

Immigration Attitudes amongst European Muslims: Social Identity, Economic Threat and Familiar Experiences

Asma Mustafa^{a1} and Lindsay Richards^b

^a Muslims in Britain Unit, Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, Oxford, UK; ^b Centre for Social Investigation, Nuffield College, Oxford, UK

Abstract

Studies of attitudes towards immigrants have typically taken the majority perspective, focussing on the views of majority groups rather than of minority groups. However, as modern societies have grown in diversity and greater proportions of individuals within societies have migration histories; this approach has become more partial. This article uses European Social Survey Round 7 data to explore attitudes towards immigration from the perspective of Muslim Europeans. Muslim attitudes are compared to Christian and secular majority populations in eight countries with large or moderate Muslim populations in Europe (Austria, Belgium, Germany, France, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK).

We show that income has a significantly weaker effect on Muslim attitudes compared to the secular majority and that Muslims tend to hold more favourable attitudes towards migrants from poorer countries. Further, we find that Muslim attitudes towards Muslim immigrants are contingent upon religiosity to a greater degree than for non-Muslims. We therefore argue that European Muslim attitudes towards immigration are less a consequence of competition, and more in line with Social Identity Theory. The research also proposes an additional model for understanding immigration attitudes, whereby people's personal histories and experiences (and of those around them) create empathy with others across national borders.

Article History: Received 03 February 2017; Accepted 23 April 2018

Keywords: Immigration Attitudes, European Muslims, European Social Survey, Social Identity Theory, Economic threat

Introduction

European immigration has steadily increased in the last decade. The perception of host societies is in the main far from welcoming. Anti-immigration political parties are gaining electoral successⁱ, garnering members and gaining momentum, especially through their anti-immigration policies. The importance of understanding anti-immigration attitudes lies in easing social tension that is detrimental to the well-being of democracy, national cohesion and state security.

Research on immigration attitudes is usually based on data from majority viewpoints. As immigration has grown and societies have become increasingly diverse, the focus on majority attitudes has therefore led to gaps in knowledge of minority group attitudes (Just and Anderson, 2015). In order to move forward the academic enquiry into attitudes to immigrants, it is necessary to examine heterogeneity in the processes that

¹ Asma Mustafa: asma.mustafa@oxcis.ac.uk, @DrAsmaMustafa

lie behind the attitude formation of minority ethnic and religious groups. This paper focuses on the attitudes of European Muslims and compares to Europeans of other faith and non.

We select 'Muslims' as our minority group of interest for several reasons. Muslims in Europe are regularly accused of non-integration and of having differing values and attitudes. This research attempts to explore if different attitudes on immigration are found when compared to other European groups. European Muslims are also a minority that is much troubled. The European social climate surrounding Muslims over the previous decade or more can be described as subtle hysteria. There is a genuine 'fear' of Islam and Muslims in many European populations, and whether real or imagined, Muslim citizens themselves are perceived as a threat (Caldwell, 2010; Phillips, 2006). Extensive Islamophobia has been long documented in Europe (Allen, 2010; Amnesty International, 2012; Pew Report, 2012; European Islamophobia Reports, 2015) as well as political policies that limit religious observance, including limiting minaret building and banning headscarves. If perceived discrimination among Muslims is widespread, it would be interesting to note if perceived discrimination effects views on non-Muslim immigration and whether Muslim-only immigration is favoured among the group. Anecdotally, European Muslim voices are also being heard that resist further 'Muslim' immigration. Critical attitudes towards immigration from those who themselves were migrants or the children of migrants is not necessarily due to racism or cultural superiority; but may be in part due to fears of being targeted for abuse, harassment and discrimination due to religious visibility and being seen as 'foreigners' rather than being accepted as long- settled and integrated citizens. European Muslims may also fear the further competitiveness in jobs and housing at a time of limited resource availability and employment opportunities.

Theory, Aims and Hypotheses

Realistic Group Conflict theories developed in the 1950s. Focusing on the role of prejudice in resource competition, Allport (1954) noted that individuals linked their own identity and material interests to that of their group. Thus, people are aware of potential changes (negative or positive) to their status. This produces 'perceived' competitiveness between groups for resources and group dominance. Blumer (1958) proposed that in-group/outgroup competition stems from in-group fear that outgroup(s) are demanding shares of resources and rights that the in-group perceive to belong to them alone. Barth's 'Ethnic groups and boundaries' (1969) argues specifically that ethnic groups make choices based on their own group interests through 'boundary maintenance', creating social distances between themselves and other groups in order to protect the resources, relationships and inter-cultural assets.

The mid 1970s saw the development of Social Identity Theory. An influential body of work on concepts of Social Identity Theory belongs to Henri Tajfel (Tajfel, 1981). Tajfel's theory of social identity explored the importance that social groups play in influencing the self-identification and categorisation that individuals place on themselves and those around them. Tajfel believed that group belonging provided individuals with three elements: The reason to belong with the group; an assessment on which to base positive and negative associations with other 'out' groups and finally the emotional ties among the group itself. Individuals seek to improve group status in effect to improve their own self value.

More recent analysis of the relationships between in-groups/out-groups or majority/minority groups has found that variations of the above theories are relevant. Bobo and Hutchings (1996) use data including African American, Asian, White and Latino respondents in Los Angeles, USA. They found that the historical context is influential in determining attitudes, as well as prejudice and competition over group interests. In their research, Whites perceived African Americans competitively, but differently from attitudes to Asians and Latinos, mainly (but not solely) due to concepts of social order.

Gorodzeisky and Glickman (2017) analyse immigration attitudes of ethnic Russians (majority) compared to Russian ethnic minority groups. The exploration highlights the relevance of historical context, alongside the perceived threat expressed by groups in Blumer's 'Group Position Theory' (1958). Gorodzeisky and Glickman (2017) argue that since minority and majority groups perceive threat differently due to historical experiences, the attitudes towards immigrants are driven by different mechanisms (Gorodzeisky and Glickman, 2017: 16). In fact, self-interest is a stronger driver of anti-immigrant attitudes among non-Russian ethnic minority groups in Russia than the majority ethnic Russians, who are more likely to be swayed by national sentiment.

Alongside this, some anti-immigrant intolerance has been found to be determined by threat to the Social Identity Group (Cohrs and Stelzl, 2010; Fetzer, 2000; Sniderman et al, 2004). If people feel that their social identity is threatened, or they are socially isolated, disenfranchised or alienated, they are likely to have negative attitudes towards immigrants because individuals want to experience a sense of 'belonging' and see immigrants as a threat to their likely connection to a/their group.

The strong identification with the 'In-group' leads to group conflict based on need for control, superiority and 'In-group' favouritism (Hodson et al, 2009). This also creates stereotypes, feelings of threat and the development of prejudice (Blumer, 1958; Bonacich, 1972; Quillian, 1996). However, immigrant groups vary, and so the 'In-group' (or majority) express threat by challenging 'Out-groups' (or minority) values, culture and norms (Brader et al, 2008; Strabac and Listhaug, 2008). The more different the immigrants are from the majority group, the more likely we are to see antipathy – this is especially the case when both ethnic, religious and linguistic differences are found.

We anticipate European Muslims would have preferences for further Muslim immigration (and similarly we expect the majority race to have a preference for majority race immigrants).

H₁: Muslims will prefer Muslim immigrants over others, while non-Muslims will prefer immigrants that are of the same race as the majority population

The other main argument for negative attitude formation towards immigration relies on the impact of competition and conflict. Individuals may perceive other 'Out-group' members as direct competition for jobs, housing and welfare benefits. This develops into a 'prejudice' through the assumption that all individuals in the 'Out-group' are competition. This self-interest can be determined by showing that prejudice towards all 'Out-groups' depends on personal economic circumstances. This may be the case for individuals who have low social distance from minorities, but feel threatened economically by them all the same.

We expect socio-economic standing to matter to Muslims; however, given that we expect isolation, religiosity, and immigrant status to be salient issues (see below), we hypothesise that economic threat has lesser explanatory power to explain attitudes than for non-Muslim groups.

H₂: Individual level socio-economic standing will be less salient for Muslim attitude formation than for other groups, and Muslims will use economic criteria less than other groups to make distinctions between types of migrant

While conflict theory prioritises the negative impact that immigrant numbers have on negative immigration attitudes due to intergroup competition, Contact Theory posits the opposite argument – namely that regular intergroup contact reduces prejudicial attitudes and negative perceptions of minorities. In 'The Nature of Prejudice' Allport (1954) hypothesized that prejudice can be reduced through contact between majority and minority groups, especially if supported through law and civil society institutions.

Research providing evidence for the impact that contact with members of other groups has on individual attitudes called 'Intergroup Contact Theory' (Hewstone, 2015) posits that positive intergroup attitudes are

influenced by constructive contact (Hewstone and Swart, 2011; Hodson et al, 2013 and Pettigrew and Tropp, 2011). European based research highlights evidence that positive intergroup contact guards against the negative impact of the social context, essentially shielding against anti-immigrant attitudes and reducing the perceived threat of high European immigration (McLaren, 2003; for focus on Germany see Stolle et al, 2013; for focus on UK see Schmid et al, 2014).

Although contact theory has plenty of empirical support in explaining favourable attitudes of ethnic majority populations, we reflect that most Muslims experience contact with the majority race and will, as such, be a less salient issue.

H₃: While contact with ethnically diverse others is likely to be of importance to the majority population, we expect this to be of reduced salience for the formation of attitudes among Muslims

In addition, immigrant status has been shown to be linked to more favourable attitudes towards immigrants (Just and Anderson, 2015; Ford and Heath, 2014). Here, the mechanisms of identity and contact are also relevant but in a more abstract sense. Shared experiences with other immigrants may bring about extended empathy outside of the ethnic group as Just and Anderson (2015) describe: “Though migrants hail from many different nations, they all have gone through the process of moving to another country – an experience that may create a sense of solidarity and kinship with other migrants” (Just and Anderson, 2015: 189). This familiarity with immigration, whether directly or through ethnic minority heritage, influences immigration attitudes and is also highlighted by Ford and Heath in analysis of the British Social Attitudes data (Ford and Heath, 2014: 82).

The majority of European Muslims have direct experience of migration (see Table 3), and so we expect that Muslims will hold more favourable attitudes overall than the majority population, and that those more-recently arrived in terms of immigrant ‘generation’ may be more favourable than second or third generation for whom attitudes may be more assimilated with the majority population.

H₄: Muslims will hold more favourable attitudes towards immigrants overall than the majority population in the same country, and 1st generation Muslims will hold more favourable attitudes than 2nd and 3rd generation Muslims

At the individual level prejudice is reduced with levels of education (Hello et al, 2002), and with higher socio-economic status (Semyonov et al, 2004). Age is also a discriminating factor, with older people more likely to express prejudice than younger people (Gorodzeisky, 2011).

Another variable that is relevant to this analysis is that of religious values. Among the religious and non-religious we can find concern for humanity, promoting compassion for those in need and the less privileged. Numerous studies have found that those who belong to religious ‘communities’ or active members of religious organisations/institutions, have high levels of institutional trust, consider they have a political voice and are less likely to have anti-immigrant attitudes (Boomgaarden and Freire, 2009).

In the Islamic faith, value is placed on social justice and communal solidarity (Eickelman and Piscatori, 1996: 21). The commitment to poverty alleviation is most clearly indicated through the ‘Zakat’ⁱⁱ - one of the five mandatory acts prescribed for Muslims. Social justice and a commitment to poverty alleviation is a pillar of the faith and a possible explanation for attitudes towards redistribution (Fish, 2011). Due to the specific emphasis on communal solidarity and poverty alleviation within the teachings of Islam, we expect self-defined religiosity to be associated with more favourable attitudes.

H₅: Religiosity will be associated with higher levels of support for immigrants among Muslims than among those with no religion

Finally, Muslims are at the centre of a subtle hysteria, which has brought about increasing levels of discrimination, and in addition to socio-economic disadvantage (Heath and Li, 2015), we expect that alienation from the host society (in terms of perceived discrimination and belonging to country) will be an important driver of attitudes among Muslims.

H₆: Isolation from society (operationalized in terms of closeness to country and perceived discrimination) will be associated with lower levels of support for immigration among Muslims, to a greater extent than other groups

In addressing these hypotheses we pay attention to country differences (and indeed similarities). We also use two different points of comparison; firstly we compare Muslims to the whole population, and secondly, due to salient issues around religiosity, we compare to Christians and to those not belonging to a particular religion.

A careful approach needs to be taken when treating Muslims in Europe as a homogenous group. European Muslims have varied ethno-linguistic heritage, diverse migration trajectories and history; they also experience host country ‘integration’ differently, are seen as citizens in dissimilar ways and are permitted to practice Islam in varied ways. Are we able to find ‘one voice’ in which European Muslims view immigration? Or will we find greater similarity between Muslims and their fellow citizens?

Data

We use data from Round 7 of the European Social Survey (ESS), for which the fieldwork was completed in 2014/15. The study, which aims to monitor changing public attitudes and values within Europe, employs random probability sampling of private households, and the data are collected in face-to-face interviews. We select a subset for analysis consisting of European countries in which there is a moderate or large Muslim population: Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Sweden. Survey response rates range from 31% in Germany to 59% in the Netherlands. In these countries between 2 and 5% of the survey sample self-identify as belonging to Islam (see Table 1)ⁱⁱⁱ.

We only use the most recent round of ESS for the main analysis as it includes a detailed module on immigration attitudes not available in other rounds, in particular attitudes towards Muslims and questions on inter-group contact.

Table 1 – Our subsample of interest (unweighted)

Country	Full Sample N	Belong to any religion N	Belong to Islam N	Of sample, % Muslim
Austria	1,795	1303	69	4%
Belgium	1,769	708	90	5%
Switzerland	1,532	969	60	4%
Germany	3,045	1673	53	2%
France	1,917	948	104	5%
UK	2,264	1118	70	3%
Netherlands	1,919	718	60	3%
Sweden	1,791	539	40	2%
Total	16,032	7,976	546	3.4%

European Social Survey round 7; selected countries have moderate or large Muslim populations

Dependent variables

The survey included a detailed battery of questions on attitudes to immigration, and we use the following questions as dependent variables:

To what extent do you think [country] should allow 1) Muslims from other countries 2) people of the same race or ethnic group to come and live in [country]?

And how about people from the 3) poorer countries in Europe 4) poorer countries outside Europe?

For all these questions the response codes were ‘allow many to come and live here’, ‘allow some’, ‘allow a few’ and ‘allow none’, which we treat as ordinal in the multivariate analysis. In Table 2, we can see that there is a clearly preferred type of migrant; just 5% say allow no immigrants and 26% say allow many immigrants of the same race as most country’s people (we use the term ‘majority race’ from hereon), compared to 13% who say allow no and 18% saying allow many Muslim immigrants. Attitudes towards immigrants from poor countries are broadly similar to allowing Muslim immigrants, with a slight preference for European over non-European.

Table 2 – Response frequencies; average across our 8 countries of interest

	Muslims	Majority race	Poor European	Poor non-European
Allow none	13%	5%	10%	13%
Allow a few	26%	17%	27%	30%
Allow some	43%	52%	46%	42%
Allow many	18%	26%	17%	15%

Independent Variables

Our main explanatory variable is religious identification and we compare outcomes for Muslims (3.4% of the sample), Christians (all denominations grouped, 44.8%), and those who say they do not belong to particular religion (50.3%). Those belonging to other religions are dropped from the analysis (1.5%).

While the relative power of cultural and economic threat can be inferred by comparing patterns of response in the various dependent variables, we also test specific hypotheses through a range of explanatory variables. To test the relative importance of belonging and alienation, we include a measure of country closeness based on the question *How close do you feel to [country]*? Where the response options are not close at all, not close, close and very close; we include a measure of whether the respondent reports being a member of a group that is discriminated against (for any reason). We examine the relative effects of economic position by measuring income (household income measured in country deciles).

Contact and exposure to individuals of different ethnic backgrounds is operationalized with the variables: *how would you describe the area where you currently live?* 1) An area where almost nobody 2) Some people 3) Many people are of a different race or ethnic group is of a different race or ethnic group from most [country] people.

Finally, we measure religiosity. The question of religiosity is asked to the whole sample, including those who say they do not belong to a particular religion: *Regardless of whether you belong to a particular religion, how religious would you say you are? (0-10 scale)*. The literature on ‘believing without belonging’ (Davie, 1990) demonstrates a separation (conceptual and empirical) between religious affiliation and behaviours from religious beliefs; thus it is not unexpected that the majority of the ‘secular’ in our sample give themselves a

score above zero on the religiosity scale. It is highly likely that religiosity as a subjective concept is interpreted differently according to religious and social context. Independence from established religions, for example, may be associated with modern spirituality rather than traditional spirituality (Saroglou, 2011). We find large differences between religious group (Muslims average 7.4, Christians 5.9, non-affiliated 2.4) we therefore re-code into high, medium, and low religiosity for each group. In doing so, we address the issue that religiosity may be interpreted differently according to religious affiliation, and our resulting variable is therefore *relative* to others within the same religious grouping.

For immigrant generation, we code any respondent who reports being born outside of the country as first generation. Respondents born in the country, but who report that their parents were born in a different country, are coded as second generation. Third generation includes everyone else including the majority population and those who have just one parent born overseas.

We include age, sex and education as controls in all models as well as dummy variables for country using France as the reference category due to its larger subsample size. Education is measured using the ISCED 7-point scale which is a harmonized measure designed for comparative analysis (European Social Survey, 2015).

Table 3 – Descriptive statistics for explanatory variables

	Scale variables - means		
	Muslims	Christians	No religion
Education (1-7 scale)	3.3	3.8	4.0
Religiosity* (1-10)	7.4	5.9	2.4
Age	36.2	52.5	45.8
Income (in deciles within country)	4.5	5.7	5.9
	Categorical variables - %		
	Muslims	Christians	No religion
Do not feel close to country at all	1%	1%	2%
Feel discriminated against	37%	6%	8%
1st Generation immigrant	65%	12%	10%
2nd Generation immigrant	27%	3%	3%
Female	49%	55%	48%
Live in ethnically diverse area	91%	59%	61%

* Religiosity means are before recoding to high-medium-low based on tertiles within religious group

Table 3 shows that the Muslims in our sample differ from the others in several ways. Most notably they differ in socio-economic status; average income is 4.5 (on the 10-point scale) compared to 5.7 and 5.9 of the Christians and the non-religious.

The Muslims in our sample are also younger than the rest of the sample with an average age of 36 compared to 52 for Christian and 45 for non-religious. It is not surprising, given the relatively recent migration patterns of many Muslim groups, that the majority are 1st generation immigrants (67%) (compared to 12% among Christian and 10% among the secular) or 2nd generation (27%) (compared to 3% in both other groups).

The vast majority, 91%, report that they live in an ethnically diverse area compared to around 60% of the other groups. Another important difference is that large numbers of Muslims reporting group discrimination, a finding that confirms studies of Islamophobia (European Islamophobia Reports, 2015; Allen, 2010; Amnesty International, 2012; Pew Report, 2012).

Results 1: Average attitudes by country (bivariate analysis)

We begin with a bivariate analysis of attitudes towards the various immigrant groups by country. For reporting simplicity, we here recode the response codes into favourable (allow some + allow many) and not favourable (allow a few + allow none). Table 4 shows the country averages and demonstrates that Sweden is by far the most favourable in their attitudes across the board, with over 80% saying some or many immigrants of all types should be allowed to come and live in Sweden. Austria, on the other hand, has some of the least favourable attitudes from these eight countries, with between 44% and 49% support for non-majority race immigrants. Austria is also a country where immigrants of the majority race are preferred over other types of migrant by a large margin (24.8 percentage points), as are Switzerland (28.9 point gap) and Germany (24.6 point gap).

Muslims in all countries hold more favourable attitudes towards Muslims than the general population, and in most cases Muslims are preferred over other types of migrant, thus supporting Hypothesis 1. From the small sample of Muslims in Sweden, 100% say allow some or many; in France this also reaches 97.6% and in Germany 89.0%. The Netherlands makes an interesting exception here: 71% of Muslims are supportive of other Muslims coming to live in the Netherlands, a rate that is similar to, but slightly lower than, support for immigrants of majority race and from poor countries. However, Muslims are also generally positive towards the majority race of the country they are living in, and in Switzerland, Belgium and the UK, the level of support is almost identical to support for Muslims.

A number of differences are evident in terms of Muslim attitudes when compared to the country average. We can see that Muslims hold more favourable attitudes than average in many cases, providing initial support of Hypothesis 4. Of Muslims in Austria, for example, 59.1% would allow immigrants from poor non-European countries to come and live in Austria, compared to 44.1% of Austrians on average. Muslims hold more favourable attitudes towards poor migrants, by a similar margin, in the UK, Netherlands, and France. In Belgium, this pattern also holds but is more evident in attitudes towards non-Europeans than towards immigrants from poor European countries.

It is interesting that Muslims also hold more favourable attitudes towards the majority race in Austria (by 8.3 percentage points), France (by 12 points), and the UK (by 15.7 points). In these cases, as hypothesised, immigrant status itself may be a salient group boundary that operates beyond ethnicity.

Table 4 Percentage allow some/many; average across our 8 countries of interest

	Muslims on Muslim immigration	Country Average on Muslims	Muslims on Majority Race	Country average on Majority Race	Muslims on Poor European	Country average on poor European	Muslims on Poor non-European	Country average on Poor non-European	Muslims Hi-lo differential	Country average Hi-lo differential
Austria	85.0%	45.8%	77.2%	61.2%	68.9%	48.7%	59.1%	44.1%	25.9	24.8
Belgium	74.4%	52.7%	70.5%	63.6%	73.3%	61.6%	64.8%	52.4%	10.8	20.9
Switzerland	77.2%	56.2%	74.6%	57.9%	84.4%	64.3%	56.9%	55.5%	20.3	28.9
Germany	89.0%	71.3%	77.3%	58.5%	90.9%	72.7%	61.7%	66.3%	30.5	24.6
France	97.6%	65.3%	86.2%	71.4%	74.2%	61.2%	65.3%	52.0%	32.3	22.2
UK	80.1%	54.9%	79.5%	64.8%	63.8%	51.2%	60.1%	42.6%	20.0	21.1
Netherlands	71.0%	53.9%	74.8%	73.9%	72.0%	58.6%	67.7%	53.3%	7.2	18.8
Sweden	100.0%	81.3%	94.9%	89.7%	94.5%	88.3%	94.7%	87.4%	10.3	13.2

Results 2: Individual-level drivers of attitudes (multivariate analysis)

In this second section of analysis, our focus shifts to an examination of the drivers of these attitudes. Given the ordinal nature of our response variables, we estimate a series of ordered logistic regression models. In Table 5 we show the results of the multivariate analysis for the full sample. Confirming our descriptive findings, at least to some extent, we find that Muslims are more positive towards Muslim immigrants and towards poorer non-Europeans, even after accounting for individual socio-demographic factors.

The dummy variables for countries also largely confirm our descriptive analysis, with differences persisting after individual level controls. We see that in comparison to France, the omitted category, Germany and Sweden are more positive towards all types of immigrant while the UK is more negative. Austria and Belgium are similar or more negative than France. On the other hand, Switzerland and the Netherlands are more negative in terms of attitudes towards Muslims but not towards other immigrant types.

In Table 6, we present the interaction terms of Christian and Muslim with each explanatory variable, where the reference category is the non-affiliated. To avoid over-specifying the models, we add the interactions one variable at a time, though with all the controls included in each model. Turning firstly to the control variables, we see that age is associated with less favourable attitudes towards immigrants of all types. The interaction terms are in the main not statistically different from the average, with the exception that age appears to matter more for Muslims in their attitudes towards poor European immigrants. In the main model, we can see that women are slightly more favourable towards immigrants from poorer non-European countries, though not the other groups. The interaction terms suggest that there are no differences between the non-affiliated and Christians or Muslims with regard to the effect of being female.

Education is associated with more favourable attitudes in general, with the main effects being of similar magnitude across all four outcomes. However, here we see that the interaction terms are negative and significant for both Christians and Muslims, suggesting that education is of less explanatory value than among the non-affiliated. This is particularly evident for Muslims where the coefficient estimates are similar in magnitude to the main effect.

Turning to our explanatory variables, firstly the effect of income, we see that higher incomes are associated with more favourable attitudes. The coefficient estimate is a little higher for Majority race immigrants ($b = 0.045$, $se = 0.005$) and Muslims ($b = 0.034$, $se = 0.004$), compared to immigrants from poorer European ($b = 0.018$, $se = 0.005$) and non-European countries ($b = 0.020$, $se = 0.004$). Here too we find statistically significant interaction terms: income has significantly smaller effect for Muslim attitudes towards Muslim and Majority race immigrants. The interaction terms for Muslim attitudes toward immigrants from poorer countries are also negative but do not reach statistical significance; thus hypothesis 2 is largely supported. Income also plays a weaker role in Christian attitudes towards immigrants from poorer countries.

Regarding contact with ethnically diverse others, we can see the average effect, as we would expect, is positive. Living in an area with some or many minorities is associated with more favourable attitudes than living in an area with none or few minorities, and it is interesting that the effect of 'many' or 'some' are similar in size. The interaction terms show there are no significant differences; thus we find that counter to our Hypothesis 3, local diversity is of equal importance in the formation of Muslim preferences than in the preference formation of others.

Turning to the effects of immigrant generation, we find that neither 1st nor 2nd are any different to the reference category on any of the four outcomes. Further, we see that none of the interaction terms are statistically significant and thus the second part of Hypothesis 4 is not supported.

On the effect of religiosity, we find in the main models that medium and high levels are both associated with more favourable attitudes compared to low religiosity. The interaction terms largely confirm our Hypothesis 5; despite the fact that our measure of religiosity is relativized to the group, they show that religiosity has a stronger effect on attitudes among Muslims. The interaction term is statistically significant in the case of attitudes towards Muslim immigrants, and immigrants from poorer countries in Europe and outside Europe.

Finally, for those reporting group discrimination we find that there are no effects on average for the overall sample. However, this average clearly masks variation by group as we find significant interaction terms with being Muslim for attitudes for immigrants from poorer countries. The perception of discrimination makes attitudes more favourable to these two groups of immigrants, thereby providing partial support for hypothesis 6. On the other hand, not feeling close to one's country of residence is associated with less favourable attitudes towards all four types of immigrant, but there are no significant differences between the non-affiliated and Muslims in this regard. The particular form of isolation therefore appears to have differential effects: reporting group discrimination makes for more favourable attitudes among Muslims but not among other groups while a lack of belonging makes for less favourable attitudes equally across Muslims, Christians and the non-affiliated.

Robustness checks

The bivariate analysis suggested that Muslims in six of the eight countries look more similar to each other in terms of the attitudinal profiles, with the Netherlands and Switzerland looking exceptional in the lack of distinctions between immigrant groups. For this reason, we re-specify the models on the reduced six-country sample to check that our main findings hold. We find just one major difference in the coefficient estimates: in the reduced sample the interaction term for Christians and discrimination is negative and statistically significant on attitudes towards Muslim immigrants.

We chose to restrict our main analysis to Round 7 of the European Social Survey given its detailed module on immigration attitudes allowing us to test hypotheses about attitudes towards In-Group immigration and the effect of contact. However, as a robustness check we pool all 7 rounds of the survey and re-test a subset of our hypotheses for which we have salient variables. For attitudes towards the majority group and people from poorer non-European countries, our findings hold and in particular our results on the effect of discrimination and religiosity among Muslims become more robust.

Table 5 – Ordered logit models for allowing different types of immigrant

	Allow Muslims b/se	Allow Majority b/se	Allow poorer Europeans b/se	Allow poorer non-Europeans b/se
Age	-0.009** [0.001]	0.001 [0.001]	-0.008** [0.001]	-0.009** [0.001]
Female	-0.05 [0.033]	-0.018 [0.034]	0.012 [0.033]	0.074* [0.033]
Christian	-0.081* [0.035]	0.054 [0.036]	-0.004 [0.035]	-0.028 [0.035]
Muslim	1.020** [0.103]	0.083 [0.108]	0.158 [0.106]	0.422** [0.104]
Education (ISCED 7)	0.269** [0.010]	0.250** [0.010]	0.225** [0.010]	0.239** [0.010]
Generation 1	-0.035 [0.054]	0.094 [0.056]	0.064 [0.055]	0.037 [0.054]
Generation 2	0.089 [0.095]	0.152 [0.097]	0.032 [0.096]	-0.048 [0.094]
Household income	0.055** [0.007]	0.052** [0.007]	0.034** [0.007]	0.039** [0.006]
Some minorities in area	0.298** [0.036]	0.202** [0.038]	0.199** [0.036]	0.266** [0.036]
Many minorities in area	0.170** [0.051]	0.154** [0.052]	0.192** [0.051]	0.227** [0.050]
Discriminated	-0.035 [0.064]	-0.069 [0.066]	-0.009 [0.064]	-0.023 [0.064]
Not close to country	-0.530** [0.167]	-0.813** [0.175]	-0.749** [0.172]	-0.624** [0.173]
Medium religiosity	0.120** [0.039]	0.140** [0.041]	0.193** [0.039]	0.141** [0.039]
High religiosity	0.107** [0.041]	0.165** [0.042]	0.211** [0.041]	0.192** [0.041]
Austria	-0.531** [0.070]	-0.024 [0.073]	-0.313** [0.070]	-0.087 [0.070]
Belgium	-0.600** [0.066]	-0.202** [0.069]	-0.091 [0.066]	-0.069 [0.066]
Switzerland	-0.264** [0.070]	0.414** [0.073]	0.178* [0.070]	0.288** [0.070]
Germany	0.321** [0.059]	1.154** [0.063]	0.527** [0.060]	0.632** [0.059]
UK	-0.303** [0.064]	-0.558** [0.066]	-0.415** [0.064]	-0.301** [0.064]
Sweden	1.071** [0.068]	1.283** [0.070]	1.468** [0.069]	1.786** [0.069]
Netherlands	-0.281** [0.065]	-0.130 [0.067]	-0.055 [0.065]	0.161* [0.065]
Constant 1 (none – a few)	-1.124** [0.094]	-1.585** [0.103]	-1.339** [0.095]	-0.820** [0.094]
Constant 2 (a few – some)	0.527** [0.093]	0.345** [0.097]	0.478** [0.093]	0.978** [0.093]
Constant 3 (some – many)	2.857** [0.096]	3.089** [0.101]	2.899** [0.097]	3.309** [0.098]
<i>N observations</i>	<i>13332</i>	<i>13412</i>	<i>13426</i>	<i>13413</i>

*Coefficients are log odds; Significance levels: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$*

Table 6 Table of interaction terms, reference group is the non-affiliated

	Allow Muslims		Allow Majority race		Allow Poorer Europeans		Allow Poorer non-Europeans	
	Christian b/se	Muslim b/se	Christian b/se	Muslim b/se	Christian b/se	Muslim b/se	Christian b/se	Muslim b/se
Female	0.098 [0.066]	-0.246 [0.185]	0.053 [0.068]	-0.027 [0.194]	-0.023 [0.066]	-0.129 [0.191]	0.032 [0.066]	0.027 [0.188]
Age	0.002 [0.002]	0.002 [0.007]	0.002 [0.002]	-0.012 [0.007]	0.003 [0.002]	-0.017* [0.007]	0.003 [0.002]	-0.011 [0.007]
Education (ISCED 7)	-0.079** [0.018]	-0.222** [0.05]	-0.069** [0.019]	-0.176** [0.054]	-0.084** [0.018]	-0.270** [0.053]	-0.080** [0.018]	-0.227** [0.052]
Generation 1	-0.134 [0.108]	0.132 [0.216]	-0.059 [0.112]	-0.199 [0.226]	0.009 [0.108]	0.019 [0.223]	-0.053 [0.107]	0.036 [0.218]
Generation 2	0.172 [0.205]	-0.118 [0.256]	-0.076 [0.211]	0.007 [0.264]	-0.079 [0.207]	-0.157 [0.262]	-0.257 [0.203]	-0.180 [0.256]
Household income	-0.025* [0.012]	-0.144** [0.035]	-0.002 [0.012]	-0.126** [0.037]	-0.026* [0.012]	-0.136** [0.037]	-0.021 [0.012]	-0.099** [0.036]
Some minorities	-0.136 [0.071]	-0.300 [0.336]	-0.143 [0.074]	-0.340 [0.349]	-0.100 [0.071]	0.235 [0.335]	-0.170* [0.071]	0.004 [0.328]
Many minorities	0.086 [0.1]	0.289 [0.338]	0.136 [0.104]	0.138 [0.35]	0.075 [0.1]	0.571 [0.334]	0.028 [0.1]	0.329 [0.327]
Discriminated	-0.211 [0.126]	0.063 [0.19]	-0.069 [0.131]	0.191 [0.206]	-0.042 [0.127]	0.553* [0.195]	-0.085 [0.126]	0.369* [0.192]
Not close to country	-0.040 [0.334]	0.545 [0.667]	-0.217 [0.354]	0.010 [0.991]	-0.073 [0.344]	0.774 [0.772]	-0.025 [0.339]	0.535 [0.704]
Medium religiosity	0.113 [0.074]	0.230 [0.207]	-0.024 [0.076]	0.090 [0.216]	0.020 [0.074]	0.364 [0.216]	0.081 [0.073]	0.439* [0.213]
High religiosity	0.087 [0.076]	0.509* [0.204]	0.057 [0.078]	0.132 [0.213]	0.102 [0.076]	0.407* [0.209]	0.196** [0.075]	0.665** [0.206]

*Coefficients are log odds; Significance levels: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$*

Interactions are added one at a time but the full set of controls is included in each model (age, sex, education, generation and country)

Discussion

We find that Muslims are more in favour of immigration in general than fellow citizens in their member states. European Muslims, especially among those who self-described themselves as ‘highly’ religious, are very supportive of Muslim immigration. This underscores the strength of Social Identity Theory – identifying with a salient social group motivates individuals to maintain a sense that their group is positively distinct from other groups, with a preference for their own group. Muslim immigrants who share religious ties are highly favoured due to identifiable religious markers (religio-cultural customs and linguistic similarities); while there is also the potential for increasing group size or increasing diversity in the nation state. It may also be that positive attitudes towards Muslim immigration stems from self-interest in extended family reunification.

However, unlike aspects of Social Identity Theory, this immigration preference for one’s own group is not matched by Out-group prejudice, given that it is not always the case that antipathy increases as we escalate the ‘difference’ between the Muslim In-group and other Out-groups. The significant connection between Muslims and majority race immigrants is their immigration position, thus producing a salient connection, understanding, empathy and identification across ethnic, geographical and religious divides. Similar positive attitudes among those with migrant heritage have been briefly highlighted by others (Just and Anderson, 2015: 189; Ford and Heath, 2014: 5).

The results also show that income has a far weaker influence on Muslim attitudes towards immigration, even though Muslims overall are lower on the socio-economic scale. It was also highlighted that compared to their fellow citizens, Muslims in general do not have strong immigration preferences on economic grounds. The evidence suggests that European Muslims, though usually young and socio-economically weak, are more in favour of immigration from poor countries than other members of their countries, and this remains significant in the multivariate analysis in the case of poor non-Europeans. Altogether, these underpin a diversion away from the theoretical literature emphasising economic threat as an explanatory mechanism for European Muslims. The weight placed on resource competition seems to be trumped by other factors. This may in part be supported by the evidence provided on religiosity - European Muslims in both the mid-level and high level religiosity categories held more favourable attitudes towards immigrants from poorer countries. This outcome could possibly be explained by religious values of compassion and charitable actions (helping those who are equally or less fortunate).

Similarly, the individual-level analysis raised interesting results regarding discrimination. Muslims who feel discriminated against seem to hold more favourable attitudes towards immigrants from poorer countries. It is also the case that European Muslims in both the mid-level and high level religiosity categories held more favourable attitudes towards immigrants from poorer countries. Visible religious stereotyping and Islamophobia is clearly evident in the literature, and awareness of discrimination can contribute to durable social (religious) group affinity. This could explain the lack of differentiation in immigration attitudes between the generations, because the assimilation among 2nd and 3rd generations we expect (and thus attitudes closer to wider society), is slowed by discrimination and increased social group salience. Ultimately it seems that Muslims who experience discrimination have stronger solidarity and empathy towards other marginalized groups. Again, this sympathy or empathy seems to outplay feelings of economic threat.

Regarding the question of European Muslim homogeneity, in some ways, the results have shown that Muslims across Europe have strong similarities in their positive attitudes towards different immigrant groups. However, there were cases where country wide results matched closely to the attitudes of Muslims within those states, especially in the case of Sweden, where positive attitudes among Swedish citizens towards immigrants surpassed most all other counties analysed. It is therefore important to recognize that the country context matters, and that the influence of national culture and social attitudes towards immigration on the attitudes of minority group citizens within nation states is significant.

In essence this paper challenges the regular assumption that immigration attitudes in the main stem from economic threat, highlighting the role that Social Identity plays in providing group support and a platform for increasing immigration on grounds of similarity. The pro-immigration attitudes of European Muslims also holds for those of majority white race, which would be counter-intuitive for Social Identity Theory (given that the group would perceive other faiths and ethnic groups as opposition) but for the role that immigration heritage and experiencing group discrimination plays in connecting people through empathy and common

experience. Thus, the outcomes are a mixture of Social Identity Theory and a new *Familiar Experiences Theory*, whereby people's individual histories and experiences (and of those around them) build bridges with others across national borders. This sympathy, awareness and understanding of the challenges others are facing is amplified by people's own diversity, histories and social experiences in European societies.

References

- Allen, C. 2010. *Islamophobia*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Allport, G. 1954. *The Nature of Prejudice*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Amnesty International. 2012. *Choice and prejudice: Discrimination against Muslims in Europe*. <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR01/001/2012/en/85bd6054-5273-4765-9385-59e58078678e/eur010012012en.pdf>
- Barth, F. 1969. *Ethnic groups and boundaries: The social organization of culture difference*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Blumer, H. 1958. "Race prejudice as a sense of group position." *The Pacific Sociological Review* 1 (1): 3-7.
- Bonacich, E. 1972. "Theory of ethnic antagonism—split labor market." *American Sociological Review* 37, 547–559.
- Boomgaarden, H., and A. Freire. 2009. "Religion and Euroscepticism: Direct, indirect or no effects?." *West European politics* 32 (6): 1240-1265.
- Brader, T., N. Valentino, and E. Suhay. 2008. "What triggers public opposition to immigration? Anxiety, group cues, and immigration threat." *American Journal of Political science* 52 (4): 959-978.
- Caldwell, C. 2010. *Reflections on the revolution in Europe: Immigration, Islam and the West*. London: Penguin.
- Cohrs, J., and M. Stelzl. 2010. "How ideological attitudes predict host society members' attitudes towards immigrants: Exploring cross-national differences." *Journal of Social Issues* 66 (4): 673-694.
- Davie, G. 1990. "Believing without Belonging: Is This the Future of Religion in Britain? in Implicit Religion/Le religieux implicite." *Social compass* 37 (4): 455-469.
- Eickelman, D., and J. Piscatori. 1996. *Muslim politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- European Islamophobia Reports: <http://www.islamophobiaeurope.com/reports/2015-reports/>
- European Social Survey. 2015. Appendix A1: Education, ESS7 - 2014 ed. 3.0.
- Fetzer, J. 2000. *Public attitudes toward immigration in the United States, France, and Germany*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Fish, S. 2011. *Are Muslims distinctive? A look at the evidence*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ford, R., and A. Heath. 2014. "Immigration." In *British Social Attitudes 31*, edited by A. Park, C. Bryson, and J. Curtice, 78-94. London: NatCen Social Research. www.bsa-31.natcen.ac.uk Nat Cen.
- Gorodzeisky, A. 2011. "Who are the Europeans that Europeans prefer? Economic conditions and exclusionary views toward European immigrants." *International Journal of comparative Sociology* 52 (1-2): 1000-1113.
- Hello, E., P. Scheepers, and M. Gijsberts. 2002. "Education and ethnic prejudice in Europe: Explanations for cross-national variances in the educational effect on ethnic prejudice." *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* 46 (1): 5-24.
- Heath, A., and Y. Li. 2015. *Review of the relationship between religion and poverty—an analysis for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Hewstone, M., and H. Swart. 2011. "Fifty-odd years of inter-group contact: From hypothesis to integrated theory." *British Journal of Social Psychology* 50, 374–386.
- Hewstone, M. 2015. "Consequences of Diversity for Social Cohesion and Prejudice: The Missing Dimension of Intergroup Contact." *Journal of Social Issues* 71 (2): 417-438.

- Hodson, G., S. Hogg, and C. MacInnis. 2009. "The role of 'dark personalities' (narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy), big five personality factors, and ideology in explaining prejudice." *Journal of Research in Personality* 43 (4): 686-690.
- Hodson, G., M. Hewstone, and H. Swart. 2013. "Advances in intergroup contact: Epilogue and future directions." In *Advances in intergroup contact*, edited by G. Hodson, and M. Hewstone, 262–305. London, UK: Psychology Press.
- Just, A., and C.J. Anderson. 2015. "Dual Allegiances? Immigrants' Attitudes toward Immigration." *The Journal of Politics* 77 (1): 188-201.
- McLaren, L. 2003. "Anti-immigrant prejudice in Europe: Contact, threat perception, and preferences for the exclusion of migrants." *Social Forces* 81 (3): 909-936.
- Pettigrew, T., and L. Tropp. 2011. *When groups meet: The dynamics of intergroup contact*. Philadelphia, PA: Psychology Press.
- Pew Report. 2012. *Rising tide of restrictions on religion*. Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life. <http://www.pewforum.org/uploadedFiles/Topics/Issues/Government/RisingTideofRestrictions-fullreport.pdf>
- Phillips, M. 2006. *Londonistan: How Britain created a terror state within*. London: Gibson Square Books Ltd.
- Quillian, L. 1996. "Group threat and regional change in attitudes towards African-Americans." *American Journal of Sociology* 102 (3): 816-860.
- Saroglou, V. 2011. "Believing, Bonding, Behaving, and Belonging The Big Four Religious Dimensions and Cultural Variation." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 42 (8): 1320-1340.
- Schmid, K., A. Al Ramiah, and M. Hewstone. 2014. "Neighborhood ethnic diversity and trust: The role of intergroup contact and perceived threat." *Psychological Science* 25: 665–674.
- Semyonov, M., R. Raijman, A. Tov, and P. Schmidt. 2004. "Population size, perceived threat and exclusion: A multiple-indicators analysis of attitudes toward foreigners in Germany." *Social Science Research* 33: 681-701.
- Sniderman, P., L. Hagendoorn, and M. Prior. 2004. "Predispositional factors and situational triggers: Exclusionary reactions to immigrant minorities." *American Political Science Review* 98 (1): 35-50.
- Stolle, D., S. Petermann, K. Schmid, K. Schönwälder, M. Hewstone, S. Vertovec, and J. Heywood. 2013. "Immigration-related diversity and trust in German cities: the role of intergroup contact." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion & Parties* 23: 279–298.
- Strabac, Z., and O. Listhaug. 2008. "Anti-Muslim prejudice in Europe: A multilevel analysis of survey data from 30 countries." *Social Science Research* 37 (1): 268-286.
- Tajfel, H. 1981. *Human groups and social categories: studies in social psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Appendix

Table A1 – Migration Rates, Muslim population %, and Prosperity 2015

Country	Net migration rate per 100 population	GDP per capita \$	Muslim population
Austria	5.56	47,300	5.4%
Belgium	5.87	43,600	5.9%
France	1.09	41,200	7.5%
Germany	1.24	46,900	5.8%

Netherlands	1.95	49,200	6.0%
Sweden	5.42	47,900	4.6%
Switzerland	4.74	58,600	5.0%
UK	2.54	41,200	4.8%

Source: CIA World Fact Book for migration rates, GDP and Muslim population in Switzerland; Pew Research Center for Muslim population estimates for other countries

ⁱ Austria's far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ) garnered further support in the first round of Austria's presidential election in 2016. In France, the far-right National Front (NF) won the French European Parliament election in 2014. Denmark's Danish People's Party (DPP) came second in 2015 general election. In Germany, Alternative for Germany (AfD) has seats in half of German state parliaments. The far-right Golden Dawn Party in Greece has 18 MPs. Switzerland's anti-immigration Swiss People's Party (SVP) won the parliamentary election in 2015.

ⁱⁱ Zakat can be described as a means of distributing excess wealth a little better. Zakat in fact is an obligatory tax which every Muslim has to pay on remaining capital – giving away around 2.5 percent of accumulated wealth annually for poor relief.

ⁱⁱⁱ Muslim populations appear to be under-represented in the survey as estimates based on census or other official sources suggest actual populations to be higher (Table A1). As interviews are conducted in the official languages of the various European countries, there may be a selection bias towards more acculturated immigrants. There are differences in political and institutional factors among these 8 countries, as well as in culture and in histories of migration; nonetheless these countries also share a great deal in common including their high GDP per capita, and having a long history of being net 'receivers' of migrants (see Table A1 for 2015 estimates). Design weights are used throughout the descriptive analysis unless otherwise stated.