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The Political Accommodation of Islam in Portugal and Ireland: Testing the 'Convergence Thesis' in Two Peripheral Cases

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Resumen

Este artículo compara la acomodación política del Islam en Portugal y en la República de Irlanda desde el término de los años 50. Mucha literatura tiene como foco los sospechos usuales, como Alemania, Francia, Holanda y Gran Bretaña, contextos con comunidades musulmanas de tamaño considerable y establecimiento de considerable duración. Por su turno, no se conoce mucho sobre la institucionalización del Islam en Estados en los cuales la presencia de musulmanes es más reciente y sigue siendo relativamente pequeña. Portugal e Irlanda son dos Estados periféricos, de pequeña dimensión y de matriz católica. Sus populaciones musulmanas representan debajo de 1% de la población total. Los dos casos providencian un teste único a la tesis de Jonathan Laurence sobre la convergencia de los procesos de institucionalización en la Europa Occidental en contextos de diferenciación histórica, política e institucional. Nuestras conclusiones apuntan al hecho que Portugal converge conforme la sugerencia de Laurence, Irlanda no es un caso de convergencia. Lo explicamos recurriendo a dos puntos. Las comunidades musulmanas en Irlanda tienen niveles de diversidad intracomunitaria mayores y eso explica la mayor dificultad de movilización. La posición de la Iglesia Católica Romana es el segundo punto. En Portugal, ese agente institucionalizado tiene un papel de *gatekeeper* y intermediación mas fuerte que su homólogo irlandés. El proceso de cooptación del Islam es una ilustración. En Irlanda, la Iglesia Católica tiene un papel más ambiguo y no tiene las capacidades ni los recursos para operar como su homóloga portuguesa en el contexto de la institucionalización del Islam en Irlanda.

Palabras clave: Islam, institucionalización, política, Portugal, religión

Abstract

This paper compares the political accommodation of Islam in Portugal and Ireland since the end of the 1950s. Whereas much of the literature focuses on ´usual suspects´ such as France, Britain, Germany or the Netherlands, states with long-established and sizeable Islamic communities, we know relatively little about

the institutionalization of Islam in states where the presence of Muslims is more recent and still relatively marginal. In this paper we focus on Portugal and Ireland: two small, predominantly Catholic states in Europe's periphery with a relatively recent Muslim immigrant experience and an Islamic community representing less than one percent of the population. These two 'peripheral' cases provide a unique test of Laurence's observation that in Western Europe the institutionalization of Islam has followed remarkably similar pathways, despite strong historical, institutional and cultural differences. We find that while Portugal largely complies with the expectation that Islam has been institutionalized in Western Europe through corporatist arrangements, the Irish case provides little evidence of state-sponsored institutionalization of Islam. Our explanation for this difference is twofold. First, the Muslim community in Ireland is much more diverse than its Portuguese counterpart and, hence, by default more difficult to organize. Second, our analysis also points at the historical role of the Catholic Church in both societies: whereas in the Portuguese case the Church has always represented the status quo and thus had a clear interest in coopting new religious groups in existing institutional frameworks, in Ireland the relation between the Church and the status quo has historically been more ambiguous due to the question of Irish nationalism.

Keywords: Islam, institutionalization, politics, Portugal, religion

Introduction

Islam is now the largest minority religious community in Europe. Since 1945, recurring migration waves, driven by economic needs and political reconfigurations, have increased the diversity of European social and religious environments. As migrants and State institutions faced quandaries and challenge in the dialogic issue of accommodation, perhaps no other religious community faced as significant a challenge as the Muslim community, here understood as a compound set of diverse sub-communities, segmented around religious orientation and national, ethnic and class belonging (i.e. Sinno 2008; Nielsen 1992, 2009; Maréchal 2003; Cesari 2005). While it has been long and successfully argued that this challenge is not the function of an "Islamic incompatibility" with democratic governance (Cesari 2005, 2006, 2007; Nielsen et al. 2009; Ramadan 2005), it is also apparent that broader discussions regarding religious diversity have commonly coincided with arguments over policies pertaining directly to Islamic practices and the lives of Muslim residents in European countries. Decisions in Belgium and France on the prohibition of wearing Islamic garments – especially the *burqa* and the *niqab* - illustrate the salience of Islam in public discourse and policy on religious diversity (Fokkas et al 2007; Kepel 2006; Laurence 2006, 2009).

Secularization, here understood as the overarching process of reconfiguration of religion which erodes boundaries between the public and private realm (Casanova 1994; Asad

2003), became increasingly prominent in European polities – thus posing relevant challenges to existing institutional structures for the management of religion, traditionally arranged towards and focused on historically established patterns of religious affiliation. As the emergence of religious diversity – inextricably linked to migration fluxes – and secularization went on concomitantly, those structures became locii of discussion, because their importance for policymaking was revealed as much higher than was widely acknowledged (Soper and Fetzer 2004, 2007; Minkenberg 2007; Soper and Monsma 1998; Madeley and Eniyedi 2003). Subsequently, a growing number of scholarly accounts discuss and point to the importance of these institutional legacies, going so far as to state that these historically-inherited, path-dependent arrangements are one of the key – if not *the* key – explanatory factors of policy decisions concerning religious diversity in general and Islam in particular (Fetzer and Soper 2004, 2007; Tatari 2009). The onset of the 1990s became fertile ground for such arguments, as scholars tried to offer alternative explanations to culturalist accounts of an incoming *clash of civilizations*: the Rushdie affair and the first *hijab* controversy in France marked the start of a discussion which had its high point in the threefold New York/Madrid/London terrorist attacks, over the course of less than a decade. An immense growth in the public exposure of Islam followed, sometimes – but with wide geographic variation - infused with populist-xenophobic themes. At the same time, the literature on Islam in Europe, which widened its scope – both geographically and thematically, grew.

We propose to compare two countries which nicely supplement the literature, filling some gaps and adding several insights to existing knowledge on the accommodation of Islam in Europe. Portugal and the Republic of Ireland, are two small historically Catholic countries where the pattern of Church-State relations is the single historically inherited institutional structures for the management of religion. We perform dual-process tracing in a paired comparison (Tarrow 2010) and employ the "structured, focused" comparison approach suggested by Bennett and George (2006). Our emphasis is on the process, rather than on explaining variation, but is also the case that we are testing the argument of, among others, Soper and Fetzer (2005, 2007), who assert that specific stances and policies towards accommodation emerge in specific countries due to institutional legacies of "models of Church-State relations". Portugal and Ireland differ fundamentally at this level. We construct a qualitative account of the process connecting the explanatory factor and the outcome – substantive and comparative differences in level/status of accommodation of Islam.

Portugal and Ireland are eligible for a paired comparison research design for several reasons. The pairing of these cases in not new: as so-called "cohesion" countries, there have been some efforts, from several disciplinary perspectives, to look at Portugal and Ireland from a comparative perspective. Demographically, these are recently urbanized small countries with relatively small Islamic communities of comparable size: around 0.5% of the population in Ireland and 0.4% of the population in Portugal (Laurence 2011: 3). As discussed below, these are countries where a major reversal in migration

patterns has occurred from the 1990s on. Portugal and Ireland are highly centralized unitary liberal democracies (Lijphart 1999), increasingly bipartisan (Jalali 2007; Mair and Weeks 2004) and Europeanized and all political parties holding office since the 1970s have kept strategically close to religion and the Catholic Church Interest group structures are similar (Mair 2004; Siaroff 1997). In addition, church attendance and subjective religiosity levels, as well as the role of the Catholic Church, are proximate. Finally, and following the discussion started above, the preeminence of a single confession, Catholicism is key to our research design.

Having this in mind, how do we locate and insert institutional arrangements, namely the model of State-religion relations, which configures the political opportunity structure for the accommodation of Islam, into this study? Policy responses towards Islam are always made within specific sets and/or subsets of institutional structures. Since Islam is still largely construed as a religious confession, although the presence of Islam in contemporary Europe is interpreted as a consequence of migration fluxes (Nielsen 2004) and is increasingly ethnicized (Soysal 1997), there is good reason to presume that existing institutions which mediate State-religion relations will also apply in State-Islam relations. This influences visible policy effects dealing with accommodation. Moreover, it is expected that existing political practice, namely corporatist procedures to assign legitimacy to social agents and representatives, will exert an important influence in the process. We aim therefore to test the following working hypothesis: the legacy of institutionalized Church-State relations in a country is a key factor in explaining the accommodation of Islam because it is historically the most appropriate institutional repertoire for the management of religion. This is more likely in confessionally homogeneous countries, such as Portugal and Ireland: Catholicism is linked to national identities (Ferriter 2005; Halikiopolou 2011; Inglis 1998, 2007; Mattoso 1995; Whyte 1970), albeit through different historical conditions; moreover, the Catholic Church has been one of the most important interest group in Portuguese and Irish societies well into the 21st century.

Religious diversity and governance challenges

Religious diversity and its emergence, insofar as they are construed as governance challenges, is mediated and interpreted through institutions which will define both the outer limits of policy responses and the set of possible substantive policy responses. Although a number of cases show that new institutions, namely public agencies or State-sponsored bodies (Laurence 2009, 2011) may emerge as a result of these structural changes, they always occur within limits defined by existing structures. Differences in flexibility and adaptability shown by those institutions explain, to a significant extent, the present situation of Islam in Portugal and the Republic of Ireland. The underlying assumption here is that preexisting policies and institutions largely determine processes and outcomes (Pierson 2000, 2004); it is nevertheless important to

acknowledge the importance of agency by Muslim communities and representatives, as Tatari (2009) and other scholars have noted (Nielsen 1992; Tiesler 2000, 2005; Vakil 2004). With this in mind, we follow the structural argument advanced by Fetzer and Soper (2004, 2007), although we postulate a weaker version. We recognize limits to the strong version of "models of Church-State relations" as the most important factor in explaining the process of accommodation followed a specific path and advance a causal argument for the linkages between structure of present arrangements for provision of religious needs and representation of Muslims within the State. Moreover, and importantly, it is necessary to emphasize the importance of national Roman Catholic Churches and the role of corporatist practice in assigning legitimacy to specific groups. A key example would be the Jewish and Ismaeli communities in Portugal: although neither of these are quantitatively significant, their representatives have held places in representatives venues on account of their relations with State and Church representatives.

Islam in two peripheral Catholic countries: Portugal and Ireland

Religious diversity as a social phenomenon emerged late in modern Portugal (Bastos 2004; Vilaça 2006; Tiesler 2005) and Ireland (Flynn 2006; Ryan 1996, Mac Éinri 2007). It is a result of post-World War II migration, especially later-stage (1980s-early 1990s) influxes. The arrival of first-generation Muslims in both countries predates the emergence of religious diversity as a broad phenomenon: towards the end of the 1950s, Muslim students started enrolling in Portuguese and Irish educational facilities. The former were mainly of middle-class Mozambican origin (Tiesler 2000, 2005, 2009; Vakil 2004, 2006), while the latter were mainly South-African (Flynn 2006; Sakaranho 2006). Jonathan Laurence asserts that the arrival of Islam in Europe operates along two main lines: as a form of "embassy Islam", supported by diplomatic staff from Muslim-majority countries, or "student Islam", supported by the efforts of individuals with high cultural capital (2006; 2009; 2012).

There is ample evidence of the arrival of Islam in Portugal as a form of "embassy Islam", through the support of Egyptian and Pakistani ambassadors to Lisbon (O Islão 1978a, 1978b 1979), which provided not only economic resources but also supported transnational contacts between the nascent Islamic Community in Lisbon (ICL) and governments abroad. The mosque-building process (1968-1985), which took up most of ICL representatives' efforts at State contact and partnership-building, reveals that the authoritarian governance structure, coupled with the concordatarian model's lack of flexibility, presented an insurmountable challenge to the consolidation and diversification of Muslim communities in Portugal (Bernardo 2010; Machaqueiro 2007; Tiesler 2005). Founded in 1968, the ICL is the sole representative of Islam in State-sponsored bodies. As an institution, it quickly established itself as the most important

representative of Muslim residents in Portugal (Bernardo 2010; Tiesler 2001, 2005; Vakil 2004, 2006). Islam in Portugal is unique in Europe for three main reasons. There is a comparatively high share of Shi'a Ismaili believers (accounting for the strong public role of the Aga Khan Foundation and its president, Nazim Ahmad, who holds the honorific title of *Comendador da República* (a rough translation would be "Knight Commander of the Republic")). The importance of the late imperial cycle should not be underestimated. Class relations crossed into the religious field and, where an emergent Sunni elite was visible in Portugal, especially since the 1960s, that emergence was as much a result of changes in the broader governance system as it was a function of emerging networks where highly resourceful entrepreneurs tried to use those resources in order to construct a favorable institutional pattern after the perceived end of the imperial cycle, a foreseeable event that came to pass shortly after the ICL started its operations. As a result of the end of the Portuguese imperial cycle from 1975 on, a significant number of Muslim residents were native Portuguese-speakers with high levels of social and cultural capital; changing migration patterns have altered intra-community composition to a point where an increasing share of Muslim residents in Portugal are of South-Asian and West-African origin and have lower levels of social and cultural capital (Mapril 2008). This transition from low intra-community diversity to a situation of high diversity (albeit not to the extent to which Islam in Ireland is diverse) furthers the need for research which transcends traditional elite/grass-roots dychotomies while exploring how such changes impact Muslim communities in Portugal. The increase in numbers across less than three decades illustrates a very quick transition.

There is now research showing that a thriving community life operates beneath elite organizations (Mapril 2006; Santos 2008), higher-level associational patterns are less diverse in Portugal than in Ireland. As political process entry requirements are comparatively high – because the model of Church-State relations in Portugal establishes a "selective cooperation partnership" framework (Ferrari 2005) which effectively disadvantages minority religious communities – ICL, as the oldest Muslim community organization in Portugal, was the only stakeholder with sufficient resources to gain access to representation.

The Royal College of Surgeons was a key venue in the arrival of Islam in Ireland, in the late 1950s. In 1959, a number of Muslims students rented a space at the Koinonia House in Dublin (Sakaranaho 2006; Khan 2011) and thereby established an institutional practice which extended to other State venues and facilities. The Dublin Islamic Society was formed by Muslim students endeavoring for a forum where they and their peers could develop an aid structure to other students (Sakaranaho 2006; Flynn 2006; Scharbrodt 2012). The Society served as a basis for the first Islamic Center in Dublin, opened in 1976 (IFI s.d.). The creation of an Islamic Foundation of Ireland (IFI) followed. Its constitution holds that all Muslims in Ireland enjoy honorary membership (IFI Constitution: 1). As a community where a low number of members possess national

citizenship, Muslims in Ireland withstood a larger increase in numbers: in 2006, 32 500 acknowledged their religious confession as Islam in the national census (CSO 2006), but the number may now be reaching some 50 to 60 000 individuals. As the history of Islam in Ireland progressed, the IFI was to face the emergence of the Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland (ICCI), a wide-ranging association, linked with the Dubai-based al-Maktoum Foundation. The interplay between the IFI and the ICCI is an apt illustration of the dynamics of Muslim communities in Ireland. From the beginning, there was no significant ethnic or national group within the community; if anything, there was a prevalence of middle-class professionals (Flynn 2006; Sakaranaho 2006; NCCRI 2007), a feature closely related to the characterization of Islam in Ireland as "student Islam". Effectively, while the ICL enjoyed the support of diplomatic staff and transnational links, the Dublin Islamic Society and the Islamic Foundation of Ireland were largely grass-roots efforts, unlike the Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland, a transnational initiative (Sakaranaho 2006; Kahn 2011; Scharbrodt 2012). The grass-roots character of these initiatives was aided by the inclusive character of the model of Church-State relations in Ireland and the salience of religion and religious communities in the country. As a charity, the IFI registered as a Friendly Society and was eventually able to open a national school (Flynn 2006; Kahn 2011; Nesbitt 1990; Walshe 1990), establishing itself as a State partner. Differences between the IFI and the ICL are clear: entry requirements were lower in Ireland and opportunities for the participation of the IFI in provision of services were more stable and more frequent.

Claims on a purported ethnic divide within the Irish Muslim community stated that the IFI and the ICCI supported different groups, there is no ample evidence of such cleavage (although mounting evidence suggests that it may be emerging; see Scharbrodt 2012). There is, however, evidence that a shift in power distribution between the IFI and the ICCI. The former had been a patron of both Muslim national schools in Dublin until 2001, enjoying wide access to official venues. But, from 2001 on, the ICCI gained increasing political leverage (Sakaranaho 2006). As consultations with the State on abortion make clear, the ICCI's Sheikh was perceived as the foremost representative of Muslim residents in Ireland (All-Party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution, 2002; Selim 2007, 2008a, 2008b). The controversy on the Irish Blashpemy Act also illustrated the increasing dominance of the ICCI in the Irish public sphere, as its representatives were called to offer their take on the bill (RTÉ 2009). At a higher level, Islam in Ireland is currently highly segmented and dynamic. In 2006, the Irish Council of Imams was founded as an initiative encompassing all tendencies and sectors within the Irish Muslim community: all fourteen recognized imams in Ireland participate in its activities, marking a step forward in institutional development. It remains to be seen whether this Council will be able to sustain its activities.

Taking a cue from its foundational moment, the Irish Muslim community is also highly active within universities. Higher education institutions in Ireland have traditionally promoted and supported students' associations. As a result, all major public universities

in the country hold Student Islamic Societies, an institutional form inherited from the United Kingdom. These Societies are coordinated by the Irish branch of the Federation of Student Islamic Societies. The significance of these societies is not to be understated: Mary McAleese, former President of Ireland, attended the 2010 Islamic Awareness Week, an increasingly popular event held within higher education facilities across Britain and Ireland; moreover, Student Islamic Societies illustrate the continuing significance of education in the Irish Muslim community.

Political representation and state facilities

The Structured Dialogue with Churches, Faith Communities and Non-Confessional Organizations, set up in 2007 under the aegis of Taoiseach Bertie Ahern (Fianna Fáil) and kept in place by Enda Kenny (Fine Gael) in 2011, even as the unfolding crisis of the Irish Roman Catholic Church marked an epochal change in Irish society (running contrary to arguments understating Church influence over Irish society in the 20th Century), is an interesting case of a corporatist practice entangled with the legacy of State-Church relations. In effect, the name itself reveals how the Irish State makes religion legible (Houston 2010; Laurence 2012; Scott 1991) in the 21st Century: by detailing "Churches", "Faith Communities" and "Non-Confessional Organizations", including humanists and atheists, Irish policymakers render a complex set of social conditions and interest groups manageable. However, its informal character (as compared to plausible Portuguese counterparts) also advises caution in overdetermining its corporatist character; while post-Celtic Tiger Ireland certainly retains historically inherited arrangements, societal diversity and wider societal responses to migrants have shaped how the State deals with religion. An interesting policy document, the Intercultural Health Strategy, provides us with trace evidence of the specific ways in which Irish policymakers have made communities "legible" (Scott 1991, 2003). Although it makes its case for culturally sensitive health services, this policy document employed consultations with many of Ireland's resident minority religious traditions while including some communities which could be construed as ethnic or national, e.g. the Chinese community. The pattern repeats itself across the Irish institutional eco-system: ethnicity and religion are discernible as separate categories, but are generally conflated – whether one looks at the structure and mission of NCCRI, the defunct Equality Authority or the Equality Tribunal. The accommodation of Islam in Ireland has developed within this context and a comparatively rapid internal differentiation among communities, as well as important transnational linkages, have played an important role in defining how accommodation (or lack thereof), as a specific mode of institutionalization, has developed over time. In that respect, the number of different organizations claiming to represent one or more segments of Muslim residents in Ireland has increased to the extent of covering most of the country (there are official (registered charities) or semi-official Islamic communities or associations in Cork, Galway and Limerick, three of Ireland's largest cities) and providing multiple insights into the political life of Islam in Ireland.

The dynamics of interaction and recognition between the ICCI – Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland – and the IFI - Islamic Foundation of Ireland – shows how fluid, as compared to Portugal, Islam in Ireland is. There has been a remarkable transfer of recognition of dominance (in the sense of garnering influence and mobilizing resources) from the IFI to the ICCI. While the IFI is the oldest institution, ICCI is clearly the largest, best-equipped organization to deal with political issues pertaining to Islam in Western Europe. Its representativeness is highly contentious (Scharbrodt 2012) and the perceived growth in its influence has been represented as misconstruing the dynamics of Islam in Ireland. In this sense, it is important to recognize that Sheikh Halawa, as a representative, has become an important figurehead for a new transnational Islam, connected with Muslim-majority polities which willfully fund cultural initiatives. The al-Maktoum Foundation is one such example. One important reference, in this sense, is the European Council for Fatwa and Research; its establishment in Dublin is at once a consequence of the ICCI's resource pool and an important sign of Islam in Ireland as a specifically transnational phenomenon. In fact, Islam in Ireland is socio-demographically very diverse and its connection with refugee/asylum-seeker inflows is commensurate. The growth of Islam in Ireland stems mainly from two factors: language and labor. The former refers to the post-colonial character of Ireland, while the latter refers to the exponential growth in migrant inflows following the Irish economic boom of the mid-90s. As a consequence of former British colony and dominion, English is one of two official languages; 1950s student migration, especially to the Royal College of Surgeons, in Dublin, from former or soon-to-be former British imperial territories, is best explained via linguistic affinities (i.e. South African students) and the preeminence of South Asian staff in post-war Irish healthcare has been significant enough to merit discussion in numerous policy documents on the accommodation of culturally diverse staff in public health services.

Sets of institutional arrangements were available to policymakers and representatives at any given stage of interaction between Islam and the State while the Catholic Church, if conceived as a dominant special interest group tried to keep its privileged status, with special emphasis on credence goods (Gill 2007) and service provision (Davie 2007). This, coupled with one of the slowest secularization trends in Western Europe and a post-colonial religious field which assured at least a modicum of pluralism, has set the stage for a long-standing high status accorded to religion. These pressures towards the sustained salience of religion aid us in explaining why religious communities as they shift into interest groups were and are afforded a comparatively high salience. Since the Irish State remains a contradictory hybrid of secular and non-secular components operating in a society where religion only recently became a belief system among others (Taylor 2007), religious interest groups, and namely Muslim representatives, have been able to organize and rapidly differentiate. The non-secular features of the Irish State, embodied for example in the Catholic preeminence in primary school governance, biased responses towards religious interest groups in a way which allowed for their entry into institutionalized systems.

Whether that entry has been entirely successful or is in of itself a feature of integration as conceptualized by liberal political theory is a point of controversy which will not be discussed here, but it is important to differentiate between entry and growth after entry. Namely, whether the North Dublin School effort set the stage for replication and implementation across Ireland. In effect, that is hardly the case. The North Dublin School, in particular, has been a point of contention (Reilly 2009) and the patronage system, while affording benefits to Muslim communities, also entails costs which may be difficult to negotiate by newcomers with enough resources to benefit from opportunities but not enough leverage to build a sustainable base. The dynamic interplay between the secular and non-secular components of the State apparatus is important because the Irish Constitution limits hands-on regulation and the State is precluded from enlarging its mandate beyond enforcing rights extension (Sakaranaho 2006). Systems of interest intermediation, or instances of societal corporatism (Offe 1980), are weak in that there is no formal or at least recognizable procedure by which the State assigns legibility to religious groups, apart from legacy procedures involving the Catholic Church. Institutionalization via structured consultation committees, State-designated representatives at official venues or State-sponsored umbrella organizations has not, thus far, been observed in State-Islam relations in Ireland. Accounts of State-Islam relations which posit an either secularist or non-secularist State are unable to identify these gaps and contradictions. Islam in Ireland, as other increasingly differentiated communities which pursue goals as interest groups, face low entry costs but high maintenance costs in their engagement with policy-related venues and goal-seeking. The monopoly of the Catholic Church works paradoxically: it lowers entry costs and raises maintenance; interest intermediation disavows any policy responses which would correct these asymmetries.

The Portuguese case is rather different. The Roman Catholic Church has never been in a non-dominant situation, either in the structure of the religious field or in terms of political allegiances. Although the Portuguese Constitution asserts non-confessionality, representatives and policy documents usually ascribe an exceptional role to the Catholic Church on the basis of its representativeness. This rhetorical device is in itself evidence of corporatist practice. It is mostly obvious that Portuguese citizens are culturally Catholic and census data show an overwhelming majority of Catholics. But subjective religiosity and church attendance, to take two indicators from cross-national surveys, show that Portuguese citizens maintain a diminishing connection with ecclesiastical structures: while Portugal is facing a comparatively slow secularization process, slower even than Ireland, Church attendance is remarkably low. The Constitution prevents any mandatory question on religion (taking a cue from French legal traditions) and the State is obliged to maintain non-discriminatory policies, converging with European Union standards since roughly 2001. However, the latest Census data includes a question on religion, providing a further statistical source.

The aforementioned rhetorical device is thus evidence of an ongoing bias towards the dominant group. The fact that the Concordat continues to regulate the religious fields, instead of a general law, is case in point. The 2001 Law on Religious Freedom takes its cues from the Concordat and policymakers accept the preeminence of Church representatives in most instances. An extensive analysis of the 2001 Law has not been made so far, but two points should be made. First, the Roman Catholic Church was initially defensive towards a first draft, presented by a then-recent leftist political party (the Left Bloc), which, if approved an enforced, would level the playing field in its entirety. The Concordat would be revoked and the Roman Catholic Church would see its exceptionality wane while the religious field itself was becoming increasingly dynamic. A rather conservative sector within the Church argued against the Law on the basis of post-revolutionary normalization in the relationship between the State and the Church as mediated by the Concordat. Second, the second draft, which eventually entered into force as Law, effectively institutionalized the corporatist regime which ascribed legitimacy to the preeminence of Catholics and Catholicism in the relationship between State structures and religious traditions. There is no process of self-selection among religious communities; it is an entirely corporatist practice of assigning legibility and seats on official bodies to "acceptable" communities, as stated in the 2001 Law; indeed, the eligibility rules written into law show that an account of discrimination or non-pluralism should be made regarding New Religious Movements, especially those movements, sects or traditions which emphasize proselytism or heterodox practices as structural in their belief systems. In the religious regulation body, there are two representatives from the Sunni and Ismaeli Muslim communities, which enjoy high levels of political trust and are highly embedded in relevant networks – both inter-religious networks and policy issue networks; one would be hard-pressed to identify such resource densities and embeddedness levels in neo-pentecostal churches or other non-traditional NRMs. Exclusionary corporatism is enhanced by the role of the dominant Catholic Church, which has repeatedly entered public discussion warning against the influence of aggressively proselytizing movements; the Cardinal Patriarch in Lisbon also publicly voiced his concerns on interfaith marriage due to his perception of gender relations in Islam. In religious regulation, the Catholic Church is therefore a gatekeeper and a market-maker: the present-day Portuguese religious field operates under constrains imposed by the Catholic Church.

If religious communities operate in such a way that they are regarded as potential coalition partners – as is the case with many smaller communities, such as the Baha'i or Hindu – with non-threatening behavior, the Church generally operates as a facilitator. As a long-term result from the II Vatican Council, the ecumenical emphasis is important in assessing Church strategies to cope with increased diversity, making them less obvious and aggressive: by co-opting smaller communities and facilitating assignment into official venues, the Church aids the State in maintaining a corporatist grip on religious regulation and keeps organizational bias mobilized towards Catholicism as the most representative belief system in Portugal. In contrast to Ireland, where such claims to

representativeness are also backed by statistical evidence, there are far fewer (if any) instances where corporatist practice is as evident: while the patronage system in primary schools and the general preeminence of Catholic Church in education and healthcare is relevant, there is no evidence that it is a product of active exclusionary practice – those configurations are a product of historical legacies and the logic of low entry costs/high maintenance costs seem to apply. In Portugal, entry costs are also increased by the regulatory environment.

In this context, most accounts of Islam in Portugal would tend to emphasize the preeminence of Catholicism in policy venues without discussing its function and effects, eventually erasing the important of specifying how structural bias works for or against Islam in policymaking. However, as we recall the brief discussion above on NRMs and the mobilization of bias against specific types of newcomers, there is scarce evidence of such bias against Islam. The 2001 Law on Religious Freedom does not prevent Muslim communities from registering and there are few legal constraints on the observance of rituals or seasonal festivities. The two most important communities in Portugal enjoy a level of salience not enjoyed by, for example, NRMs or non-federated evangelical churches. The Sunni community, built around the Lisbon Central Mosque, has been a participant in policymaking since the 1990s (see Tiesler 2001, 2005; Vakil 2006), after facing a transition from Embassy Islam structure into a rooted religious community, in the wake of efforts by two policy entrepreneurs (Suleiman Valy Mamede and Abdool Vakil) to reestablish Islam in Portugal after 1974. The Islamic Community of Lisbon is an interesting case of a community faced with pressures from migration inflows and the needs of representativeness in a corporatist environment: its leadership arises from a highly educated, Mozambican-born, South-Asian (Indian) heritage stratum in the wider Muslim community in Portugal; since the 1990s, as the community faced a reconfiguration with the inflow of West African and South Asian (Bangladeshi and Pakistani) migrants, it also faced the need to represent Islam, as it were, at specific policy venues, especially an important committee which decided, in a corporatist style, on public broadcasting rights for religious communities. It was to become, according to several representatives from minority religious communities, the most important forum for interfaith dialogue in the Portuguese democracy – a single committee which was to decide upon the allocation of a public good – broadcasting time in public television and radio – to selected communities. In Ireland, RTÉ, the public television broadcast system, does not provide for such venues and does not allocate timeslots for religious communities within such an established and rule-bound framework.

The Islamic Community of Lisbon was one of the earlier members, as it was perceived to be representative of "Islam". Again, the Catholic Church was assigned most of the timeslots for broadcasting – even as it already enjoyed an important market share in media broadcasting (e.g. live liturgy broadcasting and a massive Catholic local newspaper network) – and communities were selected on the basis of vague criteria, especially taking into account that representativeness was hardly identified in Census

data, as most religious traditions were subsumed under "other" and thus unquantifiable. Nevertheless, it is the case that the corporatist-style assignment was beneficial to Islam and other religious traditions deemed as eligible by both the State and the dominant Church: it bypassed the cost of entering policymaking and allowed communities to focus on proper decision-making, giving those early representatives a decisive advantage over other newcomers. A few years later, as the 2001 Law on Religious Freedom established the requirements for registration in the National Religious Association Registry, this became discernible via the composition and selection procedure for the Commission on Religious Freedom, the newfound regulatory agency for the religious field. Both Sunni and Ismaeli representatives have been designated as representatives. For different reasons, both communities offer interesting contrasts to the Irish case. The Sunni community, as stated before, is as much a product of societal shifts as of the will of two policy entrepreneurs which have engineered consensus around Muslims in Portugal, even if reports of peaceful "coexistence" or "acceptance" should be tempered by a critical analysis of instances of Islamophobia, especially in the wake of 9/11. Nonetheless, it is the case that Mamede and Vakil, along with the current Sheikh at the Lisbon Central Mosque, have engineered, to a large extent, the frame in which categories such as "Muslims" or "Islam" are perceived in Portuguese society. This is a rather important point to make. Although this study is structuralist in its approach and outlook, the case for institutional entrepreneurship is strong, especially, if one looks at Mamede, who engineered links to important media outlets and political parties, especially the main center-right political party in Portugal. The clientelistic character of Portuguese political culture, with its emphasis on networks of personal contacts, has interacted with the renewed interest in Islamic heritage, especially as archaeological findings and academic activism from two generations of academics have sought to break traditional narratives of "Christian Reconquista" and "Muslim-Christian clashes". In this regard, it is perhaps interesting to observe that these tropes exert little influence in actually existing policymaking processes, which are better understood in terms of current dynamics in the religious field and issues of power. The Ismaeli community is an important illustration of this assertion. It is neither very numerous nor does it engage in high-profile religious activities. But it has nonetheless garnered State support to the extent of being the first non-Christian community to enter into a Concordat-style agreement with the Portuguese State. It is a unique arrangement in the world, to our knowledge, and it shows that the politics of religious diversity is hardly separate from issues of power and class relations. The Ismaeli representative at the Commission for Religious Freedom holds the honorific title of *Comendador da República*, roughly translatable as "Knight Commander of the Republic" and is the representative of Prince Karim Aga Khan, making him an ambassador of sorts and thus turning the agreement into an international one; moreover, the Aga Khan Foundation is one of the most powerful civil society organizations in Portugal, sponsoring a plethora of projects in vulnerable neighborhoods and making discussions on faith-based work a less Catholic-centred matter. The Ismaeli community is very well connected and its representation at the Commission for Religious Freedom indicates that, *contra* general bias in the

literature towards the relevance of community size, analyses must include issues of power and corporatist-style power allocation – indeed, in certain contexts, such as the Portuguese one and in contrast with the Irish case, the distribution of power and representation in policy venues are not necessarily related to representativeness. While State officials justify informal bias towards Catholicism via demographic representativeness, such justifications would seem to exclude the Ismaeli community.

Again, the problem of taking the State as a set of arrangements without significant contradictions or internal conflicts arises when one tries to reconcile a constitutional non-confessional State with binding agreements such as the Concordat, the embeddedness of religious entities in welfare provision and the Social Security system and corporatist practices which are riven with bias towards Catholicism,. The case of the Ismaeli community would seem to support this. Its inclusion, and those of the Hindu and Jewish communities, into the Commission, are not justifiable on account of representativeness, but of choices constrained by the corporatist framework of State-religion relations and the role of the Catholic Church in mobilizing bias towards its continued dominance. Therefore, Islam is increasingly institutionalized into policy-making venues through corporatist arrangements, signaling that Laurence's framework applies to Portugal, but to a far lesser extent Ireland (Laurence 2012). The case for institutional entrepreneurship in Portugal is weakened by the strength of institutional arrangements and especially the sources of that strength: State structures in Portugal are highly centralized and bureaucratic fields nested into higher order institutions are closed to entrepreneurship by outsiders. In other words, Mamede or Vakil were indeed coopted into an institutional pattern and then sought to lobby existing institutions – at very different points in time – in order to establish a niche for Sunni Muslims. They were institutional entrepreneurs who sought to transform institutional arrangements from within – a rather important nuance to the hard structuralist approach taken by this study.

Conclusion

The question now is why these arrangements differ to a large extent in both countries. These national cases were similar until recently, even controlling for the 50-year long non-democratic period in Portugal. The current structural and functional environment for religious diversity management is not a product of cultural notions of belonging or national primacy of a given tradition. Rather, current structures and functions are a product of long-term institutional trajectories. This is a counter-intuitive argument: the Portuguese Catholic Church, since 1822, sided with conservative groups to safeguard a specific *status quo* and collect what its representatives saw as just rewards for significant disenfranchisement in the 18th Century; most of the subsequent State-Church relations history stems from that foundational choice. In 1974, it was, once more, siding with the losing conservative side of a struggle.

In Ireland, the Church was an institution with manifold social and political functions: it was the caretaker of Irish national and republican identity facing colonial occupation and the Northern neighbor; indeed, Irish republican nationalism is tinged with Catholic tropes, the largest of which is the Church as a monopoly actor in the world of morals and ethics; as an institution, it was perceived to side with nationalists in the struggle for autonomy and subsequent independence (Kissane 2003). It sided with those who fought against the *status quo* and eventually established a new political order in Ireland. The contrast would seem to suggest that the Church in Ireland would be in a much better position to determine whether Islam or other newcomers would be able to enter policy-making venues than in Portugal, but that is disputable.

The position of each institution in each country explains, to a large extent, how and why Islam is institutionalized. In Ireland, there are no established procedures and whatever contexts in which Islam or Muslims have managed to venture into, it was mostly by using own resources and supporting costs which did not automatically translate into institutionalization, whereas in Portugal such costs were bypassed by a highly corporatist procedure which stemmed from the preeminence of the Church in defining which communities were to enter policymaking and those that were not to. The religious field in Portugal is much more hierarchical than in Ireland and its regulatory framework assigns resources to the Church to such an extent that it is able to decisively influence these patterns of recognition and assignment; in Ireland, no such procedure exists and the Church is quickly becoming disenfranchised, as Tom Inglis has aptly discussed (Inglis 1998).

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