The Economic and Social Review, Vol. 50, No. 3, Autumn 2019, pp. 491-514

Irish Attitudes to Muslim Immigrants

Éamonn Fahey
Economic and Social Research Institute

Frances McGinnity*
Economic and Social Research Institute and Trinity College Dublin

Raffaele Grotti
European University Institute, Florence

Abstract: This paper uses data from the 2014 Special Module of the European Social Survey on attitudes to immigration to investigate attitudes towards Muslim and White immigrants in Ireland. Drawing on theories of social identity, ethnic threat and social distance, the paper develops hypotheses about which factors influence attitudes to Muslim immigrants, and how and why they might differ from attitudes to White immigrants. Comparing these attitudes, we find evidence of an "ethnic hierarchy" in Ireland, with more positive attitudes to White than to Muslim immigrants. We also find that age and religious practice are associated with attitudes towards Muslim immigrants, but have only weak effects on attitudes towards White immigrants. The analysis reveals that an international terrorist attack had a negative effect on attitudes to Muslim immigrants but not on attitudes to White immigrants.

Acknowledgements: This paper is based on work done on attitudes to diversity as part of the research programme on human rights and equality, funded by a grant from the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission. An earlier version was presented at an ESRI lunchtime seminar and to contributors to the ECSR 2018 conference in Paris, and the authors would like to acknowledge constructive comments from participants at both. The paper was enhanced by the journal referee process. The authors would also like to acknowledge the contribution of their ESRI colleague Helen Russell. The authors are solely responsible for the content and the views expressed.

* Corresponding author: fran.mcginnity@esri.ie

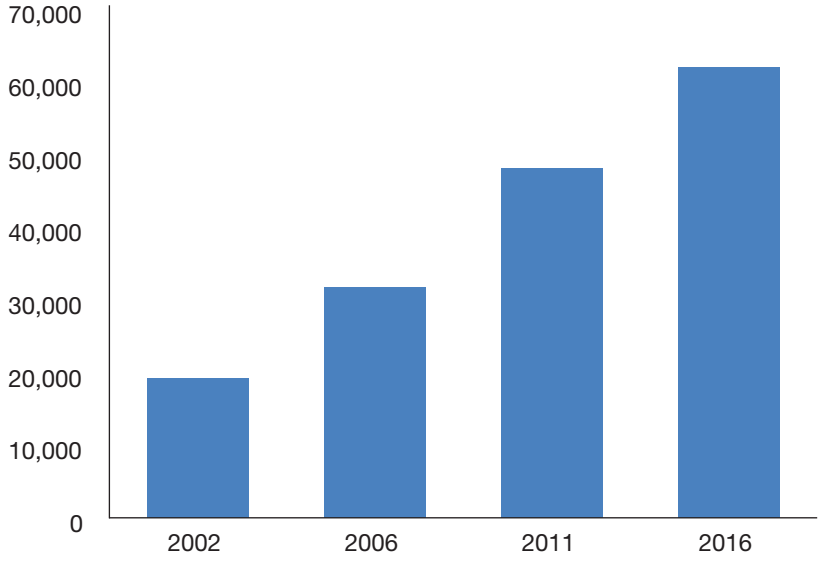
I INTRODUCTION AND MOTIVATION

This paper builds on previous work in Ireland on attitudes to immigrants by considering Irish attitudes towards Muslim immigrants, a small but growing religious community. The motivation behind it is two-fold. First, previous research has shown that the attitudes of host country nationals are important for social cohesion in general, and for minority group integration in particular. This is particularly relevant to Muslims, as there has been considerable public debate in recent years on the perceived difficulty of integrating Islamic communities into European societies. In fact, some argue that this is one of the major concerns fuelling an international backlash against multiculturalism (Helbling, 2012). Second, there has been remarkably little quantitative research on Muslim immigrants in Ireland of any kind, let alone on the attitudes of the host population towards them. However, qualitative research suggests that Muslim immigrants experience discrimination and racism in multiple arenas of daily life (Carr, 2016). Ireland is unusual in a European context because Islam is largely absent from national political discourse, making it an interesting setting for a study of this kind. Because of data limitations, we generally do not make causal claims. Instead, we seek to measure and contextualise attitudes to Muslim immigrants, and to uncover the factors associated with these attitudes. The analysis should therefore be viewed as an early step in a research agenda on religious diversity in Ireland.

Muslims have a relatively advantaged socio-economic profile in Ireland (McGinnity *et al*., 2018a). In line with the substantial diversification of the Irish population since the start of the 21st Century, the number of Muslims has increased from under 20,000 in 2002 to over 60,000 in 2016 (see Figure 1). Muslims now comprise 1.3 per cent of the population, and are disproportionately young, urban, professional and highly educated. Just under one-in-three Muslims were born in Ireland and around half report Irish nationality, reflecting an increasing trend towards naturalisation among non-EEA migrants in Ireland (McGinnity *et al*., 2018a). Indeed, Ireland's restrictive policy regarding the issuance of work permits to immigrants from outside the EEA has meant that immigration from mostly Muslim countries has been highly selective. Of course, not all immigrants come to Ireland to work. Some Muslims come to seek international protection, many others come on student visas to study in Ireland (McGinnity *et al*., 2018a). In fact Ireland's Muslim population is extremely diverse. Muslims living in Ireland originate from several regions of the world, identify with various cultural and religious traditions, speak numerous languages and belong to different socio-economic classes (Fanning, 2018).

Ireland is also unusual in a European context because there is no prominent national debate on Islam. This might be partly due to the size of the Muslim population, but immigration and diversity in general are not highly politicised. In comparison to European countries such as the Netherlands, Austria and France,

Figure 1: Muslim Population in Ireland, Census 2002-2016



Source: Census of Population, Ireland, 2002-2016.

where right wing parties achieve significant electoral success campaigning on an anti-Islamist platform, Islam is not politically charged in Ireland and there has not been a successful anti-immigration far-right party (O'Malley, 2008).

A central question for researchers interested in attitudes towards Muslims is whether they are positive or negative, given the small and relatively affluent nature of the Muslim community in Ireland, and the absence of a national debate on Islam. Much research on attitudes to immigrants is comparative. The strength of this paper is that it considers the national context in depth to interpret the attitudinal findings (Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010).

In light of these considerations, we address three research questions. First we examine how attitudes among Irish born survey respondents towards Muslims compare to attitudes towards immigrants of the same race or ethnic group as most Irish people.[1] We acknowledge that Muslims are a religious rather than an ethnic group. Ideally, we would compare attitudes to Muslim immigrants to attitudes to Christian immigrants, but no such question is available in the European Social Survey (ESS). That said, there is substantial overlap between religion and ethnicity among immigrants to Ireland. According to the 2016 Census, less than 18 per cent of Muslims recorded White ethnicity (McGinnity *et al*., 2018a). Most White immigration to Ireland in recent years has come from predominantly Christian

[1] Throughout this paper, we refer to this group as "White immigrants".

countries such as Poland and Lithuania. Second, we consider whether individual factors such as the educational attainment and religious practice of the survey respondent play a different role in shaping attitudes to Muslim immigrants than they do in influencing attitudes to immigrants of the majority ethnic group. Finally, we investigate whether the *Charlie Hebdo* terrorist attack of January 2015 had more of an impact on attitudes to Muslim immigration than on attitudes to White immigration.

To address these questions, we use data from the 2014 wave of the ESS, a high quality, academically driven survey of a random sample of adults in multiple European countries. We are limited to data from this wave of the survey because questions on attitudes to Muslim immigrants are based on questions fielded as part of a special module on attitudes to immigrants and immigration.

II THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND EXPECTATIONS

This paper draws on several theories which attempt to explain or predict variation in attitudes to minorities and in particular to Muslims. Most research in the area draws on social identity theory – the idea that people construct 'in-groups' and 'out-groups', and perceive positive qualities of the former and negative characteristics of the latter (Hewstone *et al*., 2002). A group of individuals who are perceived as more different from the in-group are especially likely to be targets of prejudice (Quillian, 1995). An extension of social identity theory – group threat theory – argues that the in-group perceive the out-group to be a threat to their jobs, welfare or even personal security (Quillian, 1995). Two types of threat are usually distinguished. One is primarily material or realistic, referring to any threat to the economic, political or physical well-being of the 'in-group' for example to their jobs, financial resources or housing. The second is more symbolic, that is the perception that immigrants have differing belief systems and moral values that pose a threat to the values and symbols of the majority group, regarding for example the role of women in society or religious values. Threat can be real or imagined but both may affect attitudes (Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010). In relation to Islam, the main perceived material or realistic threats may relate to security and terrorism (Cesari, 2009), and perceived symbolic threats could include threats to gender equality, secularism, liberty and democracy (Sauer, 2009; Betz, 2013).

2.1 Ethnic Hierarchies

Throughout the analysis in this paper, we compare attitudes towards Muslim immigrants to attitudes towards White immigrants. There are several reasons for us to believe that attitudes to the two groups may differ. Ireland's predominantly White population may be particularly opposed to immigration of co-ethnics, due to a mechanism known as "horizontal hostility", which refers to groups' tendency

to act to differentiate themselves from similar groups to maintain their social identities (White and Langer, 1999; Brown, 2000).[2]

More likely, however, is that Irish people will favour White immigrants over Muslim immigrants. Brown (2000; pp. 757-758) reviews a number of studies which show that groups which perceive themselves as similar in terms of both norms and status tend to "show more intergroup attraction and less bias then [sic] dissimilar groups". This view is supported by research which demonstrates that multi-ethnic societies often form "ethnic hierarchies" which are implicit rankings of ethnic groups. There tends to be widespread consensus among survey respondents on the ordering of groups, and Muslims are often situated near the bottom of European hierarchies. For instance, Snellman and Ekehammar's (2005) study of attitudes towards immigrants in Sweden showed that immigrants from mostly-Muslim Syria, Iran, and Somalia were ranked lowest in terms of attitudes, followed by Latin American, and finally Italian immigrants. In the Netherlands, Verkuyten and Kinket (2000) report that a number of studies have found European immigrants to be the public's "favourite" immigrant group, followed by Jewish immigrants, Southern Europeans, nationals of former Dutch colonies, and finally immigrants from mostly-Muslim countries. Bleich's (2009) review of data in France and the UK concludes that although Muslims are not at the bottom of the ethno-racial hierarchy, they are viewed negatively. For example a 2005 national survey in Britain revealed that 19 per cent of the population held negative views about Muslims, compared to 10 per cent holding negative views about Black people, and 38 per cent expressing negativity towards asylum seekers (Bleich, 2009).

Of most relevance for this paper, Mac Gréil's 2007-2008 National Survey of Attitudes in Ireland measured social distance to 51 social, political, ethnic and religious groupings. He used the Bogardus Social Distance Scale, which is an index derived from a series of questions about the minority groups. Among other things, respondents were asked whether they would marry or accept as a close family member an individual from a certain group, whether they would share a workplace with them, and whether they would deport or debar them from Ireland (Mac Gréil, 2011). He found that Muslims had the second highest scores on social distance, ranked fiftieth out of 51 groups. This means that they were among the least preferred of all groups, with only drug addicts receiving a higher score. White immigrants, by contrast, were viewed quite favourably. Minorities labelled as Welsh, English, Canadian, Scottish, French, British, Dutch and German were all in the top 20, and Polish people were ranked twenty-third. Overall, therefore, the existing literature leads us to the hypothesis that attitudes to Muslim immigrants will be more negative than attitudes to White immigrants in Ireland (Hypothesis 1).

[2] For instance, White and Langer (1999) find evidence of "horizontal hostility" between members of very similar groups, i.e. between members of different types of Jewish congregations, and between different classes of varsity soccer players.

2.2 Education

Previous research has found that individual characteristics of respondents can influence attitudes to immigrants (Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010). A particularly strong and robust finding is that people with higher educational qualifications typically record more positive attitudes to immigrants, regardless of the ethnic or religious background of the immigrant group in question. However, there lacks consensus on the mechanism driving the relationship. One view is that people with third-level education have "educated preferences" (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2007). According to this opinion, the very experience of attending university makes people more liberal, because they become exposed to diverse college campuses and often receive a training in critical thought. Another view is that people with tertiary education are less likely to be in competition with immigrants for jobs and welfare, because immigrants to European countries are typically less skilled than the host population (Mayda, 2006). Even in cases where the skill profile of immigrants matches that of the native population (as in Ireland), there may be a perception that they "flood" the labour market at the lower end of the skills distribution.

Alternatively, the link between education and preferences for migration may have less to do with the effect of education but rather a selection issue. Individuals with more positive views of minorities may self-select into higher education (Lancee and Sarrasin, 2015). Another possibility is that more educated respondents are more likely to mask negative attitudes to immigrants when asked by interviewers, a phenomenon known as social desirability bias (Kuppens and Spears, 2014). In general we would expect these mechanisms to operate both for Muslim and White immigrants. Thus we expect that people with tertiary education will express more positive attitudes towards Muslim and White immigrants than those with Leaving Certificate qualifications or lower (Hypothesis 2a). Given that Muslims have higher social distance scores than White immigrants, and tolerance of diversity is expected to rise with levels of education, we expect the education gradient in attitudes to be even steeper for attitudes to Muslim immigrants than attitudes to White immigrants (Hypothesis 2b).

2.3 Religious Practice

The second individual-level characteristic which we consider is religious practice. Synthesising the existing research on this question is not straightforward, because no single outcome is used. Among other things, studies consider measures of social distance, threat to national identity, general affect, and feeling thermometers. However, some general patterns emerge.

It seems that certain types of radical religious belief – such as Christian nationalism, religious fundamentalism, and Born-Again Christianity – are associated with more negative attitudes towards both Muslim minorities and immigrants in general. On the contrary, a general belief in God or a spiritual being has been linked to more positive attitudes towards these groups. The effect of

religious attendance, by contrast, is weak and inconsistent, and may depend on the national context.

One of the most authoritative studies on the issue is Doebler's (2014) cross-European analysis of European Social Survey data, which examined the relationship between respondent religion and attitudes towards both immigrants and Muslims. According to this work, believing in God, a "spirit or life force", or expressing individualised spirituality/religious belief all have robust effects in reducing intolerance towards both immigrants and Muslims. By contrast, expressing the belief that "there is only one true religion" is associated higher levels of religious intolerance to both groups. The finding that extreme, fundamentalist religious belief is linked to negative attitudes towards out-groups is supported by research in the United States. Kalkan *et al*. (2009) find that American Born-Again Christians are particularly negative towards Muslims, and McDaniel *et al*. (2011) argues that Christian nationalism – the belief that the United States has a special relationship with God – is associated with negative attitudes towards immigrants.

These studies and others also investigate the effect of attending religious services on attitudes to minority groups. In the US, McDaniel *et al*. (2011) and Kalkan *et al*. (2009) show weak associations between religious practice and positive attitudes towards immigrants and Muslim Americans respectively. However, Doebler finds no link between religious service attendance and attitudes towards either minority in Europe. Storm's (2011) analysis of religious attitudes in the UK, Denmark, the Netherlands and Ireland found that in all four countries, church attendance is associated with a lower likelihood of believing that immigration is a threat to the respondent's national identity. In a 2018 cross-European follow-up study, she reached the conclusion that attending religious services is associated with more pro-immigration attitudes in countries with low rates of attendance, and with anti-immigrant attitudes in countries with high rates of attendance, such as Ireland (Storm, 2018). For Ireland, the findings of Storm (2011) and Storm (2018) are not consistent.

The Catholic Church has played a major role in Ireland's religious and social life for centuries. Recorded affiliation to the Catholic Church remains high, at 84 per cent of the Irish-born population in the 2016 Census; and religious diversity is low, with most non-Catholics falling into the "no religion" category (CSO, 2017).[3] Church attendance, while it has fallen, is also high: in Storm's (2018) sample of 31 countries, Ireland is ranked second (behind Poland) in terms of religious attendance, with 61 per cent attending religious services at least once a month.[4] Fahey *et al*. (2005) find that regular Catholic churchgoers are more conservative than irregular

[3] Religious diversity is higher among the foreign born, but this paper only considers the attitudes to those born in Ireland. Even among the foreign born, over half (55 per cent) record their affiliation as Roman Catholic (CSO, 2017).

[4] Coincidentally Polish immigrants make up the largest immigrant group in Ireland since 2011.

Catholic churchgoers in terms of attitudes towards homosexuality, abortion and divorce, though they do not consider attitudes towards immigrants or religious minorities. However, the influence of the church, particularly on social attitudes, has been waning for some time (Inglis, 1998). This is reflected in data on religious affiliation, which shows a 5.7 percentage point decline in the share of the Irish-born population identifying as Catholic between the 2011 and 2016 Censuses, and in high profile political events such as the legalisation of gay marriage and abortion by popular vote in recent years.

Given the low numbers of religious minorities in Ireland, we cannot explore the effect of religious affiliation. However, we might expect that regular Irish churchgoers would be more negative towards immigrants than non-attendees and the non-affiliated (Hypothesis 3a). Religious practice might also play more of a role for attitudes to Muslim immigrants than attitudes to White immigrants, given that Islam may be perceived as more of a 'threat' to Catholicism (Hypothesis 3b).

2.4 Terrorism and International Affairs

Because Muslims are a small group in Ireland, most Irish people do not have regular contact with them, and they only occasionally feature in domestic political debates. Instead, Irish people's understanding of Islam is informed mainly through the international news media, including social media. This coverage is often negative, and relates to issues such as war, human rights abuses, and above all international terrorism, which is one of the main perceived "ethnic threats" posed by Muslim immigrants in Europe (Saeed, 2007). Because people in Ireland are typically reliant on the international media for cues and heuristics about Muslims, we expect an international terrorist event to have a particularly large effect on their attitudes towards Muslim immigrants. This line of thought draws on Strabac and Listhaug's (2008) cross-national study of attitudes towards Muslims which finds no association between the size of the Muslim population and intolerance of Islam. The authors suggest that this may mean that attitudes to Muslims are shaped more by international events than by domestic relations. It also builds on the more general finding by Gilliam *et al*. (2002) that social contact with a minority group moderates the effect of negative news stories about that group on attitudes towards that group. In their experiment, they find that exposure to negative news stories about crime perpetuated by Black people had a significant negative effect on attitudes towards Black people among Whites from homogeneous neighbourhoods, but no such effect among Whites from diverse neighbourhoods.

By contrast, three-quarters of Ireland's large immigrant population are White,[5] and there is no evidence that they are highly segregated (Fahey *et al*., 2019). Social contact with White immigrants is therefore likely to be quite common among the Irish public. Of course, White immigrants are also not associated with the

[5] The 2016 Census shows that 17 per cent of Ireland's population was born abroad – one of the highest proportions in the EU (McGinnity *et al.*, 2018a).

stereotype of international terrorism in the same way that Muslims are. We therefore do not expect the attack to impact on attitudes to White immigrants.

In this analysis, we leverage the chance occurrence of the attacks on the *Charlie Hebdo* magazine in Paris during the Irish ESS fieldwork to compare attitudes to Muslim immigrants before and after a major terrorist incident. This is not a new technique in the study of values and attitudes. Boydstun *et al*. (2018) use an online survey, fielded over a period which covered both the November 2015 attacks in Paris (on the Bataclan theatre and elsewhere) and the San Bernadino mass shooting in California, to investigate changes in a feeling thermometer towards Muslims. They find that the attacks have no significant effect on attitudes to Muslims, though they did lead to an increase in concern about radicalism. Using two earlier rounds of the ESS, Legewie (2013) studies the impact of the 2002 and 2004 Islamist terror attacks in Bali and Madrid respectively on attitudes towards immigrants. They find variation across countries and regions in the magnitude of the effect of the attacks and the extent to which the effects persisted over time. Additional analysis shows that the attack had a greater negative effect among respondents who report not having social contact with minorities, as would be the case for most respondents in Ireland. Furthermore, there is evidence of a three-way interaction between the Bali attack, respondent social contact with minorities, and the size of the immigrant population in the respondent's region. The effect of the attack on attitudes is greatest where the respondent has no contact with immigrants despite living in a diverse area.

Because Irish people have frequent social contact with White immigrants, limited social contact with Muslims and extensive exposure to the *Charlie Hebdo* story in the news media, we expect that an international terrorist incident will impact negatively on attitudes towards Muslim immigrants but will have no effect on attitudes towards immigrants of the same ethnicity as most Irish people (Hypothesis 4).

III DATA AND METHODS

Measuring attitudes to immigrants and immigration is challenging. This paper uses data that combine many elements of best practice in measuring attitudes: the European Social Survey (ESS). The ESS is a biennial survey that was specially designed to measure and interpret aspects of public attitudes, and changes in these attitudes over time (2002-2016) and across countries (up to 36 countries). It is particularly suitable for our scope because it provides rigorous representative data about people's perceptions and attitudes, and the questions are carefully worded to ensure that they are balanced.

The survey instrument of each round contains a core set of questions and a rotating module that changes each round. For this paper we exploit the 2014 special

module entitled "Attitudes towards immigration and their antecedents" (Heath and Richards, 2016). The module asks respondents about their attitudes towards the immigration of particular groups, such as Muslims, Jewish people and Gypsies from other countries, as well as about their beliefs about ethnic groups, their contact with minorities and the perceptions of the size of the immigrant population in their country.

Data on attitudes towards Muslim immigrants are collected with a question that asks "Please tell me to what extent you think Ireland should allow **Muslims** from other countries to come and live in Ireland?" Attitudes to White immigration are tapped with a question which asks "Do you think Ireland should allow people of the **same race or ethnic group as most of Ireland's people** to come and live here?"

In each case, respondents are presented with four response categories – allow none, allow a few, allow some and allow many. We group the "allow some" and "allow many" responses into a single category both for ease of interpretation and to achieve an even distribution across our main dependent variable (attitudes to Muslim/White immigrants).

We restrict the ESS sample to the Irish-born population and exclude observations with missing values.[6] Importantly, we include in the model only those individuals who responded to the question on both Muslim and White immigrants – this allows us to compare attitudes to the two groups for the very same individuals. Our final sample comprises approximately 1,800 respondents.

Our first hypothesis about ethnic hierarchies, i.e. that attitudes towards Muslim immigrants are more negative than attitudes towards White immigrants, is tested by examining descriptive statistics on these outcomes. The values for attitudes to Muslim immigrants are compared to those towards White immigrants. The remaining hypotheses are tested using a series of nested multinomial regression models.[7] We specify these models with attitudes towards Muslim and White immigrants as the dependent variables, and formally test differences between the effects of the explanatory variables on each outcome.[8] Results are presented as relative risk ratios, which are comparisons of the probability of being in the category in question rather than the reference category, which in this paper is the "allow none" option. Our focus in presentation is on the comparison between allow many/some and allow none: results for the allow few versus allow none models are presented in Appendix Tables A.1-A.3.

[6] Those born abroad are thus excluded from the analysis. Ethnic and religious minorities who are born in Ireland are included in the sample.

[7] Given the ordered nature of our dependent variables, ordered logistic regression would be a more efficient technique to model these attitudes. However, we performed tests which showed that in a few cases the proportional odds assumption is not satisfied, which forces us to rely on multinomial logistic regression.

[8] This is done using the "suest" (seemingly unrelated estimation) post-estimation command in Stata that allows to test differences between models based on their parameter estimates and covariance matrices.

Right hand side variables are chosen to test each of the remaining hypotheses. The distribution of these variables is shown Appendix Figure A.1. Hypothesis 2 concerns the effect of education on attitudes to Muslim immigrants. We use a standard measure of educational attainment with four categories: people with lower secondary education or less (early school leavers), people with upper secondary education, people with lower (non-honours) tertiary education, and respondents with university degrees or higher.

Hypothesis 3 relates to the religion of the respondent. Here we amalgamate a religious affiliation variable with a religious practice variable. The religious affiliation variable is derived from a question which asks "Do you consider yourself as belonging to any particular religion or denomination?" Those who reply "no" are coded as not religious and are used as the reference category in our analysis. Respondents are also asked how often they attend religious services outside of special occasions. There are seven detailed possible responses categories, which we recode to weekly, monthly, less often than monthly, and never. This results in a rich variable which differentiates between those who identify with a religion but do not practice and those who actively attend religious services.

Hypothesis 4 is tested by examining the impact of the terrorist attack on the offices of *Charlie Hebdo* magazine in Paris on January 7, 2015 on Irish attitudes to Muslim immigrants. The fieldwork for the seventh wave of the ESS in Ireland took place between 4 September 2014 and 15 January 2015. However, it was heavily back-loaded over this period, resulting in 22 per cent of the sample being interviewed after the attack (see Appendix Figure A.1). We first test this hypothesis with a simple bivariate cross-tabulation and chi-squared test. The sample is not equal on all relevant variables before and after the attack meaning that differences in attitudes before and after the January 7 attack may be due to the composition of each sub-sample.[9] For that reason, we estimate another multinomial model with the rural/urban dummy, the employment status variable and the education variable included as controls.

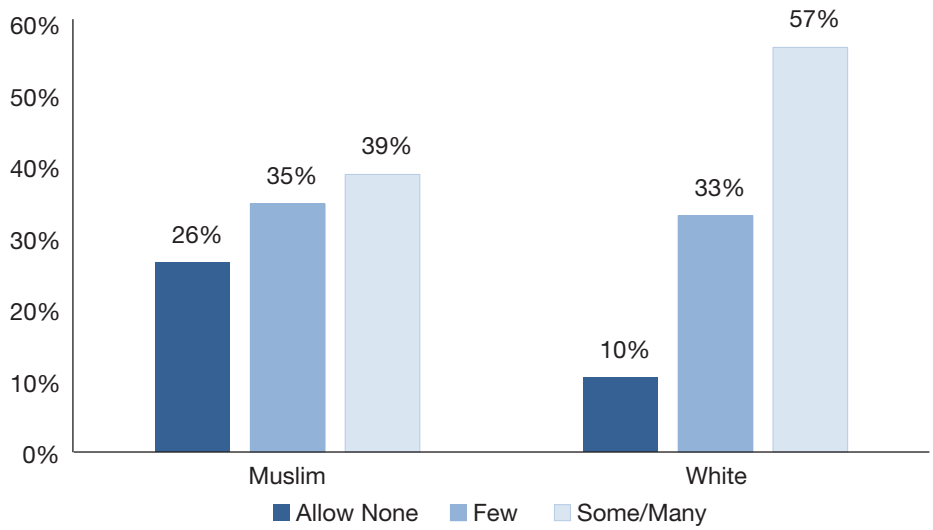
When modelling attitudes to Muslim immigrants we first include the variable of interest on its own for each outcome before adding a set of socio-demographic controls which have been identified in the literature as correlates of attitudes to diversity. These controls are sex, age, urban/rural location, employment status and financial stress. Educational attainment and religious practice are also included as controls when they are not the variable of interest.

[9] People surveyed after the attack were more likely to live in rural areas and were more likely to be unemployed, but were less likely to be early school leavers.

IV RESULTS: ATTITUDES TO MUSLIM AND WHITE IMMIGRANTS IN IRELAND

The first set of results relate to the descriptive statistics for our two outcome variables. These are depicted in Figure 2. The chart shows clear evidence in support of Hypothesis 1 about an ethnic hierarchy in Irish people's views on immigrants. While almost 60 per cent of respondents would allow many or some White immigrants to come to Ireland, the equivalent figure for Muslim immigrants is just under 40 per cent. Only 10 per cent of respondents would like to see no White immigration but a quarter of the sample would prefer there to be no Muslim immigration.[10]

Figure 2: Preferences for Migration, Ireland 2014



Source: ESS Round 7, respondents born in Ireland, weighted.
Note: While there is no statistically significant difference between the proportion who would allow a few of each group to come to Ireland, the differences between attitudes to Muslim and White immigrants in the "allow none" and "allow some/many" categories are statistically significant at the 0.1 per cent level.

The second hypothesis posits that more educated people will be more positive towards both White and Muslim immigrants. Table 1 shows results from the first set of multinomial models. The results are presented as relative risk ratios, showing

[10] McGinnity *et al.* (2018b) also publish descriptive statistics on ethnic hierarchies in the ESS data, and reveal that Roma Gypsies are viewed even more negatively than Muslims, with only one-quarter of respondents born in Ireland saying they would allow many or some Roma to come to live in Ireland.

the increase in probability of falling into the "allow many/some" category rather than the "allow none" category relative to the reference group. Equivalent models which calculate relative risk ratios between the "allow few" and "allow none" categories are shown in the Appendix.

The left hand panel of Table 1 shows the results for attitudes towards Muslim immigrants. The first column is a simple bivariate model, and the second column is the equivalent model with socio-demographic controls included. Both Irish and international research has found that socio-demographic controls can have substantive impacts on models predicting attitudes to diversity (McGinnity *et al*., 2018b; Doebler, 2014). It is clear that educational attainment has a strong and statistically significant relationship with attitudes to Muslim immigrants. For instance, in the bivariate association people with upper tertiary education are 4.7 times more likely than early school leavers to fall in the "allow many/some" category, rather than the "allow none" category. This relationship is partially mediated by the control variables, but all coefficients remain significant at the 0.1 per cent level and the most educated are still about four times more likely to allow "some/many" compared to the least educated group.

The right hand panel of the table depicts the relationship between educational attainment and attitudes to White immigrants. As for Muslim immigrants, education has a strong and statistically significant effect in both the bivariate and multivariate models. While we cannot rule out some element of socially desirable responding which may affect the highly educated more than those with lower education (Kuppens and Spears, 2014), Hypothesis 2a is broadly supported. This posits that those with tertiary education will express more positive attitudes to Muslim and White immigrants.

However, the effect of educational qualifications is a good deal stronger for attitudes to White immigrants, with degree-educated respondents being between 8.5 and 9.7 times more likely than early school leavers to fall into the "allow many/some" group rather than the "allow none" category (see Table 1). Thus Hypothesis 2b, that the effect of education would be more marked for attitudes to Muslim immigrants, is not supported. In fact the opposite is true. This may mean that respondents' economic concerns influence their attitudes. Because lower-educated respondents born in Ireland have more contact with White immigrants, they may feel more in competition with them for jobs and housing, for example. The Muslim population is much smaller and less visible in Ireland, and may not be perceived as a threat to the lower-educated respondents. This may explain why the education gradient is stronger for attitudes to White immigrants than to Muslim immigrants.

For both attitudes to Muslim and White immigrants, the effects appear to be monotonic, with weaker relationships arising from lower tertiary (non-degree) and upper secondary education. Furthermore, the relationship is stronger when we compare the "allow many/some" versus "allow none" models to the "allow few"

versus "allow none" models for attitudes towards both Muslim and White immigrants (shown in Appendix Table A.1).

Turning to the control variables, the most interesting difference between the models is that age has a stronger effect on attitudes to Muslim immigrants than on attitudes to White immigrants. People aged 45 or over are between one-third and one-quarter as likely to be in the "allow many/some" category relative to the "allow none" category on the Muslim question as people aged under 25. Age also has a negative effect on attitudes to White immigrants but this is much less robust. People aged 65 or over are just 36 per cent as likely to support many or some White immigrants coming to live in Ireland as respondents under the age of 25, a finding which is significant at the 5 per cent level. More negative attitudes to immigrants and immigration among older respondents has been found in some international studies (Quillian, 1995).

The results also show that financial stress is associated with more negative attitudes towards both groups, but that the urban-rural divide has no impact. There is some evidence that people who are economically inactive hold more positive attitudes than those in employment, but this is only significant for attitudes towards White immigrants.

We now turn to Hypotheses 3a and 3b concerning the effect of religiosity and religious practice on attitudes towards each group. As in the previous set of models, the independent variable of interest is included on its own, followed by a suite of controls, which now also includes the education variable. Recall that the existing literature is ambiguous on how respondent religion affects attitudes.

We find some support for Hypothesis 3a, which states that more frequent religious practice will be associated with more negative attitudes towards both Muslim and White immigrants. Controlling for socio-demographic factors, those who practice their religion weekly or monthly are approximately 65 per cent as likely to be in the "allow many/some" category rather than the "allow none" category as people who identify as non-religious. The relative risk ratios are also below 1 for attitudes to White immigrants, but they are not statistically significant. The relative risk ratios for the control variables (not shown) remain largely unchanged from Table 1. While the effect of religious practice is more robust for attitudes towards Muslim immigrants than towards White immigrants, the difference between the coefficients is not significant (see Table 2). The difference between coefficients (attitudes to Muslim versus attitudes to White immigrants) is only significant for the contrast between "allow few" and "allow none" (see Appendix). Thus Hypothesis 3b, that religious practice might play more of a role for attitudes to Muslim immigrants than attitudes to White immigrants given that Islam may be perceived as more of a 'threat' to Catholicism, is only weakly supported.

Table 1: Effect of Education and Socio-Demographic Characteristics on Attitudes to White and Muslim Immigrants (Relative Risk Ratios)

	Some/many Muslim immigrants vs None		*Some/many White immigrants vs None*		*Muslim-White difference (p value)*	
	Bivariate	*With Controls*	*Bivariate*	*With Controls*	*Bivariate*	*With Controls*
Education (Ref. early leaver)						
Upper secondary	2.203***	1.862***	2.823***	2.496***	0.231	0.181
Low Tertiary	2.795***	2.465***	3.671***	3.569***	0.368	0.250
Upper Tertiary	4.667***	4.010***	9.654***	8.518***	**0.012**	**0.018**
Female		0.908		0.755		0.310
Age (Ref under 25)						
25-44		0.493*		0.634		0.556
45-64		0.333***		0.560		0.194
65+		0.240***		0.360*		0.312
Rural		1.000		1.095		0.611
Financial Stress		0.520***		0.298***		**0.003**
Economic status (Ref. employed)						
Unemployed		1.257		0.907		0.262
Out of LM/other		1.347		1.633*		0.410
Constant	0.739**	2.574**	2.508***	8.950***		
Observations	1,767	1,767	1,767	1,767		
Pseudo R^2	0.027	0.045	0.036	0.061		

Source: ESS Round 7, respondents born in Ireland.
Note: $^{*}\ p < 0.05$, $^{**}\ p < 0.01$, $^{***}\ p < 0.001$. P-values less than 0.05 are presented in bold in the Muslim-White difference columns.

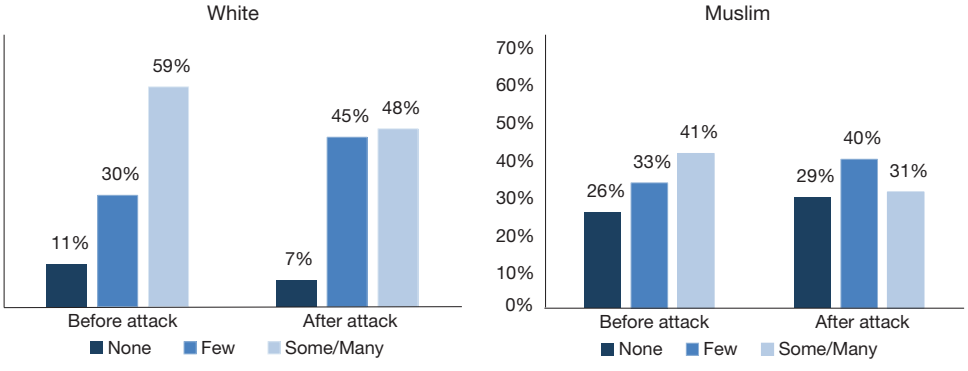
Table 2: Effect of Religion and Socio-Demographic Characteristics on Attitudes to White and Muslim Immigrants (Relative Risk Ratios)

	Some/many Muslim immigrants vs None		*Some/many White immigrants vs None*		*Muslim-White difference (p value)*	
	Bivariate	*With Controls*	*Bivariate*	*With Controls*	*Bivariate*	*With Controls*
Religion (Ref. Not Religious)						
Weekly Practice	0.468***	0.649*	0.703	0.866	0.053	0.186
Monthly Practice	0.608*	0.612*	0.946	0.889	0.129	0.178
Less often	0.718	0.739	0.795	0.765	0.672	0.788
Never	0.978	1.061	1.114	1.250	0.739	0.760
Constant	2.259***	3.056**	6.622***	9.703***		
Observations	1,767	1,767	1,767	1,767		
Pseudo R^2	0.008	0.048	0.004	0.063		

Source: ESS Round 7, respondents born in Ireland.
Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Controls include sex, education, age, rural/urban, financial stress and economic status.

Our last hypothesis is that the *Charlie Hebdo* attack in Paris will have a negative impact on attitudes towards Muslim immigrants but not on attitudes towards White immigrants. Chi-squared tests reveal that the null hypothesis that that pre- and post-attack samples are equal can be rejected at the 0.001 level for both attitudes towards Muslim and White immigrants (see Notes to Figure 3).

Figure 3: Effect of Charlie Hebdo on Distribution of Dependent Variables



Source: ESS Round 7, respondents born in Ireland.
Notes: In model for attitudes to Muslim immigrants Chi^2: 13.4853 and p = 0.001; in model for attitudes to White immigrants Chi^2: 35.2497 and p = 0.000.

Table 3 shows that the attack was associated with a reduction in people saying they would allow many or some Muslims to come and live in Ireland relative to people who would allow none to come. The effect is large and statistically significant. By contrast, people sampled after the attack were more positive towards White immigrants than people interviewed before the attack.

Table 3: The Effect of the Charlie Hebdo Attack on Attitudes Towards Muslim and White immigrants (Relative Risk Ratios)

	Some/many Muslim immigrants vs None		*Some/many White immigrants vs None*		*Muslim-White difference (p value)*	
	Bivariate	*With Controls*	*Bivariate*	*With Controls*	*Bivariate*	*With Controls*
Charlie Hebdo	0.665**	0.565***	1.265	0.996	**0.003**	**0.013**
Constant	1.596***	0.757	5.252***	2.255***		
Observations	1,767	1,767	1,767	1,767		
Pseudo R^2	0.003	0.034	0.009	0.052		

Source: ESS Round 7, respondents born in Ireland.
Notes: Controls included are education, rural/urban and economic status. Controls are selected on the basis of a series of chi-squared tests which detected which independent variables differed significantly before and after the attack. The post-attack sub-sample individuals are significantly less likely to be early school leavers, are more rural and are more likely to be unemployed.

A series of chi-squared tests were run to compare the pre- and post-attack samples' values on the control variables listed above. The samples were found to differ significantly on education, location (urban/rural) and economic status (see Appendix Table A.3). Because these things could be driving all or part of the difference in attitudes before and after the attack, they are included in the models as controls. As Table 3 shows, this only serves to increase the size of the effect on attitudes towards Muslim immigrants, and reduces the size of the effect on attitudes towards White immigrants. Regarding Muslims, when we control for other variables, people were just over half as likely to be in the "allow many/some" category rather than the "allow none" category. By contrast, the attack had no effect on these categories on attitudes to White immigrants.[11] Thus we find strong evidence to support Hypothesis 4. It appears that Irish respondents' opinions on immigration by Muslims to Ireland were shaped at least in the short run by a distant terrorist event in Paris. While this is in accordance with expectations, the magnitude

[11] Table A.3 of the Appendix shows that there was a significant change in attitudes towards White immigrants after the attack. However, as can be seen from Figure 3, this change was due to a 'piling in' to the middle category ("allow a few").

of the effect is somewhat surprising. The finding is consistent with Savelkoul and Te Grotenhuis (2018) whose preliminary analysis of the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks in six European countries found that it had a particularly negative impact on attitudes to Muslim immigrants in Ireland and the Czech Republic – both of which are countries with relatively small Muslim populations.

V SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This is the first paper that uses high quality representative survey data to examine attitudes of the population born in Ireland to Muslim immigrants. It contributes to Irish literature on immigrants by focusing on attitudes to a particular immigrant group. It also contributes to the growing international literature on attitudes to Muslim immigrants by presenting data from Ireland, a country with a small and relatively recent Muslim population.

Consistent with international literature on ethnic hierarchies and Irish evidence on perceived social distance, we find that the population born in Ireland is more negative to Muslim immigrants than to White immigrants. That said, other work has found that attitudes to Roma immigrants are even more negative than attitudes to Muslims (McGinnity *et al*., 2018b).

In general Irish-born respondents with higher educational qualifications are more positive towards both Muslim and White immigrants. While we cannot rule out an element of social desirability bias in responses, this is as expected and consistent with international findings. Confounding expectations, we find the eduational gradient to be stronger regarding attitudes to White immigrants than Muslim immigrants. We suggest this may be because economic concerns may be playing a role for the low-educated: Muslim immigrants may be perceived as more socially distant from the Irish population, but the more numerous White immigrants may be perceived as more of a threat to resources such as jobs and housing. Detailed causal analysis is required to ascertain what mechanisms drive the relationship between educational attainment and attitudes to immigrants in Ireland.

It was not possible to explore the link between religious affiliation and attitudes to immigrants as the number of non-Catholics born in Ireland in the sample was too small. However, religious practice is associated with attitudes to immigrants, though it is only statistically significant for attitudes to Muslim immigrants. Those attending services weekly or monthly were less likely to support some or many Muslim immigrants coming to Ireland than those who were not religious. Respondents who recorded affiliation but never attended church services did not differ from those who self-identified as non-religious. Notwithstanding data constraints, a question for further research is whether certain religious sub-groups, such as people who hold fundamentalist religious beliefs, espouse even more negative attitudes towards Muslims.

Finally the paper explored whether attitudes to immigrants changed after the international terrorist attack by Muslim extremists on the *Charlie Hebdo* offices in Paris, which occurred during the fieldwork. While attitudes to Muslim immigrants became significantly more negative in Ireland, attitudes to White immigrants did not change following the attack. It could be that this effect is reduced over time, as the fieldwork ended shortly after the attack. However it is still remarkable that the attack should have such a marked effect. We suggest that international terror attacks attributed to Muslim extremists may be more salient in Ireland, where the national debate on Muslims is not prominent, the Muslim population is small, and social contact with Muslims is limited.

REFERENCES

Arnold, S., C. Ryan and E. Quinn, 2018. *Ireland's Response to Recent Trends in International Protection Applications,* European Migration Network. Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute.

Betz, H. G., 2013. "Mosques, Minarets, Burqas and Other Essential Threats: The Populist Right's Campaign against Islam in Western Europe" in Wodak, R., M. KhosraviNik and B. Mral (eds). *Right-Wing Populism in Europe: Politics and Discourse*. London: Bloomsbury.

Bleich, E., 2009. "Where do Muslims Stand on Ethno-Racial Hierarchies in Britain and France? Evidence from Public Opinion Surveys, 1988-2008", *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol. 43, Nos. 3-4, pp. 379-400.

Boydstun, A. E., J. T. Feezell and R.A. Glazier, 2018. "In the Wake of a Terrorist Attack, Do Americans' Attitudes Toward Muslims Decline?", *Research and Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 4, pp. 1-7.

Brown, R., 2000. "Social Identity Theory: Past Achievements, Current Problems and Future Challenges", *European Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 30, pp. 745-778.

Carr, J., 2016. *Islamophobia in Dublin: Experiences and How To Respond*. Dublin: Immigrant Council of Ireland.

Ceobanu, A. M. and X. Escandell, 2010. "Comparative Analyses of Public Attitudes Toward Immigrants and Immigration Using Multinational Survey Data: A Review of Theories and Research", *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 36, pp. 309-328.

Cesari, J., 2009. "The Securitisation of Islam in Europe", *CEPS Challenge Programme, Research Paper No. 15*.

CSO, 2017. *Statbank Table E8083*. Available: www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Statire/SelectVarVal/saveselections.asp Accessed January 2019.

Doebler, S., 2014. "Relationships between Religion and Intolerance Towards Muslims and Immigrants in Europe: A Multilevel Analysis", *Review of Religious Research*, Vol. 56, No. 1, pp. 61-86.

Fahey, T. B. Hayes and R. Sinnott, 2005. *Consensus and Conflict. A Study of Values and Attitudes in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland*. Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers.

Fahey, É., H. Russell, F. McGinnity and R. Grotti, 2019. *Diverse Neighbourhoods: An Analysis of the Residential Distribution of Immigrants in Ireland*. ESRI/Department of Justice and Equality: Dublin.

Fanning, B., 2018. *Migration and the Making of Ireland*. UCD Press: Dublin.

Gilliam, F. D., N. A. Valentino and M. N. Beckmann, 2002. "Where You Live and What You Watch: The Impact of Racial Proximity and Local Television News on Attitudes about Race and Crime", *Political Research Quarterly*. Vol. 55, No. 4, pp. 755-780.

Hainmueller, J. and M. J. Hiscox, 2007. "Educated Preferences: Explaining Attitudes toward Immigration in Europe", *International Organisation*, Vol. 61, No. 2, pp. 399-442.

Heath, A. and L. Richards, 2016. "Attitudes Towards Immigration and their Antecedents. Topline Results from Round 7 of the European Social Survey", London: European Social Survey.

Helbling, M. (ed.), 2012. *Islamophobia in the West*. London: Routledge.

Hewstone, M., M. Rubin and H. Willis, 2002. "Intergroup Bias", *Annual Review of Psychology*, Vol. 53, pp. 575-604.

Inglis, T., 1998. *Moral Monopoly: Rise and Fall of the Catholic Church in Modern Ireland*. Dublin: UCD Press.

Kalkan, K. O., G. C. Layman, and E. M. Uslaner, 2009. "'Bands of Others'? Attitudes toward Muslims in Contemporary American Society", *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 71, No. 3, pp. 1-16.

Kuppens, T. and R. Spears, 2014. "You Don't Have To Be Well-Educated To Be An Aversive Racist, But It Helps", *Social Science Research*, Vol. 45, pp. 211-223.

Lancee, B. and O. Sarrasin, 2015. "Educated Preferences or Selection Effects? A Longitudinal Analysis of the Impact of Educational Attainment on Attitudes Towards Immigrants", *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 34, No. 4, pp. 490-501.

Legewie, J., 2013. "Terrorist Events and Attitudes Toward Immigrants: A Natural Experiment", *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 118, No. 5, pp. 1199-1245.

Mac Gréil, M., 2011. *Pluralism and Diversity in Ireland*. Dublin: Colombia Press.

Mayda, A. M., 2006. "Who is Against Immigration? A Cross-Country Investigation of Individual Attitudes Toward Immigrants", *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, Vol. 88, No. 3, pp. 510-530.

McDaniel, E. L., I. Nooruddin and A. F. Shortle, 2011. "Divine Boundaries: How Religion Shapes Citizens' Attitudes Toward Immigrants", *American Politics Research*, Vol. 39, No. 1, pp. 205-233.

McGinnity, F., É. Fahey, E. Quinn, S. Arnold, B. Maître and P. O'Connell, 2018a. *Monitoring Report on Integration 2018*. ESRI/Department of Justice and Equality: Dublin.

McGinnity, F., R. Grotti, H. Russell and É. Fahey, 2018b. *Attitudes to Diversity in Ireland.* ESRI/IHREC: Dublin.

O'Malley, E., 2008. "Why Is There No Radical Right Party in Ireland?", *West European Politics*, Vol. 31, No. 5, pp. 960-977.

Quillian, L., 1995. "Prejudice as a Response to Perceived Group Threat: Population Composition and Anti-Immigrant and Racial Prejudice in Europe", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 60, No. 4, pp. 586-611.

Saeed, A., 2007. "Media, Racism and Islamophobia: The Representation of Islam and Muslims in the Media", *Sociology Compass*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 443-462.

Sauer, B., 2009. "Headscarf Regimes in Europe: Diversity Policies at the Intersection of Gender, Culture and Religion", *Comparative European Politics*, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 75-94.

Savelkoul, M. and M. Te Grotenhuis, 2018. "Did the Terrorist Attack on Charlie Hebdo Fuel Anti-Muslimism in Europe? Results from a Natural Quasi-Experiment in Six European Countries in 2015", *Presentation to the European Consortium of Sociological Research*, Paris 31 October.

Snellman, A. and B. Ekehammar, 2005. "Ethnic Hierarchies, Ethnic Prejudice, and Social Dominance Orientation", *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 83-94.

Storm, I., 2011. "«Christian Nations»? Ethnic Christianity and Anti-Immigration Attitudes in Four Western European Countries", *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society*, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 75-96.

Storm, I., 2018. "When Does Religiosity Matter for Attitudes to Immigration? The Impact of Economic Insecurity and Religious Norms in Europe", *European Societies*, Vol. 20, No. 4, pp. 595-620.

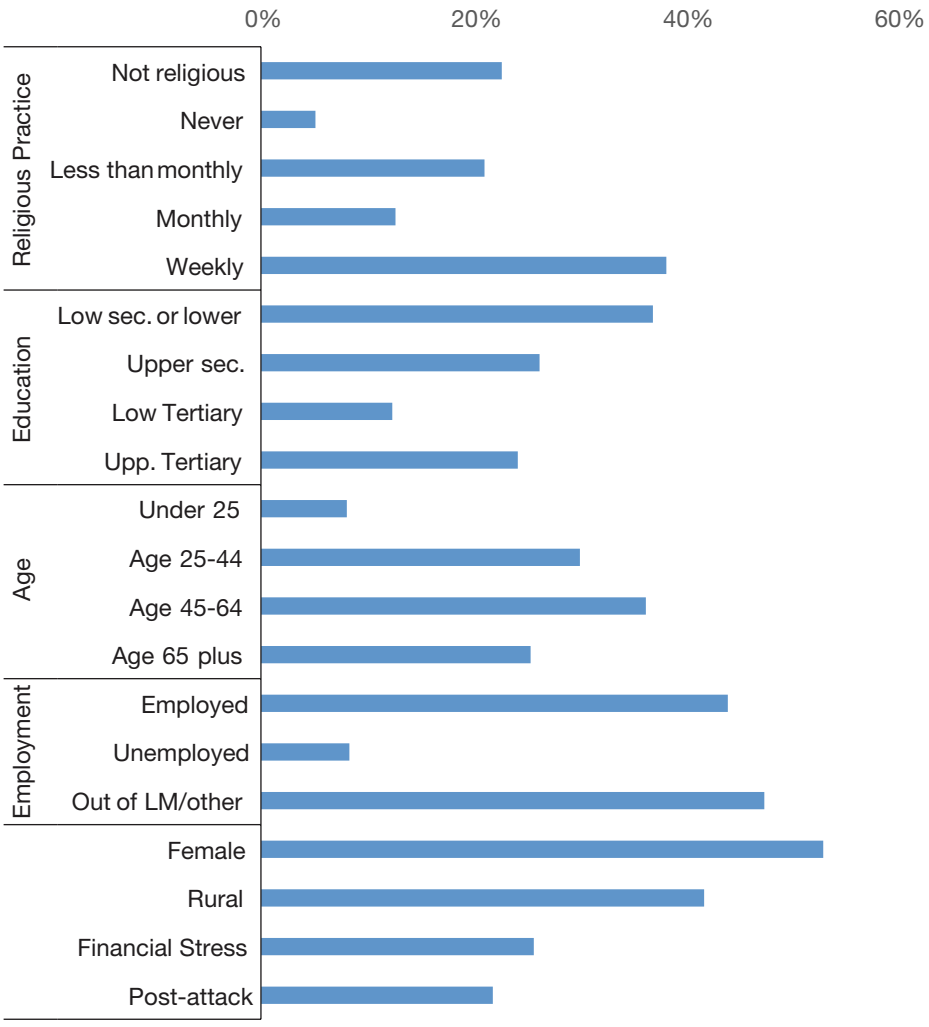
Strabac, Z. and O. Listhaug, 2008. "Anti-Muslim Prejudice in Europe: A Multilevel Analysis of Survey Data from 30 Countries", *Social Science Research*, Vol. 37, pp. 268-286.

Verkuyten, M. and B. Kinket, 2000. "Social Distances in a Multi Ethnic Society: The Ethnic Hierarchy among Dutch Preadolescents", *Social Psychology Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No. 1, pp. 75-85.

White, J. B. and D E. J. Langer, 1999. "Horizontal Hostility: Relations between Similar Minority Groups", *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 55, No. 3, pp. 537-559.

APPENDIX

Figure A.1: Distribution of Explanatory Variables



Source: ESS Round 7, respondents born in Ireland.

Table A.1: Effect of Education and Socio-Demographic Characteristics on Attitudes to White and Muslim Immigrants (Relative Risk Ratios)
Muslim Immigrants

	Allow a few Muslim Immigrants vs None		*Allow a few White Immigrants vs None*		*Muslim-White difference (p value)*	
	Bivariate	*With controls*	*Bivariate*	*With controls*	*Bivariate*	*With controls*
Education (Ref. early leaver)						
Upper Secondary	1.719***	1.478*	2.011***	1.630*	0.488	0.682
Low Tertiary	1.822**	1.571*	2.139*	1.746	0.634	0.766
Upper Tertiary	2.101***	1.692**	3.847***	2.695**	0.059	0.181
Female		0.961		0.791		0.324
Age (Ref under 25)						
25-44		0.956		0.966		0.983
45-64		0.618		0.621		0.992
65+		0.575		0.394*		0.410
Rural		1.204		1.069		0.535
Financial Stress		0.555***		0.371***		0.052
Economic status (Ref. employed)						
Unemployed		1.197		0.531*		**0.012**
Out of LM/other		0.980		1.345		0.216
Constant	0.931	1.694	2.120***	5.975***		
Observations	1,767	1,767	1,767	1,767		
Pseudo R^2	0.027	0.045	0.036	0.061		

Source: ESS Round 7, respondents born in Ireland.
Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Table A.2: Effect of Religion and Socio-Demographic Characteristics on Attitudes to White and Muslim Immigrants (Relative Risk Ratios)

	Allow a few Muslim Immigrants vs None		*Allow a few White Immigrants vs None*		*Muslim-White difference (p value)*	
	Bivariate	*With controls*	*Bivariate*	*With controls*	*Bivariate*	*With controls*
Religion (Ref. Not Religious)						
Weekly Practice	0.673*	0.784	0.830	0.946	0.393	0.332
Monthly Practice	0.578*	0.552*	1.412	1.291	**0.008**	**0.008**
Less often	0.893	0.889	1.095	1.008	0.460	0.488
Never	0.927	0.964	0.925	0.993	0.997	0.996
Constant	1.704***	1.940	3.243***	6.949***		
Observations	1,767	1,767	1,767	1,767		
Pseudo R^2	0.008	0.048	0.004	0.063		

Source: ESS Round 7, respondents born in Ireland.
Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Controls include sex, education, age, rural/urban, financial stress and economic status.

Table A.3: The Effect of the Charlie Hebdo Attack on Attitudes Towards Muslim and White Immigrants (Relative Risk Ratios)

	Allow a few Muslim Immigrants vs None		*Allow a few White Immigrants vs None*		*Muslim-White difference (p value)*	
	Bivariate	*With controls*	*Bivariate*	*With controls*	*Bivariate*	*With controls*
Charlie Hebdo	1.024	0.918	2.330***	1.987**	**0.001**	**0.001**
Constant	1.302***	0.979	2.652***	2.177***		
Observations	1,767	1,767	1,767	1,767		
Pseudo R^2	0.003	0.034	0.009	0.052		

Source: ESS Round 7, respondents born in Ireland.
Notes: Controls included are education, rural/urban and economic status. Controls are selected on the basis of a series of chi-squared tests which detected which independent variables differed significantly before and after the attack. The post-attack sub-sample individuals are significantly less likely to be early school leavers, are more rural and are more likely to be unemployed.