ELECTORAL SYSTEM EFFECTS ON ANTI-MUSLIM SENTIMENTS IN WESTERN EUROPE

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The purpose of this thesis is to answer the question, why is there a variation in anti-Muslim sentiments across Western Europe? There is existing literature on individual and country-level variables to explain why prejudice exists, but this research examines the impact of political institutions on anti-Muslim sentiments. Based on new institutionalism theory, electoral systems can shape public attitudes by providing far-right parties a platform to put their concerns on the agenda, and these parties promote anti-Muslim popular sentiments. The results of this analysis support this argument in that the larger the average district magnitude in a country, the greater the anti-Muslim sentiments. The findings also show that an increase in far-right party vote-share also covaries with an increase in anti-Muslim sentiments.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Recent literature has identified a rise in anti-Muslim sentiments in Western Europe (Starbac and Listhaung: 2008), particularly after 9/11 (Fetzer and Soper 2003: 247). Yet despite this purported increase, the levels of anti-Muslim sentiment vary across countries. The purpose of this thesis is to address this question: Why are there varying levels of anti-Muslim sentiment across Western European countries? Current prejudice literature explores individual (Burns and Gimpel 2007; Cimino 2005; Johnson 2006) and aggregate level variables (Kehrberg 2007; Scheeper 2002; Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004) but does not emphasize the impact of political institutions on anti-Muslim sentiments. Unlike previous literature, this thesis addresses a largely ignored variable in the existing work on anti-Muslim sentiment-- the impact of political institutions, and more specifically the electoral system, on shaping political attitudes.

Indeed, there is some reason to believe that institutions can shape political attitudes. For instance, Anderson and Guillery (1997) argue that electoral institutions (particularly those that promote “consensualism”) shape positive attitudes towards democracy. Similarly, Brass (1985) argues that electoral institutions can help shape “group identities” particularly ethnic ones. It is reasonable to expect that electoral institutions should also shape attitudes regarding Muslims in Europe as well. Thus, this
thesis pioneers a new research area by examining how electoral systems have served to shape anti-Muslim sentiments in Western Europe.

The Argument

Currently, there are two schools of thought that approach the question of what causes prejudice and intolerance. On the one hand, there is the idea that individual level variables contribute to prejudices; on the other, there is the approach that suggests social and economic context (or the aggregate level) variables are the cause for resentments.

Individual level variables examine the situation of each individual and how their situation may contribute to their prejudices. A common individual level reason for prejudices is personal economic standing. Quillian (1995) suggests that an individual is more likely to have prejudices if he or she perceives an economic threat from the subordinate group. On the contrary, Burns and Gimpel (2000) state that it is not a person’s economic standing that increases his prejudices, but that their education, attitudes about welfare use, gender, place of residence, and political ideology play a larger role in a person’s unfavorable judgment about the intelligence and work ethics of minority groups. A person’s religious association is also used as an indicator for intolerance. One study found that Evangelical Christians are exceptionally antagonistic to Islam (Cimino 2005), and another similar study found that negative attitudes towards Islam did exist in individuals influenced by conservative, fundamentalist Protestantism (Johnson 2006).
On the other hand, aggregate level analyses examine the impact of societal characteristics. Kehrberg (2007: 272) states that as wealth between nations vary, prejudice levels are also expected to vary with Gross Domestic Products (GDP). Higher unemployment levels are also used to explain prejudices towards others (Scheeper 2002), while Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior (2004) suggest that national identity is the leading cause for prejudices. Bowyer (2009) proposes that the proximity of a minority group contributes to intolerance. He argues that interaction between the dominant group and a large minority population decreases intolerance towards the latter group. For instance, he notes that English whites that live in close proximity to large black population show lower levels of racial hostility than respondents with few black neighbors. However, this study also discusses that if a minority group is considered to be much different than the majority group, contextual factors like proximity might increase intolerance.

Where this thesis differs from other studies is in its focus on the impact of political institutions. The basic argument made in this thesis is that electoral systems help shape attitudes by providing openings for political actors to put their concerns on the agenda, and hence shaping popular attitudes. This certainly has been an argument made by students of minor parties, who have pointed out how smaller parties shape the issue space by introducing ideas and proposals into the political agenda (ideas and proposals which are often absorbed by the larger parties in the system) (for this point see Herzog, 1987; Ishiyama 2002). In a similar vein, I argue electoral systems that are “open” to extremist, far-right parties are more likely to have greater anti-Muslim sentiments. Most
of the existing literature on anti-Muslim sentiments in Western Europe focuses on socioeconomic explanations or the effect of discrete events (such as 9/11) as explanations for the rise of the anti-Muslim sentiments. However, I argue that the more accommodating the electoral system is to far-right parties, then the more far-right parties will enter politics, and this will result in an increase in anti-Muslim sentiments. In many ways, this argument is similar to the argument made by Maurice Duverger (1986) when he contended had Weimer Germany adopted a less permissive electoral system in the 1920s, (a list proportional representation with only a mathematical threshold) such as a first past the post district based electoral system. This would not have allowed the National Socialists and Adolph Hitler to gain a foothold in German political institutions, where they went on to popularize anti-Semitism and hate.

Thus, permissive electoral systems (such as low threshold list proportional representation systems) may provide for the rise of far right-wing parties, which may explain why some countries have more intense anti-Muslim sentiments than others, despite facing similar social and economic difficulties in the early 21st century. There are mechanisms that control how much power and support a party can receive. Depending on the electoral rules, some countries may have a greater chance at electing far-right parties than others. An open electoral system creates a platform for far-right parties where they can broadcast their beliefs. Far-right parties are less likely to compete in an election if the possibility of winning an election or entering parliament is slim. If an electoral system is less open to extremist parties, then this may mitigate the chance of far-right parties competing in the election, and hence less chance an anti-Muslim agenda is popularized.
Although it might be argued that the causal direction is opposite of what I propose (that the rise of anti-Muslim sentiment preceded the rise of far-right parties, and that far-right parties are not a cause, but an effect of anti-Muslim sentiment) it is important to note two things. First, that many right wing extremist parties (such as the National Front in France and the Centre Democrats in the Netherlands) preceded the rise of anti-Muslim sentiments in Europe. Second, if anti-Muslim sentiment is greater in countries that have electoral systems that are more permissive of extremist attitudes (and these electoral systems certainly preceded the rise of anti-Muslim attitudes) then this would suggest support for the arguments made by Duverger that electoral systems can act as a hedge (or not) against extremism becoming part of mainstream popular attitudes.

Anti-Muslim sentiments in Western Europe may not be explained by individual and aggregate level variables alone. Looking at institutional factors provides for another perspective to increase our understanding to why anti-Muslim sentiments exist. If electoral systems have an influence on anti-Muslim sentiments, then there are serious repercussions following that relationship. This means that once far-right parties are in parliament, they have the chance to influence policy making. Future scholars should also consider the possibility that political institutions can influence anti-Muslim sentiments or prejudices towards any other group, for that matter.

The Plan of this Thesis

Examining the rise of anti-Muslim sentiments in Western Europe is particularly timely. Western Europe’s demographics have significantly changed in the past fifty
years, and the consequences of that change have resulted in rising anti-Muslim
sentiments (as is discussed in chapter 2). Prejudices against Muslims do not only surface
as civil violence, but has resulted in laws that actively single out Muslims.

The following sections of this thesis develop the argument that electoral systems’
affect popular anti-Muslim sentiments. Chapter 2 provides some historical background to
the current context, pointing to the rise of anti-Muslim attitudes in Western Europe. It
discusses the history of immigration in Europe and the evolution of immigration policies
in France, Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, and Italy. The chapter ends with an
overview about the current state of the Muslim population in Western Europe. Chapter 3
reviews the existing literature and focuses on how the current literature on anti-Muslim
prejudice focuses on sociotropic and individual level variables. This chapter also explores
the literature that discusses the impact of political institutions on political behavior and
public opinion.

From the literature discussed in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 develops a theoretical
framework which integrates the literature on electoral systems and political behavior with
the literature on anti-Muslim sentiments in Western Europe, and then introduces the
research design. In this chapter, a series of hypotheses are derived, with particular focus
on institutional explanations. The main hypothesis is the more permissive the electoral
system is for far-right parties then the more likely the citizens of that country will hold
anti-Muslim views. The research design details and operationalizes the dependent,
independent, and control variables used in the cross-sectional logistic analyses. There are
two models presented in this chapter that help explain the hypothesis. The difference
between the two models is the independent variable. Each independent variable is a measure of an electoral system’s “openness” to extremist parties.

In the last chapter, I analyze the results and discuss the significance of the findings. According to the results of the statistical analysis, there is support for my institutional hypothesis, that countries with electoral systems that are accommodating to extremist parties are more likely to hold anti-Muslim sentiments. Finally, I provide some conclusions and directions for future research.
CHAPTER 2
THE RISE OF ANTI-MUSLIM ATTITUDES

History of Muslims in Europe

Before turning to an analysis of European popular attitudes towards Muslims, it is first necessary to understand the historical background of Muslim immigration to Europe. Unlike the United States, which is geographically separated from countries that have substantial Muslim populations, Europe is more accessible to variety of different people, particularly Muslims. For some, such as Moroccans, landing on European shore line is a short boat ride away. For Turks, entering Europe is simple as crossing the border in Thrace. The opportunity for work and better living attracts immigrants to Europe, especially to Western Europe. Muslims are not the only immigrants that enter Europe, but in many European countries they are the largest immigrant population. Further immigration in Europe has been identified (rightly or wrongly) with the Muslim population (as immigration has been identified with Hispanics in the United States).

Muslims developed an increasingly larger presence in Europe after World War II when they arrived as a labor force mainly from South Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East. In many ways, post war Europe was rebuilt on the “sweat” of immigrant Muslim workers. As “guest workers,” they were expected to work temporarily but their presence became more permanent as male immigrants were joined by their families, and
eventually the first generation led to the second and third generation of European Muslims. Because of shortages of labor in post-World War II Europe, foreign workers were initially welcomed in Europe (Leikin 2005: 120; Taspinar 2003: 76-5). Industrial expansion throughout Western Europe also led to an increased demand for guest workers from Turkey, Morocco, Tunisia and Yugoslavia (Pettigrew 1998: 79).

After the 1970’s oil crisis and recession, European countries faced important economic challenges, including demands for reducing deficits and economic restructuring in the face of increasing global competition. Support of social programs and guest worker programs declined, especially as unemployment in the general population increased. Further, immigrant workers were now seen as a hindrance, rather than as a benefit, as unemployment rose. Initial efforts to reduce foreigners through stricter immigration laws were futile, because many of the male guest workers took advantage of the exception to immigration laws that allowed family members to join them. This led to an increased number of “second wave” immigrants or the families of the workers who had first migrated to Europe as guest workers. Their presence solidified the permanency of foreign-born residents and increased the overall population of immigrants in Western Europe (Fetzer and Soper 2005: 3).

The foreign population of Europe grew at a time when there were several economic, political, and social changes. Rising unemployment, as the result of the worldwide economic recession of the 1980s, created tension amongst native and foreign born populations. At the same time, European integration expanded to include more states, and in the 1990s the European Union (EU) experienced a very rapid expansion as
it began to include the former communist states of Eastern and Central Europe. As the EU grew larger, resentment directed against foreign guest workers in Western European countries grew as well. The changing environment intensified concerns over possible “threats” from immigrants and workers from former communist countries, and the developing world were often used as popular scape goats for individuals who were disappointed with their declining economic fortunes (Leveau 1992: 174; Pettigrew 1998: 83).

Immigration in Europe

The quickly changing social landscape fundamentally altered the position of Islam in Europe-- as Shahi and Lawless (2005: 3) point out, “Islam, long perceived in Europe as ‘external’, is nowadays a highly visible internal social actor in European countries due the immigration and settlement of individuals of Muslim origin.” Although, immigration is an important issue across Europe, there is variation across individual European countries. Indeed, each Western European country has its own legacy with Muslims and has dealt with immigration in different ways. In this section, I examine the situation in France, Netherlands, Germany, Denmark and Italy.

France

France has had generally a longer experience with large scale immigration than other countries in Europe. In France, the need for a labor force prompted, initially, a pro-immigration policy in the years after the World War I. As a result of the First World War,
a decline in French birthrates, coupled with enormous losses in manpower that France suffered during the war, provided an incentive for the promotion of immigrants (particularly from other parts of Europe) to make up for labor shortages. These labor problems were exacerbated after World War II as competition for labor grew along with the need for agricultural and industrial production in the post war reconstruction boom (DeLey 1993: 179-199).

In the post-World War II era, there were a growing number of immigrants from Algeria to France, in part because of the former’s colonial relationship with the latter. In the 1960s, France saw a further influx of asylum seekers after the Algerian War where many Algerians sought asylum after fighting for the French side (Viorst 1996: 1). Immigrants also flowed into France from other former North African French colonial possessions. By 1999, 39% of immigrants in France were from Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. Further in the 1990s there were an increasing number of immigrants arriving from Turkey, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia as well.

Generally, immigrants have been able to secure employment in France. By 2002, unemployment for immigrants was 16.4%-- however the number of unemployed was twice as high among ‘native’ French citizens. Thus, recent economic stagnation affected ‘natives’ more than immigrants, leading to the claim by many (particularly on the extreme Right) that immigrants “took away” jobs from native born citizens. This has been widely cited as a cause of greater tension and the rise in support of the extreme right in France. As Ulrike Schuerkens (2007: chs. 9, 113) notes, “Economic stagnation led to a rise in ethnocentric sentiments and a shift towards anti-immigration discourse and
support for extreme-right parties.” In turn, immigration coupled with increased unemployment levels fueled support for extremist populist-parties (Golder 2003:459-60).

Immigrants in France have also faced increasing legal restrictions as well. For instance, currently non-Europeans are only allowed to immigrate to France for the purposes of reunifying with family members, but migrating to France for the purpose of employment is almost impossible. In addition, non-Europeans can only be employed if they receive special authorization permits, where a resident permit is valid for 10 years and a temporary permit is valid for 1 year. Even if a permit was granted, finding employment is currently difficult. There is rampant alleged discrimination against non-Europeans and particularly immigrants from Muslim countries in both employment and in housing. As a result, in 2005, there was widespread protest and rioting in immigrant communities in France, largely in protest of discrimination in the housing and labor markets. The rioting lasted nearly three weeks and caused massive property damage (Schuerkens 2007: chs. 9, 114-116).

Muslims in particular perceive themselves as targets of special discrimination. For instance, the French law of laïcité or secularism prohibits religious symbols from entering the public sphere—this has been used to justify the banning of the Muslim headscarf. This is often perceived as hypocritical and used to unfairly target Muslims. For instance, although secularism also rigorously promotes the separation of church and state, Catholic schools are publicly funded, but Muslims schools are not (Klausen 2005: 555).

Such discriminatory policies, like banning the headscarf, are encouraged by the far-right extremist party, the National Front. The issue arose in 1989 when three girls of
North African origin insisted on keeping their headscarf on during school to keep in line with their Islamic obligations. As other political parties took a centered or neutral stance on the matter, the National Front exploited the issue and labeled it as an example of “religious and cultural colonization of France that threatened her very identity” (Brechon and Mitra 1992: 67). The National Front had the highest support in urban and industrial areas, mainly where the largest population or Northern Africans lived, but also these area where places that struggled economically. Regardless of the National Front’s hotspots of supports, the party gained national support in an increase of 4% of votes in 1988 (Brechon and Mitra 1992).

Limiting religious practices of Muslims in France started earlier than other Western European nation, in part because of the rise of a formidable far-right party and increasing xenophobic attitudes amongst the citizens. Some scholars have argued that the reason for this is that France has the largest Muslim population in all of Western Europe, and the country had to deal with its new segment of its population sooner than most other European countries. Indeed, currently, France has the largest Muslim population in all of Western Europe, with 10% of its population consisting of Muslims (CIA World Fact book).

Netherlands

The Netherlands encouraged immigration into its country somewhat later than France. In the 1960s and 1970s, guest workers from Turkey, Morocco, Southern Europe, and Yugoslavia emigrated to the Netherlands, largely as agricultural workers in industries
such as tulip bulb cultivation. Immigrants from Southern Europe and Yugoslavia returned to their home during the oil crisis of 1970s, however the Turks and Moroccans ended up staying in the Netherlands and took advantage of Dutch family reunification policies.

The Netherlands has had a long tradition of “tolerance” of diversity, as earlier immigration policies encouraged multiculturalism, equal opportunity, and fighting discrimination. The Dutch government followed through with coexistence policies by providing each recognized group with their own public broadcasting station, their own schools, and each group was given public subsidies for those organizations. In essence, each group could have their “pillar” in Dutch society. By the 1990s, efforts to help disadvantage minority groups were less and less popular, and the Dutch government decided to move away from their pluralistic policy and replace it with a more individualistic approach. The new policy was geared towards integration and civic involvement. Instead of accommodating to minorities, there was more of a demand for them to integrate (Vink 2007: 341-45). The government made integration and Dutch language classes compulsory for new comers; earlier immigrants were also prompted to partake in integration courses, but it was more difficult to reach these group of people. Participating in these integration courses was difficult since it took years to complete the course, and even willing participants were discouraged to participate by the challenging administrative procedures (Vink 2007: 347; Wal: 2007 chs. 19, 249-50).

Under the multiculturalism policy, immigrants were not integrated with mainstream Dutch society, and the consequences of a multiculturalism policy appeared to have the opposite intended effects (Joppke 2007: 6). Second-generation immigrants were
unemployed, relied on social welfare, faced high drop-out rates and ethnic segregation in urban schools (Wal: 2007 chs. 19, 257). Less access to education impeded the ability of immigrants and their offspring to make economic and social progress in Dutch society. Students of Turkish and Moroccan descent were three times less likely to attend college than a native Dutch citizen (Shahi and Lawless 2005: 83).

In short, although the Netherlands was historically much more accepting of different cultures and even promoted them more than other countries (such as France), recently the Netherlands has become stricter with their immigrant policy. One scholar explains, “the supposedly difference-friendly, multicultural Netherlands is currently urging migrants to accept `Dutch norms and values ' in the context of a policy of civic integration that is only an inch (but still an inch!) away from the cultural assimilation that had once been attributed to the French” (Joppke, 2007, p . 2). The change in the Netherlands has several explanations, but one possibility is the visibility of Islam, as Muslims are especially marginalized in Dutch society. Leo Lucassen (2005: 12) describes that “it is precisely their adherence to the Islamic faith that makes Turks and Moroccans much more alien, in fact more `black', than other groups such as the Surinamese” (Vink 2007: 247).

Several events exacerbated tensions between Dutch residents and Muslim immigrants. Islam and the ethnicity of non-Dutch residents were increasingly highlighted in the media and by political actors, and the threat of immigrants became a political issue. The words ‘migrant’ and ‘Muslim’ were juxtaposed together in public debate. By the end of the decade, public concern increased with the presence of Imams, Islamic schools,
mosques, the wearing of the headscarf in public domains, and the political movements started by Muslim youths. The attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11th, 2001 sparked violence against Muslims living in the Netherlands. The anti-Muslim sentiments grew and eventually resulted in the political breakthrough of an explicitly anti-immigrant political party, the Pim Fortuyn List. The party was led by Pin Fortuyn, a sociology professor turned politician (who was also openly gay) who believed that Islam was a “backwards culture,” compromised Dutch values, was homophobic, and it treated women as second-class citizens. He promoted an immigration policy that prevented Muslims from entering the country. In 2002, he was assassinated, but several other politicians and public figures continued his platform (the Economist 2002; Lang 2002; Wal 2007: chs. 19, 257-8). After the killing of Pim Fortuyn, Dutch politics were pushed to the right, as integration efforts increase with more force. Immigrants were now responsible to pay for their own integration tests, and any family member that is abroad must take the integration test at a Dutch embassy in their country of origin before they can enter the Netherlands (Joppke 2007: 8). Another major event in 2004 was the murder of controversial film director Theo van Gough, who was murdered by a Muslim in retaliation for the release of his film that focused on how women in Islam were subjected to a demeaning position in Muslim society. His murder sparked another wave of violence towards Muslims, particularly in southern parts of the Netherlands (Grace 2004).

Relatively speaking, Muslims are generally more politically active in the Netherlands than elsewhere in Europe. Indeed, according to the country’s constitution, migrants and minorities have the same rights as Dutch citizens to assemble and create
organizations. Foreign-born residents are also allowed to join and run as candidates for political parties. Political activism has meant that the majority of the Turkish and Moroccan population vote for left-wing parties (and Muslim candidates are generally affiliated with the left wing parties). This has generally meant that those who take issue with Dutch immigration policy, or who are appalled by the murder of figures like Theo Van Gogh, gravitate towards the political right. This has led to an increasingly polarized political environment in the Netherlands, especially on the issue of immigration.

Germany

Germany’s relationship with immigrants is not too different than France or the Netherlands, but migration patterns were affected by the legacy of a divided country after the Second World War. While the communist German Democratic Republic (GDR) recruited labor workers from other Eastern European socialist states, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) received a large number of GDR citizens seeking political, social, and economic refuge. From 1973-1990, West Germany also experienced an influx of a large number of Turks and refugees seeking asylum from Yugoslavia. With the fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of Eastern Europe, Germany has had to deal with large influx of several ethnic groups crossing into its borders. Once the unification process was in place, a more sound and stable immigration policy began to take shape (Cyrus and Vogel 2007: chs. 10, 129).

For a short time, the German government moved towards a liberal immigration policy at the start of year 2000, mainly due to the demand for highly qualified workers.
The initiative was short lived as the terrorist attack in the U.S. on September 11, 2001 and the decline of the information technology sector prompted a retreat of the liberal immigration policy (Cyrus and Vogel 2007: chs. 10, 136).

The attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001 catalyzed further calls for limits on immigration and growing popular anti-Muslim sentiment. Media coverage turned towards the topic of an Islamic threat and the banning of the headscarf for teachers (Cyrus and Vogel 2007: chs. 10, 137). In the German state of Wurttemberg, the Christian Democratic Party pushed for the ban on the Islamic headscarf in schools, but upheld the presence of the crucifix in classrooms. The party’s leader was noted to state that “everyone who lives in her country must accept that it is based upon a Judeo-Christian value system.” Another discriminatory policy supported Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Jews entitlement to run state-subsidized hospitals, religious and social services, but Islamic organizations were not given the same opportunities (Klausen 2005: 555).

Like many Western European countries, integration of a non-Christian and non-European ethnic group is the common problem, but Germany’s immigration issues differ from the problems of France and the Netherlands. In France the issue is what to do with unemployed immigrants, and the Netherlands is coping with an outdated multicultural immigration policy. In Germany, one of the largest issues is how to integrate Turkish immigrants. Turkish residents are the largest foreign nationals group in Germany, and their lack of legal status in the country inhibits their integration. Becoming naturalized as a Turk in Germany is not impossible; the maze of rules and codes makes the process difficult and inefficient.
**Denmark**

Denmark saw its immigrant population boom in the 1960s and 1970s, primarily receiving people from Turkey, Yugoslavia, and Pakistan. Repeating the actions of other Western European countries, Denmark limited immigration into its country during the 1970s recession. Keeping steady employment became very difficult for an immigrant in Denmark. In the 1980s, immigrants mobilized to support the left-wing parties, and by 2001 Danish citizens began moving away from supporting these parties and moved towards more right-wing groups. The public supported the far-right Danish People’s Party (DF) which introduced a harder line stance towards immigrants in the country. In 2007, more than half of the immigrant population consisted of people from majority Muslim countries (Goli and Rezaei 2007: 73).

Many Muslims in Denmark are segregated from the rest of Danish society, a consequence of lack of integration and work discrimination towards Muslims. Integration classes may not see as many participants due to their high cost, but more importantly, Denmark’s “redistributive policies tend to weaken their [immigrants’] economic incentive for labor market participation” (Nannestad 2003: 2). Discrimination in the work place alienates Muslims, and in response, Muslims resort to running small business within their community (Roseveare and Jorgensen 2004: 25). This can be contributed to the high-minimum wage requirement, which is necessary for a welfare-state like Denmark. The wage requirement makes it very difficult to justify hiring low-skilled labors. Therefore, discrimination in the work place has an economic explanation beyond the race based reasons (Nannestad 2003: 6).
Immigrants were encouraged to participate in policy, and the government promoted their equal rights, but by 2001, a new integration policy curtailed those efforts. For example, new immigrants to Denmark get fewer welfare benefits than people who lived in Denmark longer. The purpose of this condition is to motivate newcomers to obtain jobs quickly. Also, family reunification became stricter as well. If someone wants to wed a person from outside of Denmark, both parties must be over 24 years of age, meet some economic requirements, and show their attachment to Denmark is greater than the country of their spouse. The new spouse arriving into Denmark may not receive welfare benefits, and all cost must be covered by the husband and wife for the first 7 years. Immigrant and minority associations also lost governmental funding (Goli and Rezaei 2007: 79).

The entry of labor workers after World War II did not increase anti-immigrant attitudes, as they were seen as a reasonable solution for Denmark’s labor shortage for jobs natives did want to do. However, “It was not until the issue was rephrased in quite other terms when cheap immigrant labor was replaced by refugees from the mid-1980s that political polarization began to increase and political attention began to accumulate” (Andersen and Bjørklund 1999: 3). Many of these refugees were from the Middle East, and entered Denmark when high unemployment and the problems of the social welfare state plagued the country. Also, neo-liberal and neo-racist ideologies in Western Europe were on the rise (Schierup 1994). These events created the conditions for the rise of an anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim party, the Danish People’s Party (DFP), which broke away from The Progressive Party in 1995. The Progressive Party focused on lowering
taxes and limiting the expansion of the welfare state, but the Danish People’s Party was created when the Progressive Party leader broke away and created the DFP in a power struggle (Anderson and Bjørklund 1999: 1).

The most notable example of anti-Muslim attitudes in Denmark is the depiction of Prophet Mohammad as a terrorist in a Danish newspaper. However, this instance is not new because a review of 800 Danish articles printed in 2001 revealed that 95% of them were negatively representing Islam and Muslims (Goli and Rezaei 2007: 82). The “cartoon controversy” was supported by the anti-immigration party the Danish People’s Party (DFP). The DFP specifically focuses on Muslims, who claim that Muslims are “unwilling to integrate and are hostile to ‘Danish values’ such as free speech.” Winning 15% of the votes in the last Danish elections, the DFP has gained political influence. For the past ten years the ruling-parties in government needed DFP’s support to pass legislation. Their presence cannot be ignored in parliament, and they have been influential in passing harsher immigration and integration policies (Bowlby 2011).

Overall, the experiences with immigrants in Denmark mirror other Western European countries. However, Denmark’s varies in its approach to immigration. It never had the strong multi-cultural policy that the Netherlands enforced, and it did not have the early and proactive integration policy that France implemented. Denmark’s approach is somewhere in the middle where it tried working with immigrant culture through equal opportunity and educational flexibility. Yet the change towards a right leaning government in 2001 spawned a stricter stance towards immigrants and their rights. The
infamous cartoon controversy solidified anti-Muslim sentiments in the country.

_Italy_

Italy’s case is somewhat different than the countries mentioned thus far. First of all, Italy started a comprehensive immigration policy much later than other Western European countries. Immigration to Italy did not start at the end of World War II, but immigrants began to flow into Italy in the 1970s because other European countries began to tighten their borders. Italy did not initiate its first immigration control policy until the late 1980s, and at this time there was no mention of integration efforts. Secondly, its migrant population is not dominated by one ethnic group. Even though Muslims are its second largest religious denomination at 2.45%, the Muslim population in Italy is a fraction of that of France’s and the Netherlands’. Also, family reunification laws did affect the flow of immigrants into Italy that much either (Kosic and Triandafyllidou 2007: chs. 14, 186-90).

There are a few examples of how Italy handles its immigrants differently from other Western European nation. Unlike Denmark where low-skill work is difficult to find, Italy has a thriving informal economy which provides an outlet for low-skilled and illegal workers. Its geographic position also exposes it to migration from the south and the east. Nevertheless, Italy for the most part had a makeshift immigration policy until only recently. A 2006 law instilled a quota system, but with the system in place, Italy still manages to acquire large numbers of undocumented/illegal immigrants (Kosic and Triandafyllidou 2007: chs. 14, 188). Most immigrants migrate to Italy for economic
reasons. The procedure it takes to become an Italian citizen is based on the person's country of origin. For instance, EU citizens are required to reside in Italy for four years while a person from a non-EU country must reside in Italy for 10 years before applying for Italian citizenship. Also, Italy’s dual citizenship policy is a good example of the country’s less aggressive naturalization measures. For example, Germany removed their acceptance of dual citizenship and required any prospective German citizen to denounce their citizenship other than Germany’s. Italy however, allows a dual-citizenship policy (Triandafyllidou and Gropas 2007: 129 and 192).

Immigration in Italy is also complicated by the internal divided within the nation. Northern Italy’s administration is more efficient as for Southern Italy’s administrative local-culture welcomes outsiders and their integration (Triandafyllidou 2000: 378). The rise of the right-wing populist party, Northern League, gives evidence to the regional differences. The Northern League is purely a regional party where its main supporters lie in the northern parts of Italy. The party appeals to several constituents and their grievances, anxieties, and prejudices. For a short period of time, it gained a burst of support in votes, and it managed to gain seats in Italy’s lower house. The party did not start off with an overtly anti-immigrant agenda during its high point in the mid-nineties. Instead, it focused on how specific characteristics of the north were different than the south, such as northern Italians’ work ethic and “entrepreneurial spirit.” Eventually, the Northern League aimed to exploit Italians’ apprehension towards immigrants. The party was careful at not giving the impression of overt racism by making the distinction between immigrants who adopted northern work ethics and those who are in Italy for
only social benefits. Racists tones were underplayed while preserving ones culture were highlighted in the party’s agenda (Hans-Georg 2001).

By 1998, Northern League’s leader, Umberto Bossi, begins to increase his anti-immigrant rhetoric. He stated that immigration is a way for the United State to weaken Europe through “demographic imperialism.” Also, when North Atlantic Treaty Organization intervened in Kosovo, Bossi rejected the action, and defined the conflict as a war between the “Christian Serbs and the Albanian immigrants who are Muslims.” To present the party as a defender of Western ideas and democracy, the party protested against the building of a mosque, but the protest made no influence on the local government that allowed the construction permit for the mosque. By the late nineties, the Northern League lost supporters. “The disastrous results for the Northern League in the most recent elections [since 2001] suggest that its shift to a radical politics of identity and exclusion is no longer enough to attract even the party’s core electorate…The north Italian population is much more concerned about the connection between immigrants and rising crime and insecurity than about the rise in the number of Muslims” (Hans-Georg 2001: 393).

Italy is a late adopter when it comes to a comprehensive immigration policy, and its situation varies from other Western European countries as well. Immigration in Italy began when many of the North European countries closed their borders, but Italy still did not accept itself as a country of immigrants until the late eighties. Its integration plans are not nearly as developed or enforced as other Western European countries. The strength of
Italy’s far-right anti-immigration party, the Northern League, also diminished a few years after its prominence in the mid-1990s.

The Current Situation for European Muslims

In sum, although each Western European county has had its own experiences with Muslims, there has been a surge across the continent in anti-Muslim sentiment. Surprisingly, anti-Muslim identity arguments are made from both the political right and political left. The right argues that Europe is historically a Christian region, and a growing Muslim population threatens the European identity. Individuals on the left argue that the Muslims in Europe are too dedicated to their faith, and their traditions do not align with the secular norms of Europeans (Ozyurek 2005: 510).

National identity also plays a factor in anti-immigrant (and in Europe anti-Muslim) sentiments. The idea of having borders establishes a sense of “us” and “them.” Each country embraces a national identity that makes it different than its neighboring countries, whether it is through culture, language, food, or politics (Dijkstra, Geuijen, Ruijter 2001: 56-57). As Weldon (2006: 334-335) notes, when immigrants enter a country, there is a level of expectation that they will assimilate into society. That demand maybe greater in some countries than other. A person may be French by nationality but culturally he may not be a true Frenchman. The “true French” identity is difficult to attain because it depends on religion and/or ethnicity. Immigrating to a county poses problems, such as discrimination or even violence towards immigrants when they are not accepted
by the native population. Paired with political, social, and economic threats, these tensions are exacerbated, creating eurocentric and xenophobic attitudes.

Practically speaking, Muslims are a growing population, unlike many non-Muslims in Western European countries. The Muslim birth-rate in Europe is three times higher than non-Muslim Europeans (Taspinar 2003). Currently, France has the largest population of Muslims, at 10 percent, followed by the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and Italy (Leiken 2005).

The presence of ethnically and religiously different groups in Europe creates tensions that are not too different than inter-ethnic tensions seen in other parts of the world. As competition for jobs increase, immigrants demand political representation, and Europe becomes more ethnically diverse. Basic demographic changes in the last half century, to some extent, explain the tension in Europe (Pettigrew 1998). A change in equilibrium is a cause of alarm for many native Europeans. Governments are forced to decide how to grant citizenship status, how to handle religion in the public sphere, and how to adjust the rules of governance to meet the demands of the new social landscape. In the meantime, governments are unable to adapt quickly enough and conflict ensues (Leveau 1992: 172).

The changes in the European social landscape have also shaped public opinion towards Muslims. Generally these attitudes are negative; however there appears to be variation in the degree to which negative attitudes exists across Europe. Even at first glance, this is apparent as some countries developed laws that regulate Muslim practices, as mentioned earlier, and some cities in Europe have tried to stop the building of
mosques. On the other hand, people in other European countries have a more favorable opinion of Muslims. What explains this variation?
CHAPTER 3
LITERATURE REVIEW

To begin to answer the question posed at the end of chapter 2, in this chapter, I review the relevant literature that will help frame the theoretical approach. The section, the Role of Institutions, explains literature on institutions, but this literature is still different than from what I am doing. Previous institutional literature focuses on institutional effects on political behavior. This thesis, on the other hand, shows the impact of a political institution on prejudices towards Muslims in Western Europe. A study like this has not been done before, but institutional literature does pave way for research such as this thesis. I take the same approach, and apply the impact of institutions on anti-Muslim sentiments. By evaluating the relationship between electoral systems and anti-Muslim sentiments, I intend to answer why is there a variation in anti-Muslim attitudes across Western Europe? The Prejudice Literature section covers the wide array of literature that explains the different causes of prejudice and intolerance. There is no one cohesive answer to the question, and at the same time, there is no investigation of institutional factors in this literature. Prejudice literature is bundled into two categories—country and individual-level indicators. Both categories are covered in this section. Country and individual-level explanations for prejudices provide control variables for the analysis part of this thesis.
The Role of Institutions

Current literature on institutions does not investigate prejudice and intolerance, but what it does show is that institutions have an impact on political behavior. And if institutions can guide individual’s behavior, they can also guide an individual’s opinion towards other groups of people.

There has been a longstanding argument that political institutions do help shape public opinion. For example, the Bill of Rights helped institutionalized civil liberties into the American legal system. As some scholars argue, the Bill of Rights, help buttress political freedoms and thus helps elites implement them (Barnum and Sullivan 1990: 720). Without it, Americans may not have the same concern for civil rights and liberties as it does now.

Also, types of institutions have an impact on how individuals behave. Institutions help define winners and losers, and thus citizens develop their opinions about the re-distributive institution based on their concerns about whether they will benefit or lose in that system (Wenzel, Bowler and Lanoue 2000). For example, if individuals are living in a city without property taxes, they may approach their real estate options differently than individuals in a city with high property taxes.

Another example is the effect of different health care systems on attitudes about health care reform. Based on a comparative historical analysis of United States and Canada’s health care reform, the evidence suggest that Canada’s institutional factors allowed a social democratic party access to power, which then was able to influence health care policies and Canadians’ opinion about health care reform. “The favorable
public consensus that now exists [in Canada] about the role of government in the health care system was built up over time as a result of the success of the public sector in assuring the basic health needs of Canadians” (Maioni 1997: 425). U.S. institutional factors, on the other hand, did not have the same results and diverged from Canada’s reform efforts (412). According to Maioni (1997), this has much to do with the nature of Canada’s parliamentary system (as opposed to presidential democracy) and the particular kind of federalism in Canada. Even though both Canada and the United States both use similar plurality electoral systems, the rules of Canadian parliamentary government allows for the formation of effective third parties. Federalism in Canada is also different than the United States in the sense that it does not have an institution like the U.S. Senate that represents each region equally. Therefore, regionalism in Canada encourages the rise of third parties, and Canadian provinces take on responsibilities that the federal government has not adopted, such as health care policies. The characteristics of Canada’s government and federalism helped the federal government instill national health care for its citizens, which in turn has shaped Canadian public opinion about health care.

Voting is another way the public expresses its opinion, and institutions vitally affect voting behavior. According to one hypothesis, some electoral systems (such as low threshold proportional representation) may provoke moderate voters to vote for extremist parties (Duvervger 1952). Moderate voters in a proportional representation (PR) electoral system are more likely to vote for extremist parties because the government is shared amongst several parties or no one party is dominant in the government. Parties have to negotiate and bargain amongst themselves to make policies, leading to what voters in PR
systems accept as the “watering down” of policies. To overcompensate for this outcome, voters may decide to vote for an extremist party to get the policy outcome he or she prefers (Kedar 2005).

Abramson, Aldrich, Blais, Diamond, Diskin, Indridason, Lee, and Levine (2009) also conclude that voters defect from their preferred party because they focus on policy consequences of their vote. Tactical voting is more common under the PR system than a majoritarian system, and voters are concerned with which party is more likely to influence policy outcome after the election. Again, research shows that the difference in institutions and their structure motivate different reactions from people. In the case of Kedar (2005) and Abramson et al. (2009), tactical voting is more prominent in PR systems. Since electoral systems affect voting behavior, one would expect systems to affect the formation of attitudes as well.

Beyond making the claim that institutions matter, Powell and Witten (1993) emphasize that institutions also shape how voters hold their representatives accountable. According to the authors, clarity of responsibility, which mediates the effects of economic performance on voting, is determined by the type of institution in place. Voters are less likely to penalize the government for a bad economy when the government is made up of several parties (which is more likely in a system that uses PR election rules). Blame for an economic downturn is difficult to pinpoint in a multiparty government.

The institutional literature thus far has concentrated on political behavior and public opinion. It is also plausible that institutions can influence public opinion in the case of intolerance towards a minority group, especially in Western Europe, where
antagonism towards Muslims is politicalized through electoral campaigns. The next section goes in depth about how and why prejudices are formed.

Prejudice Literature

One approach that can help explain anti-Muslim sentiment in Europe is related to the longstanding interest in prejudice. A large segment of the prejudice literature focuses on “realistic conflict theory” (M. Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, C. Sherif 1961; Sherif 1966), which states that limited resources increase conflict between groups of people and as a result of limited resources, stereotypes and prejudices surface. Especially during hard economic conditions, prejudice against certain groups surface because threat levels also increase (Quillian 1995).

Generally, from this economic perspective the effect of national level variables, such as Gross Domestic Products (GDP) and Gross National Products (GNP), are used to explain prejudices. GDP and GNP are measures of a country’s wealth. The assumption is, that the wealthier the country the less antagonistic the country is towards a minority group than a country with less wealth. Economies typically vary from country to country, and as these vary, prejudice levels are also expected to increase and decrease accordingly with GDP from one country to the next (Kehrberg 2007). Other national level variables include unemployment and changes to unemployment which also describe cross-national variations in anti-immigration attitudes (Scheepers 2002). National level economic variables have been a common explanation for anti-immigration attitudes or prejudice against minority groups. If people feel their environment is insecure, whether it is
because of an uncertain economy or due to other factors, people feel that competition for scarce resources increases.

However, when examining prejudice towards immigrants in the United States, Citrin, Green, Muste, and Wong (1997) conclude that personal economic circumstances play little role in how individuals form their opinion about immigration policies. Instead, sociotropic beliefs about the state of the national economy, anxiety over taxes, and generalized feelings about immigrants in the United States are significant factors that lead to attitudes that promote stricter immigration policy. Citrin et al. (1997) also provide a more nuanced understanding about the economic and public opinion relationship. They argue that adverse economic conditions are a trigger for anti-immigration sentiments (rather than a direct cause), because they heighten cultural anxieties and group identification. Their conclusion establishes the psychological aspect of economics and public opinion.

Another aggregate level factor that influences intolerance is geographic “proximity”. A recent piece of research showed how English whites’ opinion toward ethnic minorities and immigrants depended on their proximity to the ethnic group (Bowyer 2009). Depending on which ethnic group whites are in proximity to, determines their level of racial hostility. Contrary to earlier research on proximity, this literature suggests that interaction amongst a large minority population decreases intolerance towards that group. English whites that live in close proximity to a large black population show lower levels of racial hostility than respondents with few black neighbors. However, the same study found the opposite trend with the relationship between English
whites, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis. English whites’ were more antagonism towards Pakistani and Bangladeshi neighbors.

This difference is likely due to not only to the size of the group, but how long it has resided in the country. The difference between how English whites feel towards blacks on the one hand and South Asian neighbors, on the other, can be attributed to how well each group is assimilated and how long that group has been present in England. Blacks have been residing in England longer than Pakistanis or Bangladeshis, and they are more likely to be assimilated as well.

Apart from proximity, size of the minority population, its length of residence, and national economy, Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior (2004) suggest that national identity is also a leading cause of prejudice. The authors uphold realistic conflict theory, but they add a caveat by stating that “the root problem is conflicting identities and values. And so far as that is true, there is no reasons to believe that improvement in people’s material circumstances will have an ameliorating effect…concerns over national identity are more of a driving force than concerns over economic interest” (46). Jerome Legge (1996) arrived at a similar conclusion in his study on anti-Semitism in Germany. He also suggests that economic variables are not the source for anti-Semitism in Germany but German nationalism is the source. The author connects anti-Semitism to antagonism towards foreign born populations, because both are seen as barriers to those who advocate strong German nationalism (627).

While sociotropic perceptions and country-level economics have been used to explain prejudices, individual economic circumstances may have greater explanatory
power according to some scholars (Quillian 1995: 591). From this perspective, what drive prejudices is one’s individual economic circumstances. Attitudes about immigration, minority rights, and representation are essentially pocketbook issues. The worse off one is individually (regardless of the overall aggregate state of the economy) the more likely one will develop resentment against others who he or she perceives as a “threat”.

Other individual level explanations include education level, religious beliefs, and political views. Burns and Gimpel (2000) use public opinion data to explore the extent to which economic conditions and stereotypes explain attitudes towards highly controversial immigration policy domains. The authors differentiate between an individual’s personal and national economic assessments, and how each assessment has an effect on prejudices and immigration policies. The results of the study show that an individual’s personal economic projection or one’s national economic outlooks are not important indicators for attitudes towards immigration. Rather, they suggest, that education, attitudes about welfare use, gender, place of residence, and political ideology play a larger role in respondents’ unfavorable judgment about the intelligence and work ethics of minority groups.

Hainmueller and Hiscox (2007) findings are similar to Burns and Gimpel (2000). In their study, they considered labor-market competition as a powerful indicator for anti-immigrant attitudes. Arguments for labor-market competition predict that individuals will oppose the immigrant workers with similar skills to their own, but they will support immigrant workers with different skill sets then theirs. Contrary to the market competition argument, Hainmueller and Hiscox found that people with higher education
levels and occupation skills are more likely to favor immigrants despite the skill-level of the immigrant. There are a few points to consider here. Education and skill level cannot be completely independent of each other. It is easy to assume that with higher levels of education one’s skills also increase. Despite the overlapping relationship between the two indicators, education appears to be a crucial mediator for negative attitudes towards minority groups. A person with high levels of education and skills does not feel threatened by an immigrant. Further, respondents that are more educated are much less likely to hold prejudices, and they tend to place greater significance on cultural diversity than their less educated peers.

Another more nuanced study (Gaasholt and Togeby 1995) examines the relationship between education and interethnic tolerance, using Denmark as a case study. The authors sought to challenge the interpretation of the relationship between education and tolerance. The empirical study found that education reinforced tolerance in individuals with a left-leaning orientation. In other words, education merely reinforced tolerance among those with left leaning orientation, who are predisposed to being tolerant regardless. The authors explain that this is the reason why they saw more tolerance amongst students than non-students. With this in mind, the authors also state that it is possible to be a non-student and have tolerant views towards ethnic minorities, because it is the left-leaning orientation, and not necessarily education, that is a pre-requisite for tolerance. Nevertheless, education fosters liberal orientation and hence creates cognitive constraints necessary for tolerance. The authors of this study approach education and tolerance literature by dwelling into the cognitive process of the individual, and they
provide a much more nuance understanding about the relationship between education, ideological orientation, and intolerance.

Others have examined religious cues for intolerance towards minority groups. One study (Cimino 2005) examines American Evangelical literature about Islam and how Evangelical polemics against Islam increased after September 11th. As a consequence, Evangelical Christians are showed to be exceptionally antagonistic to Islam. The authors main point is that being associated to a particular religious sect may increase one’s intolerance towards religious minority groups. Literature on the effects of religion on public opinion is recent compared to literature that focuses on economic indicators. This study is one of the few that specifically looks at attitudes towards Islam and Muslims. It is interesting to see that an individual’s religious affiliation is important in public opinion when the minority group is another religion. We might not see the importance of religion when the focus is minority groups or immigrants in general, but when the minority group is a minority religion, a majority religion may feel threatened by them.

Johnson (2006) provides similar finding in his random telephone survey of four hundred and twelve residents in Muncie, Indiana in 2002. He included individual demographic variables, such as age, sex, race, education, and income along with religious denominational preference and level of religious fundamentalism. Results show that most respondents did not have anti-Islamic attitudes, but negative attitudes did exist in individuals influenced by conservative, fundamentalist Protestantism. Religious fundamental sects are more likely to have dogmatic views about their own religion, and
hold more negative views against other religions (Johnson and Tamney 2001; Stark and Glock 1973; Tamney and Johnson 1998).

There are two recent studies that empirically examine cross-national variations in anti-Islamic attitudes. Both studies use European countries, although the first one is much smaller in scope (Fetzer and Soper 2003), while the more recent one examines cases across Europe, including Eastern Europe (Starbak and Listhaug 2008). Fetzer and Soper (2003) measures public support for state accommodations of Muslims’ religious practices by conducting surveys in three European countries—France, Germany, and Great Britain. Surveys were conducted before and after September 11th, 2001. Results of the survey reveal that support for Muslims’ religious practices is not explained by social class, gender, or status as a religious minority. Instead, education and religious practices best explain Europeans’ support for state accommodations of Muslims religious practices. Also, support for Muslim religious practices decreased after September 11th as expected, but France showed little statistical difference between the two time periods.

Zan Starbac and Ola Listhaug (2008) have the most comprehensive research to date that examines the cross national variations of anti-Muslim attitudes in Europe. More importantly, this study covers many of the indicators previous research claim to be important factors in describing intolerance towards minorities and immigrants. The authors incorporate several individual and country-level variables that deal with the economy and demography of each country. They also recognize the difference between Western and Eastern Europe. Previous literature suggested that the size of minority population may have a negative effect on attitudes towards minorities. Their finding did
not support this theory, and in fact some countries with small Muslim populations were
more hostile than countries with larger Muslim populations. They also find contrary
evidence to economic theories. In their results, there is a weak relationship between
deteriorating economic conditions and public opinion of Muslims. Also, given the
different Muslim populations between Western and Eastern Europe, both regions are
surprisingly affected by the same indicators. The greatest difference is that antagonistic
sentiments are higher in Western Europe (281-84).

Previous literature on public opinion and intolerance focused on national and
individual-level effects. My research emphasizes the impact of electoral system on cross-
national variations of anti-Muslim attitudes in Western Europe. In my study, I examine
how variations in electoral systems can be another mediating variable affecting the extent
of intolerance towards Muslims. The approach of my research would be similar to
Starbac and Listhaug, but I will approach the research with one overarching theory that is
grounded in the new institutional literature (March and Olsen 1984). In particular, I
examine the largely ignored impact of the electoral systems on shaping anti-Muslim
intolerance in Western Europe.

Considering previous literature, from country-level and individual-level effects,
there are a number of variables that can theoretically affect public opinion, specifically
attitudes towards a minority group such as Muslims. There is no one variable that
assumes to be an overarching contributor to prejudice, but prejudice is a product of
several variables like national or individual economic condition or a person’s education
level and political affiliations. These must be considered when asking the question, what
explains the variation in anti-Muslim attitudes between one Western European country and another? The type of electoral institution within that country could be a contributor, and institutions have shown to have an influence on public behavior and opinion.
CHAPTER 4
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Theory

Why do some Western European countries have high levels of anti-Muslim attitudes while some have relatively lower or insignificant levels? The purpose of this research is to determine why this variation exists. The assumption of this study is that countries with certain types of electoral systems facilitate greater anti-Muslim sentiments. Therefore, the variation in electoral systems covaries with the variation in anti-Islamic attitudes. This hypothesis is grounded in the primary premise, forwarded by advocates of new institutionalism, that institutions shape and influence the individual. Institutions are, to an extent, autonomous, and they actually play a large role in shaping how people act.

The basic definition of an institution I employ in this study is that institutions are systems or organizations with collections of standard operating procedures and structures that define and defend interests (March and Olsen 1984: 738). This includes groups, organizations, political parties, and for the purpose of this research, electoral systems. According to new institutionalism, institutions are autonomous, political actors that affect society. Through their rules, institutions constrain or expand people’s political behavior. Whether it is the parliament, the executive, or the judicial branch of a government, these institutions have norms and standard procedures that resolve what policy actions should
or should not be taken. To assume that institutions are always at the disposal of the citizenry is not accurate, because even institutions are self-interested and have their own preferences. Interests are based on rational choices, and one of the basic interests of institutions is seeking legitimacy amongst other institutions, but seeking legitimacy may not always represent what citizens want (March and Olsen 1984: 738-740).

Electoral systems, like any other political institutions, have rules, norms, and methods of operation. The basic assumption about electoral rules is that social and political engineering can be achieved through the public policy process. Electoral rules determine which candidates get elected or who gains access to parliament. In other words, the structure of an electoral system can determine the outcome of the election (Norris 2004: 5). Leaders or even institutions can take advantage of this by reforming the electoral system to promote their own interests. By reforming an electoral system, political leaders can increase representation or limit it to keep fringe groups out of parliament. Either way, voters have to work within the rules and norms of their electoral system.

There are three main types of electoral system, each having its own subcategories. First there is the majoritarian system, which consists of first-past-the-post (FPTP), second ballot, the bloc vote, single non-transferable vote (SNTV), and the alternative vote. Second is the proportional system (PR), which includes the party list (open or closed) and the single transferable vote (STV). The third type of electoral system is the combined system which includes both majoritarian and proportional style of electoral voting (Norris 2004: 39-58). Each of these different types of electoral systems has its
own rules on how the electoral process plays out. Depending on the type of electoral system, some parties receive more representation and power in government than other parties. For example, unlike the PR system, the majoritarian system has a winner-takes-all approach, and it is not conducive for minority parties or multiple parties. The largest parties take all the seats within the district; there is no proportional distribution of seats in government, as in the PR system. The degree to which PR systems are beneficial for smaller parties depends on its electoral rules. Not all PR systems are the same, and some are less accepting of extremist or small parties. Many times this degree of “small party tolerance” can be measured by the threshold level—a percentage of votes parties must reach to gain representation (Norris 2004: 51), or district magnitude—the number of candidates to be elected from an electoral district.

If a country has a PR system with electoral rules that allows even the smallest parties to gain seats in parliament, as a consequence, it harbors an environment where multiple parties will get elected. In this country, many ideas and viewpoints can seek representation in parliament; contrary to a country with a majoritarian system, only two parties would obtain seats in parliament. The majoritarian system does not promote a multiparty system, and the one or two parties that do exist tend to lean towards the center of the political spectrum so they can accommodate as many people as possible to win an election (Downs 1957; Katz and Mair 1994). The difference between these two ends of the spectrum is the degree of accommodation to parties. In a PR system, it is sometimes advantageous for a party to take on more extremist views to set itself apart from the several other parties competing for seats in parliament. This is a simple yet direct
example of how political parties work within the confines and rules of an electoral institution in hopes of achieving their goal of getting elected.

Based on the new institutionalism assumption, institutions, like electoral system, can influence public behavior and opinion. The assumption of this research is that highly permissive electoral systems allow many parties to enter parliament, including parties that hold extreme views. An electoral system that encourages small and/or extreme parties to compete creates an environment that provides an outlet for them to disseminate their view (Golder 2003: 441). More extremist parties can be expected to adhere to platforms that promote controversial issues in Europe such as limiting Muslim rights in their country. Therefore, the hypothesis is:

\[ H_1: \text{the more permissive the electoral system is for far-right parties then the more likely the citizens of that country will hold anti-Muslim views.} \]

The nationalist Party of Freedom in the Netherlands is an example of an anti-Muslim party in Europe. It vehemently promotes an anti-Islamic and anti-immigration stance as part of its platform. The leader of the party, Geert Wilders, stated that he wants to ban the Quran, and he suggested a tax on headscarves worn by Muslims women. Currently, the party doubled its votes in the 2010 Dutch national elections (BBC 2010). The Netherlands is a closed-list PR system with a low 0.67 percent threshold.
Research Design

This study is a cross-sectional logistic analysis that follows the Starbac and Listhaug (2008) approach, which also examines anti-Muslim attitudes. Like their study, this research uses the European Values Study and similar individual and country-level variables. To use the most current data available, the 2008 European Value Study is used for the purpose of this study (although Starbac and Listhaug used the 1999-2000 European Values Study).

Also, this thesis focuses on only Western Europe. There are several reasons for restricting this study to only Western European countries. First, Muslim immigration is not generally a major issue for most post-communist states. Second, in many of these states, democratic political institutions have been in flux, more so than in some countries than others, making it difficult to ascertain their effects, as opposed to the longstanding electoral rules used in the Western European states. Therefore, 14 Western European countries are included, and these countries are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and Switzerland. The total number of respondents used in this study is 13,421 individuals.

Even though Starbac and Listhaug used Western and Eastern European countries, their approach was basically descriptive as opposed to theoretical and systematic. Instead of proposing a hypothesis, they approach their study by presenting questions, and with their findings they hoped to negate or confirm assumptions presented by previous scholars (Starbac and Listhaug 2008: 274-5). My hypothesis proposes that the more
permissive the electoral system is for far-right parties then the more likely the citizens of that country will hold anti-Muslim views. There are two models used, each measures the openness of electoral systems in a different way.

Model 1’s main independent variable is the average district magnitude. The average district magnitude shows just how many parties (on average) can enter an election. Hence, a large district magnitude means a greater chance for extremist and fringe parties getting elected. Model 2’s main independent variable also measures the openness of a country’s electoral system towards extremist and fringe parties, but the average district magnitude is replaced by vote share of extremist and fringe parties. If fringe parties are able to acquire a large percentages of votes, then such results illustrates the leniency of the electoral system towards fringe parties.

Due to the dichotomous nature of the dependent variable, a logistical analysis is used as the analytical method. Both models include respondents from all of the 14 Western European countries.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is Anti-Muslim attitudes, which is determined from the 2008 European Values Survey question which asks respondents from each country, “on this list of people, could you please sort out any that you would not like to have as neighbors?” The list consists of 15 groups of people, one of which includes Muslims. The dependent variable is operationalized as a dichotomous variable, where the value of 1 is
given to respondents who mentioned that they would not like Muslims as their neighbors, and 0 if they did not mention Muslims in their response.

Independent Variable

The main variable is the institutional variable that measures the degree to which an electoral system accommodates extremist parties. The average district magnitude is the most direct way to measure the permissiveness of the electoral systems. In addition, I employ the vote shares of extremist parties. Both measures provide an insight into a country’s institutional permissiveness vis-a-vis fringe parties.

In the first model, the independent variable \((\text{Ln}) \text{ average district magnitude} \) is measured as the natural log of average district magnitude per country. The average district magnitude takes the number of seats in the lower house and divides them by the number of districts. This is done for each country. The larger the district magnitude of a region in a country, the more accommodating the electoral system is to extreme parties. If more seats are allocated per district in a country, then parties have a great chance in acquiring seats in their government. For the western countries, the average district magnitude was obtained from Golder’s (2003) data set for “Explaining Variation in the Electoral Success of Extremist Right Parties in Western Europe.” The calculations for the average district magnitude are also based on Golder’s code book. To mitigate the effects of countries with very large average district magnitudes, the log of the average district magnitude is taken. The \((\text{Ln}) \text{ average district magnitude variable} \) represents the institutional variable for the first model. The coefficient for this variable is expected to
have a positive sign. As the district magnitude increases, so does the acceptance of extremist parties into the electoral system, and when this occurs, anti-Muslim sentiments should increase as well. The log of average district magnitude is used to mitigate the effects of outliers in the data and bring uniformity to residuals.

In the second model, *Extreme vote share* is the vote share acquired by extremist parties in each of the 14 Western European countries is the institutional variable. Vote shares are the percentage of votes won by a party in an election. The latest parliamentary or lower house elections are used. The most recent election was in Portugal, June 2011, and the oldest elections used in this research were held in 2007 by Denmark, France, and Switzerland.

Vote share allows a more precise look into the effects of electoral systems and extremist parties. Countries with high vote shares amongst extremist parties are expected to have greater anti-Muslim sentiments. The strength of the extremist parties can be attributed to the electoral system, as some electoral systems provide fringe parties with a greater chance in getting elected. The stronger and better organized is an extreme party the greater the support it receives (Husbands 1998). Also for the purpose of this thesis, the focus of extremist parties is directed at far-right parties, because they are the ones that hold nationalist and anti-Muslim positions.

To find the vote share of far-right parties, the political positions of each party had to be identified, and several sources were used to find this information. Election World data, which was converted to Wikipedia’s “election by country page”, is used to determine a party’s political position. On a party’s Wikipedia page, the party’s political
position is labeled as far-left, left-winged, center-left, center, center-right, right-winged, or far-right. The political position of parties was cross referenced with data found in Lubber (2002), and Huber and Inglehart (1995) articles. These articles identified far-right parties and the political ideology of parties. To further confirm the political position and the anti-Muslim agenda of all identified parties, I conducted a search of news articles and publications that affirmed their political positions. This was especially important when Wikipedia, Lubber (2002), or Hubber and Inglehart (1995) lacked information about the political stance of a party. News article used to confirm the political ideology of each party are cited in Appendix B.

To find the vote share of extremist parties, several sources are used as well. First, Wikipedia’s “election by country page,” is used to determine a party’s percentage of votes earned in the latest election. Elections from the lower house are used because these elections are best at capturing citizens’ affinity for a particular party. Election results were cross-referenced with Election Guide and Parline Database on National Parliments’ websites. When a country voted more than once in a given election, such as the case with France, the percentage of votes from the first round are used. Appendix A displays the list of extremist parties in each of the 14 Western European countries, the vote share of each party, the election year, and the total vote share for extremist parties. The citations for the vote share percentages are listed in Appendix B.

Both models illustrate how institutional factors influence public opinion. In the first model, the (ln) average district magnitude coefficient is expected to have a positive coefficient. This shows that the more open an electoral system is towards extremist
parties then the country will also hold more anti-Muslim sentiments. By actually looking
at the vote share of extremist parties in Model 2, I hope to show that an increase support
for extremist parties also increases anti-Muslim sentiments. Extreme vote share illustrates
the strength and support of far-right winged parties. Therefore, the coefficient for
extremist vote share is also expected to have a positive coefficient. The two models are
represented below:

Model 1:

\[
\text{anti-Muslim} = \ln \text{average district magnitude} + \text{age} + \text{sex} + \text{education} + \text{income} + \text{left right} + \text{immigrants take jobs} + \text{religious attendance} + \ln \text{percent Muslims} + \ \text{GDP}
\]

Model 2:

\[
\text{anti-Muslim} = \text{extreme vote share} + \text{age} + \text{sex} + \text{education} + \text{income} + \text{left-right} + \text{immigrants take jobs} + \text{religious attendance} + \ln \text{percent Muslims} + \text{GDP}
\]

Control Variables

Individual Level

Individual-level control variables address the individual factors that cause
prejudices. Previous literature concluded these variables to be significant determinants
for intolerance and prejudice. Data for these control variables are taken from the 2008
European Values Survey. The Sex variable is measured as a dummy variable where the
value of 1 is given if the respondent is a female and a 0 if the respondent is a male. Age is operationalized as an ordinal variable, and it measures the individuals’ age in number of decades. The oldest respondent was born in 1900 and the youngest in 1999. Individuals that were born in 1908 or earlier was coded as 10, which mean they were about 100 years old. Individuals born from 1909 to 1918 were coded as 9, and so on. Education is also an ordinal variable that is measured 0 through 6. 0 is coded for respondents who had no more than pre-primary education and 6 for respondents who had up to secondary stage of tertiary education. Income measures the individual’s income in Euros per year. This is also an ordinal measure that scales income from 1 to 12. A 1 is given for individuals who make more than 120,000 Euros and a 12 for individuals who make less than 1,800 Euros a year.

Also, Religious attendance is an ordinal variable, which measures how frequent a person attends religious practices. It too is measured on a scale where 1 equals never and 7 equals more than once a week. Left-right is an ordinal variable that measures a person’s left-right ideology. Individuals on the far left were coded as 1 and the ones that considered themselves to be on the far right were coded as 10. Immigrants take jobs is a variable that describes how strongly an individual believes that immigrants take jobs away. It is measured on a scale where 1 means that a respondent does not think immigrants take jobs and 10 means immigrants take jobs. This variable is important because sometimes it is difficult to separate anti-immigrant sentiments with anti-Muslim sentiments. In Europe, many times, the two issues are synonymous because many of the immigrants in Europe are Muslims. It is possible that if respondents are asked about
immigrants taking jobs away from the native population, they might be thinking of Muslims as well, but it is not certain.

All these control variables are discussed in the previous literature covered in chapter 3 of this thesis.

- Older people are associated to have great prejudices; more educated individual are expected to hold less prejudices (Burns and Gimpel 2000; Fetzer and Soper 2003; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007);
- If individuals are satisfied with their income, then they are more likely to accept other minority groups;
- If individuals are more religiously fervent or adherent, previous literature claims that people are more prejudice against other religious groups (Cimino 2005), but Fetzer and Soper (2003) found that more religious practicing individuals were more accepting to accommodate Muslim practices in Germany, France, and Great Britain. Therefore, the effect of this control variable is not as predictable.
- It is predicted that people with left leaning or liberal ideologies are more accepting to minority groups than people who are to the right of the ideological scale (Burns and Gimpel 2000; Gaasholt and Togeby 1995).

Country Level

These control variables look at the country-level or aggregate level factors that could influence prejudices against Muslims. The \( (Ln) \) percent Muslim variable is measured as the log of the percentage of Muslims in each country. The log of the
percentage of Muslim population is taken to lessen to effects of countries with very large Muslim populations. This data is coded from the U.S. State Department Religious Freedom Reports. If information was not available on the State Department’s website, the information for each country was then retrieved from the Association of Religious Data Archives’ (the ARDA 1998) website. It is expected that as percentage of Muslims in a country rise so does the level of anti-Muslim sentiments. The Muslim population in Western Europe is a minority immigrant population, and in most Western European countries it is the second largest religious denominational group.

The measure for gross domestic product per capita (GDP) is measured in U.S. dollars. The information is collected from the CIA World Fact Book for each of the 14 countries. This is an aggregate level variable that measure the effect of a country’s economic standing and wealth (Citrin 1997; Kehrberg 2007). If a person’s country is not wealthy as other countries, people in the less wealthy country might pin their national economic frustrations more on minority groups then people in wealthier countries.
CHAPTER 5
RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter discusses the results of the statistical analysis, the significance of the findings, and suggestions for future research.

In the first model (Model 1) a logistical analysis is used, largely because the dependent variable was measured in a dichotomous way. The results of this model affirm some previous research, and in some cases it counters it. More importantly, the outcome also shows that the main independent variable, the (ln) average district magnitude, is significant. The results for Model 1 are summarized in Table 1. (Parentheses show standard error for the coefficients).

The results support my theory and hypothesis. The variable (ln) average district magnitude shows to be significant (p < .005) and its coefficient has a positive sign. The larger the average district magnitude, the more likely a country will hold anti-Muslim sentiments. A large district magnitude increases anti-Muslim sentiments in a country because the parties that promote anti-Muslim attitudes have a better chance in winning elections. If far-right parties know they have an opportunity in gaining seats in their government, then they are more active in pursuing their goal of winning elections. At the same time these far-right parties also promote their agendas, and they create an environment that agitates anti-Muslim sentiments. A large district magnitude provides far-right parties with a platform in the political arena. These results are an example of
how an institutional variable, like the average district magnitude of a country, can have an influence on public opinion. Most of the control variables have their expected sign that previous literature predicts. The sex variable is negative and significant, which shows males are more anti-Muslim than females. The sign for age coefficient is positive and significant, suggesting that the older the individual, the more likely they are going to hold anti-Muslim attitudes. The left-right coefficient also has the expected positive sign and it is significant; it shows that as an individual becomes more right winged, they tend to hold stronger anti-Muslim attitudes. As expected by previous research, the education coefficient has a negative sign, suggesting that highly educated individuals are less likely to have anti-Muslim attitudes. Even though this variable is the least significant compared to all the other variables, it is still important (p = .019). Also, the results show that the amount a person attends religious practices has a negative effect on anti-Muslim sentiments. The more religiously fervent a person is, the less likely they will hold anti-Muslim sentiments. This aligns with Fetzer and Soper (2003) findings in their analysis of three Western European countries, that religiosity leads to less prejudice not more. Finally, as expected, the stronger a person believes immigrants take jobs away, the more anti-Muslim sentiments they have.

However, other control variables show counter expectation of several previous scholars. The gross domestic product (GDP) and individual’s annual income coefficients have a positive sign. This means that citizens in wealthy countries, which have high GDP, may feel more threatened, and thus hold more anti-Muslim sentiments. The GDP coefficient is also very small, and may not have that strong impact on anti-Muslim
sentiments. The other economic coefficient, which looks at individual income, illustrates that individuals possessing higher incomes also have greater prejudices towards Muslims. This is counter to what some previous literature suggests. Yet, the results are not too surprising when there is a debate between scholars whether individual or aggregate economic conditions have a greater effect on intolerance. These results suggest that good economic conditions do not predict prejudices. It is likely that even when economic conditions of a person or country are good, anti-Muslim sentiments may still run high. Also, the coefficient for the (ln) percent Muslims has a negative sign, which means that countries with smaller Muslim population may have greater anti-Muslim sentiments. Starbac and Listhaug (2008: 280) found similar results for the same variable in their research. It is not necessary that a large Muslim population in a country would translate into anti-Muslim sentiments.

The (ln) percent Muslim variable is a proximity variable similar to the one discussed in Bowyer (2009), but Bowyer’s conclusion was mixed. By comparing a non-Muslim Caribbean population and a South Asian Muslim population in different neighborhoods, he found that neighbors were happier with their Caribbean neighbors then with their South Asian Muslim neighbors, but this could have been due to the better assimilation of Caribbean people, and their greater years of residency in the country. An explanation is possible for the negative coefficient of the (ln) percent Muslims variable in model 1 and model 2. There may be other factors that explain why a smaller Muslim population may increase anti-Muslim sentiments. Although this thesis does not address this question,
Table 1. Electoral Systems Effect on Anti-Muslim Sentiments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>(ln) average district magnitude</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.019)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extreme vote share</td>
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<td>.009**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(.003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-.174**</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.048)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>age</td>
<td>.079**</td>
<td>.078**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.014)</td>
<td>(.014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.019)</td>
<td>(.018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>income</td>
<td>.023**</td>
<td>.026*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.012)</td>
<td>(.012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-.057**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>(.013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>left-right</td>
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<td>.138**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>(.012)</td>
</tr>
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<td>immigrants take jobs</td>
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<td>.222**</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>(.009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ln) percent Muslim</td>
<td>-.122**</td>
<td>-.140**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>(.024)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>.000**</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.000)</td>
<td>(.000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
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<td>-4.10**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.194)</td>
<td>(.198)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>13,421</td>
<td>13,421</td>
</tr>
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<td>Prob&gt;chi2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R2</td>
<td>0.08</td>
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</table>

*p<.05 and **p<.005
the reason could be because a smaller Muslim population means that there are greater negative feelings for the “unknown,” which flames people’s fears. If a country has a large Muslim population, it is likely that it is also well informed about Muslims and their religion. This is also consistent with the literature on proximity mentioned above. Because the Caribbean population was more “proximate” with the white English population, White English were more accepting of the Caribbean in their neighborhood. The same conclusion could be drawn from the Muslim population variable. More Muslims means the more “proximate” and accepted they are by the rest of the population in the country.

To give greater credence to the independent variable in Model 1, Model 2 examines if the vote share of extremist parties has an effect on anti-Muslim sentiments. In other words, Model 2 solidifies the assumptions that electoral systems that are accommodating to extremist parties do increase anti-Muslim sentiments.

According to the results of Model 2, an increase in votes for extremist parties does increase anti-Muslim sentiments. The coefficient for extreme vote share is positive and significant (p < .005). The results suggest that in countries where anti-Muslim, extremist parties receive a lot of support, anti-Muslim sentiments will also be higher. The diagram below explains how extremist vote share supports the hypothesis:

Hypothesis

Accommodating Electoral Systems → Platform for Extremist Parties → High Extremist Party Vote Share → Increase Anti-Muslim Sentiments
In both models, the independent variable is significant with the expected positive signs next to their coefficients. Coefficients for the controls variables in model 2 all have the same signs as they do in model 1, and they all hold similar degree of significance. To make sure there is no multicollinearity amongst the variables, a correlation test showed that there is no strong correlation between any of the variables.

Discussion and Concluding Remarks

Overall, there is support for my hypothesis; the more permissive the electoral system is for far-right parties then the more likely the citizens of that country will hold anti-Muslim views. Models 1 and 2, which test the hypothesis, both support the expectation that electoral systems that permit far-right parties into elections influence anti-Muslim attitudes. This research offers additional confirmation for Maurice Duverger (1986) argument that if 1920s Germany adopted a less permissive electoral system, it would not have allowed the National Socialist to gain power in German political institutions, where anti-Semitism was propagated.

Model 1 uses the average district magnitude to measure how accommodating the electoral system is within Western Europe countries. The results show that an increase in the average district magnitude leads to an increase in anti-Muslim sentiments. A large district magnitude provides the opportunity for several parties to win an election, and consequentially this also provides an opening for far-right parties. Unlike a majoritarian system, where the winner takes all the electoral seats, many of the Western European countries have a proportional representation (PR) system that houses multiple parties.
The average district magnitude also accounts for the variations amongst PR systems, as some PR systems have many parties winning seats in parliament while other PR systems only have a few. I can conclude that as the average district magnitude increases, the number of far-right parties competing in an election also increases. Therefore, the electoral system provides an opening for far-right parties and their anti-Muslim propagation.

Model 2 gives greater support to the findings in model 1, because it measures the impact of vote shares acquired by far-right parties on anti-Muslim sentiments. If a permissive electoral system causes an increase in anti-Muslim sentiments, than an increase in vote shares for far-right parties should also represent that as well. Given the results of the analysis, I can also conclude that an increase in far-right vote shares leads to an increase in anti-Muslim sentiments as well. Vote share percentage is also a variable that measure electoral systems’ permissiveness towards far-right parties. High vote shares for a far-right party means that the electoral system created an environment for its success.

The hypothesis is grounded in new institutionalism theory, which suggests that institutions can shape political attitudes. A very permissive PR system has low threshold levels and provides far-right parties the opportunity to win elections. Even if a far-right party does not make up majority of the electorate, the party is more willing to campaign in a country where it has a chance in winning. A high average district magnitude (which accounts for a low threshold level) provides even the smallest far-right party with the possibility of winning an election.
Far-right parties in Western Europe are known to disperse anti-Muslim rhetoric and promote policies that are unfriendly towards Muslims and their practices. Depending on the electoral institution of the country, the public is exposure to more anti-Muslim campaigns in a country with a high average district magnitude than in a country with a lower average district magnitude.

As the results for Model 2 shows, countries that vote for far-right parties also have a higher level of anti-Muslim sentiments. Since far-right parties in Western Europe are antagonistic towards Muslim and their practices, the percentage of votes they win in an election is a key example of how many people support an anti-Muslim agenda. A high vote share percentage for far-right parties also indicates the leniency of the electoral system. Model 2 works under the assumption that far-right party receives high percentage of votes because the electoral rules allow it. If a country has a majoritarian system, only two parties compete in an election, and they often maintain ideologies towards the center. Third or extremist parties do not have a chance in winning elections in a majoritarian system. Their chances in securing parliamentary seats increase if the electoral system allows multiple parties to compete in an election. A large vote share percentage is an indication of an electoral system’s permissiveness towards far-right parties. Although, average district magnitudes is a better measure for permissiveness, Model 2, paired with the finding in Model 1, solidifies the hypothesis that the more permissive the electoral system is for extremist parties than the more likely the citizens of that country will hold anti-Muslim views.
As information becomes available, future research should improve on this study by refining the dichotomous aspect of the dependent variable—anti-Muslim sentiments. An ordinal variable that measures antagonism towards Muslims will provide a more accurate illustration about the feelings people hold towards Muslims. It will illustrate the degrees of disdain or acceptance individuals have towards Muslims. Also, as information becomes more widely available, it will be interesting to continue with this research by including more Western European countries and the impact of electoral systems on anti-Muslim sentiments over time.

Investigating the impact of institutions opens a whole new research agenda that supplements the existing prejudice and intolerance literature. Previous prejudice literature focused on individual level variables such as personal economic circumstances, sex, age, education and religion, and sociotropic indicators like GDP. Little research has examined the impact of institutions on intolerance, let alone its impact on anti-Muslim sentiments. Future researchers should consider political institutions as part of intolerance studies. Based on new institutionalism theory and the results of this thesis, political institutions can influence individual opinions.

Future studies about public opinion, beyond prejudice and intolerance, could also be improved by including institutional variables in their analysis. Finding answers to questions such as why do some countries value green energy and environmental protection more than others can be answered by looking at the electoral systems and finding if certain parties are able to sway votes and public opinion. As the case with
Western Europe, some electoral systems create an inviting environment for extremist parties to campaign and promote their anti-Muslim platforms.

Another potential future research topic is to examine the impact of electoral systems on anti-Muslim laws. Some local and national governments have taken votes on policies that try to curb Muslim practices such as removing headscarves in public places. It is not necessary that these laws are passed in national or local governments. If similar policies are presented in government as a topic of discussion, it is fair to include these types of legal efforts in a study, which can shed another light on the effects of electoral systems on anti-Muslim attitudes and policy making. Along the lines of the argument of this thesis, the expectation for this type of analysis is that the more permissive an electoral system is towards far-right parties, the more likely the country will have anti-Muslim laws presented within its local or national governments. Beyond examining the permissiveness of an electoral system’s impact on anti-Muslim laws, future researchers can also incorporate other institutional variables into their analysis, such as parliamentary structures and veto powers. With the combination of electoral laws, these variables can also prevent or drive anti-Muslim laws in local or national governments.

Policymakers can also benefit from investigating the impact electoral systems have on political behavior. Implementing certain rules, norms, and structure makes political engineering possible, because the mechanism of an institution can navigate individuals in a certain direction. Electoral systems are often designed to bring a level of fairness to elections, but they can also increase political disparity by buttressing a particular segment of a population while excluding another. This research shows that
electoral systems in Western Europe are capable of supporting marginal parties that may represent a small segment of the population. Despite their size, these parties have the capability of influencing an entire public’s attitude on certain issues that would not have been a topic of discourse if it was not for the electoral system. More importantly, it is crucial to consider a far-right party’s ability to win seats in parliament and local governments. If anti-Muslim parties win seats in government and are able to presents laws that limit Muslim practices, they are not only influencing public opinion, but they can also guide policymaking in a certain direction as well.
APPENDIX A

EXTREMIST PARTY VOTE SHARE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Far-Right Parties</th>
<th>% of Votes</th>
<th>Election year</th>
<th>Total Extremist Vote Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Freedom Party (FPO)</td>
<td>17.54</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Flemish Interest (Vlaams Belang)</td>
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<td>7.76</td>
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<td>2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>True Finns (PeruSS)</td>
<td>19.10</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>19.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Front National (FN)</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>4.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>National Democratic Party (NPD)</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Republican (Rep)</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS)</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>5.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Golden Dawn (Popular Union-Chrysi Avyi)</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>2008</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reformed Political Party (SGP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
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<td>11.74</td>
<td>2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Party Name</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>Swiss Democrats</td>
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APPENDIX B

SOURCES FOR EXTREMIST PARTY VOTE SHARE
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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Far-Right Parties</th>
<th>Sources</th>
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<td>• <a href="http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2017_E.htm">http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2017_E.htm</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Flemish Interest (Vlaams Belang)</td>
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<td>• <a href="http://www.electionguide.org/results.php?ID=1549">http://www.electionguide.org/results.php?ID=1549</a></td>
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<td>• <a href="http://www.vlaamsbelang.org/57/2/">http://www.vlaamsbelang.org/57/2/</a></td>
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<td>• (Lubber, Gijsberts and Scheeper 2002)</td>
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<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Danish People's Party (DF)</td>
<td>• (Lubber et al. 2002)</td>
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<td>• (Huber and Inglehart 1995)</td>
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<td>Finland</td>
<td>True Finns (PeruSS)</td>
<td>• <a href="http://www.ipu.org/parline/reports/2111_E.htm">http://www.ipu.org/parline/reports/2111_E.htm</a></td>
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<td>• <a href="http://www.electionguide.org/results.php?ID=1121">http://www.electionguide.org/results.php?ID=1121</a></td>
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<td>• Used first round of election</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>National Democratic Party (NPD)</td>
<td>• <a href="http://www.thelocal.de/politics/20080609-12381.html">http://www.thelocal.de/politics/20080609-12381.html</a></td>
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<td>• <a href="http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,652088,00.html">http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,652088,00.html</a></td>
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<td>• <a href="http://electionresources.org/de/bundestag.php?el">http://electionresources.org/de/bundestag.php?el</a></td>
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<td>Country</td>
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<td>• <a href="http://www.jstor.org/pss/422304">http://www.jstor.org/pss/422304</a></td>
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|                 | Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS)                    | • [http://electionsmeter.com/arguments/laos/4545](http://electionsmeter.com/arguments/laos/4545)  
|                 | Golden Dawn (Popular Union-Chrysi Avyi)          | • [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/01/world/europe/01greece.html?_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/01/world/europe/01greece.html?_r=1)  
<p>| Ireland         | N/A                                              |                                                                     |
| Luxembourg      | N/A                                              |                                                                     |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
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</table>
• Several sources identify this party as anti-Islamic: [http://www.rnw.nl/english/article/geert-wilders-anti-islam-party-makes-major-gains](http://www.rnw.nl/english/article/geert-wilders-anti-islam-party-makes-major-gains) |
• Focused on building Christian state                                                                 |<|
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<th>Party</th>
<th>Relevant Links</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tricino Leauge (LdT)</td>
<td>• <a href="#">electionresources.org/ch/nationalrat.php?election=2007</a></td>
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<td>• The league rejected the building of minarets:</td>
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<td><a href="#">islamineurope.blogspot.com/2009/02/switzerland-canton-rejects-minaret-ban.html</a></td>
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<td>Federal Democratic Union</td>
<td>• <a href="#">electionresources.org/ch/nationalrat.php?election=2007</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>(EDU/UDF)</td>
<td>• This article shows the parties ban on minarets:</td>
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<td><a href="#">www.thecuttingedgenews.com/index.php?article=11825&amp;pageid=&amp;pagename=</a></td>
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<td>Swiss Democrats</td>
<td>• <a href="#">electionresources.org/ch/nationalrat.php?election=2007</a></td>
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<td>• They have been labeled far right/nationalist by:</td>
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<td><a href="#">www.dailyestimate.com/print.asp?idarticle=10940</a></td>
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<td><a href="#">www.tau.ac.il/Anti-Semitism/asw2000-1/switzerland.htm</a></td>
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