

Anti-Muslim prejudice in Europe: A multilevel analysis of survey data from 30 countries

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Abstract

There is widespread interest in understanding anti-Muslim prejudice in Europe, but there is little systematic evidence about the extent and patterns of the prejudice. Using data from the 1999–2000 wave of European Values Study this article examines the extent and determinants of anti-Muslim prejudice in both Western and Eastern Europe. We find that prejudice against Muslims was more widespread than prejudice against other immigrants, and that the effects of individual and country-level predictors of prejudice resemble those found in research on anti-minority prejudice in general. Fairly similar results were obtained for both Eastern and Western Europe, but the aggregate levels of prejudice are higher in the East. Our results imply that Muslims in Europe were particularly prone to becoming targets of prejudice, even before the attacks of September 11. The results give some support to group-conflict theory, mainly with regard to the effects of the unemployment. However, the size of Muslim population in a country does not seem to increase the level of anti-Muslim prejudice. © 2007 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

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1. Introduction

Within social science literature a considerable amount of research is related to prejudice. The majority of studies on prejudice has been conducted in the USA, and has mainly focused on anti-black prejudice. In Europe, the number of studies on prejudice has increased considerably since the 1970s, and it is prejudice against immigrants that is main focus of interest. There are good reasons for this increased interest in prejudice and inter-ethnic hostilities in Europe. Since the economic recession in the early 1970s immigration from developing countries has been perceived as a problem and there is concern over the rising xenophobia and increased support for the far right political parties which are emphasising ethnic issues (Pettigrew, 1998).

A significant proportion of immigrants in Western Europe is Muslim. The precise number is unknown and is dependent on the definition of “Muslim”, but recent estimates vary from around 9 million (Fetzer and Soper, 2003) to 15 million (Modood, 2003). Being a part of immigrant population, Muslims meet the same problems

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as other immigrants. However, a series of international events in the last couple of decades has increased the saliency of the Muslim religion as a marker of minority-group identity. The terrorist attack on September 11, 2001 is the most prominent of these events, but also the previous events like the Iranian Revolution and the Rushdie affair—have been prominent subjects in the public discourse shaping attitudes toward Muslims. It is therefore relevant to explore whether Muslims are particularly exposed to prejudice and if the patterns of anti-Muslim prejudice follow similar patterns of prejudice against minorities in general, or if there are some notable differences.

Although there is large literature addressing the situation and problems of Muslim populations in Western countries, very few systematic empirical studies of prejudice and discrimination exist. The most probable reason for this is lack of micro-level data. Therefore, as Fetzer and Soper (2003) declared: “. . . [a] methodologically sophisticated, cross-national analysis of mass-level attitudes toward Muslims is virtually nonexistent.” (p. 248). In this article, we attempt to reduce this gap in existing knowledge by using the data from the 1999–2000 wave of “European Values Study” to shed more light on the levels and the patterns of anti-Muslim prejudice in both Western and Eastern Europe.

It is important to note that our study is based on data preceding the September 11, 2001 attacks in the USA, the murder of Theo Van Gogh in Amsterdam, the terrorist attacks in Madrid and London, controversies about the Prophet Mohammed cartoons in Denmark and the Pope’s speech in Germany. If we assume that levels and patterns of anti-Muslim prejudice are in a period of rapid change in recent years (our best guess would be increase in prejudice), then the results of this study are highly time-specific. They show the situation as it was at the turn of the millennium, and probably differ from the results one would obtain by analysing either older or more recent data.

We are concerned with two main questions: (1) Is the aggregate level of prejudice against Muslims higher than the level of prejudice against other non-Western immigrants; and (2) Does the pattern of anti-Muslim sentiment follow the pattern usually found in analyses of prejudice against minority groups, or are there significant differences? By differences in patterns of prejudice we mean differences in effects of individual and country-level predictors of anti-Muslim prejudice compared to the corresponding effects usually found in studies of anti-minority prejudice. We employ a *t*-test in the study of differences in aggregate country-level prejudice in an attempt to answer the first question. Regarding the second question we employ a series of multilevel logistic regressions.

2. Previous research and theories of prejudice

There is no generally accepted definition of prejudice, but the single most known definition is probably Allport’s (1979, p. 9) definition of ethnic prejudice as “an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization”. Prejudice has usually been conceptualized as an attitude, consisting of negative feelings, beliefs and behavioural intentions toward other social groups (e.g. Dovidio et al., 2000; Jackman, 1977; Simpson and Yinger, 1985). Although this notion of prejudice as negative, openly expressed attitude is still widely used in empirical research, in some important lines of research the unitary concept of prejudice has been abandoned and the distinction is made between “old” and “new” forms or dimensions of prejudice (e.g. subtle and blatant prejudice (Pettigrew and Meertens, 1995), old-fashioned and symbolic racism (Kinder and Sears, 1981; Tarmann and Sears, 2005)). In our analysis, the data allow only exploration of the blatant form of anti-Muslim prejudice, and for our purposes prejudice is defined as “an openly expressed negative attitude toward a social group, or negative attitude toward an individual that is based on that individual’s membership in a social group”.

As we shall see, our dichotomous empirical measure of prejudice is based on a question from the survey asking respondents if they would oppose having people belonging to a particular social group as neighbours. This kind of question is usually associated with Bogardus’ social distance scale, but as long as both the social distance and the prejudice are conceptualized as negative attitudes, the use of the one term or of the other is the matter of convenience. In our view, the term “anti-Muslim prejudice” is most appropriate in our analysis, but one could also use the terms “social distance toward Muslims” or “anti-Muslim attitudes”.¹ It should also

¹ In an analysis of negative attitudes toward foreigners similar to our analysis, Semyonov et al. (2006) use term “anti-foreigner sentiment”.

be mentioned that our measure of prejudice can be viewed as dichotomisation of underlying continuous variable. The dichotomisation introduces an amount of random measurement error in the model and weakens the correlations between the variables. This increased level of measurement error may lead to weakening power of statistical tests and the associated levels of statistical significance.

2.1. General theories and research on prejudice

Due to the abundance of previous research results and theories of prejudice, a number of different starting points for the analysis are possible. In this article we adopt an eclectic theoretical approach to the explanations of the effects of individual-level variables, and focus on sociological theories emphasizing group-level competition in the analysis of contextual effects. In the following we give a brief presentation of theories of prejudice and relevant results of previous empirical research. The presentation is chronological, and mainly follows the approach of Duckitt (1992).

Following the Second World War, research on prejudice strongly emphasized the personality of the prejudiced individual, with *Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno et al., 1950) as a best-known work. Toward the end of 1950s this line of research encountered increasing criticism, some of critics emphasizing importance of sociological factors in the explanation of prejudice. Two early influential studies of regional and cross-national differences in prejudice (Pettigrew, 1959, 1960) produced results which suggested that regional differences in prejudice could not be accounted for by compositional differences in psychological characteristics alone. These results were confirmed in later studies (e.g. Kinloch, 1974; Middleton, 1976), and consequently a sociocultural view of prejudice resulting from (sub)cultural norms and values emerged. This approach emphasized the role of socialization and norm conformity, and was dominant in research on prejudice in the 1960s (Duckitt, 1992). The sociocultural approach usually viewed prejudiced societal norms as being a result of historically determined processes, and these norms and resulting prejudiced attitudes were viewed essentially as irrational and as having “little real social or economic basis” (Bobo and Hutchings, 1996: 954). Well-developed areas of research on stereotypes in psychology are also related to the sociocultural approach, insofar as the content of stereotypes is viewed as being culturally determined.

The persistence of racial segregation and discrimination in USA, despite of the “change of climate” when it comes to social norms regulating racial relations and decreased reported levels of racial prejudice in surveys, led to stronger interest in approaches focusing on actual or perceived conflicts of interest among ethnic groups (Bowser, 1985; Duckitt, 1992; Fairchild and Gurin, 1978). These conflicts of interest are defined in rather general terms, and focus can be on “real” (usually economic) competition and conflicts, or on perceived conflicts and the perception of threat from outgroups. The “real” conflict approach can focus on individual-level conflicts, or on group conflicts. When the focus is on individuals, the prejudice of individuals is explained as a result of their direct competitive conflict with individuals from outgroups. In other words, the driving force behind prejudice is simple self-interest of individuals (Bobo and Hutchings, 1996; Jacobson, 1985). An important perspective focusing on economic competition between ethnic groups is the split labour market theory (Bonacich, 1972, 1976; Boswell, 1986). Split labour market exists when there are substantial differences in the price of labour between ethnic groups (Bonacich, 1972; Boswell, 1986). These price differentials are used by employers to weaken the bargaining position of majority ethnic group workers. Majority workers then react with exclusionist measures and prejudice against minority workers in order to reduce competition in the labour market.

When the conflict is conceptualized at a group level, the focus is on the conflict of interests between social groups. This approach is often referred to as “realistic group conflict theory” (Campbell, 1965; LeVine and Campbell, 1972), and there is evidence from a wide range of sources of the influence of level of inter-group conflict on prejudice and hostility between the groups (e.g., Brown, 2000; Olzak, 1992; Sherif, 1958; Sherif and Sherif, 1953; for a theoretical review see Jackson, 1993).

Theoretical explanations of the association between competition and conflict, and prejudice usually involve the notion of competitive threat from out-groups and the perception of that threat (LeVine and Campbell, 1972). A highly influential approach that integrates (unequal) social position of the groups, the competitive threat resulting from group inequalities, perception of threat, and prejudice and hostility that follow from threat perceptions, is Blumer’s (1958) Group Position model. According to this view the dominant group

in an ethnically or racially stratified social system develops a feeling of superiority and a proprietary claim to certain areas of privilege and advantage. Assuming that the underprivileged group threatens, or will threaten, the position of the dominant group, the members of the dominant group react with fear, suspicion and prejudice. This approach to prejudice as a consequence of the relative positions of groups and threat perceptions is still widely used in research (Bobo, 1999; Bobo and Hutchings, 1996; Quillian, 1995; Smith, 1981; Weitzer and Tuch, 2004).

In empirical research, the Group Position approach has been mainly used to guide the selection of group-level variables (Quillian, 1995; Smith, 1981). In an influential article, Quillian (1995) used the relative size of the subordinate group and (group-level) economic circumstances as indicators of group-level threat. The argument is that increasing size of subordinate group and deteriorating economic circumstances contribute to increased feelings of threat to their privileged position among members of the dominant group. In general, the relative size of minority population is by far most commonly used indicator of group threat and resulting prejudice and discrimination. Most of the studies have been conducted in the USA, and the majority of these find a positive relationship between the size of minority population (usually Blacks) and the discrimination or prejudice (e.g., Giles and Evans, 1986; Pettigrew, 1959; Quillian, 1996; Taylor, 1998). In Europe, however, the results are more mixed. Quillian (1995) and Scheepers et al. (2002a) found positive effect of the size of immigrant population on anti-immigrant prejudice in Western Europe. On the other hand, Evans and Need (2002) found no effect of size of minority groups on attitudes toward minority rights in Eastern Europe, while Semyonov et al. (2004) found no effect of the actual size of a foreign population on the exclusionary attitudes toward foreigners in Germany. In a longitudinal study of anti-foreigner sentiment in 12 EU countries, Semyonov et al. (2006) found positive effects of the size of immigrant population on prejudice in years 1988, 1994 and 1997, but not in 2000.

Group-level economic conditions are somewhat less frequently used as variables in analyses of prejudice but some important empirical studies do exist. Lincoln Quillian finds substantial inverse relationships between average per capita income and prejudice in Western Europe (Quillian, 1995), and the USA (Quillian, 1996). In a study based on data from Western Europe, Scheepers et al. (2002a) find no effects of a country-level rate of unemployment or change in the level of unemployment on ethnic exclusionism. Semyonov et al. (2006) find some weak evidence of negative relationship between GDP and anti-foreigner prejudice in Western Europe, but GDP does not show consistent effect in the models employed in their study.

It is arguably so that one theoretical approach, the group-conflict theory, is dominant in current empirical research on group-level causes of prejudice. Regarding individual-level causes, however, the theoretical foundations of empirical research are much more diverse. For example, some recent studies use social identity theory (Scheepers et al., 2002a), socialization theories (Hello et al., 2004) and frustration–aggression theories (Quillian, 1995). In spite of theoretical differences, survey based empirical research has produced fairly consistent results regarding individual-level correlates of prejudice. Perhaps the most robust finding is that education reduces prejudice (e.g. Hello et al., 2002; see Vogt, 1997 for an extensive review of empirical findings). Higher socio-economic status is another individual trait that is often found to be correlated with lower reported levels of prejudice (e.g. Evans and Need, 2002; Semyonov et al., 2004), but there are rather large differences in definitions of socio-economic groups in different empirical papers, and non-significant results do occur. Another fairly common finding is that older respondents tend to be more prejudiced than the younger ones (Chandler and Tsai, 2001) and that residents of urban areas exhibit lower levels of prejudice (Scheepers et al., 2002a; see Carter et al., 2005 for a summary of theoretical issues and empirical findings).

When it comes to individual-level religiosity² and the prejudice, two approaches are common in empirical research. The first approach, dominant in early research papers, is to simply measure the strength of association between indicators of religious involvement, such as frequency of church attendance, and levels of prejudice. In an extensive review of (mostly American) studies of association between prejudice and indicators of religiosity conducted between 1940 and 1990, Batson et al. (1993) conclude that within this framework of analysis “. . .the more religious an individual is, the more prejudiced he or she is likely to be” (p. 296). The second approach to analysis of religiosity and prejudice is based on distinctions between different dimensions of religiosity. The most known of these theoretical distinctions is the distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic

² Some semantical clarification is necessary here: by “religiosity” we mean quality of being religious, and not excessive religiousness.

religious orientation introduced by Allport and Ross (1967). Other concepts, such as religious fundamentalism (Altemeyer and Hunsberger, 1992), or religious quest orientation (Batson and Ventis, 1982) have also been used in empirical research. Common findings in this line of research is that some of the religious orientations are linked with increased prejudice, while others are not: extrinsically religious individuals tend to be more prejudiced, but intrinsically oriented persons do not; religious fundamentalists are prejudiced, but those with quest religious orientation tend to be tolerant (see Hunsberger and Jackson, 2005 for summary of findings). As mentioned, most studies of religiosity and prejudice described above have been conducted in the USA. European results tend to be somewhat different: In a summary of several European studies, Hunsberger and Jackson (2005) report that these often showed little or no relationship between religiosity and prejudice. Scheepers et al. (2002b) conducted a large cross-national study of 11 European countries and they did find some significant effects of religiosity, but these effects tended to be weak. Thus, recent European research results indicate fairly weak relationship between religiosity and prejudice.

2.2. Differences in prejudice toward different minority groups

Most of the research on ethnic prejudice focuses on dyadic ingroup-outgroup relations even though the real-life intergroup situations are often characterized by interactions of a multitude of different ethnic groups (Verkuyten and Kinket, 2000). When social research does include analysis of the relations between several ethnic groups (usually within “social distance” research tradition), the following two outcomes are usually observed: (1) Ingroup members show different levels of prejudice against different outgroups. (2) There is a fairly high level of consensus regarding the ranking of different groups in a social distance or prejudice hierarchy.

These “ethnic hierarchies” (Hagendoorn, 1995) have been observed in several different countries: the USA (e.g. Bobo and Zubrinsky, 1996; Duckitt, 1992), Canada (Berry and Kalin, 1979; Kalin and Berry, 1996); Sweden (Snellman and Ekehammar, 2005), the Netherlands (Verkuyten and Kinket, 2000), etc. The reasons for the apparently consensual nature of ranking of ethnic groups are, however, often not explained in detail. To our knowledge, the most elaborate explanation and discussion is provided by Hagendoorn (1995). The author claims that the phenomenon of ethnic hierarchy cannot be explained by just one theoretical perspective, but that the hierarchy emerges as a result of different motives for the different groups involved in ranking. The dominant groups are motivated by a desire to justify their privileged position, while subordinate groups are motivated by a desire to differentiate themselves from the groups they perceive to be low in the ethnic hierarchy.

Regarding the more fundamental question of why there are different levels of prejudice against different ethnic groups, fairly different explanations are provided by different authors. The much researched heightened levels of anti-black prejudice in the USA (as compared with, e.g., Asians and Hispanics) have usually been explained by the specific historical circumstances of slavery and discrimination (e.g. Dixon and Rosenbaum, 2004; Iceland and Wilkes, 2006). In addition to historical factors, Jones (1997) also focuses on blacks’ political saliency and status as a single largest minority group as reasons for prejudice. In Europe, most of the research on ethnic hierarchies has been conducted within the field of social psychology and the explanations for the differing levels of prejudice focus on processes of stereotype formation, perceived cultural and socio-economical similarity, and status considerations (Hagendoorn, 1995; Hagendoorn et al., 1998; Snellman and Ekehammar, 2005).

Another interesting finding in analyses of prejudice against multitude of outgroups is that individuals that are prejudiced against one outgroup also tend to be prejudiced against other outgroups. In empirical research this has been confirmed by high positive correlations between measures of prejudice against different outgroups (e.g., Duckitt, 1992; Duckitt and Mphuthing, 1998; Ray and Lovejoy, 1986). However, this does not mean that there are no differences in the individual traits associated with prejudice toward different target groups. As Duckitt (1992) puts it: “. . .all persons are not prejudiced against all outgroups” (p. 93). Sometimes, a particular variable has a distinctive effect on prejudice targeted toward one specific group. A classical American example in this regard is the connection between religiosity, attitudes toward homosexuals and policy preferences regarding issues related to homosexuality (e.g. same-sex marriages). We have seen before that religiosity tends to have influence on prejudice in general, but the impact of religious variables is felt particularly strongly in issues related to homosexuality. Several different measures of religiosity, such as biblical literalism,

church attendance and religious affiliation, have proven to be strong predictors of attitudes and policy preferences (see [Burdette et al., 2005](#) for extensive discussion). The most common sociological explanations for these strong effects of religious variables focus on theological beliefs and official congregational positions regarding homosexuality (e.g., [Olson et al., 2006](#)).

In our analysis of anti-Muslim prejudice, we will focus mainly on previous empirical findings when discussing individual level effects. We assume that prejudice targeted against Muslims is just a form of well-researched prejudice against ethnic minorities. We are therefore interested if some of individual level variables show an “unusual effect” (for example, if individual measures of religiosity have strong effects on prejudice, or if women tend to be particularly negative toward Muslims due to existing negative stereotypes about the position of women in Muslim families). If so, that would disconfirm our assumption about the similarity of anti-Muslim prejudice and ethnic prejudice, giving us reason to believe that anti-Muslim prejudice is qualitatively different from ethnic prejudice in general.

2.3. *Prejudice and muslims*

The theoretical approaches discussed above may be labelled general theories of prejudice, i.e. they can be applied in analyses of prejudice against wide range of outgroups. When it comes to the particular case of anti-Muslim prejudice there is clearly a growing interest in the subject, but both the theoretical accounts and the empirical evidence tend to be less systematic. Historically, the presence of large-scale Muslim communities in Europe is centuries old, but it is immigration in the second part of twentieth century that has laid foundations for the Muslim population that is usually the target of prejudice today ([Nielsen, 1999](#)). This Muslim population is fairly diverse with regard to several important aspects. Geographically, major groups come from Pakistan and Bangladesh (Southern Asia), Morocco and Algeria (Northern Africa) and Turkey (Middle East/Europe). All these groups started arriving in Europe in larger numbers during the 1960’s as labour immigrants. Since the 1980’s, Muslims from Iran, Iraq and Somalia migrated in larger numbers, mainly as asylum seekers and refugees.

Immigrants from Muslim countries generally fare less well in socio-economic terms than some “successful” groups of non-European immigrants such as Chinese in the UK ([Model, 1999](#)). Nevertheless, the social standing of immigrants from Muslim countries is still rather similar to the social standing of immigrants from other developing countries, and is not akin to the “exceptionalism” of the position of blacks in the USA ([Jones, 1997](#)). Thus, while [Friedrichs \(1998\)](#) finds the social distance toward Turks in Germany to be larger than the social distance toward European immigrants, this distance is still much smaller than the social distance toward asylum seekers. In a similar manner, [Murdie and Borgegard \(1998\)](#) find high levels of residential segregation of Turks and Somalis in Sweden, but rather low levels for Iranians.

Stronger interest in prejudice and hostility targeted specifically toward Muslims can be traced back to the 1980s, with the term “Islamophobia” being coined in late 1980s ([Brown, 2000](#); [Zolberg and Woon, 1999](#)). Since then, the chain of international events has led to ever increasing attention to Islam and Muslims in public discussion in Europe. Although important exceptions do exist, the general tendency in public perceptions of Muslims and Islam can perhaps best be described as characterized by alarmism and simplification ([Halliday, 1999](#)).

Basically, a number of negative stereotypes appeared in media and the public discourse. In an analysis of representations of Islam in the British broadsheet press, [Richardson \(2004\)](#) identifies four main themes that appear in the articles: (1) the military threat of Muslim countries; (2) the threat of political violence and extremism; (3) the (internal) threat to democracy posed by authoritarian Muslim political leaders and parties; and (4) the social threat of Muslim gender inequality (see [Richardson, 2004](#); 69–93 for a detailed description). This fourfold division can be reduced to a two main sets of negative stereotypes: The first is based on a “clash of civilizations” type of argument and emphasized the presumed political and military threat that Islam poses to the non-Muslim world. The second set of stereotypes has developed around notion of “Muslim cultural traits” and focuses mainly on issues of gender relations and family life.³ In

³ The stereotypes show a remarkable consistency across different Western countries. See [Dunn \(2001\)](#) for an account about Australian stereotypes, and [Bulliet \(2003\)](#) and [Read \(2003\)](#) for stereotypes in the USA.

addition to these specifically anti-Muslim stereotypes, the immigrant status of the Muslim population is an important source of prejudice and discrimination. Thus, the anti-Muslim prejudice in Europe can be conceived as comprising two main components: the first, “generic anti-immigrant” component, resulting from unsuccessful integration of non-Western immigrants since 1950s, and the second, “specific anti-Muslim” component that has developed as a result of stereotype-generating processes in the last couple of decades. The analysis of the content and the processes of formation of anti-Muslim stereotypes would be highly relevant for understanding anti-Muslim prejudice but would require the different data different to that which we have used, and we will not pursue this here.

Regarding empirical research, some relevant European studies do exist. Using data from privately commissioned polls in Britain, France and Germany, [Fetzer and Soper \(2003\)](#) report higher educated and less religious respondents to be more tolerant toward Muslim practices. Furthermore, their results show a decrease in tolerance after the September 11 attacks. The much cited [Allen and Nielsen \(2002\)](#) report on Islamophobia in 15 EU states following the September 11 attacks presents a fairly clear picture: there was an increase in hostility against Islamic communities in a wide range of EU countries. The increase was observed in xenophobia and prejudice as well as acts of physical aggression and harassment, although the number of acts of physical violence remained relatively low.⁴ Similar results about an increase in anti-Muslim prejudice in UK after September 11 have been reported by [Sheridan and Gillet \(2005\)](#).

2.4. *Research questions for the study*

With the starting point in previous research and theories of prejudice as well as in our assumptions about the nature of anti-Muslim prejudice, we may formulate more elaborate research questions for our study:

- (1) *Is the aggregate level of anti-Muslim prejudice significantly higher than the level of prejudice against non-European immigrants in general?*

Here, it is important to remember that our analysis is based on data predating September 11, 2001. Previous research results indicate that there was a significant increase of anti-Muslim hostility in Europe after September 11, but it is not clear if the level of prejudice against Muslims was higher than the level of prejudice against immigrants in general before that.

- (2) *Are the effects of individual-level predictors of anti-Muslim prejudice similar to the effects of individual-level predictors commonly found in research on prejudice in general, or are there any important differences?*

Regarding possible differences in the patterns of prejudice targeted toward Muslims and the prejudice targeted toward minority groups in general, a point of departure can be the question about what it is that makes Muslims distinctive as a target of prejudice. If the core of the problem is simply enhanced (negative) attention to Muslim identity as a boundary marker of a minority group ([Barth, 1969](#)), then we would expect patterns of anti-Muslim prejudice to be similar to patterns of prejudice in general. Applied to individual-level predictors, this would mean that the effects of individual characteristics such as higher education, higher socio-economic status and urban residence should have a negative effect on anti-Muslim prejudice, while effects of unemployment and financial difficulties should be positive. If, on the other hand, the religious or historical aspects of Muslim–Christian relations are of paramount importance, one would expect to find the patterns of prejudice specific only to anti-Muslim prejudice. (For a discussion of approaches focusing more strongly on religious nature of Muslim identity, see [Fetzer and Soper \(2003\)](#)).⁵ Our assumption is that Muslim identity is simply a boundary marker of minority-group affiliation which has become unusually highly visible, and that the patterns of anti-Muslim prejudice will be similar to those of prejudice against minorities in general.

⁴ It has to be mentioned that [Allen and Nielsen \(2002\)](#) report is based on data collected using rather informal gathering procedures, but there should be little doubt about validity of its main conclusions.

⁵ For a discussion of approaches focusing more strongly on religious nature of Muslim identity, see [Fetzer and Soper \(2003\)](#).

- (3) *Are the effects of country-level predictors of anti-Muslim prejudice in accordance with the predictions that can be derived from group-conflict theories of prejudice?*

In other words, will the level of economic development (measured by GDP per capita) have a negative effect on prejudice, and will the level of unemployment and percentage of Muslims have positive effects on prejudice? The results of research in the USA are generally supportive to group-conflict theories, while the results from Europe are more ambiguous. An additional complication in our study is that we are investigating anti-Muslim prejudice, and not the more thoroughly researched anti-immigrant prejudice.

- (4) *Are the patterns of anti-Muslim prejudice in Western and Eastern Europe similar, despite different size and nature of Muslim populations in these two parts of Europe?*

There are important differences in both Muslim populations and recent historical experiences between Eastern and Western Europe. With the point of departure in these differences one could expect considerable differences in anti-Muslim prejudice. If, however, levels and patterns of anti-Muslim prejudice are largely determined by present public discourse and are symbolic in nature, the patterns of prejudice in Eastern and Western Europe might be rather similar, in spite of abovementioned differences.⁶

3. Data and methods

3.1. Data

Our main data source is the 1999–2000 wave of European Values Study (Halman, 2001).⁷ The original data set includes around 41,000 individuals from 32 countries. Due to missing values on our main dependent variable, we removed Turkey and Hungary from the data set. Additionally, Muslims (around 320 individuals), and non-citizens (around 1500 individuals) were also removed. For most of the countries, the number of respondents in the data file was between one and two thousand, the minimum number being 968 (for Iceland), and the maximum 2500 (for Russia). We weighted the data for this study so that an equal number of respondents is set for each country. In order to keep the total number of (virtual) cases unchanged after the weighting, the number of respondents from each country is set to approximately 1250. In addition to EVS data, we created several country-level variables. These are described further in the text.

Regarding the analyses performed, we first tested whether there any differences existed in the aggregate level of prejudice against Muslims and immigrants at the country level by using a paired sample *t*-test. Thereafter, we analysed the individual and contextual correlates of anti-Muslim prejudice using binary logistic multilevel regression analysis. The multilevel modelling is performed with MLwiN software, using predictive (or penalized) quasi-likelihood with 2nd order terms of the Taylor series expansion (Rasbash et al., 2003). For logistic multilevel analysis with a small number of level-2 units the estimates of higher-level variance terms and their standard errors are known to be unreliable.⁸ Due to this and to our main interest being in effects of individual and country-level predictors and not in changes in variance of level-2 residuals, we only present the fixed parts of the models in final tables.

After some consideration we decided to split the data file and run separate models for Western and Eastern Europe. This reduces the sample sizes but has several advantages. Most important of these are: (1) a clear distinction between Western and Eastern Europe in comparisons of aggregate levels of prejudice against immigrants and Muslims. This distinction is desirable since Muslims are a subgroup of immigrant population only in Western Europe. (2) Presentation of results regarding differences in effects of

⁶ The implicit assumption here is that the public discourses in both parts of Europe are strongly influenced by similar mass media images and perceptions.

⁷ Datasets we used were made available from the Norwegian Social Science Data Services. Additional information on the data and the download of European Values Study and World Values Study data are also available at the ICPSR web-page: <http://webapp.icpsr.umich.edu/cocoon/ICPSR-STUDY/03975.xml>.

⁸ See Chapter 10 in Hox (2002) for thorough methodological discussion.

independent variables is less clumsy than in the case of whole-sample models loaded with east-west interaction terms.

3.2. *Dependent variables*

The point of departure for construction of dependent variables is a “social distance” question about which groups of people respondents find undesirable as neighbours. The wording of the question is as following: “*On this list are various groups of people. Could you please sort out any that you would not like to have as neighbours?*” The list consists of 14 groups, five of which can be broadly described as ethnic groups: “Jews”, “Gypsies”, “People of different race”, “Immigrants/foreign workers” and “Muslims”. Responses to the question were coded into a set of dummy variables coded 1 if the respondent mentioned the members of a particular social group as undesirable, and 0 if the group was not mentioned. We use a dummy variable coded 1 if the Muslims were mentioned as undesirable as neighbours as our main dependent variable, *anti-Muslim prejudice*.

Using a single dichotomous indicator as a measure of prejudice has its weaknesses, but also some strengths. On the negative side, assuming continuous prejudiced attitude, our measure is rather crude and less reliable since only one dichotomous item is used in the construction of the measure. On the positive side, our measurement of prejudice is based on a rather simple and straightforward question and the problems of meaning and interpretation inherent in cross-cultural research are probably smaller than in the more complex measures.⁹

Since we are interested in measuring prejudice targeted specifically against Muslims, the indicator mentioned above is the only available measure in our dataset. By using it, we are making an assumption that the respondents’ opposition to having Muslims as neighbours is based on prejudice. Results of Schuman and Bobo (1988) show that a respondent’s personal objection to having a member of a minority group as a neighbour is influenced not only by prejudice, but also by other factors such as perceptions of social class differences between themselves and the members of minority groups. However, the effects of social class perceptions appear to be rather weak as compared to the influences of prejudice. For example, the authors find that experimentally controlling for social class of potential black neighbours increases the percentage of white respondents who “do not mind at all” having Black neighbours from around 73% to around 79% (p. 290). Thus, in a related article Bobo and Zubrinsky (1996) state: “Prejudice does appear to be an important element of how respondents form their views on residential integration” (p. 903).

In addition to our main dependent variable, we use two other variables for comparative purposes. The *Anti-immigrant prejudice* variable, coded 1 if immigrants were mentioned as undesirable as neighbours, and an additive scale *Ethnic prejudice* consisting of five dummy variables coded 1 if a particular ethnic group (“Jews”, “Gypsies”, “People of different race”, “Immigrants/foreign workers” and “Muslims”) is mentioned as undesirable as neighbours. The scale is used for analyses of West European data and has satisfactory psychometric properties (Inter-item correlations are positive, in range 0.26–0.56; Cronbach’s alpha equals 0.76 and the principal component analysis shows scale to be unidimensional).

3.3. *Individual-level independent variables*

Level of education is operationalised as an ordinal level variable having values from 1—“incomplete primary education” to 8—“higher education—upper-level tertiary certificate”. Control variable *Female* is a dummy variable coded “1” for females. *Size of place of residence* variable has eight values (1—“under 2000 inhabitants” to 8—“500 000 inhabitants and more”). *Income in lowest quartile* is a dummy variable coded with “1” for persons whose household is in the first quartile of the income distribution.¹⁰

Continuous variable *Age* measures the individual’s age in number of decades (e.g. the value “3” represents an individual that is 30 years old). Empirical research often finds older individuals to be more prejudiced, either due to the life-cycle or cohort effect. The effects of age are often found to be non-linear. We have therefore tested the models including the second power of age, and have also tried coding age as a set of dummy

⁹ For an overview of some relevant scaling issues in cross-cultural research, see Poortinga (1989).

¹⁰ Due to the categorical nature of the variable that was used as a starting point for dummy coding (v320), the individuals coded as having income in lowest quartile actually occupy the lowest 21.8% of the income distribution.

variables. None of these strategies resulted in a significant improvement of the models and age is included in final analyses as a single continuous variable.

The *Occupational category* variables are a set of dummy variables indicating the kind of job and employment status of the respondents. The coding presented in the models is based on both theoretical expectations and exploratory analyses of different coding possibilities. Some of the variables, like *unemployed*, are included in the models owing to theoretical expectations about significant effect. Others, like *student*, are kept in the models because they show a significant effect, in this case even after controlling for the level of education. The reference category is *blue collar*. To avoid losing cases, we include the “rest” category *other occupations*.

Since Muslims are defined as a social group by a religious criterion, it is of interest to investigate whether the religious aspects are especially prominent in anti-Muslim prejudice. Our dataset contains a large number of religiosity-related variables. We pre-tested several different combinations of different aspects of religiosity, and decide to include three different measures in final models. *Religious dogma* variable is a five-item scale based on questions whether or not the respondent believes in the following: “God”, “life after death”, “hell”, “heaven” and “sin”. Answer categories are: “yes” (coded 2), “do not know” (coded 1) and “no” (coded 0). We summed the score for each item to create the *religious dogma* scale, where a high value indicates a strong belief in the religious dogmas mentioned. The scale is one-dimensional and has a reliability coefficient (Cronbach’s alpha) of 0.85. The *Importance of God* variable is based on a question from the survey: “How important is God in your life? (1 = not at all important, 10 = very important). The *Frequency of attendance* variable is based on a question: “Apart from weddings, funerals and christenings, about how often do you attend religious services these days?” (1 = Never, practically never, 8 = More than once a week).

4. Country-level independent variables

Percentage of Muslims is the country-level variable indicating the percentage of Muslims in the population. The variable is coded on the basis of data from *Religious Freedom Reports* issued by the U.S. Department of State (2001). The material in *Religious Freedom Reports* is abundant, but its form is narrative and the demographic data are not presented in any systematic form. Out of this narrative text we have extracted the data about the proportion of the population that is Muslim.¹¹

The measure of *GDP per capita* is a Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) estimate for 1999 measured in thousands US dollars. The variable is coded on the basis of data from CIA (2000). Regarding unemployment, we created two different measures: (1) *Mean unemployment 1996–2000* which measures average level of unemployment in the countries in the survey in five years preceding the data collection. We use the mean value of a five-year period in order to reduce possible influences of random short-term fluctuations in the level of unemployment; (2) *Change in unemployment 1996–1999*. This variable is created to test the hypothesis of Quillian (1995) that deteriorating economic conditions lead to increase in prejudice. This variable measures difference in level of unemployment in 1999 compared to 1996. Both measures of unemployment are coded on the basis of data from the United Nations (2004).

Percentage of non-EU immigrants variable is the country-level variable used in models dealing with anti-immigrant prejudice and ethnic prejudice in general in West Europe. In coding of the variable, we follow the approach of Semyonov et al. (2006) and calculate the proportion of non-EU immigrants as the average value for the years 1998, 1999 and 2000. The source of data is European Communities (2003). There were no available data for Iceland and Malta. Thorough discussion about the advantages of such measurement of the size of immigrant population can be found in Semyonov et al. (2006, p.434), while empirical results supporting the use of proportion of non-EU immigrants as a measure of the relative size of immigrant population can be found in Lahav (2004, pp. 118-126).

¹¹ Since *Percentage of Muslims* is an important variable in our analysis, we have coded an additional version of the variable at the basis of the data from Barrett et al. (2001) to check the robustness of the results. The alternative coding of the variable correlate highly with the coding presented here ($r = .91$ for West Europe and $r = .94$ for East Europe), and running of the models with the alternative coding produces essentially same results. All of the level-2 variables we used will be presented in the appendix available at the web-page: <http://www.svt.ntnu.no/iss/Zan.Strbac/>, together with tables of values of all level-2 variables.

Table 1

The percentage not willing to have Muslims as neighbours, the percentage not willing to have immigrants as neighbours, and the difference between these two

	Muslims	Immigrants	Difference M-I
<i>Western Europe</i>			
France	16.19	12.12	4.07***
Great Britain	13.89	15.94	-2.05
Germany	11.46	8.83	2.63**
Austria	15.46	12.29	3.17***
Italy	17.17	16.52	.65
Spain	10.91	9.31	1.61
Portugal	8.11	2.55	5.56***
Netherlands	12.21	5.17	7.05***
Belgium	22.65	18.95	3.70***
Denmark	16.48	10.85	5.63***
Sweden	9.20	2.93	6.27***
Finland	19.08	13.04	6.04***
Iceland	11.63	3.01	8.62***
Ireland	13.70	12.35	1.35
Greece	21.13	13.79	7.34***
Malta	27.71	15.28	12.43***
Luxembourg	15.17	8.59	6.59***
Mean Western Europe	15.42	10.68	4.74
<i>Eastern Europe</i>			
Estonia	24.03	23.52	.51
Latvia	17.84	11.85	5.99***
Lithuania	33.32	23.79	9.53***
Poland	23.81	23.60	.21
Czech Republic	15.31	19.54	-4.23***
Slovakia	24.68	23.07	1.61
Romania	31.41	21.12	10.30***
Bulgaria	23.10	25.56	-2.46
Croatia	26.47	21.68	4.79***
Russia	14.15	11.10	3.05***
Slovenia	22.84	16.20	6.64***
Ukraine	23.95	14.88	9.07***
Belarus	26.99	17.11	9.88***
Mean Eastern Europe	23.68	19.46	4.22
Mean total	19.00	14.48	4.52

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$, McNemar test, real sample sizes.

5. Results

We start our analysis by examining whether the aggregate level of anti-Muslim prejudice is higher than the level of anti-immigrant prejudice. The percentage not willing to have Muslims and the percentage not willing to have immigrants as neighbours, together with the difference between these two percentages are presented in Table 1. The percentage not willing to have Muslims as neighbours seem to be higher both in Western and Eastern Europe. Paired sample t -tests reveal differences to be statistically significant for both Western Europe ($N = 17$; $p < .01$), and Eastern Europe ($N = 13$; $p < .01$). In Western Europe, Malta is a possible outlier (see Table 1), and we perform the t -test without Malta in the sample, but the results remain unchanged. Due to small sample sizes we perform normality assumption checks for sample differences. Two commonly used tests, Shapiro–Wilk and Kolmogorov–Smirnov produce fairly large p -values for both parts of Europe.¹² In addi-

¹² Shapiro–Wilk: $p = .97$ for Western Europe and $p = .41$ for Eastern Europe. Kolmogorov–Smirnov (with Lilliefors significance correction; lower bounds of the true significance): $p = .20$ for Western Europe and $p = .20$ for Eastern Europe.

tion, graphical inspection of Q–Q plots does not reveal serious departures from normality. We conclude therefore that the assumption of normality appears to be reasonable, and the results of the *t*-test acceptable. Thus, we find that the level of anti-Muslim prejudice was significantly higher than the level of prejudice against the rest of immigrants in both Western and Eastern Europe.

We also test for statistical significance of difference between anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant prejudice within each country in our sample by using McNemar test. As one can see, the levels of anti-Muslim prejudice are significantly higher than levels of anti-immigrant prejudice in 13 out of 17 countries in West Europe and in 8 out of 13 East European countries. In Czech Republic, the level of anti-immigrant prejudice is significantly higher than the level of anti-Muslim prejudice. Thus, the results give robust support to conclusion that the prejudice against Muslims was more pronounced in both parts of Europe, with levels of anti-Muslim prejudice being significantly higher in 21 out of 30 countries, and with only one country showing the opposite result.

We now turn our attention to individual-level and contextual-level factors that influence the prejudice of individuals. We present separate models for Western and Eastern Europe in Tables 2 and 3. Due to the small sample size at level-2, the simultaneous inclusion of several level-2 predictors is somewhat problematic. A common rule of thumb in OLS regression is that at least 10 observations are needed for each predictor. With some reservations this rule can be applied to the multilevel models too (see Bryk and Raudenbush, 1992; 211 for the discussion). For this reason, we estimate three models containing different level-2 variables. The first model contains the *Percentage of Muslims* variable, the second one contains the *GDP per capita* variable, and the third model contains the two measures of unemployment.

For Western Europe, the effects of level-1 predictors are largely in accordance with the usual findings in studies of prejudice in general. The odds of expressing anti-Muslim prejudice decrease by 20% for each

Table 2

Unstandardized parameter estimates from a multilevel logistic regression analysis of anti-Muslim prejudice in Western Europe; standard errors in parentheses

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	b	(SE)	b	(SE)	b	(SE)
Intercept	−1.65***	(.258)	−1.38*	(.658)	−1.64***	(.233)
<i>Individual-level variables</i>						
Level of education	−.106***	(.025)	−.106***	(.025)	−.105***	(.025)
Female	−.205**	(.075)	−.205**	(.075)	−.205**	(.075)
Size of place of residence	−.024	(.020)	−.024	(.020)	−.024	(.020)
Income in lowest quartile	.056	(.101)	.057	(.101)	.056	(.101)
Age (in decades)	.115***	(.017)	.116***	(.017)	.116***	(.017)
<i>Occupational category</i>						
Student	−.230*	(.114)	−.230*	(.114)	−.232*	(.114)
Unemployed	.168	(.120)	.169	(.120)	.168	(.121)
Other occupations	.117*	(.053)	.117*	(.053)	.116*	(.052)
Office worker (White collar)	−.183*	(.079)	−.182*	(.080)	−.184*	(.080)
Employers, managers and professionals	−.133	(.099)	−.133	(.099)	−.135	(.099)
Agricultural workers	.003	(.244)	.003	(.244)	.004	(.245)
<i>Religiosity</i>						
Belief in religious dogmas	.018	(.010)	.018	(.010)	.019	(.010)
Frequency of attendance	−.008	(.009)	−.009	(.009)	−.009	(.009)
Importance of god	−.012	(.011)	−.012	(.011)	−.012	(.011)
<i>Country-level variables</i>						
Percentage of Muslims	.000	(.050)				
GDP/capita			−.013	(.026)		
Mean unemployment 1996–2000					.024	(.019)
Change in unemployment 1996–99					.102*	(.040)

Only fixed parts of the models are presented.

Note 1: **p* < .05; ***p* < .01; ****p* < .001 (two-tailed).

Note 2: Reference category for *Occupational category* variables: blue collar.

Table 3

Unstandardized parameter estimates from a multilevel logistic regression analysis of anti-Muslim prejudice in Eastern Europe; standard errors in parentheses

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	(SE)	b	(SE)	b	(SE)
Intercept	−1.11***	(.157)	−.943***	(.255)	−1.09*	(.174)
<i>Individual-level variables</i>						
Level of education	−.064***	(.016)	−.065***	(.016)	−.065***	(.016)
Female	−.046	(.052)	−.047	(.051)	−.047	(.051)
Size of place of residence	−.020	(.014)	−.021	(.014)	−.021	(.014)
Income in lowest quartile	−.009	(.061)	−.010	(.062)	−.009	(.062)
Age (in decades)	.051*	(.021)	.050*	(.021)	.051*	(.021)
<i>Occupational category</i>						
Student	−.401*	(.160)	−.400*	(.160)	−.401*	(.160)
Unemployed	.104	(.088)	.102	(.088)	.103	(.088)
Other occupations	−.073	(.077)	−.074	(.077)	−.073	(.077)
Office worker (White collar)	−.138	(.112)	−.135	(.112)	−.136	(.112)
Employers, managers and professionals	−.089	(.125)	−.086	(.125)	−.087	(.125)
Agricultural workers	−.044	(.145)	−.047	(.146)	−.045	(.146)
<i>Religiosity</i>						
Belief in religious dogmas	−.015	(.011)	−.015	(.011)	−.015	(.011)
Frequency of attendance	.031*	(.014)	.031*	(.013)	.031*	(.013)
Importance of god	.025	(.014)	.025	(.014)	.025	(.014)
<i>Country-level variables</i>						
Percentage of Muslims	−.024	(.013)				
GDP/capita			−.035	(.024)		
Mean unemployment 1996–2000					−.005	(.013)
Change in unemployment 1996–99					−.008	(.037)

Only fixed parts of the models are presented.

Note 1: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

Note 2: Reference category for *Occupational category* variables: blue collar.

additional level of education, while they increase by around 12% for each additional decade of age.¹³ White collar workers and students seem to be less prejudiced than blue collar workers. However, our predictions about the unemployed and individuals with financial difficulties being more prejudiced were not confirmed. Regarding religiosity, it has little or no influence on prejudice. We also included several other measures of religiosity in pre-testing of the models, but none had noteworthy effects.

Effects of level-2 predictors presented in Model 2 give little support to group-conflict theories. The effects of economic variables are in the predicted direction, but only the effect of change in unemployment is statistically significant. The effect of the size of Muslim population does not have any influence on prejudice. Thus, our findings do not confirm those of Quillian (1995) and Scheepers et al. (2002a) about positive effect of the size of minority group on prejudice.

In Eastern Europe, the effects of a majority of individual-level variables are similar to the corresponding effects in Western Europe, but tend to be weaker. Education has a strong negative effect on anti-Muslim prejudice also in Eastern Europe, but an additional level of education in the East leads to a 9% decrease in odds for expressing prejudice, as compared with 20% in the West. The position in the labour market has somewhat different influence on prejudice in Eastern Europe. The differences in prejudice between the occupational categories are not statistically significant, although the coefficients are generally in the predicted direction. Effects of religiosity are weak, as in the West, though *Frequency of attendance* does have a significant positive effect. The general impression is that the results do not show strong positive effects of religiosity on anti-Muslim pre-

¹³ Odds-ratios are calculated by using the usual formula: $OR = \exp(b \cdot \Delta x)$. Interested readers can see Powers and Xie (2000) for related formulas.

judice. Thus, our results give us little reason to believe that the religious component in itself is a prominent factor in the generation of anti-Muslim prejudice.

None of country-level variables in Eastern Europe have any significant effect on prejudice, although the effect of GDP is in the predicted direction and with the fairly large *t*-ratio of 1.46. The percentage of Muslims clearly does not have any positive effect on anti-Muslim prejudice in Eastern Europe, and the value of the coefficient is actually negative.

The results so far leave us with the impression that the aggregate levels of anti-Muslim prejudice were clearly higher than the levels of anti-immigrant prejudice in both Western and Eastern Europe. However, the effects of the independent variables in our analyses of anti-Muslim prejudice resemble those usually found in studies of different kinds of ethnic prejudice. Thus, the mechanisms underlying anti-Muslim prejudice seem to be rather similar to the mechanisms underlying anti-immigrant prejudice and ethnic prejudice in general. Our data allow us to perform some additional tests regarding similarities in the mechanisms underlying anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant prejudice. First, we look at the correlations between the variables measuring anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant prejudice. The correlations for all 30 countries in our sample are positive and statistically significant, with the values of Pearson's *r* varying from low of 0.26 (in Iceland) to high of 0.66 (in Belgium). The values of Pearson's *r* are 0.52 for Western Europe and 0.49 for Eastern Europe. Our measures of prejudice can be viewed as dichotomizations of an underlying continuous distribution, so tetrachoric correlations are a better measure of the correlation between them. Tetrachoric correlations equal 0.80 for Western Europe and 0.74 for Eastern Europe.¹⁴ The correlations are high for both parts of Europe, which means that individuals who are prejudiced against Muslims also tend to be prejudiced against immigrants. These results are in line with previous research results (Duckitt, 1992) and give us an indication that the same individual traits (measured by individual-level variables) might be related to both anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant prejudice.

To further explore possible similarities in the effects of group-level and individual-level determinants of prejudice targeted toward different outgroups, we test two different models presented in Table 4. Model 1 has the dichotomous measure of anti-immigrant prejudice as the dependent variable, while Model 2 has the continuous measure of ethnic prejudice in general as the dependent variable.¹⁵ The comparison of Muslims and immigrants is most straightforward in West Europe, where Muslims are basically a subgroup of immigrant population. Therefore, we focus on West European data. We use *Percentage of non-EU immigrants* as country-level independent variable; the models are therefore akin to the model 1 in Table 2.

Comparing these results with the results of the analysis of anti-Muslim prejudice (Model 1 in Table 2), we can clearly see that the mechanisms underlying anti-Muslim prejudice are very similar to the mechanisms underlying anti-immigrant prejudice and ethnic prejudice in general. The signs of the effects of the independent variables in the model of anti-Muslim prejudice are the same as the signs of the corresponding variables in the models in Table 4. The significance levels are also fairly similar, with only notable difference being larger number of significant effects in Model 2 in Table 4.¹⁶ Thus, these results give us a clear indication that anti-Muslim prejudice is influenced by same individual and contextual characteristics as are anti-immigrant prejudice and ethnic prejudice in general.

6. Discussion and conclusions

In this study we have examined both the aggregate level and patterns of anti-Muslim prejudice, patterns being represented by individual and country-level predictors of prejudice. Perhaps the most important finding is that aggregate level of anti-Muslim prejudice was significantly higher than the corresponding level of anti-immigrant prejudice in both Western and Eastern Europe. To our knowledge, this is first statistically significant evidence about heightened level of anti-Muslim prejudice in Europe based on a large cross-national sample, and we hope the finding will contribute to scholarly discussions in the field. As mentioned, the comparison

¹⁴ Tetrachoric correlations are calculated using Mplus software.

¹⁵ Both dependent variables are presented in Section 3.

¹⁶ This is probably caused by the five-item scale being a better measure of general ethnic prejudice, as compared with the dichotomous measures of anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant prejudice.

Table 4

Unstandardized parameter estimates from a multilevel logistic regression analysis of anti-immigrant prejudice (Model 1), and multilevel linear regression analysis of ethnic prejudice in general (Model 2)

	Model 1 (logistic)		Model 2 (linear)	
	b	(SE)	b	(SE)
Intercept	−1.951***	(.346)	.935***	(.116)
<i>Individual-level variables</i>				
Level of education	−.112***	(.030)	−.053***	(.005)
Female	−.194**	(.061)	−.077***	(.019)
Size of place of residence	−.031	(.022)	−.010*	(.004)
Income in lowest quartile	.057	(.093)	.066*	(.028)
Age (in decades)	.086***	(.023)	.055***	(.007)
<i>Occupational category</i>				
Student	−.087	(.164)	−.046	(.042)
Unemployed	.314**	(.104)	.131**	(.047)
Other occupations	.128*	(.057)	.075*	(.031)
Office worker (White collar)	−.031	(.123)	−.017	(.031)
Employers, managers and professionals	.009	(.148)	.003	(.035)
Agricultural workers	.123	(.148)	.175*	(.075)
<i>Religiosity</i>				
Belief in religious dogmas	.007	(.014)	.003	(.004)
Frequency of attendance	−.007	(.017)	−.003	(.005)
Importance of god	−.008	(.020)	−.004	(.004)
<i>Country-level variables</i>				
Percentage of non-EU immigrants	−.007	(.051)	−.041	(.025)

Fixed parts of the models: Western Europe.

Note 1: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed); Missing Malta and Iceland.

Note 2: Reference category for *Occupational category* variables: blue collar.

of immigrants and Muslims is most straightforward in Western Europe where Muslims are basically a subgroup of the immigrant population. Significantly higher levels of anti-Muslim prejudice in Western Europe, also in the period prior to September 11, indicate deeper roots of the problem, the roots predating the chain of international events triggered by terrorist attacks in the USA.

At the same time, our analyses of individual-level predictors of prejudice yield results fairly similar to previous findings of research on anti-minority prejudice in general. We interpret this as an indication that we are not dealing with a novel or exceptional phenomenon. A particular minority group has become especially exposed to prejudice, but we find little evidence that religious or cultural elements play a prominent role. This is especially clearly demonstrated by running the models with measures of anti-immigrant prejudice and ethnic prejudice in general on the same set of independent variables. The similarity of the results obtained in these different models gives strong support to the conclusion that we are dealing with the familiar form of ethnic prejudice, and that it is only a new target group that has come into spotlight.

When it comes to group-level predictors, an important finding is that the group-conflict theories receive little or no support from our results. We find only weak indications that bad or deteriorating economic conditions lead to the increase in prejudice, and the size of the Muslim population in a country has no effect on the level of anti-Muslim prejudice. One recent longitudinal study of anti-immigrant prejudice, [Semyonov et al. \(2006\)](#), generally obtained results showing that country-level variables similar to those we have used did have significant effects on prejudice in the 1988–1997 period. But, rather interestingly, none of the country-level variables in [Semyonov et al. \(2006\)](#) had a significant effect for the data collected at the same time as ours, in the year 2000 (p. 438). This might just be a coincidence, but the other possibility would be that we are witnessing a development over the time where the importance of “real” group conflict indicators as predictors of prejudice is diminishing.

The absence of association between a high proportion of Muslims in a country and a heightened level of prejudice is an especially interesting finding, and deserves some elaboration. A classical argument in conflict

theory is that the potential for conflict increases correspondingly with an increase in size of the minority population. However, this argument is based on an “other things being equal” assumption. We can think of at least two different situations which might lead to the absence of association between the proportion of Muslims in a country and the country’s average level of anti-Muslim prejudice. The first is that countries with larger Muslim populations are stimulated to do a better job in integrating this group into mainstream society and promoting tolerant attitudes among the majority population. The second, less optimistic possibility is that international events are a major source of negative images and views of Muslims and that these can lead to an increase in prejudice in a particular country, fairly independent of the presence of a sizable Muslim population in that country. When we find that a proportion of the respondents not wanting a Muslim as a neighbour is somewhat larger in Finland which practically does not have any Muslim population than in France with its largest proportion of Muslims in the West Europe and some hotly debated issues related to the Islam, we are inclined to believe that other issues than “real” ethnic conflict are of decisive importance in the determination of anti-Muslim sentiments.

Regarding anti-Muslim prejudice in Eastern Europe, three things are worth noting. First, the levels of prejudice against both Muslims and immigrants are consistently higher than in the West. Second, the effects of independent variables tend to be weaker. Third, the determinants of prejudice in the East are very similar to those in the West, meaning that the same variables influence prejudice in both East and West Europe. Kunovich (2004) has discussed higher levels of prejudice and weaker effects of influential variables in East Europe and he proposed two different sets of explanations for these. The first one focuses on the cultural legacy of communism, lack of democratic tradition and tolerance. The second, and in Kunovich’s view more important, set of explanations focuses on poorer economic conditions in East Europe. According to this view, poor economic conditions affect *both* less privileged and more privileged social groups, thus reducing the sense of security from competition with the minorities and the resulting lower levels of prejudice of the latter. This implies that the anticipated improvement of economic conditions in East Europe will lead to a greater differentiation in the levels of prejudice between higher and lower strata of society.

Regarding the similarity of determinants of prejudice in the East and in the West, this is somewhat surprising given that both the nature and size of Muslim populations in these two parts of Europe are very different. Among the East European countries in our sample only Russia and Bulgaria have larger Muslim populations, but these populations are native, not immigrant. The other countries have negligible Muslim populations, on average less than 0.4% of the total. Nevertheless, the patterns of anti-Muslim prejudice strongly resemble those found in the West, including higher level of prejudice toward Muslims than toward immigrants. In our view, the most probable explanation for this is the increasingly global nature of dissemination of information about Islam and Muslims. Not just in East Europe, but also in other countries with negligible Muslim populations like Iceland and Finland, the general audience has to form views about Muslims at the basis of information from abroad. In the absence of local and national issues, the international events and debates serve as a basis for opinion-making.

An illustrative example in this regard is the debate about Islam in Italy. Being a “new immigration country” (Semyonov et al., 2006), Italy has experienced immigration of larger numbers of Muslims later than most of the other West European countries. However, due to the spreading of information about controversial issues in other countries, the controversies surrounding the position of Muslims in society took shorter time to emerge in Italy than in European countries with “older” Muslim population. As Allievi (2002) puts it: “The debate about Islam [. . .] came to Italy quicker than elsewhere—imported from other European countries rather than originating in Italy itself” (p. 37). In a similar manner, analyzing broadsheet press coverage of Islam in Great Britain, Poole (2002) found that only 12% of the articles related to Islam in the 1994–96 period were about British Muslims, with the remaining 88% of articles dealing with global issues (pp. 57–58).

Thus, the relations between Muslim minorities and the majority population in any given European country seem to depend on two major sets of factors. The first set consists of factors that are to a large degree under national control, such as policies for the integration of Muslim immigrants, the handling of prominent controversial issues in a country, etc. The second set of factors consists of a complex set of international issues that are usually completely out of control of a single European state, but might influence relations with, and attitudes toward, the country’s Muslims strongly. The examples in this regard are the political situation in the Middle East, spectacular terrorist attacks in any Western country, etc. Attitudes toward immigrants are

generally affected by international events, but this is particularly so with regard to Muslim immigrants. Therefore, national attempts to develop harmonious relations between the majority population and Muslim minorities might prove to be an especially challenging endeavour.

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