepts and rejects any offer  $X < X'$  (which in equilibrium does not happen.) If the church's moral authority is particularly compromised by forming a coalition with the state (in other words, when condition (1) fails, condition (2) is easier to satisfy than (3)), then relatively low levels of moral authority are sufficient for a church to gain institutional access. Finally, when both condition (1) and (3) fail, the state offers  $X = 0$ , the church rejects any offer  $X < X'$ , and would accept any offer of institutional access, which does not happen in this equilibrium. In this case, the state is neither sufficiently threatened to seek church support nor is the church's moral authority sufficiently large or resilient to make a coalition attractive.

We can summarize the discussion so far as follows:

**Claim 1.** The following is a unique subgame perfect Nash equilibrium when  $A \geq (1 - \delta_A) M_{t-1}$  (when the size of institutional access exceeds the church's loss of moral authority by obtaining such access).

A. If  $(2-p)\delta_X \geq 1$ :

• If  $M_{t-1} \geq \frac{A}{(1-p)(\delta_A - \delta_X) + (1 - \delta_X)}$ , the state offers  $A$ . The church accepts  $A$ , as well as any offer  $X \geq (1 - \delta_X) M_{t-1}$ , and rejects any other  $X$ . *The outcome is that the state offers  $A$  and the church accepts.*

<sup>17</sup> And the church would accept any offer  $X \geq X'$ , which does not happen.

• If  $M_{t-1} < \frac{A}{(1-p)(\delta_A - \delta_X) + (1 - \delta_X)}$ , the state offers  $X' = (1 - \delta_X) M_{t-1}$ . The church accepts  $A$  as well as any offer  $X \geq (1 - \delta_X) M_{t-1}$ , and rejects any other  $X$ . The outcome is that the state offers  $X'$  and the church accepts.

B. If  $(2-p) \delta_X < 1$ :

• If  $M_{t-1} \geq \frac{A}{(1-p)\delta_A}$ , the state offers  $A$ . The church accepts  $A$  as well as any offer  $X \geq (1 - \delta_X) M_{t-1}$ , and rejects any other  $X$ . The outcome is that the state offers  $A$  and the church accepts.

• If  $M_{t-1} < \frac{A}{(1-p)\delta_A}$ , the state offers  $X = 0$ . The church accepts  $A$  as well as any offer  $X \geq (1 - \delta_X) M_{t-1}$ , and rejects any other  $X$ . The outcome is that the state offers nothing to the church and the church rejects.

It can also be shown that all of these combinations of conditions are feasible, in that there are parameter values satisfying all relevant combinations of conditions.

The equilibrium has a number of implications. First, churches with sufficiently high moral authority,  $M_{t-1} \geq \frac{A}{(1-p)\delta_A}$ , will be offered institutional access. If the church's loss of moral authority after  $X$  is sufficiently large, the state never offers a coalition. If the church's loss of moral authority after accepting  $X$  is not too large, the state will offer a coalition to churches with relatively low levels of moral authority. Churches with higher levels of moral authority will obtain larger concessions from coalitions.

If the church loses a great deal of moral authority after accepting a coalition, churches with relatively modest levels of moral authority will be offered institutional access as well: the condition on  $M_{t-1}$  for the state to offer institutional access in the first scenario,  $(2-p) \delta_X \geq 1$ , is more restrictive than in the second,  $(2-p) \delta_X < 1$ . In this case, since a coalition comes at a very high cost to the church, and compensating for this loss would be too costly for the state, the state can effectively only offer institutional access. Churches might benefit if their moral authority would be compromised severely by accepting a coalition, since it may help them secure institutional access. For instance, if moral authority is built on the notion of non-interference with day-to-day politics, coalitions would be especially costly and parties more likely to gain institutional access. Churches whose moral authority would not suffer from a coalition, in contrast, may not be able to obtain institutional access from the state. One implication is that the origins of a church's moral authority may affect whether the church can enter a coalition or gain institutional access.

If the state is highly vulnerable ( $p$  is low), the state will offer institutional access to churches with sufficiently high levels of moral authority and a coalition to churches with lower levels of moral authority (provided that that the church retains enough moral authority.) In contrast, if the state's survival does not depend on support by the church ( $p$  is large, close to 1), the state will offer neither a coalition nor institutional access.

If the state values institutional access highly, only churches with high levels of moral authority will be offered institutional access. Moreover, the larger the loss of moral authority from accepting  $X$  and the smaller the loss of moral authority from accepting  $A$ , the more likely it is that the church is offered  $A$ . The threshold of moral authority above which a church gains institutional access increases in the value of the access to the state ( $A$  and in  $\delta_X$ ), but decreases in  $\delta_A$ . The threshold is largest when  $\delta_X$  and  $\delta_A$  approach each other.

Thus far, institutional access has been assumed to be sufficiently valuable for the church to accept it if offered: this implied that  $\mathcal{A} \geq (1 - \delta_A) M_{t,t}$ . While this is a reasonable assumption—institutional access is valuable and does not compromise greatly the moral authority of the churches—for the sake of completeness the following describes the subgame perfect Nash equilibrium if  $\mathcal{A} < (1 - \delta_A) M_{t,t}$ .

**Claim 2.** When  $\mathcal{A} < (1 - \delta_A) M_{t,t}$ , the unique subgame perfect Nash equilibrium is the following: if  $(2-p) \delta_X \geq 1$ , the state offers  $X' = (1 - \delta_A) M_{t,t}$ . The church accepts any offer  $X \geq X'$ , and rejects any offer  $X < X'$  as well as  $\mathcal{A}$ . If  $(2-p) \delta_X < 1$ , the state offers  $X = 0$ . The church rejects any offer  $X < X'$  as well as  $\mathcal{A}$ .

Thus, if institutional access is sufficiently unattractive to the church, the state will offer a coalition only if the state is highly vulnerable ( $p$  is small) and the church retains sufficiently high levels of moral authority after accepting a coalition.

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