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I'm Neither Racist nor Xenophobic, but: Dissecting European Attitudes towards a Ban on Muslims' Immigration

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Abstract

During his presidential campaign, the new elected President of U.S., Donald Trump, called for a complete ban on Muslims from entering the United States. Although numerous European observers have been shocked by his racist proposal, using the most recent round of the European Social Survey, this paper found that a sizeable proportion of Europeans support a similar ban in their own countries, e.g. Czech Republic (54%), Hungary (51%), Estonia (42%), Poland (33%), and Portugal (33%). The paper also provides evidence that racism and immigration phobia play a key role in shaping Europeans' support of a ban on Muslim immigration. This finding challenges the discourse and campaigns of the populist groups who exploit the 'Islamization of Europe' rhetoric successfully and use various pretexts to justify a call for a ban on Muslims' immigration, e.g. the threat to security, secularism, democracy, Western 'identity', culture and values.

Keywords: Internatonal migration, discrimination, islamophobia, racism, public opinion.

JEL codes: F22, J71, J79

Introduction

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, European Muslim minorities have been perceived as a threat to national 'identity' and security due to their religious faith (Allen and Nielsen 2002), and their integration, whether immigrant or born and raised in the countries where they live, is the object of recurrent debate that systematically intensifies following any terrorist attack claimed by Muslim extremists on behalf of Islam[1].

Nowadays, the European dominant image of Muslims, who number almost 1.6 billion and constitute over one fifth of humanity, is based on imagination and stereotypes. Muslims are perceived as fanatical, prone to violence and disrespectful towards women[2] and are associated in the European public mind to extremism and terrorism despite evidence suggesting that Muslims have been and continue to be the primary victims of terrorism[3]. As one might expect, a high proportion of Europeans have an unfavourable opinion towards Muslims minorities living in their countries, e.g. Hungary (72%), Italy (69%), Poland (66%) and Greece (65%) (see Wike, Stokes, and Simmons 2016). It is not surprisingly then that far-right political parties and other populist groups, who successfully exploit the 'Islamization of Europe' rhetoric, have called for a complete ban on Muslim immigration finding great resonance in public opinion[4]. The result, today Muslims' immigration is viewed negatively by a substantial proportion of the European general public. For instance, the most recent round of the European Social Survey (ESS) data reveal that over one-in-two respondents in the Czech Republic (54%) and Hungary (51%) and at least one-in-three in Estonia (42%), Lithuania (34%) and Poland (33%) would like their countries to ban Muslim immigration.

[1] The Madrid train and London subway bombings (2004, 2005), the attack of the Jewish Museum of Belgium (2014), the terrorist attack against the French magazine Charlie Hebdo's offices and the kosher supermarket in Paris (2015) and the attacks across Brussels, Nice and Paris (2016). This list is not exhaustive but just indicative.

[2] As illustration for this point, whereas a solid majority of Spaniards (83%) and Germans (78%) believe that Muslims are fanatical and violent (respectively 60% and 52%) only tiny proportions consider that they are respectful of women, respectively 12% and 17%, PEW Research Center (2006).

[3] Even though the victims of terrorist attacks should not be compared numerically, the US National Counter Terrorism Center 2011 US report on terrorism found that "In case where religious affiliation of terrorism casualties could be determined, Muslims suffered between 82% and 97% of terrorism-related fatalities over the past five years".

[4] An illustrative example, the Dutch MP and leader of the Party for Freedom, a right-wing nationalist political party, Geert Wilders has called for a complete shut down of immigration from Muslim countries to the Netherlands (Ogan et al. 2014).

The paper seeks to contribute to the discussions about islamophobia across Europe by focusing attention on the opposition to Muslim immigration that represents one of its manifestations. More precisely, I investigate whether and to what extent racism and xenophobia are key determinants of Europeans' hostility towards Muslim immigration. I predict that, other things being equal, those who hold racist beliefs and express a high level of xenophobia towards immigration in general would be more likely to favour a ban on Muslims. The contribution of this paper to the literature on attitudes towards immigration is twofold. Firstly, although there is voluminous literature on public attitudes towards immigrants in general or specific groups, e.g. asylum seeks and refugees, we currently know nothing about the driving forces behind Europeans' opposition to Muslims' immigration.

This limitation is principally due to the absence of a dataset that captures public opinion on the preferred level of Muslims' immigration. Fortunately, this lacuna has been filled by the immigration module of the most recent round of the ESS that incorporated a question that offers a unique opportunity to examine this issue for the first time from a global perspective. Secondly, a large body of empirical studies has tested several theories including contact theory, group threat theory and social identity theory, which have pointed at the role of different factors in explaining individuals' attitudes towards immigrants and immigration policy. For a review of this literature see, among others, Citrin et al. (1997), Sides and Citrin (2007), Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) and Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014). Of course this literature has contributed significantly to our understanding of several facets of this phenomenon. However, the role of racism has not received much attention as put clearly by Ayers et al. (2009, 594), 'Although political elites agree that racism is a possible factor influencing immigration preferences, empirical investigations have yet to fully document the role of racism in public opinion on immigration'. However, very few notable exceptions exist, Pettigrew and Meertens (1995), Dustmann and Preston (2007), Rydgren (2008) and Ayers et al. (2009). Furthermore, to the best of my knowledge, to date, no study has explored the relationship between racism and individuals' support of a restrictive immigration policy towards Muslims.

In addition, even though a few empirical studies have examined the determinants of anti-Muslim sentiment, Strabac and Listhaug (2008), Savelkoul et al. (2011), Ciftci (2012) and Ogan et al. (2014), none of these studies has looked at the resistance to Muslims' immigration. The objective of this paper is to do just that. The remainder of the paper proceeds as follows. Section two

presents the data used. Section three describes the empirical method employed and discusses the regression results. Section four concludes.

Data and descriptive statistics

For the empirical analyses I used the individual-level data drawn from the most recent European Social Survey (ESS) immigration module fielded, between 2014 and 2015, in 20 European countries and Israel[5]. The countries' data for this nationally representative survey were pooled into one dataset containing information on 40,185 respondents. Given that the paper analysis focuses on attitudes of Europeans towards Muslim immigrants, I excluded Israel from the database reducing the number of respondents to 37,623. The countries included in this analysis are Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom[6]. This sample offers the opportunity to consider countries that vary considerably in many respects in particular in terms of Muslim minorities' population size and contact with Muslims, e.g. whereas Muslim minorities' presence in Lithuania and Poland dates back to the 14thcentury (Górak-Sosnowska 2011), in countries such as Belgium it is a relatively recent phenomenon. Nevertheless, all these countries are experiencing a growing anti-Muslim sentiment. The survey items used in this analysis and the variables they created will be discussed below.

Descriptive statistics and dependent variable

The European Social Survey (ESS) includes seven questions intended to tap respondents' preference on how many immigrants of different types should be admitted to their country: 'To what extent do you think [country] should allow people of the same race or ethnic group as most [country] people to come and live here?', 'How about people of a different race or ethnic group from most [country] people?', 'How about people from the poorer countries in Europe?', 'How about people from poorer countries outside Europe?', 'To what extent you think [country] should allow Jewish people from other countries to come and live in [country]?', '…Muslims from other countries to come and live in [country]?' and 'Gypsies from other countries to come and live in

[5] For more information and documentation, see the ESS website: http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/about/

[6] The United Kingdom sample is restricted to Great Britain.

[country]?'. In all cases, answers were given on 4-point rating scales: 'allow many', 'allow some', 'allow a few' and 'allow none'.

Turning our attention to respondents' views concerning Muslims immigration. The first thing to note from an examination of Table 1 is that an overwhelming majority of Europeans reported that they are in favour of a restriction on Muslims' immigration. For example, over 80% of respondents in the Czech Republic (83%) and Hungary (82%) would like their countries to allow few or allow no Muslim immigrants. The equivalent proportion is 70% in Estonia and 65% in Poland. In contrast, at the other end of the scale a lower percentage of respondents in Sweden (18%) and Germany (28%) share the same opinion. The same Table indicates that a majority of Czechs (54%) and Hungarians (51%) are in favour of a complete ban on Muslim immigration to their countries. Relatively smaller proportions, but still notable, among Estonians (42%), Lithuanians (34%), Portuguese (33%) and Poles (33%) expressed the same opinion.

Insert Table 1 here

It is remarkable to see that negative attitudes towards Muslim immigration are much stronger in countries such as Hungary and Poland where Muslims represent small minorities. Paradoxically, a Friedrich Ebert Foundation report co-authored by Zick, Küpper and Hövermann (2011) found that 61% of Hungarians and 47% of Poles consider that there are too many Muslims living in their country, even though this fraction does not even reach 0.2%. Perhaps this strange situation is due to the fact that these countries' citizens perceive Muslim minorities as much larger than they really are, and the available evidence points in this direction. According to a poll conducted by Ipsos in 2014, on average, Hungarians and Poles thought that Muslims living in their country make up respectively 7% and 5% of national populations.

An inflated perception of minority populations in general and immigrant populations in particular has been recognized as an important predictor of negative attitudes towards these minorities and of resistance to immigration, (see, among others, Sigelman and Niemi 2001, Alba, Rumbaut and Marotz 2005, Semyonov et al. 2004, Sides and Citrin 2007, Herda 2013), suggesting that this phenomenon may have an influence on greater opposition to Muslim immigration and provide a potential explanation of what some scholars call 'platonic islamophobia', a high negative public attitude towards quite non-existent Muslims in the country (Górak-Sosnowska 2011).

It should be emphasized that resistance to Muslim immigration reflected in the European Social Survey (ESS) data is more likely biased downward due to the order in which questions on the desired level of different types of immigrants were presented in this survey. According to Sides and Citrin (2007, 482), the ESS 'order effect' 'may have engendered a social desirability bias, such that respondents were less willing to express negative sentiments toward immigrants of a different ethnic background'. Moreover, the most recent wave of European Social Survey used in this study was carried out prior to a series of Islamic extremists' terrorists attacks at different European cities (e.g. Brussels, Charleroi, Munich, Nice and Paris) that will probably reinforce in public eyes the stereotypical image of Muslims as a potential menace to society, as might be suggested by the deterioration of European public opinion on Muslims in general[7]. Hence, it would not be rash to think that Europeans' opposition to Muslim immigration is more significant than the figures above indicate.

Although the evidence suggests that many Europeans view Muslim immigration negatively, it is worth noting that hostility toward Muslim immigration is associated to some extent with opposition to immigration in general. It can be seen from Table 2 that among those who want to ban Muslim immigration only a tiny fraction is favourable (the responses 'allow many' and 'allow some') to the immigration of Gypsies (4%), Jews (26%) and from the poorer countries outside Europe (15%). The same Table also indicates that a notable proportion of those pro the ban on Muslim immigration were to varying degrees, but without exception, in favour of a similar ban on other immigrants, e.g. Gypsies (84%), from poorer countries outside Europe (52%) and Jews (42%). In light of these evidences, we can deduce that some of those who are against Muslim immigration are anti-immigration in general. I will control for this element in the regressions.

Insert Table 2 here

Now we turn to the dependent variable. In this analysis, I am interested in individuals' support for a ban on Muslim immigration that may result from two distinct elements: an 'anti-

[7] For instance, between 2014 and 2016, unfavourable views of Muslims minorities living in the country, increased by twelve percentage points in Greece, eight points in Spain and Italy, and five points in France, (Wike, Stokes, and Simmons 2016).

immigration effect' that indicates opposition to immigration in general and a specific 'anti-Muslim effect' that reflects islamophobic attitudes. To isolate the specific anti-Muslim effect, I used the seven questions that asked respondents to report their preferred level of different types of immigrants to construct a scale, which takes a value of 1 if the individual said 'No' to Muslim immigrants (response category 'allow none') and 'Yes' to the other types of immigrants (responses, 'Allow a few', 'allow many', 'allow some'), and 0 otherwise. This dichotomous variable was used as the dependent variable in different regressions.

Control variables

A number of control variables used in this analysis have been identified as relevant in a large number of empirical studies on the determinants of individuals' attitudes towards immigration. As was mentioned above, I am primarily interested in the effect of racism and xenophobia on opposition to Muslim immigration. Therefore, I begin by discussing the survey items used to measure racism and the control variables they generated.

Tesler (2013), for instance, argues that old-fashioned racism incorporates three elements: beliefs in biological inferiority, desire for social distance and support of public policies ensuring racial segregation and formalized discrimination. Following Tesler, to assess racist beliefs I used the eight ESS items related to biological and cultural racism, social distance towards immigrants, opposition to the law against ethnic discrimination, and support for racial immigration policy.

To construct a biological racism beliefs scale, I used the following three items: 'Do you think some races or ethnic groups are born less intelligent than others?', 'Do you think some races or ethnic groups are born harder working than others?', 'Would you say that some cultures are much better than others or that all cultures are equal?'. The answer options to the first two item 'yes' and 'no' were coded equal to 1 for 'yes' and equal to 0 for 'no'. The responses to the last question were used to create a third dummy variable set equal to 1 if the respondent think that some cultures are much better than other, and 0 otherwise. Then these three dichotomous variables were averaged into the index used as control variable.

Social distance from immigrants was also assessed by an index averaging the scores on two items asking respondents how much they would mind if an immigrant was appointed as their boss or married a close family member. These items were scored on an 11-point scale, from 0 'not mind' to 10 'mind a lot'.

Opposition to the law against ethnic discrimination was measured by the question: 'How good or bad is it for a country to have a law against racial or ethnic discrimination in the workplace?'. The answers were also registered on an 11-point scale, ranging from 0 'extremely bad' to 10 'extremely good'. To ease the interpretation, I reversed the scale, so that higher scores stand for stronger opposition to the law against this form of discrimination. Support for racist immigration policy was assessed by two survey items that ask respondents to rate the importance they attach to different criteria for accepting or excluding migrants. I used two of these criteria namely 'Christian background' and 'be white' as a measure of individuals' support for racial immigration policy[8]. The answers to these items rated on a 0-10 scale, from 'extremely unimportant' to 'extremely important', were also combined into a composite index.

The most frequent method to gauge xenophobic feelings is the construction of a composite index combining selected survey items. Yet, this method is not exempt from criticism. For instance, Fertig and Schmidt (2011) stress that this approach is arbitrary. Nevertheless, different studies have found that a summary index using European Social Survey (ESS) items is able to reflect appropriately the multidimensionality aspect of xenophobia, see Hjerm (2007), among others. Beyond these considerations, following Hjerm (2007) I measured xenophobia by a summary index 'immigration phobia' made up by the average of responses to seven questions centred on opinion about the perceived economic and non-economic threats of immigration on the country including on job opportunities, public finance, crime, cultural life and religious beliefs[9]. Again, respondents to each of these items were asked to rate their responses on an 11-point scale ranging from 0 to 10, with 0 representing the most negative view on effect of immigration on the country and 10 the most positive. The scores for these items were reversed so that a higher number represents stronger xenophobia then averaged into the index.

[8] The other individuals' characteristics to rate are: have good educational qualifications, able to speak the country's official languages, have work skills that the country needs, and committed to the way of life in the country.

[9] 'Would you say it is generally bad or good for a country's economy that people come to live here from other countries?', 'Would you say that people who come to live here generally take jobs away from workers in this country, or generally help to create new jobs?', 'Do you think people who come here take out more than they put in or put in more than they take out?', 'Are a country's crime problems made worse or better by people coming to live here from other countries?', 'Cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?', 'Is a country made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries?', 'Do you think the religious beliefs and practices in a country are generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?'. Note that I deviated slightly from Hjerm (2007) by considering the last item as a component of the index.

Additionally, I exploited the responses to other immigration questions as explanatory variables to control for individuals' opposition to immigrants in general and refugees' admission as well as their resistance to diversity that might also explain individual preference for a ban on Muslims' immigration. To measure opposition to immigration in general I created a dummy variable set equal to 1 if the respondent is opposed to immigration of any kind[10] (answer 'allow few' or 'allow none') and equal to 0 otherwise. Individuals' opposition to refugees and resistance to diversity were measured by responses to: 'The government should be generous in judging people's applications for refugee status', 'It is better for a country if almost everyone shares the same customs and traditions'. The score for each item on a 5-point scale varying from 'agree strongly' to 'disagree strongly' were recoded to create a dummy variable that takes the value 1 if the answer was 'disagree' or 'disagree strongly', and the value 0 otherwise.

The regressions also included a set of variables to control for individuals' demographic and socio-economic characteristics including age in years, two dummy variables 'Male' and 'Immigrant' coded 1 respectively for males and for respondents who are themselves immigrants, education attainment, measured on a 7-point scale from less than lower secondary to higher tertiary education, whether unemployed (for a period of more than 12 months), ideological preference, measured through self-placement along the standard 10-point left–right scale, and religiosity operationalized by a dichotomous variable equal to one if the respondent belongs to a particular religion or denomination, otherwise equal to zero, religious denomination measured in three categories: 'Christian' ,'Jew', and 'Muslim', personal contact with different racial or ethnic groups captured by two indicators: frequency of contact, measured on a 7-point scale from never to every day, and a dummy variable equal to 1 if the respondent has a few or several members of minorities as close friends. Finally, in order to control for the fact that the survey was carried out at different times and for country-specific unobserved characteristics, all the regressions included country and time fixed effects.

One might expect that individuals who hold racist beliefs, express a high level of immigration phobia, oppose immigration of any kind, favour a restrictive admission policy towards refugees, oppose cultural diversity, are older, unemployed, have less personal contact with minorities, have

[10] 'People of the same race or ethnic group as most the people of [the country]', 'People of a different race or ethnic group from most people of [the country]', 'People from the poorer countries in Europe', 'People from poorer countries outside Europe', Gypsies, Jews and Muslims.

a relatively low level of education, who placed themselves more to the right on the left–right ideological scale and who are not themselves immigrants will be more likely to oppose Muslims' immigration. On the other hand, due to the absence of theoretical predictions, the effects of the variables sex, religiosity in general and religious denomination other than Islam on opposition to Muslims' immigration are a priori undetermined.

Modelling strategy and results

Recall that a dependent variable was coded equal to 1 if a respondent reported that he or she is pro a ban on Muslim immigration and anti a ban on other types of immigration, 0 otherwise, henceforth. To simplify the exposition, henceforth in the rest of the paper I will refer to it by the terms 'against Muslims' immigration' or 'opposition to Muslims' immigration', and the reader should interpret them as meaning that the respondent is pro a ban on Muslim immigration only. Since the dependent variable is dichotomous in order to assess the influence of racism, xenophobia and the other variables on the probability of being against Muslims' immigration, a series of binary probit regressions were performed using a forward stepwise procedure, by adding distinct categories of explanatory variables sequentially in different equations to derive the final model (column 5).

The starting point was a baseline specification that includes individual demographic and socio-economic characteristics, religiosity and personal contact with minority groups, column (1). This specification was extended to include religious denomination, racism belief and feeling of immigration phobia, columns (2) and (3). The following regression added resistance to diversity, column (4). Finally, the last regression additionally included opposition to immigration in general and to refugees' admission, column (5). More likely country-specific factors and year of the survey might have influenced respondents' attitudes towards immigration in general and Muslims' in particular. To control for this year and country effects dummies were included in all regressions, although the coefficients are not reported. Table 3 displays the regression results.

Overall, a majority of variables were statistically significant at the 1% level and in the expected direction. More precisely, I found a positive and statistically significant association between the probability of being pro a ban on Muslim immigration and the variables age measured in years, unemployed, and self-placement on the ideological left-right scale. Although, once accounting

for other factors, the variables unemployed and ideological self-positioning became statistically insignificant, so they were dropped in the final model. In contrast, as expected, education and contact with minority groups have a negative effect. These findings are in line with previous research that has shown that negative attitudes towards immigration, e.g. Scheve and Slaughter (2001), Citrin et al. (1997), Sides and Citrin (2007), and anti-Muslim sentiment, Strabac and Listhaug (2008), Savelkoul et al. (2010), Ciftci (2012), Ogan et al. (2014), are much stronger among individuals who are older, less-educated, as well as those who place themselves more to the right on the ideological scale and who have less personal contact with minority groups.

Contrary to what was expected and in stark contrast to research findings suggesting that immigrants tend to hold more positive attitudes on immigration relative to native-born, for example, Sides and Citrin (2007), Scheve and Slaughter (2001), the regression results show that immigrants are more likely to be against Muslims' immigration, columns (3) to (5). Currently no explanation for this unexpected and counterintuitive result can be given except to note that anti-Muslim sentiment has become so mainstream and present in all segments of European societies, but so far there is no available evidence supporting or invalidating that immigrants in general express stronger anti-Muslim sentiment than native-born. This finding is possibly due to the limitation regarding the representativeness of immigrants in the survey sample. The ESS is nationally representative of the general population, but given that a number of foreign-born population characteristics are unknown in many European countries, e.g. immigrants' educational attainment in a country such as Belgium, one cannot assume that the sample is adequately representative of immigrants. Given this, further research is required before a definite conclusion can be drawn in this regard.

Also the results show that men are less likely to be against Muslim immigration than women (in all specifications). Again, at present, I do not have any convincing explanation for this result and the fact that previous empirical studies have been inconclusive about the effect of gender on attitudes toward immigration does not help in this regard[11]. Some might speculate, that the high

[11] The literature has reported the ambiguous effect of gender on attitudes towards immigration. Several studies suggest that women are less open to immigration than men, e.g. Citrin et al. (1997), Malchow-Møller et al. (2008). Others support the opposite conclusion, e.g., or have not found any gender difference, e.g. O'Rourke and Sinnott (2006). However, results to date are mixed, for instance Gorodzeisky (2011) reported that, relative to women, men are more favourable to the admission of immigrants from richer countries, but there was no gender difference towards immigrants from poorer countries.

opposition of women to Muslims' immigration might reflect the portrayal of Islam in Europe as a misogynistic religion. Although, this interpretation appears to some extent in agreement with Ho (2007, 292), who points out that in Western countries 'Islam's alleged misogyny is a key tenet of arguments against the immigration of Muslims'. However, this assertion does not tell us whether women are more inclined than men to associate Islam and Muslims with misogyny.

Moreover, the findings of the empirical literature on anti-Muslim sentiment do not point to this direction. For instance, Ciftci (2012) suggests that, in general, women do no tend to hold more negative anti-Muslim sentiment than men. Similarly, other scholars, such as Savelkoul et al. (2011), using survey data just for the Netherlands and Strabac and Listhaug (2008), Ogan et al. (2014), using data for different countries, found that females are less likely to be more prejudiced against Muslims than their male counterparts. However, these works do not give any clue about why men and women differ in anti-Muslim sentiment. This means that the explanation of the fact that women are more likely to be pro a ban against Muslims' immigration remains an open empirical question that needs further investigation.

Another interesting result, as shown in column (1), compared to non-religious persons, religious individuals do not have a higher or lower probability of being against Muslim immigration. This is also true for Jews and Christians as well, column (2). These findings are in concordance with other studies on attitudes towards Muslims[12]. For example, Strabac and Listhaug (2008) have shown that religiosity has no effect on anti-Muslim prejudice in 30 European countries. Similarly, analyzing public opinion in France, Great Britain, Germany, Spain and the United States, Ogan et al. (2014) found that in almost all these countries religiosity is not a predictor of anti-Muslim attitudes. The exception is France where respondents who considered religion more important were more likely to hold a more positive opinion of Muslims.

Finally, a priori, I expected that opposition to Muslim immigration is driven by racist considerations and xenophobia. Consistent with my prediction, the regression results show a positive and statistically significant association (at the 1% level) between the different indicators

[12] However, we should note that the literature is not clear-cut on the relationship between religiosity and attitudes towards immigration. Some empirical findings indicate that this relation is positive. Others reached a mixed conclusion, for example, Ben-Num Bloom, Arikan and Courtemanche (2015) argue that religiosity may either reduce or exacerbate immigration sentiments, depending on the dimension of religiosity considered as well as the similarities and/or differences between immigrants and natives. For an excellent review of this literature, see Ben-Num Bloom, Arikan and Courtemanche (2015).

of racism and the probability of being against Muslim immigration, columns (2) to (5). More precisely, support of a ban on Muslim immigration is more likely to come from persons who hold biological racism beliefs, feel a great social distance from immigrants, who oppose the law against ethnic discrimination and support racial immigration policy. These results are in agreement with the conclusions of two cases studies. Ayers et al. (2009) note that Anglo immigration policy preferences towards Latinos in San Diego County is motivated more by racial resentments than other considerations. In the same vein, Dustmann and Preston (2007) assert that racial prejudice is an important determinant of British people's attitudes to further immigration, especially of immigrants that are ethnically more distant from the majority population.

Similarly, as hypothesized, a high level of immigration phobia, resistance to diversity, opposition to immigration in general and to refugees' admission in particular constitute other factors that affect positively the probability to be pro a ban on Muslims' immigration, as shown in columns (3), (4) and (5).

Insert Table 3 here

Conclusion

Recent years have seen a dramatic increase in anti-Muslim sentiment in Europe. One of its manifestations is the adoption by different countries of legislations limiting the visibility of Islamic signs and symbols, e.g. bans on Islamic women's veils, like the hijab and burqa in the public sphere and the construction of minarets and mosques. These examples represent just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the hostility towards Muslims. Hate crimes against Muslims, and attacks on mosques and Islamic cultural centres are other signs of the growing islamophobia that European Muslims are living with. Nowadays Muslims are associated with several negative words. To name just a few: fanatic, violent, extremist and terrorist. In this context, the growing European Muslim minority population, due mainly to immigration and the difference in fertility rate between Muslims and non-Muslims, is considered as a threat to national 'identity' and security by extreme right-wing political parties and other populist groups. Because Muslims' fertility is beyond their control, they consider that a ban on Muslims' immigration is the only way to stop the 'islamization of their countries'. Unfortunately, the available evidence reveals that this discourse has found great resonance within European public opinions.

Surprisingly, despite scholarly interest in anti-Muslim sentiment, European support of a ban on Muslims' immigration has not received much attention. This paper was intended to fill this gap in the literature. The analysis of individuals' preferred level of Muslim immigration in 20 European countries led to three main findings. First, an overwhelming majority of Europeans reported a preference for restrictive immigration policies towards Muslims. For instance, 65% or more of Czechs (83%), Hungarians (82%), Estonians (70%) and Poles (65%) would like their countries to 'allow a few' or 'allow none' Muslim immigrants. Moreover, the majority of Czechs (54%) and Hungarians (51%) were in favour of a complete ban on Muslim immigration in their countries ('allow none') and a significant proportion of Estonians (42%), Lithuanians (34%), Portuguese (33%) and Poles (33%) share the same opinion. Secondly, the paper's findings reveal that better educated people and those who have personal contact with minorities are less likely to be pro a ban on Muslims' immigration while religious individuals do not have a higher or lower probability of being against Muslims' immigration relative to non-religious persons. This is also true for Jews and Christians. Thirdly, this study shows that racist beliefs, the perception of immigration as a threat, resistance to diversity, opposition to immigration in general and support for restrictive admission policies vis-a-vis refugees play an important role in shaping individuals' opposition to more Muslims' immigration. This suggests that a ban on Muslims' immigration is more driven by these factors than other considerations, e.g. religiosity. Therefore, public policies that reduce individuals' fear of immigration and promote tolerance, anti-racism, multiculturalism and positive attitudes to refugees could help to reduce Europeans' resistance to Muslims' immigration.

Limitations of this study include the use of a cross-sectional approach, due to the fact that only the most recent wave of the European Social Survey (ESS) used in this study contains a question on the preferred level of Muslims' immigration, which does not allow drawing a conclusion on the causal effects of the control variables. Therefore, the observed relationships should be interpreted as correlations. Additionally, because the ESS does not include questions that capture individuals' perception of the size of Muslim minority populations living in the country nor their view of Muslims in general and Muslim minorities in particular, I was not able to empirically test whether these factors also predict Europeans' support for a ban on Muslims' immigration. This might be explored in future research. Nonetheless, despite these shortcomings, I believe that the results of this article add a piece of evidence to the literature on anti-Muslim sentiment, the

analysis of the factors driving Europeans to support a ban on Muslims' immigration.

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Table 1 – Europeans' resistance to Muslims' immigration, and Muslim minorities' demographic size

	Attitudes towards Muslims' immigration		European Muslims Populations, in 2010	
	Restriction on Muslims' immigration (in %)	Ban on Muslims' immigration (in %)	In absolute values	In % of total population
Austria	52	20	450,000	5.4
Belgium	47	19	630,000	5.9
Czech Republic	83	54	<10,000	<0.1
Denmark	45	11	230,000	4.1
Estonia	70	42	<10,000	<0.7
Finland	61	17	40,000	<0.2
France	34	13	4,710,000	7.5
Germany	28	7	4,760,000	5.8
Hungary	82	51	<10,000	<0.2
Ireland	54	22	50,000	1.1
Lithuania	62	34	<10,000	<0.3
Netherlands	46	13	1,000,000	6
Norway	34	9	180,000	3.7
Poland	65	33	<10,000	<0.1
Portugal	62	33	30,000	0.3
Slovenia	43	20	70,000	3.6
Spain	52	20	980,000	2.1
Sweden	18	4	430,000	4.6
Switzerland	42	12	380,000	4.9
United Kingdom	44	17	2,960,000	4.8

Note: Restrict Muslims' immigration corresponds to the sum of 'allow few' and 'allow none'; ban on Muslims' immigration refers to the response category 'allow none'. The proportions correspond to the number of cases out of total responses including no response. Whenever I report percentages or other summary statistics I weight responses using the survey weight (dweight) to ensure that each country's sample represents the appropriate total population.

Source: European Social Survey (ESS) for attitudes towards Muslims' immigration and PEW Research Center (2015) for Muslims' minority population, and author calculations.

Table 2 – European preferred levels of immigration of the different immigrant categories conditional on ban on Muslim immigration, in percentages

Other immigrant categories	Ban on Muslim immigration (allow none)				
	Allow many	Allow some	Allow a few	Allow none	Total
Gypsies	0.4	3.6	12.0	84.0	100
Jews	5.2	20.7	31.9	42.2	100
From poorer countries in Europe	2.6	18.8	38.3	40.3	100
From poorer countries outside Europe	1.6	12.9	33.9	51.6	100
From the same race/ethnicity as the majority of the country's residents	8.9	31.9	36.7	22.5	100
From different race/ethnicity to the majority of the country's residents	2.0	18.5	40.3	39.2	100

Source: European Social Survey (ESS) and author calculations.

Table 3 – Individual opposition to Muslims' immigration

Against Muslims' immigration and in favour of increasing other types of immigration					
	(1)	**(2)**	**(3)**	**(4)**	**(5)**
Demographic characteristics					
Immigrant	-0.018	0.0476	0.203***	0.211***	0.210***
	(0.036)	(0.043)	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.046)
Male	-0.038**	-0.106***	-0.107***	-0.113***	-0.119***
	(0.019)	(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.023)
Age	0.009***	0.006***	0.007***	0.007***	0.006***
	(0.0005)	(0.0007)	(0.0007)	(0.0007)	(0.0007)
Socio-economic characteristics					
Educational attainment	-0.108***	-0.082***	-0.054***	-0.054***	-0.052***
	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Unemployed	0.080***	0.079**	0.038		
	(0.028)	(0.033)	(0.036)		
Self-placement on the ideological left-right scale	0.040***	0.013**	0.011*	0.009	
	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)	
Belongs to religion or denomination	-0.016				
	(0.021)				
Muslim		-0.967***	-0.798***	-0.757***	-0.817***
		(0.195)	(0.202)	(0.201)	(0.193)
Jew		0.227	0.038		
		(0.288)	(0.317)		
Christian		-0.076***	-0.043		
		(0.025)	(0.027)		
Contact with different ethnic group					
Frequency of personal contact with minorities	-0.039***	-0.036***	-0.037***	-0.036***	-0.042***
	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Minorities' members as close friends	-0.270***	-0.138***	-0.101***	-0.093***	-0.082***
	(0.021)	(0.024)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.025)

(Continued)

Table 3 – Continued

Against Muslims' immigration and in favour of increasing other types of immigration					
	(1)	**(2)**	**(3)**	**(4)**	**(5)**
Racism and xenophobia					
Biological racism beliefs		0.512***	0.354***	0.341***	0.327***
		(0.034)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.036)
Social distance from immigrants		0.088***	0.058***	0.056***	0.048***
		(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Support of racial immigration policy		0.085***	0.075***	0.067***	0.066***
		(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Opposition to law against ethnic discrimination		0.166***	0.081**	0.085***	0.083***
		(0.030)	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.031)
Immigration phobia			0.253***	0.243***	0.206***
			(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Resistance to diversity and opposition to immigration					
Resistance to diversity				0.189***	0.186***
				(0.026)	(0.025)
Favours restrictive immigration policy towards all immigrants					0.166***
					(0.033)
Favours restrictive admission policy towards refugees					0.269***
					(0.026)
Constant	-0.956***	-1.575***	-3.005***	-3.054***	-2.954***
	(0.0805)	(0.0991)	(0.121)	(0.121)	(0.122)
Time fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Countries fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pseudo R^2	0.17	0.25	0.30	0.30	0.30
Number of observations	32,790	26,998	24,626	24,618	26,080

Note: Entries are coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. * Significant at 10% level, ** Significant at 5% level, *** Significant at 1% level.