

Citizen Responses to Ethnic Representation

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Can country leaders improve citizens' ethnic outgroup views by changing ethnic representation in government? Years of pressure from the international community calling for leaders to make particularly their cabinets more ethnically representative seems to suggest that ethnic representation — conceptualized as descriptive and substantive representation and ministerial cooperation — is key to improving citizens' outgroup views. I argue that increasing ethnic representation influences majority and minority citizens differently: minority citizens' outgroup views will become more favorable, while majority citizens' views will worsen. Using a pre-registered vignette experiment with ethnic Albanians and Macedonians in North Macedonia, I show that ethnic representation does not provide the improvements in outgroup relations that many have hoped. Both groups' affect toward and perceptions of the cabinet change somewhat, but increasing ethnic representation does not improve overall outgroup attitudes. These results suggest that ethnic representation alone does not better relationships between ethnic groups.

Keywords: ethnic representation, outgroup attitudes, political appointments, cabinet, Macedonia.

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Ethnic representation in government is increasing. The last several decades have seen a substantial uptick in three forms of ethnic cabinet representation: the number of cabinet ministers from minority ethnic groups, government benefits provided to minority groups, and elite cooperation between ethnic groups (Francois, Rainer and Trebbi, 2015). This secular trend toward increased ethnic cabinet representation has been explained in two main ways: 1. pressure from international organizations and 2. leader re-election strategies. Both of these explanations rely on ethnic minority cabinet representation improving citizens' interethnic relations. Yet, this assumption remains untested. Does ethnic cabinet representation improve citizens' views of outgroups?

The Organization for the Security and Cooperation of Europe (OSCE) is a powerful international player in promoting ethnic cabinet representation. Their 2012 Ljubljana guidelines are a standard by which many international organizations evaluate countries' ethnic inclusion. These guidelines proclaim that "States should strive for adequate representation of the diverse groups in their society ...in all relevant structures of public administration," stating further that "affirmative action for the allocation of cabinet posts" is a key best-practice for country leaders to follow (OSCE, 2012, 46). In the OSCE's mind, the purpose of ethnic cabinet representation is for "everyone to have adequate opportunities to effectively participate in democratic decision-making" (OSCE, 2012, 46). By encouraging numerical representation, favorable policies, and elite cooperation with ethnic minorities, citizens will have their voices heard and develop "a sense of shared belonging" with ethnic outgroup citizens (OSCE, 2012, 18). Pressure from the international community along these lines often results in leaders engaging in ethnic accommodation of minority groups, with the international community hoping that citizens' views about the outgroup will improve as a result (Hartzell and Hoddie, 2003; Rothchild, 1997; Sisk, 1996).

At the same time, country leaders have their own motivations for promoting ethnic cabinet representation that involve citizens. Leaders need to develop coalitions in order to win re-election, and allocating influence and patronage through the cabinet is a simple

way to do this in ethnically divided societies (Arriola, 2009; Chandra, 2004). Here cabinet representation functions as a credible commitment to provide benefits to minority ethnic groups in return for political support (O’Brochta, 2020). Leaders’ hope that benefits from an ethnically representative cabinet will prompt citizens to improve their opinion of not only the leader, but of the majority ethnic group as a whole for two reasons. First, improving interethnic relations means improved country stability, which is necessary for the majority group to avoid citizen-led coups and civil unrest (Francois, Rainer and Trebbi, 2015). Second, if overall ethnic relations improve as a result of providing representation, then majority ethnic group politicians can enjoy continued support from traditionally hostile minority citizens without needing to distribute as many influence or patronage benefits.

Both scenarios provide rationales for country leaders increasing ethnic minority cabinet representation, and both scenarios rely to varying extents on the hope and promise that increased ethnic cabinet representation will improve citizen outgroup relations. Previous literature focuses on how elites use divisive rhetoric to exacerbate ethnic tensions and potentially to provoke civil conflict (Kaufman, 1996; Kifordu, 2011; Somer, 2001; van Dijk, 1992). While it has received significantly less attention, a calming effect of elite actions has also been posited. “If elites from the majority group approach minorities in a spirit of flexibility, inclusiveness, and tolerance, the odds are that tensions can be defused” (Hislope, 1998, 141; see also Steen and Kuklys, 2010). In either case, existing literature predominately considers the influence of elite rhetoric without taking into account how actual country leader decisions about ethnic representation impact citizens. This could be due to the fact that most existing work examines ethnic representation in legislatures. I study ethnic cabinet representation because country leaders’ have significant power to alter it.

Citizen responses to ethnic representation matter because they fundamentally shape a country’s political environment. Elite responses are also important, but ethnic intolerance persists unless it is addressed directly among citizens. Not only can citizens collectively organize, demanding changes in the amount of ethnic representation, but ethnic representation

has wide-reaching micro-level consequences. First, citizens emotionally respond to ethnic cabinet representation. Anger and discontent make citizens more wary of the cabinet and make it more difficult for the cabinet to effectively address citizen concerns. Additionally, ethnic cabinet representation can change citizens' perceptions of the cabinet and its ability to represent them, slowing down policy implementation and leading to calls that the cabinet is out-of-touch with citizen views. Finally, ethnic cabinet representation may influence citizens' outgroup attitudes — the ways they think about and interact with outgroup citizens. Worsening outgroup attitudes are a key factor increasing ethnic tensions and making the entire political system more ethnically polarized. Getting the ethnic representational balance wrong in terms of numerical diversity, policy priorities, or elite cooperation can have disastrous consequences, including intergroup violence and civil conflict (Lieberman and Singh, 2012).

Does ethnic minority representation improve citizens' views of the ethnic outgroup? I argue that citizens' views improve when the amount of coethnic representation increases. This is because increased coethnic representation provides perceived benefits to coethnic citizens, which leads them to develop a favorable view of ethnic outgroups. When ethnic minority representation increases, minority citizens' will therefore react favorably and improve their views of the outgroup. However, majority citizens' views worsen because their perceived benefits decrease. I test these hypotheses by manipulating three key features of ethnic cabinet representation: descriptive representation, substantive representation, and cooperation among ministers.¹ Using a pre-registered vignette experiment with ethnic Albanians and Macedonians in North Macedonia, I show that ethnic representation does not provide the improvements in outgroup relations that many have hoped. Representation among ethnic minority Albanians slightly improved Albanian affect toward the cabinet and perceptions about the cabinet. At the same time, increasing Albanian representation provoked some backlash from ethnic Macedonians. Ministerial cooperation provided the most promising

¹Descriptive representation refers to the number of coethnic ministers while substantive representation refers to policies benefiting coethnics (Pitkin, 1967).

improvements in affect toward and perceptions of the cabinet, but even so, outgroup attitudes were largely unchanged. The findings suggest that ethnic representation does not have a wide-ranging impact on outgroup attitudes and, therefore, ethnic representation seems not to provide a particularly meaningful solution to citizen ethnic tensions.

Theory

Citizens have long memories. Longstanding institutional discrimination, periods of ethnic conflict, and political and economic inequalities all play large roles in determining citizens' views of outgroups (Baldwin and Huber, 2010; Canelas and Gisselquist, 2018; Cederman, Weidmann and Gleditsch, 2011; Charnysh, 2015; Dinas, Fouka and Schlapfer, 2019; Homola, Pereira and Tavits, 2020; Miodownik and Nir, 2016; Ostby, 2008). Each of these factors is important, but country leaders have relatively little power to alter institutional history without a great deal of time and a broad base of support.

What country leaders do have control over are political appointments, and cabinet ministers represent the most important and influential appointments in government (Blondel and Muller-Rommel, 1993; Laver and Shepsle, 1994). The purpose of a cabinet is to facilitate resource delivery to citizens. Cabinets do this work by writing budgets, drafting legislation, managing the bureaucracy, and interacting with the legislature. In this way, cabinets are an intermediary between citizens and the various types of resources that the government provides to citizens. Cabinet representation is an important tool that leaders have to engender productive relationships among ethnic outgroups. While cabinet representation itself cannot address historical inequities, cabinet representation is a strong short-term signal about how political elites view relationships between ethnic outgroups.

Citizens primarily interact with cabinet ministers indirectly, receiving information about cabinet business through media sources. Because citizens' knowledge of the cabinet is limited (Fortunato and Stevenson, 2013b), citizens use these informational cues to form perceptions

about who is on the cabinet and how well the cabinet is working (Fortunato and Stevenson, 2013a).² The specific names of individual cabinet ministers are substantially less important than citizens' understandings of the amount and type of representation that the cabinet provides.

In this context, the key factor that can change citizen perceptions of the outgroup is the relative perceived benefit that they derive from a particular cabinet (Carlson, 2015; Koter, 2013; Stokes et al., 2013). Relative benefit involves citizens comparing the amount of benefit they perceive that they receive to the benefit received by others. In societies where ethnicity is a salient social cleavage, relative benefits are most naturally evaluated along ethnic lines (Chandra, 2004). This makes sense because benefits are frequently divided along ethnic lines (Habyarimana et al., 2007; van der Meer and Tolsma, 2014). Many cabinet programs or initiatives target certain ethnic groups, ethnic groups often coalesce into political parties, and discrimination primarily occurs on the basis of ethnicity. With political and social systems set-up around ethnic cleavages, citizens compare themselves with members of ethnic outgroups.

I adopt two conventions regarding the ways in which ethnic representation influences citizen attitudes. First, I evaluate majority and minority citizens separately because of historical differences in how these groups have been treated.³ Minority ethnic groups see periods of ethnic dominance followed by relatively small perceived concessions as relatively minor steps toward ethnic representation (Bahry et al., 2005; Barnes and Saxton, 2019; Howell and Fagan, 1988). On the other hand, majority groups perceive their losses as more severe because the status quo is that they have a monopoly on government representation (King and Samii, 2018). This has been shown to prompt a backlash effect wherein minority groups perceive a small amount of benefit, whereas majority groups perceive a large amount of loss (Boyer, Aaldering and Lecheler, 2020; Fisher et al., 2015; Krook, 2015; McConaughy

²Perceptions are attitudes influenced by prior beliefs — expectations for the future based on past experiences — that citizens develop based on information that they receive (Cutler, 2002; McDermott, 1998).

³For simplicity, I discuss a majority and a minority ethnic group; the same logic applies for a plurality ethnic group and multiple minority groups.

et al., 2010; Villarreal, 2002).

Second, in line with most prior work on ethnic representation, I examine perceived benefits for majority and minority groups while altering the amount of minority group representation. Increasing ethnic cabinet representation means providing cabinet representation to minority groups, so my theoretical argument and experimental set-up describe how the minority group is included in the cabinet.

I argue that relative perceived benefits influence citizens' views of the outgroup through perceived gains and losses. When citizens perceive that their group is losing relative benefits — relative deprivation, these losses produce a strong negative emotional response (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979). Emotional responses impact generalized decision-making (Johnson and Tversky, 1983; Schwarz, 2000). That is, experiencing a negative emotion infuses that emotion into information processing and changes an individual's social judgments (Andrade and Ariely, 2009; Forgas, 1995; Lerner et al., 2015). In ethnically divided societies, outgroup relations are one of the most salient social judgments. Hence, citizens' negative emotional responses to losing perceived benefits translate to more negative assessments of ethnic outgroups.

Similarly, when citizens perceive their group's relative benefits increasing — they are in a domain of gain, they generate positive emotional responses. The effects of these positive emotions are also generalized to encompass all forms of decision-making (Fredrickson, 2001). Citizens therefore respond more favorably to the outgroup when they experience a domain of gain (Gubler, Halperin and Hirschberger, 2015; Hewstone and Brown, 1986; Mironova and Whitt, 2014).

When citizens assess the relative benefits they receive from the cabinet, I argue that they use three highly visible cabinet features as informational cues: descriptive representation, substantive representation, and ministerial cooperation (Andre and Depauw, 2017; Boggild, 2019; Celis and Mazur, 2012; Pitkin, 1967). Leaders have a relatively high degree of control over the ministerial appointment process, policies adopted by the cabinet, and the cabinet

climate, therefore enabling them to influence cabinet descriptive and substantive representation and ministerial cooperation with the hope of improving ethnic outgroup views.

Descriptive representation refers to the number of cabinet ministers from a particular ethnic group. International organizations seeking increased ethnic cabinet representation often look to descriptive representation as a key method of improving outgroup attitudes. I frame descriptive representation in the conventional way by focusing on the type of representation: providing citizens with information about increasing the inclusion of minority ethnic group cabinet ministers. Minority citizens whose descriptive representation increases are in a state of gain, resulting in more favorable impressions toward the majority ethnic group (Feddes, Mann and Doosje, 2015; Pantoja and Segura, 2003; Tougas and Veilleux, 1988). Political integration in this way can foster a common identity, reduce ethnic prejudice, and improve outgroup attitudes by making minority group members feel included in government decision-making (Banducci, Donovan and Karp, 2004; Brown and Hewstone, 2005; Gaertner and Dovidio, 2000; Hewstone and Brown, 1986; Ruiz-Rufino, 2013; Tezcur and Gurses, 2017).

Conversely, majority citizens perceive lost cabinet representation when minority groups are included (Childs and Krook, 2006, 2009; Clayton, O'Brien and Piscopo, 2019; Crowley, 2004; Hawkesworth, 2003). In this state of loss, majority citizens develop negative outgroup attitudes (Casellas and Wallace, 2015; Gay, 2002; Schildkraut, 2017; Ulbig, 2007).

Hypothesis 1: Increasing minority descriptive representation improves minority and worsens majority citizens' views of the outgroup.

Substantive representation is the perception that citizens will benefit in some tangible way from policies and other government decisions (Childs and Krook, 2009; Heath, Schwindt-Bayer and Taylor-Robinson, 2005). Leaders hoping to use the cabinet as a way to improve outgroup attitudes by delivering patronage benefits rely on substantive representation. Both the presence of substantive representation and the exact change in policy, budget, or government decision making matter. For minority citizens, substantive representation provides

a higher form of equality than does descriptive representation (Gay, 2002; Krook, 2015; Mansbridge, 1999; Tate, 2003). Minority friendly policies indicate that the majority group is not thinking about ethnic representation as something that can be addressed by making token appointments to provide perceived inclusion (Arnesen, Duell and Johannesson, 2019; Cameron, Epstein and O'Halloran, 1996; Lublin, 1999). Thus, both majority and minority groups should perceive the benefits from substantive representation at least to the extent that they perceive benefits from descriptive representation: higher for minority group members and lower for majority group members. These perceptions of benefits again lead to states of gain or loss that influence views of the outgroup.

Hypothesis 2: Increasing minority substantive representation improves minority and worsens majority citizens' views of the outgroup.

Citizens tend to dislike governments that they perceive as dysfunctional (Font, Wojcieszak and Navarro, 2015; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2002). Ethnic representation often results in dysfunction because ministers are unable to cooperate with one another (Cheeseman and Tendi, 2010; Cheeseman, 2011; Spears, 2000; Sriram and Zahar, 2009), though this is not always the case (Whiting and Bauchowitz, 2020). I conceptualize cooperation as going beyond policy related dissent and look at the more fundamental property of ministers being able to work together.⁴ All citizens perceive benefits from increased cooperation because otherwise the government would not be able to function in order to provide any benefits to anyone. Cooperation is mostly about representational quality: on paper a cabinet may be descriptively and substantively diverse while still lacking meaningful interaction between outgroup ministers. Both majority and minority groups must come together for cooperation to occur, so both groups are in domains of gain when cooperation occurs.

Hypothesis 3: Increasing ministerial cooperation improves citizens' views of the outgroup.

⁴Policy-related dissent can be popular (for example Campbell et al., 2019).

Table 1 presents my empirical expectations, keeping in mind that I alter minority group descriptive and substantive representation as well as changing the level of ministerial cooperation:

Table 1: Citizens' Views of the Outgroup

	Minority Descriptive	Minority Substantive	Cooperation
Majority	↓	↓	↑
Minority	↑	↑	↑

↑ indicates improved citizens' views of the outgroup; ↓ indicates worsened citizens' views of the outgroup.

Case Selection and Design

To test these hypotheses, I implement a survey experiment with citizens in North Macedonia (henceforth Macedonia). Cabinets are not randomly constructed, so I cannot rely on observational data to measure how citizens respond to changes in cabinet representation. A survey experiment allows me to independently manipulate each of the three factors I argue influence citizens' views of the outgroup: descriptive representation, substantive representation, and ministerial cooperation.

Case Selection

An appropriate case to implement a survey experiment testing my hypotheses needs to fulfill three criteria. First, ethnicity needs to be clearly defined and unambiguous. In many country contexts, tribes, clans, or castes make alliances or feel represented by groups that are not their own. While this proxy representation is very important, it makes it difficult to clearly link ethnic representation with changed outgroup views. Second, the minority ethnic group needs to have faced a history of discrimination. This is the typical experience of minority groups, but there are some country contexts where the minority group has consistently been

influential in government. Third, the minority group needs to be large enough to practically field a survey experiment.

Macedonia is one country context that meets all three conditions (see Hislope, 1998). The country is a developing parliamentary democracy that is beginning the process of accession to the European Union (Ceka, 2018). There are two ethnic groups: majority Macedonians and minority Albanians who represent 25% of the population and are primarily concentrated near the border with neighboring Albania. Some Albanians vote for Macedonian-led multi-ethnic parties and politicians while others are ethnic nationalists.⁵

These factors make the Macedonian case ideal to conduct an experiment about ethnic representation because descriptive and substantive representation and ministerial cooperation have all occurred to some extent in the past, and there is a clear delineation between ethnic groups. Hence, the vignettes presented to survey respondents are realistic. Further, as described below, the ethnic dynamics in Macedonia are largely similar to those in other post-Communist countries.

Ethnic relations between Albanians and Macedonians have historically been challenging. Macedonia on the whole is poor, but political inequality is a bigger source of contention than is economic inequality. Prior to the 2001 signing of the Ohrid Agreement, Albanians were primarily politically disadvantaged. Though descriptively represented in parliament and in the cabinet, Albanian political leaders and the substantive issues of Albanians were essentially ignored (Hislope, 2003). External pressures made addressing political inequities difficult: Greece's demands that Macedonia change its name were seen as an attack on ethnic Macedonian identity which meant that Albanian attempts to gain political representation were perceived as further attacks on ethnic Macedonians (Adamson and Jovic, 2004; Brunnbauer, 2002). Bulgaria and Serbia questioned the status of ethnic Macedonians as a separate ethnic group by declaring their language and religion derivative of Bulgarian and

⁵The percentage of Albanians voting for Macedonian-led parties varies wildly, but Macedonian parties are actively courting Albanian voters (e.g., <https://balkaninsight.com/2016/11/11/macedonia-social-democrats-set-sights-on-albanian-votes-11-11-2016/>).

Serb Orthodoxy respectively (Ceka, 2018). In 2001, Albanian nationalists demanding increased political representation began an armed conflict against the Macedonian army. The conflict resulted in limited casualties, and the Ohrid Agreement was signed between the two parties, providing greater political rights for Albanians.

Sporadic violence has occurred in the ensuing years, though both Albanians and Macedonians have regained trust in political institutions over time (Aleksavska, 2015; Reka, 2008). Albanians continue to be represented in parliament and in the cabinet; more importantly, the government has attempted to address several substantive issues important to Albanians (Stewart, 2019). While voting and party representation mostly occurs along ethnic lines, some progress has been made toward including Albanians in traditionally ethnic Macedonian parties and providing Albanians with more integral roles in government (Ceka, 2018; Koneska, 2014; Stewart, 2019; Wagner, 2014).

Design

This survey experiment was conducted by Ipsos on their quarterly, face-to-face omnibus survey in February 2020.⁶ Ipsos oversampled Albanians in order to collect 784 responses equally divided between Albanians and Macedonians.⁷ Since the survey was conducted as part of an omnibus panel, respondents had already provided basic demographic information — including ethnicity — so that this information was not asked during the survey, eliminating priming effects. Survey questions, including the vignettes, were translated and back-translated into Albanian and Macedonian by native speakers. Particular care was paid to ensuring that the meaning of each word was the same in the Albanian and Macedonian surveys. Ethnic Albanian respondents were always interviewed in Albanian by ethnic Albanians and vice versa.

Each respondent was presented with a vignette about the cabinet consisting of four at-

⁶The hypotheses, design, and analysis were pre-registered with EGAP. The experimental protocol was approved by the university Institutional Review Board # 202001032.

⁷I conducted simulations indicating that this design provides about 75% power to detect substantively meaningful effects. See the Supplemental Information (SI) 2.

tributes block randomized on ethnicity. These attributes include descriptive and substantive representation and ministerial cooperation.⁸

I measure descriptive representation by providing information about the number of Albanian ministers in the cabinet (*ProfileDescriptive*) relative to a total of 25 ministers, the average size of the Macedonian cabinet. The number of Albanian ministers was chosen strategically. I include two extreme cases: one where there are no Albanian ministers and one where there are ten Albanian ministers. The latter case represents massive over-representation, with 40% of the cabinet being Albanian compared to only 25% of the population. Two other cases with one and six ministers are more typical.

Substantive representation (*ProfileSubstantive*) is a dichotomous treatment with a condition where the cabinet increases funding for Albanian issues and a condition where no substantive representation is provided. I focus on increased funding as a measure of substantive representation because the cabinet is more likely to change funding than they are to make major social welfare policy reform. The latter would likely require buy in from the legislature, whereas the cabinet has more authority over budgetary issues. The control condition with no substantive representation acts mostly as filler, providing no new information.

I measure cooperation in two ways. First, I develop an item that specifically refers to ethnic cooperation among ministers (*ProfileCooperation*). This dichotomous treatment indicates either that ministers are proactively working together to achieve consensus or that cabinet communication has devolved into interethnic fights. I also include information about the Albanian ministers' political party membership. Albanian ethnic parties are common in Macedonia, as are Macedonian nationalist parties. If an Albanian minister is a member of the only multi-ethnic political party, this may indicate that both the Macedonian leaders of that party and the Albanian minister have some common ground along which to work together. I create a dichotomous treatment (*ProfileSDSM*) where one Albanian minister is from the Social Democratic Alliance (SDSM) — the multi-ethnic party — and a control

⁸SI.2 contains randomization and balance checks.

with no Albanian SDSM ministers. Since the vast majority of Albanian politicians belong to ethnic Albanian parties, the number of Albanian SDSM ministers is only either one or zero regardless of the total number of Albanian ministers. When there are zero Albanian SDSM ministers, respondents will assume that Albanians are members of ethnic Albanian parties. These parties have frequently joined coalitions with both major Macedonian parties.

Several combinations of these attributes are not logically consistent (e.g., zero ethnic Albanian ministers from several Albanian parties). These vignettes were eliminated. This practice reduces the probability that respondents react to the implausibility of the vignette and provide unexpected responses, while also having the side benefit of keeping the number of vignettes much smaller than those in most vignette experiments. Respondents were shown a single vignette, meaning that there were no anchoring effects, respondent fatigue, or other issues associated with repeating vignette experiments multiple times. To ensure that respondents fully read and understood the vignette, survey enumerators displayed the vignette on a tablet computer and provided sufficient time for respondents to carefully read it. The text of the vignette is displayed below with the randomized attributes and their levels in brackets.

Vignette:

“Imagine a cabinet that contains 25 ministers with an ethnic Macedonian Prime Minister. Of the 25 cabinet ministers, [*ProfileDescriptive*: 0, 1, 6, 10] are ethnic Albanians. [*ProfileSDSM*: 1-One Albanian minister is from the Social Democratic Alliance (SDSM), the rest are from several Albanian parties.; 0-The Albanian ministers are from several Albanian parties.] [*ProfileSubstantive*: 1-The cabinet has already passed legislation to increase funding for Albanian issues.; 0-The composition of the cabinet has received a lot of attention from the media.] [*ProfileCooperation*: 1-Ministers work well together and have reformed the way the cabinet operates to emphasize forming a consensus when making decisions.; 0-Ministers stick up for their ethnic background and are unwilling to compromise when making decisions that impact their ethnic group.]”

I conceptualized citizens views of the outgroup in three ways: overall outgroup attitudes, cabinet affect, and cabinet perceptions. These three measures speak to the impact that ethnic representation may have on different types of outgroup views.

International organizations hope that pushing country leaders to increase ethnic representation will improve overall outgroup attitudes — how citizens view the outgroup. I measured overall outgroup attitudes as a combination of trust in non-coethnics (*Trust*) (Kasara, 2013; Letki, 2008; Oberg, Oskarsson and Svensson, 2011; Stolle, Soroka and Johnston, 2008) and perceived equality between different ethnic groups (*Equality*) (Jackman, 1977; McIntosh et al., 1995).⁹ I also attempted to discern whether respondents improve outgroup attitudes by eliminating traditional in- and outgroup boundaries and forming a shared group (Gaertner and Dovidio, 2000) or whether individuals fail to see themselves as sharing a common identity (*One Group*). Finally, I asked some common measures of social distance, including willingness to have an outgroup neighbor (*Neighbor*) and willingness to talk to outgroup members (*Talk Outgroup*).

Even absent ethnic representation improving overall outgroup attitudes, ethnic representation can still have a positive impact on citizens' views of outgroups. I first focused on citizens' affective (or emotional) responses to the cabinet. Ethnic groups need to *feel* represented in the cabinet in order to improve outgroup attitudes (Cheeseman, 2011; Hanni, 2017; Spears, 2000; Tezcur and Gurses, 2017). I asked four questions about respondents' emotional reactions to the cabinet profiles: their *Enthusiasm*, *Anger*, *Hopefulness*, and *Resentfulness*.

After asking about cabinet affect, I moved to more direct questions about cabinet perceptions. These questions asked citizens to evaluate the cabinet profile, to determine their perceived benefit from the cabinet, and to attribute that perceived benefit to members of the cabinet itself. I asked how well citizens believe the cabinet represents their interests (*Cabinet Represents*), how much they trust the cabinet (*Cabinet Trust*), and whether the cabinet promotes positive relationships among ethnic groups (*Cabinet Model*). These ques-

⁹Full question wording is in SI.1.

tions were similar to the overall outgroup attitudes questions, but ask respondents to think specifically about the cabinet. By asking these questions, I am able to discern whether respondents improved their perceptions about the cabinet even if these perceptions did not end up influencing overall outgroup attitudes.

There are a number of potential mechanisms that connect ethnic cabinet representation to citizens' views of the outgroup. In general, citizens may be wary of the ability of the cabinet to represent their interests, regardless of the level of ethnic representation. Citizens often express that political elites work for their own benefit and rarely deliver benefits to their constituents. If survey respondents feel this way, then ethnic representation is unlikely to have much of an effect. I asked whether respondents believed that an ethnically inclusive cabinet would only result in intra-elite cooperation with no benefit for society (*Minister Personal*).

Feelings of relative deprivation may work in the opposite way, heightening negative reactions to low levels of descriptive and substantive representation. When respondents feel relatively deprived by a given level of cabinet representation, their views of the outgroup become even worse because they perceive themselves in an extreme domain of loss. I assess this by asking the extent to which respondents were satisfied with the amount of representation they received (*Represent Satisfied*).

Finally, substantive representation means different things to different respondents. Citizens can be substantively represented when their community receives benefits or when public policies improve their lives. Yet, it is more difficult to track these benefits compared to direct financial transfers. Hence, respondents who prefer direct financial transfers may have stronger reactions to increased substantive representation. *Benefit Them* asks whether respondents think that the cabinet will directly benefit their welfare, while *Benefit Financially* asks whether respondents expect to receive financial benefits from the cabinet.

Empirical Strategy

I split the sample into Albanian and Macedonian respondents and run the analysis separately for each group. I estimate the average marginal component effect (AMCE) for each profile attribute. I add dummy variables for *ProfileSubstantive*, *ProfileCooperation*, and *ProfileSDSM*, and I make *ProfileDescriptive* a factor with levels 0, 1, 6, and 10. These are the four independent variables of interest in the analysis.

For the results presented in the main text, I normalize all dependent variables to be between 0 and 1, where 0 is a low and 1 is a high level of the variable, and I run linear models with robust standard errors. To create the cabinet affect dependent variables — one each for pleasant, unpleasant, mixed and weak, I use latent profile analysis and seven types of factor analysis on respondents answers to the *Enthusiasm*, *Anger*, *Hopefulness*, and *Resentfulness* questions (Gubler and Karpowitz, 2019). Here, pleasant and unpleasant affect refer to positive and negative emotional responses, respectively, whereas weak affect indicates the absence of a strong emotional response and mixed affect the presence of both strong pleasant and unpleasant affect (Yoo, 2010). In the main text, I present the cabinet affect classification from the minimum residual Barlett score. Details about the classification procedure and the other classification methods are in SI.3.

I include several sets of control variables in these models to improve the precision of resulting estimates. Demographic controls include *Female*, *Age*, *Married*, *Education*, and *Household Size*. I also include controls for geographic region and living in *Urban* areas. Finally, I include several pre-treatment attitude questions including frequency of watching the *News*, belief that all Macedonians have *Equal Opportunities* (Bonilla-Silva and Dietrich, 2011), tendency to follow the rules (*Authoritarian*) (Bizumic and Duckitt, 2018), and political *Knowledge*.

In the results section, I present marginal effects plots based on the linear regression models with robust standard errors. The SI includes the full model tables (SI.4), results

from logistic and ordered logistic regressions (SI.5), a number of pre-registered robustness checks (SI.6), and attribute interaction effects (SI.7).

Results

I present marginal effects plots for each hypothesis sequentially, focusing first on the effect of descriptive representation on cabinet affect, cabinet perceptions, and outgroup attitudes before moving to substantive representation and ministerial cooperation.

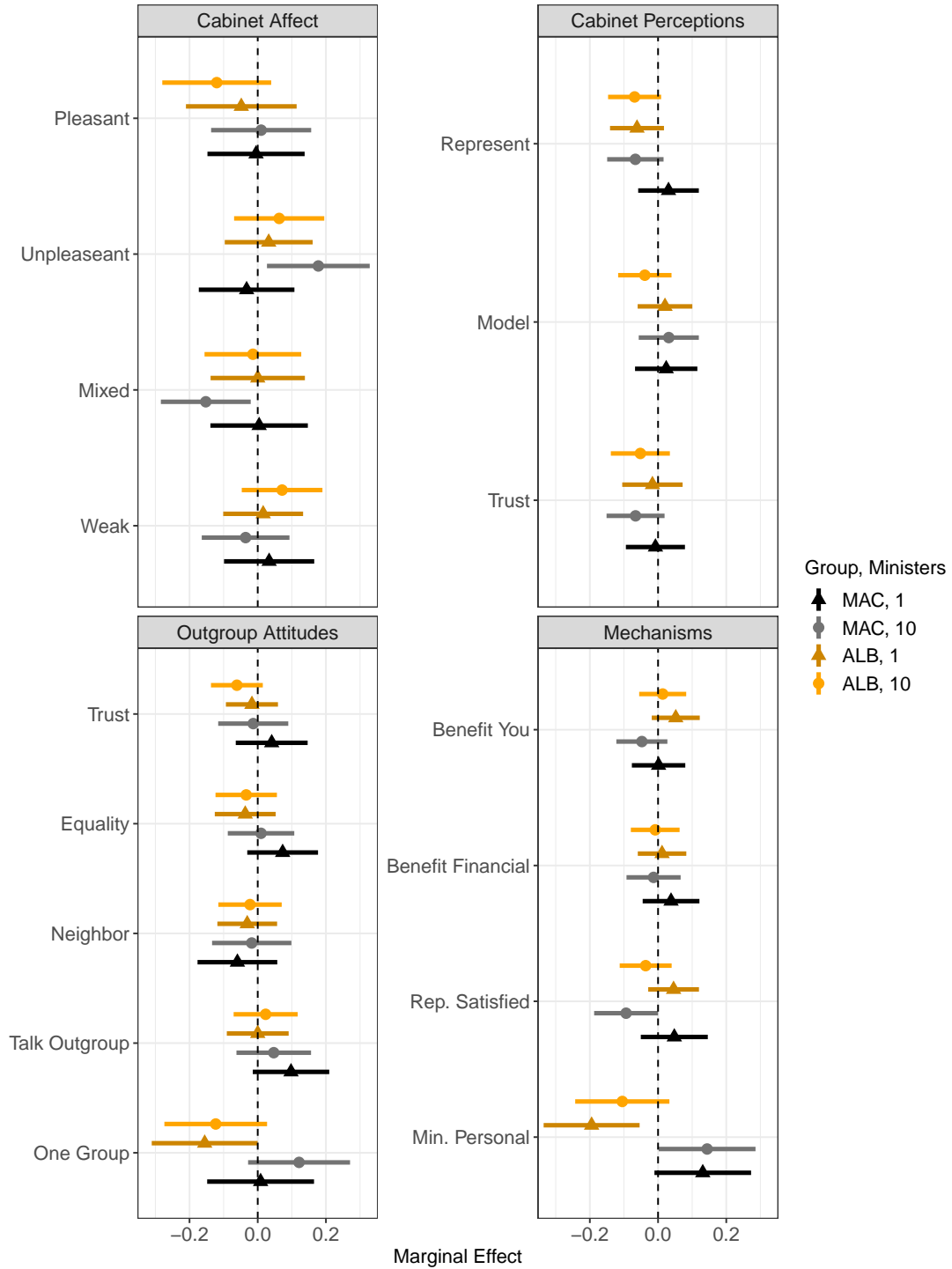
Backlash Effects from Descriptive Representation

Hypothesis 1 stated that increasing minority representation would improve minority citizens' views of the outgroup and worsen majority citizens' views. This hypothesis is closely related to how the international community pressures country leaders to diversify their cabinets with the hope of improving outgroup attitudes. Thus, my expectation is that adding Albanian cabinet ministers will improve Albanians' outgroup views and worsen Macedonians' outgroup views. Figure 1 shows the marginal effects for adding one or ten Albanians to a 25 member cabinet. Zero ministers is the reference level. The marginal effects for adding six ministers are in between the results for one and ten and are included in the full results in SI.4.¹⁰ Marginal effects are displayed on the x axis. The sets of dependent variables — cabinet affect, cabinet perceptions, outgroup attitudes, and additional mechanisms — are grouped.

Starting with cabinet affect, Macedonian respondents reacted strongly and predictably to the presence of ten Albanian ministers, significantly increasing unpleasant cabinet affect. At the same time, fewer Macedonian respondents experienced mixed affect. Thus, extreme overrepresentation of Albanians did generate affective reactions in line with the expectations for Hypothesis 1. Albanians' cabinet affect did not change compared to the baseline condition of zero Albanian ministers. At least for cabinet affect, increasing descriptive representation

¹⁰That the marginal effects for six ministers are in between one and ten is itself interesting and suggests future work focused on the sensitivity respondents have to the number of descriptive representatives.

Figure 1: Descriptive Representation



Marginal effects plots from linear regression models with robust standard errors. All dependent variables normalized from 0 to 1. Reference level is 0 Albanian ministers.

has a strong backlash effect without any compensating positive attitudes from the minority group. Importantly for the validity of the survey experiment, this movement on affect also provides reassurance that the treatment was not weak and that respondents were reacting to the treatment conditions.

Moving to perceptions about the cabinet, Macedonians felt that the cabinet with ten Albanian ministers was less representative and less trustworthy. Albanians did react negatively to the cabinet with a single Albanian minister and felt that this cabinet was significantly less representative than a cabinet with no Albanian ministers. The marginal effects for cabinet representation with one or ten ministers are indistinguishable. Descriptive representation may simply act to ethnicize perceptions of the cabinet, provoking this counter-intuitive reaction from Albanians.

Descriptive representation had similarly mixed results when examining overall outgroup attitudes. Macedonians perceived higher equality and were significantly more likely to be willing to talk to outgroup members when there was only one Albanian minister in the cabinet. Albanians felt strongly that cabinets with ten Albanian ministers create an environment where the country is a collection of individuals, not a single group. Here Macedonians exhibited a backlash effect resulting from descriptive representation, and Albanians again seemed to indicate that increasing ethnic cabinet representation made ethnicity more salient and divided Albanians and Macedonians further.

Finally, moving to the additional mechanism questions, Macedonians were significantly less satisfied with the representation they received in the cabinet when there were ten Albanian ministers, but Albanians' feelings of representation did not significantly improve. There were positive, but not significant, marginal effects for Albanians' feelings that the cabinet would benefit them and that they were satisfied with their level of representation when there were ten Albanian ministers, but the Macedonian backlash to over-representation was stronger than any improved Albanian attitudes. Most interestingly, Macedonians and Albanians reacted in opposite ways to whether ministers were working for themselves or for

the good of the country as the number of Albanian ministers increased. Macedonians felt that increasing Albanian representation led to ministers working for only their own benefit, whereas Albanians felt that increasing Albanian representation meant that ministers were working for the good of the country. This item provides support for Hypothesis 1: increasing coethnic representation increased feelings that ministers were working for the good of the country.

These results are in line with linear hypothesis tests comparing the point estimates for each level of Albanian descriptive representation (see SI.5). Macedonians exhibited a backlash effect when there were ten Albanian ministers, feeling that such a cabinet was less representative and less trustworthy than a cabinet with a single Albanian minister. Albanians felt that the cabinet with ten Albanian ministers was more of a model for their behavior than was a cabinet with only one Albanian minister. Macedonians were significantly less satisfied with their level of representation when there were ten Albanians compared to only one, and Albanians were more satisfied when there were ten Albanians compared to only one.

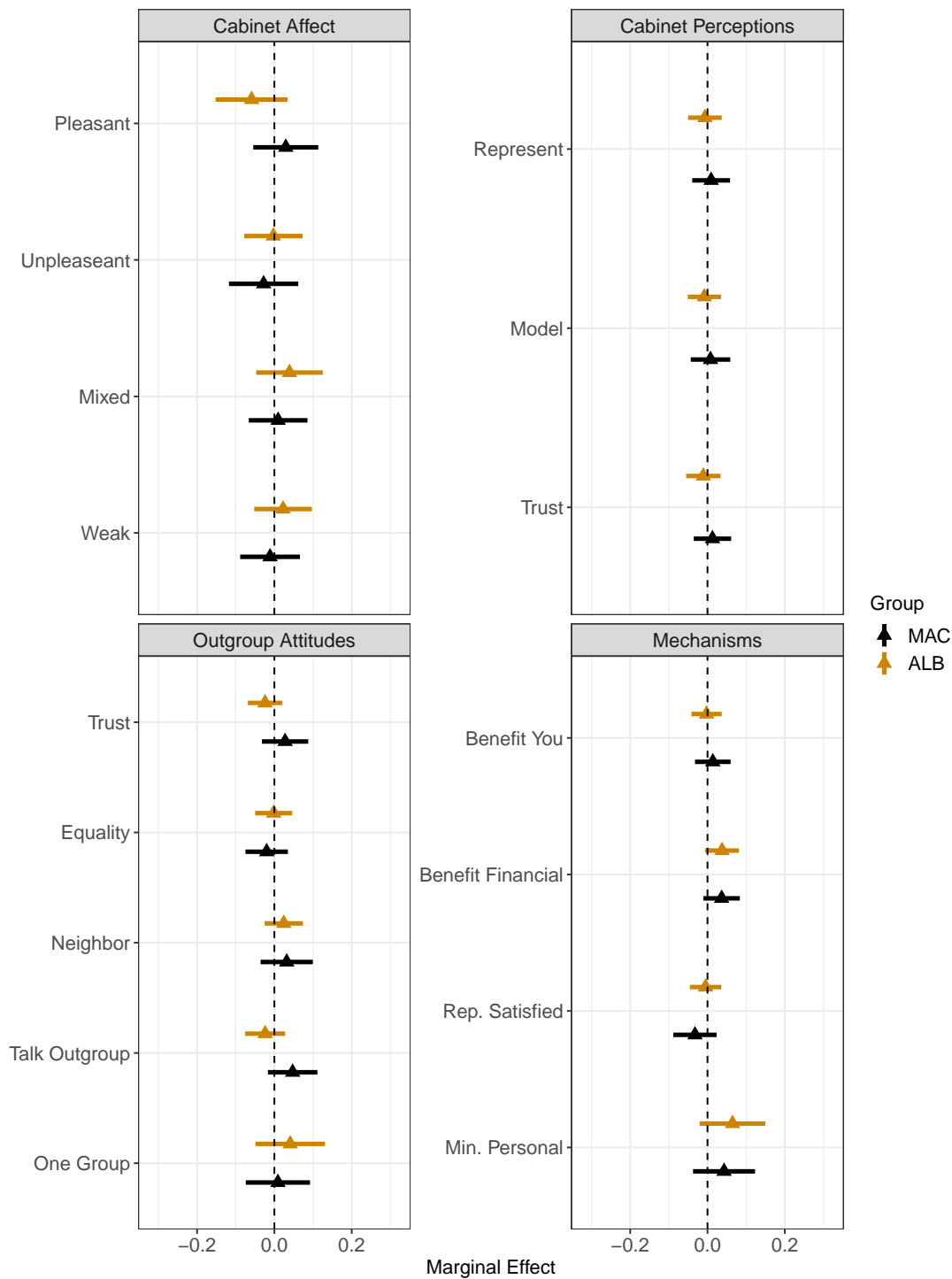
Clearly, Hypothesis 1 is only partially supported. Macedonians exhibited a strong backlash to increased Albanian representation, and Albanians' attitudes only slightly improved. It is certainly not the case that increasing descriptive representation universally improves citizens' views of the outgroup or even improves said views on balance, as those in the international community pushing for increased ethnic representation might hope.

No Effects of Substantive Representation

Moving to substantive representation, Figure 2 displays marginal effects plots for the dichotomous substantive representation treatment, where point estimates and confidence intervals indicate the marginal effect for respondents receiving the treatment relative to the control condition. As with descriptive representation, Hypothesis 2 states that increasing minority substantive representation will improve minority citizens' views of the outgroup and worsen

majority citizens' views.

Figure 2: Substantive Representation



Marginal effects plots from linear regression models with robust standard errors. All dependent variables normalized from 0 to 1. Reference level is no substantive representation.

Neither Macedonians nor Albanians reacted to substantive representation: cabinet affect was unchanged, cabinet perceptions were unchanged, and overall outgroup attitudes were unchanged. Interestingly, Albanians believed that substantive representation would lead to them benefiting financially. This is exactly the expected mechanism: Albanians perceived that they will receive financial benefits and they then attributed these benefits to the cabinet and its collection of Albanian and Macedonian ministers. Thus, Albanians do receive the treatment and perceive the expected benefit, but the attribution piece is missing. Albanians' opinions about the cabinet do not improve and neither do their outgroup attitudes. It is more difficult to account for substantive representation and to identify the individual or group of ministers who provided these financial resources, especially compared to the ease with which one can figure out the number of coethnic cabinet ministers. The attribution problem may be one reason why Hypothesis 2 is not supported.

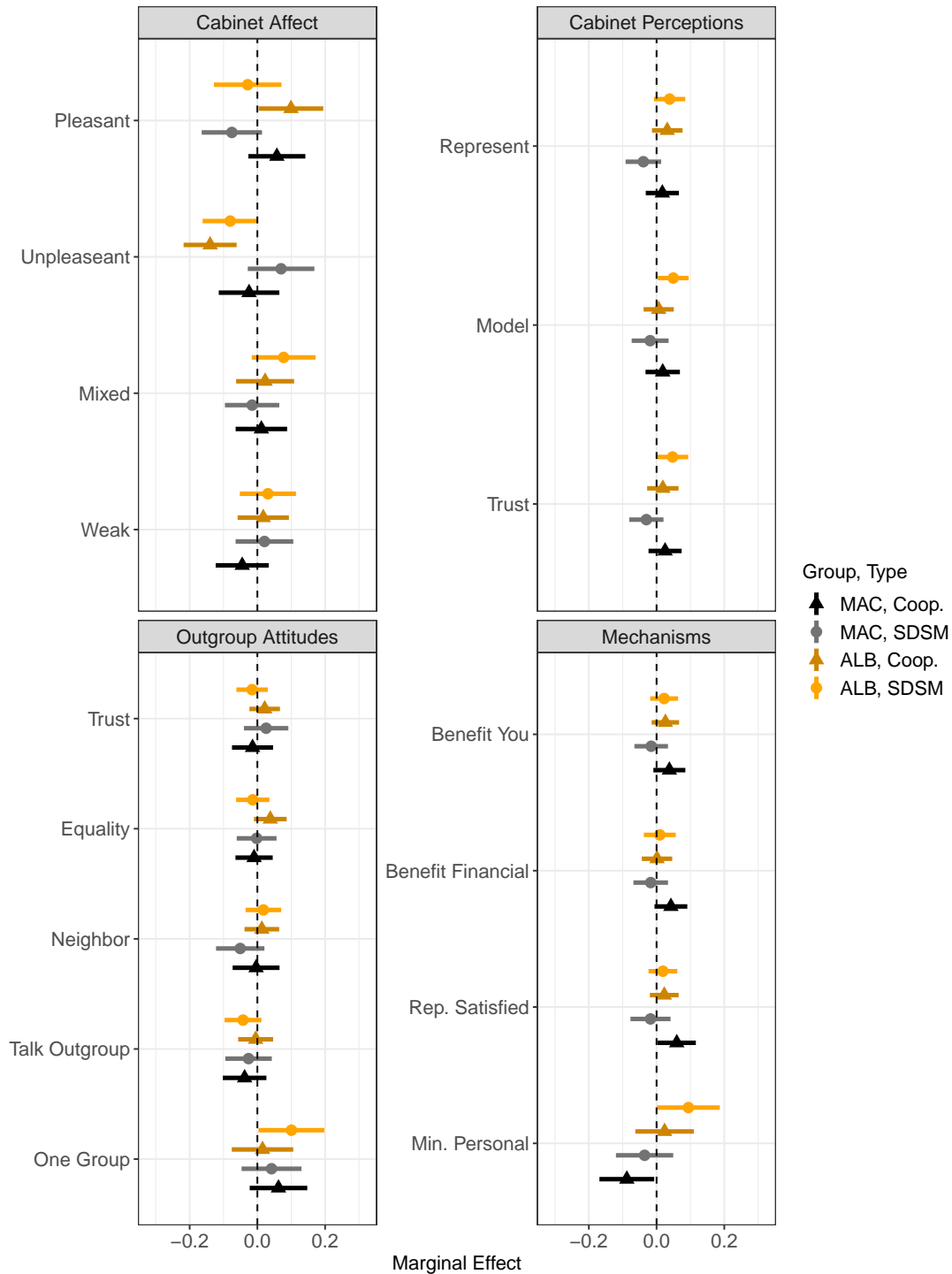
Cooperation Helps Somewhat

Finally, Figure 3 displays the marginal effects for the SDSM and Cooperation treatments relative to each of their control conditions. I argue in Hypothesis 3 that cooperation of either variety should improve citizens' views of the outgroup.

Starting with cabinet affect, Macedonians did not differentiate between cabinets with ministerial cooperation and those without. Albanians felt significantly more pleasant and significantly less unpleasant about the cooperative cabinet, in line with Hypothesis 3. Macedonians exhibited a backlash effect when there was an Albanian SDSM minister, significantly decreasing pleasant affect as Albanians significantly decreased unpleasant affect. Cooperation does not universally promote positive affect as Hypothesis 3 expects.

Cabinet perceptions among Macedonians were unchanged when ministers cooperated with each other. Albanians' did not react to the cooperation treatment, but did increase trust in the cabinet and their perception that the cabinet was a model for interethnic behavior when there was an Albanian SDSM minister.

Figure 3: Cooperation



Marginal effects plots from linear regression models with robust standard errors. All dependent variables normalized from 0 to 1. Reference level is no ministerial cooperation or no SDSM Albanian ministers.

Though these results about ministerial cooperation are somewhat promising, neither Macedonians nor Albanians translated their changed affect or cabinet perceptions into improved outgroup attitudes. The only significant effect of either the cooperation treatment or SDSM Albanian minister was on Albanians' perceptions of Macedonian citizens as one group instead of a collection of individuals. Albanians significantly improved their feeling that all Macedonian citizens are one group when there was an Albanian SDSM minister, not just ministers from Albanian ethnic parties.

Moving to the mechanism questions, Macedonians believed that they would benefit financially from cooperation, they were more satisfied with their representation when cooperation occurred, and they thought that ministers were working for the good of the country when they cooperated. Albanians were not influenced by ministerial cooperation in these ways. Interestingly, Albanians believed that having an Albanian SDSM minister led to ministers working more for their own benefit and not for the good of the country. Thus, while an Albanian SDSM minister made Albanians think of citizens as a single group, it also prompted them to believe that the ministers were working for themselves. The likely explanation for this curious finding is that the SDSM is perceived as a multi-ethnic party — hence treating citizens as a single group — but the SDSM is politically not aligned with Albanian interests.

Cooperation has mixed effects. The cooperation treatment positively impacted Albanians and Macedonians, but only in certain cases. Even though affect and mechanisms all change in the expected direction, the cooperation treatment had no effect on cabinet perceptions or overall outgroup attitudes. The presence of an Albanian SDSM minister provoked some Macedonian backlash and limited improved attitudes for Albanians. Thus, Hypothesis 3 remains partially supported for some outcomes of interest and not for overall outgroup attitudes.

The size of the significant effects are moderate, though substantively meaningful. For example, adding an Albanian SDSM minister increases Albanians' perceptions that ministers are working for their own benefit by about 10%, while it reduces Macedonians' perceptions by

about 5%. That the composition of the cabinet contributes this much to citizens' perceptions of the cabinet is noteworthy.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study suggests that ethnic cabinet representation alone is not a solution to improve citizens' views of the outgroup. Of my three hypotheses about forms of perceived benefit that may influence said views, only ministerial cooperation showed promise for improving outgroup affect and perceptions of the cabinet among both majority and minority individuals. Majority respondents exhibited some backlash effects to descriptive representation, and these backlash effects were not compensated for by improved responses among minority individuals. King and Samii (2018) examine post-conflict ethnic recognition and find a complementary result, suggesting that ethnic accommodation does not work more effectively in contexts without recent, widespread ethnic violence.

The results in this study rely on a hypothetical vignette experiment in Macedonia. As mentioned earlier, the international community and leaders in many countries are working to implement ethnic representation, hoping that it will improve citizens' views of ethnic outgroups. While Macedonia's clearly defined ethnic groups make it an attractive site for an experiment, the implications about the efficacy of ethnic representation on improving citizens' outgroup views are more broadly generalizable. Further, it is unlikely that the results are due to a weak treatment. Citizens know relatively little about national cabinets, so the information that the vignette provides about different cabinet features approximates citizen knowledge. Indeed, the significant shifts in affect toward the cabinet show that respondents do take the vignette treatment as expected, but that ethnic cabinet representation is not a powerful enough influence on citizens' views of the cabinet or on outgroup attitudes.

Future research would do well to replicate the design of this study in other country contexts and to focus more closely on different aspects of ethnic cabinet representation to see

if there is some combination of descriptive and substantive representation and cooperation that improves all citizens' outgroup attitudes. A particular focus should be paid on substantive improvements in citizens' outgroup attitudes. It is quite difficult for country leaders to move their cabinets from one level to another on any attribute of the cabinet vignette. For example, shifting from no ministerial cooperation to full cooperation may take years of negotiations. As such, small, precisely estimated effects of ministerial cooperation provide little substantive benefit, and scholars should focus on major reforms that are more likely to produce substantial substantive benefits.

The experimental results initially appear to run counter to both leaders' incentives for engaging in ethnic representation and the international community's stated purpose in promoting ethnic representation. For leaders, I present some evidence that ethnic representation may not improve citizen responses because minority groups are suspicious of cabinet appointees. In a traditional patronage story, citizens elect representatives who provide them with patronage benefits. Though leaders and citizens enter into a credible commitment to exchange political support for patronage benefits, it is much more difficult for citizens to exit the bargain. Citizens only have the ability to vote out the country leader, they cannot remove an appointed cabinet minister.

Why does the international community make ethnic cabinet representation a priority if it produces at best mixed effects? International community members may misjudge the extent to which citizens pay attention to the cabinet or feel that the cabinet impacts their lives. Importantly, the results show that citizens have little faith that the cabinet will benefit them in any meaningful way. Cabinets may be appropriate ways to improve citizen views of the outgroup in some circumstances, but collusion among cabinet ministers and distrust of elected officials hampers the effectiveness of ethnic cabinet representation at improving outgroup views.

Another quite likely answer is that the international community knows that ethnic cabinet representation is not a solution to improve ethnic relations among citizens. What the

international community really wants is for political elites to get along with and to tolerate one another. However, politicians are elected by and responsible to citizens, so arguing that diversifying cabinets will directly benefit marginalized citizens is much more convincing than is simply trying to force political elites to work together. This study cannot inform whether political elites actually become more tolerant because of ethnic representation, but I do show that while ethnic representation has limited positive effects on citizens' views of the ethnic outgroup, it is not the improving force that many have hoped.

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Supplemental Information

The supplemental information for this paper can be found by clicking [here](#).