Italian Political Science Review/Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica (2022), **52**, 118–133
doi:10.1017/ipo.2021.22

IPSR RISP

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Discrimination against Muslims, the role of networks and terrorist attacks in Western Europe: the cases of United Kingdom, France, and Italy

Davide Dell'Isola*

University of Central Florida, Orlando, USA
*Corresponding author. Email: davidedellisola@knights.ucf.edu

(Received 15 November 2020; revised 17 May 2021; accepted 19 May 2021; first published online 17 June 2021)

Abstract
In the last few years, a wave of Islamist-related terrorist attacks took place in Western Europe, mainly in France and Belgium but with relevant episodes also in the United Kingdom whereas so far Italy did not suffer any attack of this kind. Each of these countries hosts a large number of Muslim immigrants and communities, participated in military missions in the Middle East, and has been repeatedly threatened by ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) or other Islamist-related radical groups. What then explains the difference in the number and intensity of Islamist-related terrorist attacks in Western European countries? Using qualitative cross-case comparison case studies and relying on the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) and the Association of Religion Data Archive (ARDA), I argue that countries directly discriminating toward Islamic communities are more likely to suffer these kinds of attacks because this discrimination causes grievances against the host state within the discriminated minority. This effect is higher in the presence of religious and cultural networks where these grievances can be brought at the center of the public debate and be connected together because of the presence of large audiences, resulting in the possible development of more radicalized positions of small portions of the discriminated community. This is particularly true for highly secular states like France, where the interpretation of secularism makes accommodation for religious minorities extremely challenging, also resulting in laws that regulate religious behavior of minorities, therefore increasing outrage and frustration of the minority group.

Key words: Fundamentalism; Islam; radicalism; religion; terrorism

Introduction

In the last few decades, a wave of terrorist attacks related to Islamic extremism took place in the main countries of Western Europe. Spain, Belgium, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom all suffered high level of extremist violence. All these attacks were carried out after 9/11 either through direct planning or through encouraging 'lone wolves' to take actions. At the same time, other countries were constantly threatened but did not suffer any terrorist attack related to Islamic extremist groups. The research question that this paper addresses is then: Why did some Western European countries suffer a higher number of terrorist attacks than others?

The main hypothesis presented in the paper is that religious and socio-economic discrimination against Muslim communities in Western Europe led to an increase in the number of terrorist attacks in the host country. This effect interacts with the number of religious and non-religious networks (mosques, cultural associations but also prisons) of the host country. The implication of this hypothesis is that if these grievances are brought to large audiences, there will be an 'echo effect' of these complaints, generating adverse reactions. In this kind of

© The Author(s), 2021. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of the Società Italiana di Scienza Politica. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution licence (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

https://doi.org/10.1017/ipo.2021.22 Published online by Cambridge University Press

scenario, it is more likely that small groups of Muslims will radicalize than in the absence of these networks. However, that is not the case if there are fewer grievances in the society in general.

Literature review

The question of 'what causes terrorism' has been extensively addressed in the field by many authors. The use of terrorist tactics in general has been explained through the fact that these can be successful and reach the goal (Pape, 1997: 343–361; Kydd and Walter, 2006: 49–80). Another explanation looking at the causes of considers social and economic factors related to discrimination against minorities, explaining how these grievances can lead to an increase likelihood of terrorism (Piazza, 2011: 339–353). The same author (Piazza, 2012: 521–546) highlights in a large-*N* study that religious discrimination is not relevant in explaining terrorism.

Kydd and Walter (2006) explore how terrorist groups actually use several strategies according to different contexts, for instance weak groups can increase popular support for them by trying to provoke forceful state response (ivi: 154). In other words, not all terrorist groups follow the same logic, an element that complicates the study of the phenomenon.

In fact, in terms of the general understanding regarding why people choose to become terrorists there are several possible explanations in the literature. Kavanagh (2011: 106–132) suggests that poverty is a relevant factor, but at the same time highly educated people of poor areas are more likely to become terrorists, a result that reflects the theory of Gurr (1970) regarding relative deprivation. Fattah and Fierke (2009: 67–93) underline the importance of humiliation as a driving factor of radicalization in the Middle East, arguing that this feeling of humiliation (after military interventions, for instance) is a crucial factor. Other authors, like Cottee and Hayward, focused instead of the individual psychological aspects of what causes people to join terrorist groups, arguing that desire for adventure and unconventional life is important (2011: 963–986). As it can be seen by this short review there is no overarching explanation of why people become terrorists, and not in small part because this element can be heavily context-dependent.

Regarding this last aspect, Bruce Hoffman argues that the role of the terrorist organizations in the Middle East is crucial to understand Islamist-related terrorism (2017). Other authors, mainly Sageman (2008) disagree with this view and think that instead Islamist-related radicalization can also happen outside the tactics and the strategies of the terrorist organization, such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS. In both of these cases, however, the domestic aspect of grievances likely plays a role in explaining the radicalization of individuals in the West, also because the new media help the propaganda of extremist networks, which is aimed at spreading the sense of outrage against the Western world after the developments linked to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

These elements are obviously relevant and play a role in the radicalization of Muslims in the Western world, but this process can also happen because of the domestic grievances of the Muslim minority toward the host state, regardless of what the leaders of the terrorist organization say. Olivier Roy (2017) suggests how the cases of radicalization in France are linked to global cleavages but that resonate in the specific context of the French Muslim community. Although foreign policy is often mentioned as a reason for the attack by perpetrators, generally these terrorists are not directly linked to the organization, even if they pledge allegiance to it. In other cases, like the Charlie Hebdo attacks in France, the reason of the attack is entirely domestic: in the specific case some Muslims were outraged by the provocative cartoons of the satirical magazine portraying the Prophet Mohammed in a bad light.

Following the argument of Olivier Roy, the reasons for the radicalization cannot be disentangled from the social and economic domestic conditions of minorities, which in turn increase the level of frustration of marginalized communities (regardless of whether the terrorists are marginalized themselves). This situation leads to political extremism, but in the words of the author the result of this process is not 'a radicalization of Islamism, but an Islamization of radicalism' (Roy, 2017: Ch. 3). This would suggest that what occurs first is the radicalization process in

https://doi.org/10.1017/ipo.2021.22 Published online by Cambridge University Press

terms of extremism, that it is later channeled into the religious aspect. The argument made here is that the transnational element of the strategy of the terrorist organizations cannot be disentangled from the domestic grievances of the Muslim minorities in Western Europe, also because the messages of jihadist propaganda would not resonate in the same way in the absence of a fertile ground caused by discrimination toward these communities.

These domestic grievances can resonate more with the Muslim minorities if within the community there is a high number of religious and cultural networks and meeting places, which could connect grievances and increase the likelihood of radicalization of small portions of Muslims, therefore increasing also the risk of terrorist attacks in the host country. This link has been analyzed mainly in the media rhetoric and by populist parties rather than in the academia, where however some articles look at the role of mosques in society in general (Saint-Blancat and Schmidt di Friedberg, 2006: 1083–1104), finding mixed results (Shaffer, 2016: 383–394). Rabasa and Benard (2015: 110–117) highlight how some of the terrorists became radicalized in prison: the most common pattern is the one of second or third generation Muslim committing petty crimes because of social marginalization. These same people then come in contact, while in prison, with Islamist extremists, and when once they go out they become radicalized. That is because 'for petty criminals without a future, radical Islam offers a way to rise above their condition in life' (ivi: 110). It can be seen also in this case how the root cause of radicalization is still linked to grievances and lack of integration in the host society: if this was not the case, then there would have been no need to commit crimes in the first place.

In terms of the specific case studies presented in this paper, the literature generally focuses on explanations related to alternative hypotheses rather than to the variables presented here. In this comparison of countries, Italy is the only state which (so far) did not suffer any fatal Islamist-related terrorist attacks. It should be kept in mind that however Italy is a target of ISIS, also because the city of Rome represents the center of Christendom and therefore it has a strong symbolic value, as the ISIS propaganda repeatedly show explicitly threatening the city of Rome. In some occasions during the past few years, the Italian police and the intelligence services were able to prevent terrorist attacks to the Capital and other parts of Italy and arrest and expel the wannabe terrorists (Tgcom, 2017). Groppi (2017: 20–27) writes that this 'Italian exceptionalism' is rapidly diminishing, and he attributes the lack of terrorist attacks to the fact the Islamic community is still relatively small. According to his view, whereas terrorists constantly threatened Rome, the rationale for the threat is to appeal to the sympathizers more than to actually plan a terrorist attack, as the concept of 'Rome' is used most likely as a metaphor to indicate Christianity. Yet, terrorist groups *did* try a number of times to attack Rome, even if they were prevented by the Italian law enforcement and Intelligence agencies. Moreover, there is a large Muslim population in Italy too, even if the proportion from the percentage of Muslim in other countries is different. Vidino (2011: 389–418) realized an unusual specific case study, the terrorist cell of Buccinasco, a small Italian village in the North in the outskirts of Milan, explaining the dynamics and the reasons of this group of terrorists who once arrested decided to cooperate with the Italian police.

Regarding other cases, the literature addresses mainly the problem of the integration of the second generation of immigrants in the country (Algan *et al.*, 2009; Wojtowicz, 2012; Stevenson *et al.*, 2017), finding that the presence of a second generation of immigrants who are not integrated has a strong positive effect on increasing the likelihood of terrorist attacks. Finally, a relevant part of the literature focuses on the role of domestic intelligences in Western Europe in relation to their ability in the prevention of terrorist attacks. This is the case of Groppi (2017), Samaan and Jacobs (2018), and Shaffer (2016).

The relevant independent variables in this study are accounted in many other articles in the field of security. However, they are almost always taken separately and independently, whereas I argue that they interact with each other. In particular, to my knowledge no authors took in consideration the relevance and importance of the mosques, other networks, and their interaction with discriminatory dynamics toward minorities. That is the gap that this paper aims to close.

https://doi.org/10.1017/ipo.2021.22 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The research design

The paper uses a qualitative comparative case-study approach, focusing on three countries in Western Europe: Italy, France, and the United Kingdom. These cases are comparable because these countries share close relationships with the European Union, a common cultural background and host large Muslim communities (but with relevant differences in terms of numbers). The main difference between the countries in the study is in the number of fatal Islamist-related terrorist attacks they suffered. They also differ regarding how they regulate religion, and in the number of mosques and other networks on their territory.

The main hypothesis is that in a comparison of countries, those with higher level of social and religious discriminations toward Muslims are more likely to suffer Islamist-related terrorist attacks in the presence of socio-economic grievances in the Muslim community. If these grievances are brought to public debate through religious and cultural networks, this effect will be stronger. There is an interaction between discrimination toward Muslims and the number of networks where Muslims can gather. This interaction makes terrorist attacks more likely. In general, however, this interaction can enhance the mechanism, but the sufficient condition for the mechanism to take place lies in the discrimination, not in the number of mosques or religious or networks available.

This study uses several different databases: to measure the restriction of religion and other discriminatory factors, I use the Association of Religion Data Archive (ARDA) looking at the variable concerning societal discrimination of religion and regulation of religion. To examine discriminatory laws, I also consider news archive and official government sources to see if the countries discriminate against religious clothing, for example banning the wearing of the *hijab*. This prohibition makes the respect of religious principles impossible in some cases, as it forces (unwillingly) to violate religious prescriptions. This is possibly the strongest aspect of discrimination, because it goes beyond the fact that Muslims cannot publicly practice their religion. In addition to this element, bans on religious clothing make impossible to respect the laws of the host country and follow religious prescriptions at the same time in the aspects of daily lives, which is not the case for other forms of discrimination. The ARDA dataset is also used in this paper to identify the number of Muslims in the different countries (in addition to secondary sources if a regional breakdown is needed) and other quantitative data (percent of Muslim population, total population, and adherents to other religions).

To assess the increase in the likelihood of terrorist attacks, I use the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). In the analysis, I include all cases of fatal terrorist attacks related to Islamic terrorism after 9/11 and until 2019 included. I consider only cases entailing fatalities as these are more representative of the level of organization, scale and intent of the attack. I also consider cases where the perpetrator is not from the host country based on two main motivations: The first one is that there are only a few situations where this was not the case, especially if we consider the prolonged presence in Europe of foreign perpetrators. The second one is that even if the perpetrators were foreigners, the pre-requirement to carry out a successful terrorist attack entails the existence of a local support network. All the main terrorist attacks involved citizens of the attacked countries or of other European states. This paper focuses on the domestic aspect of the issue of radicalization, not on the strategy of terrorist groups. There is no event where the attack was entirely planned in another country outside of Europe and carried out only by foreigners and with no connections to local networks, which goes also against the theory of a direct impact of foreign immigration on terrorism.

The data regarding the number of mosques and other networks are more complicated to measure. The contentious issue here is what constitutes a mosque. If we consider the so-called 'prayer rooms' as mosques, the numbers are obviously larger than if we consider only the main official mosques. To assess the overall number of mosques in Europe I rely on the dataset built by Stefano Allievi (2010, 2014), which however does not breakdown religious places of

https://doi.org/10.1017/ipo.2021.22 Published online by Cambridge University Press

worships according to typology, which constitutes a major limitation for the dataset and the analysis. For this reason, I also rely on secondary media and government sources to identify, where possible, the number of official mosques. The distinction between the number of official mosques and prayer rooms might be relevant, because large official mosques have a larger audience, and therefore more potential to connect to existing grievances leading to radicalization, in situations where there is a high number of mosques of this kind. However, empirical evidence shows that radicalization can also happen in smaller and unofficial mosques, although the audience of these is smaller.

Is the nature of Islamist-related terrorist attacks transnational?

So far, I argued that the domestic grievances of the Muslim communities are likely to play a relevant role in the explanation of terrorist attacks. Yet, it might be argued, because of the strategic nature of the role of terrorist organizations (Kydd and Walter, 2006), the nature of these attacks might be merely international, and it could be mainly caused by decisions related to foreign policies of specific countries.

In that sense, it is worth to note two main things: The first one is that virtually all the Islamist-related terrorist attacks on European soil involved either local or other European citizens, even when the main organizers of the attacks were citizens of countries in the MENA region. This category of people is identified by Nesser (2018) as the category of the 'entrepreneurs'. However, entrepreneurs have to resort to 'misfits' of 'drifters' (ibidem) to carry on their plans. These categories are generally composed of marginalized people, often citizens, or at least long-time resident, of the country that the terrorist organizations want to target. Even when that is not the case, the grievance aspect toward the host society is still a driving factor of recruitment.

This paper focuses on the latter categories ('misfits' and 'drifters'), as they are the one linked to the successful realization of terrorist attacks. It is clear that if there are fewer people to recruit in a specific place, or if there are other elements which are capable of making the creations of network more difficult, then the central organization of the terrorist group, generally based in the MENA region, would have more challenges in successfully carrying out attacks in those countries.

Nesser disagrees with this interpretation and downplays the importance of grievances in explaining the radicalization of 'marginalized individuals' (ivi: 269). In this paper, I argue instead that the concept of discrimination should be broadly intended and that religious discrimination, socio-economic discrimination, outrage at the foreign policy of the host country are all factors that are likely to cause grievances in the Muslim minorities across Western Europe and should therefore be considered.

The aspect of religious discrimination is also particularly relevant. Scandinavian countries know this well, as the only reason why they became a target for Islamist extremism was the publication of sarcastic cartoons portraying the prophet Mohammed in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* in 2005 (ivi: 284). This is the same logic that inspired the Kouachi brothers in the Charlie Hebdo attack (ivi: 103–122; see also Vargo, 2021: part I). In this case the discrimination aspect of this dynamic lies in the fact that the Muslim community in Europe felt outraged by the publishing of these cartoons.

Explanations presented in the literature

Terrorist attacks as retaliations for foreign interventions

An often-cited element in the literature and mass media is that ISIS' terrorist attacks, or more in general Islamist-related terrorist attacks, are motivated based on a retaliation against foreign intervention in the Middle East area. Great Britain and France, the argument goes, suffered more attacks because they were more involved in foreign policy regarding the Middle East. This line

https://doi.org/10.1017/ipo.2021.22 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of thought overlooks two main arguments: Whereas it is certainly true that the involvement in Middle East affairs (and especially in the coalition against ISIS) is often cited as a source of conflict by terrorist groups, it is also true that some of the attacks did not have any relation to that. For instance, the attacks of January 2015 at Charlie Hebdo were explicitly motivated as a retaliation to the cartoons regarding the Prophet Mohamed, considered as straightforward blasphemy by most of the Islamic world. A second overlooked element is that even countries which did not suffer any major terrorist attacks were also involved in the Middle East, even though maybe at different times and in different scenario. Italy participated in the 2003 Iraqi war until 2006 and was a relevant part of the ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) operation in Afghanistan. Italy also intervened in more recent times in the UNSMIL (United Nations Support Mission in Libya) coalition, in the aftermath of the 'Arab Spring'. In fact, it had a prominent role in the mission until 2016 (Bearak, 2016). These are the reasons for which Italy was targeted in the ISIS propaganda. It is important to note that this paper is not arguing that retaliations against foreign interventions do not matter. The puzzle is why some countries were deeply involved in the MENA region yet did not suffer terrorist attacks. When cells plan terrorist attacks they need to rely on domestically radicalized perpetrators: The argument made in this paper is that the planning and execution of terrorist attacks is highly more likely in the presence of discrimination toward Muslim in the targeted country providing logistical support. Without the support of this network, terrorist attacks are unlikely to be carried out. It is not a case that the most active ISIS cell in Europe operated from Molenbeek, Belgium, an almost entirely Muslim neighborhood with a sky-rocketing unemployment rate (and several prayer rooms) (Forsyth, 2015). Salah Abdeslam, one of the perpetrators of the November Paris attacks, was raised in Molenbeek and stayed there, hidden in plain sight for months, in the mid of an International manhunt, before being finally captured (CBS, 2016). This was only possible because of the presence of some level of support in that community. The difference is not related to the fact that one country was more active against ISIS in the Middle East. The difference is that in Italy it is harder for cells to gather a high level of support enabling operations because of two reasons: (1) the absence of direct religious discrimination and (2) the absence of large networks that channel the rage of the discriminated community. It is therefore evident that, although intervening in the MENA region can make a state a target of terrorist plots, these are more likely to be carried out successfully in the presence of grievances in the discriminated communities.

The number of 'second-generation' citizens

Because of their colonial ties, Great Britain and France have larger Muslim communities, now arrived at the second or third generation. However, although the Muslim community is larger in France and the UK, it is also extremely relevant in Italy. As stated, the numbers of Muslims in Italy is in the order of millions, and they are also clustered around specific geographical concentrations that could potentially recreate the same dynamics observed in the rest of Europe, yet so far the country did not suffer any Islamist-related terrorist attacks.

The country of origin of immigrants

The countries of origin of Muslims immigrants, and the socio-cultural links of second-generation citizens with their ancestral country, vary across the countries compared in this analysis, but that is not a concern for the underlying mechanism. In fact, the first side of the interaction hypothesis (summarized in the mechanism 'discrimination causes grievances') is a well-established hypothesis in the field (Gurr, 1970), and it is also theoretically independent from socio-economic and cultural background of the discriminated groups. The assumption is that if a group of people is directly discriminated because of its religion, or is treated differently because of the same reasons, then this increases the likelihood of grievances, regardless of the country of origin. This

https://doi.org/10.1017/ipo.2021.22 Published online by Cambridge University Press

mechanism will always result in a higher likelihood of radicalization. The puzzle is then why some of these people take action and others do not. It could be argued that different groups of Muslims see violence in different ways, and this could prevent the step from grievance to violence. The British case, however, proves that even under the conditions of different backgrounds compared to the rest of Europe, violence is still a possible result, as for instance Pakistani people were in general peaceful in the context of Great Britain before the recent turn, as analyzed by Nesser (2018: 164–197).

The strategy of the terrorist groups

It is important to note that this paper is not addressing the strategy of Islamist-related terrorist groups. I am instead looking at what causes radicalization of domestic actors or people living in the host community in Western Europe. These are two separate elements, even though they could potentially be related. Arguing that if a particular country is not targeted by ISIS or other groups then this means the country was not a priority to them is an inaccurate statement. For instance, some authors think that the fact that Italy was not part of the coalition in Syria means that Italy is now safer from ISIS-related terrorist attacks (Momigliano, 2018) and therefore it is suffering lower level of threats than France. This hypothesis is disproven by several factors: first, the claim that ISIS and other Islamist-terrorist groups did not want to attack Italy because of a low-strategic value of the country is incorrect: Many plots were thwarted by Italian police and intelligence community, so there was an actual planning of terrorist attacks. Just to cite the main ones, Italian police discovered that Amri's network was planning a suicide bombing attack in Rome's subway (Pesante, TgCom, 2018), an ISIS sympathizer planning another attack was captured and sentenced to 8 years in prison (Il Messaggero, 2018), several plans to strike the Colosseum and Termini train station in Rome were also thwarted (Mariani, Il Secolo d'Italia, 2017). It is clear that attacking Italy *is* part of Islamist-terrorist groups strategy, so this cannot explain variations in terrorist attacks. These plots were not carried out largely because the network protecting the terrorists is not as large, whereas for Belgian terrorist cells it is easier to remain hidden in problematic socio-economic neighborhoods, as in the case of Moleenbeek (Brussels) as explained in the previous paragraph (Osborne, The Independent, 2016). The claim that Italy is used mainly as a logistical base (Momigliano, 2018) is also wrong for the same reason.

The role of networks

So far, the explanations presented by the literature are not convincing. The main element of novelty in this paper is the hypothesis that in the presence of relevant grievances, places of aggregation can help radicalization of individuals because they can be a 'multiplier' of said grievances. The mechanisms of radicalization happen mostly through networking of like-minded individuals. This mechanism can take place in mosques, but also in other places with a high concentration of members of the minority holding grievances against the host state, such as prisons. Virtual places can also have the same effect, although there are not many cases where perpetrators radicalized online, for instance through social media (Thompson, 2011). It is also worth to highlight how the *Imams* of the mosques do not generally have a strong effect on radicalization. The main element enhancing grievances is not the way of preaching in the mosques, but simply the fact that several persons holding grudges against the host state can connect in one place

Cultural and Muslim student associations might have the same effect too, even though they are not related to religion in a direct way (Rabasa and Benard, 2015: 103–122) and they are also less important as focal point of the community. Regardless, the main driver of the 'echo effect' is not necessarily the fact that the meeting place is a religious one, but it is rather the gathering of people who feel discriminated on religious and social ground by the host society in a specific place and moment in time. These networks can develop also in a more random way: For instance, prisons

https://doi.org/10.1017/ipo.2021.22 Published online by Cambridge University Press

are known to have the same effect and recruitment through the jail network is fairly common, especially in France (ivi: 110). That is because the category of people that Nesser refers to as 'drifters' can come in contact with 'entrepreneurs', who can recruit them in the terrorist network while in prison.

Yet, the role of religious networks, as explained in the section regarding the attacks in the United Kingdom, often remains at the center of the logistical base for the plotting of terrorist attacks. Several perpetrators of the July 2005 attacks in London met in mosques, which is a dynamic that takes place also in other kind of Islamist-related terrorist attacks. The role of social networks is a bit murkier: Social media can be used as a recruitment and propaganda tool (Thompson, 2011; Gates and Podder, 2015). Yet, social media and Internet tools are mostly used to recruit jihadis in the Middle East area ('foreign fighters') and very rarely the perpetrated attacks were realized by individuals radicalized on the Internet (the only case where such an argument can plausibly be made is the beheading of French teacher Samuel Paty in October 2020, BBC 2020).

Defining discrimination

Defining what constitutes discrimination is not easy. However, some basic assumptions can be made in terms of what the Muslim minorities in the three aforementioned countries care about: First, the presence of the ban on religious clothing is a clear indicator of religious discrimination as it prevents the possibility of following religious prescriptions. The French ban on religious clothing of 2004 is a clear-cut example of a discriminatory law. Second, socio-economic discrimination refers to the social and economic indicators of the minority group. These are not as straightforward to measure, but government reports and other official sources can give a general idea in terms of unemployment rates and other key measures. The further these measures are from the same indicators for the rest of the population, the higher the discrimination, as in the cases presented in the UK example. It is important to note that although the goal of the government is not to create a situation of disadvantage for minorities, the very fact that this situation exists is likely to cause a perception of discrimination. Finally, the levels of perceived discrimination are also addressed looking at survey data from the EU-Midis II survey, the results are analyzed in the sections on the countries.

These elements can coexist and overlap. For instance, according to a recent study (Abdelgadir and Fouka, 2020) the 2004 *hijab ban* in France had the effect of making teenage girls drop out of the French public school system, causing in the next decade an increase in the unemployment rate (this discrimination is both religious *and* socio-economic). The existence of multiple and overlapping grievances linked to this kind of discrimination is likely to increase the risk of terrorist attacks as a retaliation against specific laws/acts, a point also made by Sayia and Manchanda (2019) who look at the effect of burqa bans in Europe on terrorist attacks through a large-*N* regression. Some studies in the field hint at this potential mechanism, which is analyzed more in detail for the European scenario in this paper: For instance, Gathak (2016) shows that discrimination against minorities is indeed a significant predictor (worldwide) of domestic terrorism. The novel contribution of this paper is the finding that this mechanism can be magnified by the presence of networks, which facilitate the logistics and dynamics of recruitment for terrorist organizations.

France

France suffered the greatest number of Islamic-related terrorist attacks, according to the GTD. It also faces a deep contradiction between two elements: It is the country of secularism and historically has always been very clear in the distinction between church and state (despite a majority of Christian citizens) and at the same time it hosts a high number of Muslims, coming from former

https://doi.org/10.1017/ipo.2021.22 Published online by Cambridge University Press

colonial ties, second- and third-generation immigrants and also immigrants coming from Africa and the Middle East with the latest waves. According to ARDA, 8.6% of the French population is Muslim (representing roughly 5.7 million people, mainly concentrated in great urban areas). This situation can cause serious problems, as the laicity of the state and an almost assimilationist approach is in stark contrast to the prescription of the Islamic religion. These links are also studied by Ivekovic (2004: 1117–1119) from a more feminist perspective, as these prohibitions and discriminations regard mainly women, especially regarding rules for religious clothing, although other feminist authors argue that the Islamic prescription for religious clothing are inherently discriminating toward women in the first place (Chesler, 2010: 33–45). This is indeed true when the choice is not voluntary, but that impeding people from wearing symbols associated with their religions if they choose to wear them freely is a strong form of religious discrimination. It also results in a direct form of socio-economic discrimination, as shown by the example of the previously mentioned study by Abdelgadir and Fouka (2020).

The *hijab ban* constitutes therefore a clear-cut case of discrimination. In 2004, the French Parliament passed a law which banned religious clothing in public school, including crucifixes, kippahs, and Islamic veil (*hijab*) (Sciolino, 2004). The law was framed sometimes as anti-Islamic in that prohibited the wearing of veil, but the rationale for the law was the laicity of the state, as it is important to note that *all* religious symbols were banned. However, it arguably affected the Muslim community more deeply as there were more Muslim girls wearing hijab than Jewish men wearing kippahs or Christian wearing (at least 'ostensibly', as the law says) religious symbols. There is also a gender issue, as the law affects mainly Muslims women. In 2010, a new law prohibited the wearing of the 'integral veil' (*niqab*) in public spaces. These issues raised also the concerns of groups such as Human Rights Watch, which saw these laws are an attack against the right of religious freedom (Human Rights Watch, 2014). On the 2016 EU-Midis II survey, 50% of Muslims with a Sub-Saharan African background and 46% of Muslims with a non-African background felt discriminated in the last 5 years (p. 29).

These grievances enter a context where Muslim communities are already in a disadvantaged position in terms of the role in society. In France, Muslims generally face higher level of unemployment, lower wages, and higher level of crimes (for the economic variables, see Algan *et al.*, 2009). This mix of element (religious and social discriminations) led also in 2005 to the so-called Banlieu Riots, or riots in the suburbs (BBC, 2005).

France also hosts a high number of mosques. Official government data are lacking, and there is not always a clear distinction between prayer rooms, as the improvised temporary ones in the basements of residential buildings, and official mosques. According to the Allievi 2010 dataset, there are more than 2000 mosques. Among them, there are many Salafi mosques which preach more radical messages. Often, mosques of this kind have been shut down by the French police (Serhan, 2016). These Salafi mosques preached a message of violence and encouraged the *jihad*. Their radical message found a fertile ground in the grievances of the Islamic community at large, and the radical imams were able to channel frustration and anger into the jihadist propaganda. As a result of these laws, French Muslims took a strong stand against these bans (Reuters, 2021). It clearly appears that the combination of discrimination toward Muslim, bad socio-economic conditions and availability of religious networks caused outraged reactions in response to these discriminations, and all these elements also constitute an increase in the likelihood of a fertile ground for terrorist attacks in France.

Italy

Italy did not suffer any fatal Islamist-related terrorist attacks so far. Few authors and media journalists tried to answer why, since Italy is both an important country for Western culture in general and for Christianity (and Catholicism) more specifically. For Groppi (2017), the answer lies merely in numbers. This 'Italian exceptionalism', as he refers to it, is therefore not meant to last

https://doi.org/10.1017/ipo.2021.22 Published online by Cambridge University Press

long, and the rhetoric of ISIS in the 'coming to Rome' campaign had more a rhetoric value rather than representing an actual strategic planning of operations. In this sense, however, years after the publication of the article, this 'Italian exceptionalism' seems to be continuing.

Italy hosts roughly a million Muslims, representing 2.45% of the population according to the ARDA. The Italian Muslim community is not as large as the other in this study, but two things should be noted. The first one is the geographical concentrations of the Muslim community around great urban areas. More than a quarter of the Muslim Italian population lives in Lombardy, in the city of Milan and the surrounding outskirts. In Lombardy alone, there are 368 thousand Muslims, mainly coming from Albania and Kosovo, but increasingly also from Tunisia and Egypt (Polchi 2018).

Obviously, the absence of a second generation of Muslim immigrants is not clearly identifiable as cause of grievance for the lack of integration, as most of the community still consists of first-generation migrants, however in the next decades this indicator will probably become more relevant. The other overlooked aspect by Groppi is that there actually were plans for terrorist attacks in Italy, mainly in Rome and Milan, and they were successfully thwarted by Italian forces and intelligence services.

A distinctive feature of Italy, especially when compared to the French case, is the different interpretation of secularism. In fact, there is no mention of 'secularism' in the Italian Constitution and Articles 7 and 8 grant a special status to the Catholic Church, the only Church with agreements directly embedded into the Constitution (Italian Constitution, 1948).

This framework says that Italy is a somewhat secular country, but that Catholicism is clearly favored in terms of relation with the state. There is no law prohibiting the wearing of religious clothing in any case. At the same time, it is worth noting that Muslims can wear hijabs in school, possibly exactly because of a different interpretation of the role of 'religious freedom'. That means that there is no direct discrimination against the prescriptions and rules of Islam at least regarding the private sphere of individual freedom. As of today, wearing religious symbols of any kind is not against the law in Italy (although it is forbidden to completely conceal the face for reasons of public order).

When it comes to building mosques, however, things change. In Italy, there are few large official mosques. Allievi counts more than 720 when including prayer rooms but is very hard to find large mosques with minarets except for a handful of cases. Author Maria Bombardieri counts only five mosques of this kind (2011). Italy is also perhaps the country in Western Europe with more links to Catholic religion and the Vatican, and where religion still plays a relevant role in politics and social life in general. It is therefore no surprise that the planning for building mosques, sometimes made by the progressive left, are faced with strong bipartisan opposition (Talbot, 2006). In the Italian case, there is tolerance for the private sphere of the individuals and very low tolerance for public display of Muslim religion, meaning clearly visible signs of other religions in the public urban space (Allievi, 2010: 64). That does not necessarily apply to religious clothing, but it applies to places of worship, especially mosques following the traditional architecture and style of Arab countries but in a modern Western environment. The second element represents a permanent public sign of religion, an element which is not present in religious clothing, which although publicly displayed is temporary, and it also pertains to the individual sphere.

Preventing the construction of large mosques *is* a form of strong direct discrimination too. In fact, according to the EU-Midis II (EU-Midis II, 2017: 23–58) survey based on Muslim European population, Italy is the country where the perceived discrimination is the highest. However, this is a form of discrimination that does not entail the impossibility of respecting religious rules at the individual level. It is also a form of discrimination that *prevents* the establishment of networks. In France, grievances against the *hijab ban* in Salafi mosques were quite relevant, whereas the presence of this kind of more indirect discrimination is not facilitating the connection of grievances. The main point is that the leap from outrage to planning of terrorist attacks is harder for wannabe

https://doi.org/10.1017/ipo.2021.22 Published online by Cambridge University Press

terrorists in the absence of networks in which their plans can resonate, even in the presence of high levels of perceived discrimination. This is not the say that a country can discriminate as long as it does allow the building of mosques: many terrorist plots were thwarted in Italy, and discrimination alone increases this risk. However, the absence of networks makes thing harder than in other countries. A common argument in the political debate is that the few official mosques in Italy are based on moderate principles and strictly cooperate with the state, whereas improvised prayer rooms attract more radical extremists. As a consequence, progressive politicians often argue for the construction of more mosques to counter Islamic extremism, on the basis that those are actually easier to control. The same logic was also shared by moderate conservative politicians and government officials (Strnieriinitalia.it, 2015). This discourse overlooks two important elements: it is true that as of today the Imams of the main Italian mosques have moderate peaceful views and cooperate with the Italian state and security forces, but that is possible *because* there are few mosques. If there were thousands of mosques it would clearly be more difficult for the Italian state and police to have the same level of control and cooperation with the Islamic community. The second problem is that intervening with police and special operation forces in large mosques creates a different impact than shutting down improvised garage rooms where Muslim pray. For instance, we can easily imagine that a large-scale police operation in the mosque of Rome, the biggest European mosque, will have a tremendous negative repercussion in the relationships between the Muslim community and the state. The argument that large mosques are more moderate and easier to control still holds, but only when the mosques are few, as the case of France clearly shows.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom is second only to France with regard to the number of fatal Islamist-related terrorist attacks and number of victims. However, the scale of the phenomenon is somewhat different in terms of fatalities. The most notorious terrorist attack was the London public transportation bombing by Al Qaeda on the 7th of July 2005. Great Britain's colonial history explains why the numbers of the Muslim community are large, and also why the main Muslim community is from Pakistan and Bangladesh (Wojtowicz, 2012) and from South Asia more in general. According to data, the geographical concentration of Muslims, representing around 3.4% of the UK population (ARDA), is also extremely geographically concentrated and clustered around metropolis, as in the case of Italy. Of the entire UK's Muslim population, 40% lives in London, and is made of more than 600,000 people (ivi: 8).

Regarding rules for religious clothing, the UK does not have a national law enforcing this kind of ban, but local towns, villages, and schools can do so. It might be the case to highlight how, according to a recent European survey (EU-Midis II), Muslims wearing traditional religious clothing in general feel more discriminated than those who do not (EU-Midis II, 2017: 30), although only 22% of Muslims with a Sub-Saharan African background felt discriminated in the last 5 years, and only 17% for Muslims with a Non-African background (p. 29).

If religious discrimination is arguably not as relevant as in France, the ARDA dataset still indicates a high value of religious societal discrimination for Western standards, 3 out of 10. However, the main grievances of the Muslims in the UK derive from social and economic disadvantages, as there are higher levels of unemployment, poor neighborhoods, and slums. In general, British Muslims do not own houses and score low on every social indicator compared to non-Muslim British (Wojtowicz, 2012: 12). This set of problems also targets people at the individual level, and it is cause of grievances that can be linked to religion in radicalization processes, especially in cases of overwhelmingly geographical concentration creating ghetto dynamics and hindering integration processes.

The UK hosts a high number of mosques in all places where there are large Muslim communities. It is unclear from the data how many of these are prayer rooms and how many of these are

https://doi.org/10.1017/ipo.2021.22 Published online by Cambridge University Press

official large mosques with minaret. According to Wojtowicz, there are 352 mosques in London alone (Wojtowicz, 2012: 16). In all the main cases of Islamist-terrorist attacks in the UK perpetrators were British citizens affiliated to terrorist networks and regularly attending services at mosques. In the case of the July 2005 London bombing, three of the four perpetrators regularly met at a mosque in Beeston (Leeds) (Burke *et al.*, 2005), even though they were banned by moderate Muslims because they were showing signs of radicalization. This highlights in clear detail how religious networks facilitate encounters among people with similar views, enhancing the risk of radicalism despite the generally strong opposition of the religious leaders. The larger the audience, the lower the level of control of the leaders of the institution. In Great Britain the number of mosques is large: even if the total (Allievi, 2010) represents relatively low numbers, the geographical concentration of mosques coincides with the presence of Muslim communities in a way that represents per capita number of mosques actually higher than what Allievi calculates (because he calculates it at a national level). The attacker of Manchester Ariana Grande's concert, Salman Ramadan Abedi, for instance, was a regular at the mosque of Disdbury, near Manchester (Evans *et al.*, 2017). As it can be seen, most of the perpetrators in the UK shared a somewhat similar story: in particular, they were born and raised in the UK and they attended mosques.

Foreign born vs. domestic perpetrators

So far, the paper did not focus on the difference between foreign-born perpetrators and radicalized domestic citizens. Although the literature stresses the difference between the two, it is extremely difficult in the recent Islamist-related terrorist attacks in Western Europe (after 9/11) to find perpetrators who are not domestically radicalized perpetrators ('home-grown terrorists'). When the terrorists are not born in the state where the attack is perpetrated, often their place of birth is another European state. In most cases, terrorists are born on European soil. In the few cases where they are not, they still spent a significant number of years in the country where the attack took place. It is important to note that the reference here is to perpetrators on the ground, not the planners of the attacks, which indeed are more likely to take place abroad. Still, without people ready to carry out the attack in the country they live in, these terrorist attacks would be a lot harder to execute. The argument made here is that it is easier to find people willing to take part in these attacks in situation of discrimination and grievances in the countries where the attack is supposed to be taking place.

As an example, the suicide bombings in London on 7th July 2005, perpetrated by an Al-Qaeda cell, were planned in the Middle East, but looking closely at the perpetrators on the ground, three out of four were born and raised in the UK. The remaining one, born in Jamaica, moved to the UK when he was 5 years old (The Independent, 2015).

In the November 2015 Paris attacks, most of the Brussels terrorist cell was made by Belgian and French citizens. The 2015 January attack to a kosher supermarket in Paris were perpetrated by Paris-born terrorists, the Kouachi brothers. The list could go on. What is clear, once again, is that without the logistic support of domestic radicalized terrorists these attacks could not have happened. In fact, there are *zero* instances in which a foreign-born terrorist reached a Western European country and immediately proceeded to organize an attack. The fact that in virtually all the main attacks there is a heavy involvement of homegrown terrorists strengthens the hypothesis that domestic discrimination is at the center of this dynamic. Without a large support network, it becomes significantly harder for terrorists to carry out violence.

According to archival research (see the replication data on the associated dataverse repository for sources of the nationality of every single terrorist attack taking place in France and the UK), this was the distribution of homegrown and foreign-born terrorists summarized in Table 1: for every fatal Islamist-related terrorist attack in the GTD for France and the UK since 2001, I looked up either reliable media sources or reliable outlets to address the places where the perpetrators were born. The dataverse repository has the list of the attacks, the list of the perpetrators, and every source I used in relation to that attack.

https://doi.org/10.1017/ipo.2021.22 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Table 1. Place of birth of the perpetrators of fatal Islamist-related terrorist attacks in France and UK

	France	UK
Perpetrators of fatal Islamist-related terrorist attacks 2001–2019 according to the GTD (does not include attacks where only the perpetrator died)	24	15
Homegrown (including Belgian-born for attacks in France)	18	10
Foreign-born	6	5
Foreign-born with 10+ years of residence in Europe	6	3

This distribution makes it clear that without the support of the homegrown jihadis, the majority of the attacks would not have occurred. Conversely, the fact that almost the totality of the attacks was perpetrated by either homegrown terrorists or immigrants living in the country since childhood also signals the relevance of domestic grievances in explaining radicalization processes. In the absence of grievances against the host state, the planners of these attacks could not have relied on their foreign network to carry out the attacks.

Comparisons and results

The result of the study is summarized in Table 2. Regarding the countries with the highest values of societal discrimination of religious minorities and regulation of religion, higher scores are found in countries with more terrorist attacks. The additional variable regarding discrimination is based on national and local bans on religious clothing, which prevents the respect of religious principles and therefore constitutes the strongest level of discrimination toward Muslim communities, as argued in the previous paragraphs. I coded this variable, assessing whether the country has laws regulating religious clothing, and the extent of these bans. France is the only country banning hijabs in public schools; the United Kingdom delegates the matter to local authorities. However, this ban is likely to affect a very low number of people as the majority of Muslim women does not wear integral burqas, and those who do are unlikely to work in one of the aforementioned places. In Italy there is no such law, even though the burqa is theoretically banned because the Italian laws prohibits to walk in public places in a way that completely conceals the identity of the person for reasons of public safety. The conditional effect of mosques also appears clear looking at the 2010 Allievi dataset: Italy has similar numbers of mosques per Muslim per capita compared to France and the UK but very few large mosques as explained earlier, and lower levels of discrimination in terms of clothing ban and religious discrimination and regulation according to the ARDA.

Conclusions and policy implications

Regarding the hypothesis presented at the beginning of this paper, the case studies seem to confirm that higher levels of social and religious toward Muslims are more likely to increase the number of terrorist attacks. This holds particularly true if these grievances are brought to public attention through mosques and other networks, as this activates a sort of 'echo effect'. Mosques are also a place where people with similar radical views might come into contact with each other, although cultural associations and prisons might have the same effect. The French case also signals how a specific interpretation of secularism (banning religion from public spaces in general) is more likely to be perceived as a direct discrimination by Muslims more than Catholic or more religious states, which is a counterintuitive finding that deserves to be examined for future research.

Regarding policy implications, the argument made in this paper is *not* that Western European states should not build any mosque at all, or that they should shut them down, because otherwise they will increase the likelihood of terrorist attacks related to religious reasons.

https://doi.org/10.1017/ipo.2021.22 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Table 2. Discrimination, mosques and fatal Islamist-related terrorist attacks in Italy, France and the UK

	ARDA religious discrimination ['Societal Discrimination of Minority Religions (2014)']	ARDA regulation of religion ['Religious Regulation Index (2014)']	Religious discrimination regarding ban on clothing[a]	Mosques (Allievi dataset), prayers room included	Percent Muslim (ARDA)	Muslims per mosque (per capita)	Fatal attacks/ victims (GTD 2001–2019)[b]
France	3	2	High (public schools)	2100	8.6	1571	24/265
UK	3	2	Medium (local)	850–1500	3.4	2824–1600	11/93
Italy	2	0	Low (no ban)	764 (5 official)	2.5	1702	0/0

[a]Variable coded by the author, explanation in the text.
[b]Not including attacks where the perpetrator was the only victim.

There is therefore a clear straightforward policy implication, which is that in order to avoid the likelihood of terrorist attacks states should not discriminate against the Muslim community. Although progressive political parties often make the same policy recommendation, their argument is usually supported through ethical or universalistic reasons. The claim here is instead that integration of immigrants and non-discrimination are also directly linked with national security issues rather than being only part of a more ideological debate.

Mosques and other networks, however, do have an effect. There is an interaction between the availability of networks and grievances. This does not mean that if there are grievances all the country has to do in order to be safe is not building mosques or places of meeting for the Muslim minority. Grievances increase in any case, by themselves alone, the likelihood of terrorist attacks if they are not properly addressed. If that were not the case, we would not have terrorist groups trying to organize terrorist attacks in Italy and being stopped by the intelligence community and law enforcement agencies. On the other hand, building mosques in situation of unaddressed grievances is also problematic. The effect would be to enhance these grievances through religious networks, especially if there are many religious places of worship available, as the case of France clearly shows. What must remain clear, in any case, is that the solution lies primarily in reducing the discrimination factor and not in avoiding the realization of places of meeting for minorities: to solve the issues policy makers must act at the level of discrimination to prevent the emergence of grievances. Should they try to resolve the issues only on the front of the number of mosques and places of aggregation, this would have the same effect of treating a bone fracture with pain killers rather than with surgery. The pain could go away for a while, but it will come back soon if not properly addressed.

Funding. The research received no grants from public, commercial or non-profit funding agency.

Data. The replication data for Table 1 and the GTD variable in Table 2 are available at https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/ipsr-risp.

Acknowledgements. The author thanks the faculty and colleagues at the University of Central Florida for their valuable suggestions. In particular, the author thanks Dr Nikola Mirilovic, Dr Barbara Kinsey, and Dr Konstantin Ash and Dr Gallya Lahav of Stony Brook University for their comments on the previous versions of the paper. The author also thanks the two anonymous reviewers whose feedback substantially helped in improving this paper. The author also thanks all the fellow colleagues in the PhD program of Security studies at the University of Central Florida for their suggestions and interest in this research.

References

Abdelgadir A and Fouka V (2020) Political secularism and Muslim integration in the West: assessing the effects of the headscarf Ban. *American Political Science Review* **114**, 707–723.

https://doi.org/10.1017/ipo.2021.22 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Algan Y, Dustmann C, Glitz A and Manning A (2009) The economic situation of first and second generation immigrants in France, Germany and the United Kingdom. Discussion Paper for the Center of Economic Performance, October (ISSN 2042-2695)

Allievi S (ed.) (2010) *Mosques in Europe. Why a Solution has become a Problem*. London: Network of European Foundations.

Allievi S (2014) Mosques in Western Europe. Available at stefanoallievi.it/anno/mosques-in-western-europe/ (Accessed 2 June 2021).

BBC (2005) Ghettos Schakle French Muslims. BBC.com, 31 October. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4375910.stm (Accessed 11 May 2021).

BBC (2020) France teacher attack: four pupils held over beheading, BBC.com, 19 October. Available at https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54598546 (Accessed 11 May 2021).

Bearak M (2016) Italy backs out of UN's Libya mission, so Nepali troops will go instead. The Washington Post, May 16. Available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/05/16/italy-backs-out-of-u-n-s-libya-mission-so-nepalese-troops-will-go-instead/ (Accessed 11 May 2021).

Bombardieri M (2011) *Moschee d'Italia. Diritto al luogo di culto. Il dibattito Sociale e Politico*. Bologna: EMI.

Burke J, Barnett A, Bright M, Townsend M and Thompson T (2005) Three cities, four killers. The Guardian, 16 July. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2005/jul/17/july7.uksecurity (Accessed 11 May 2021).

CBS (2016) Paris attack fugitive captured in Belgium terror raid. cbsnews.com, 18 March. Available at https://www.cbsnews.com/news/paris-attacks-lead-fugitive-salah-abdeslam-new-raids-belgium/ (Accessed 11 May 2021).

Chesler P (2010) Ban the burqa? The argument in favor. *Middle East Quarterly* **17**, 33–45.

Cottee S and Hayward K (2011) Terrorist (e)motives: the existential attractions of terrorism. *Studies in Conflict and Studies Terrorism* **34**, 963–986.

EU-Midis II (2017) *Second European Minorities and Discriminations Survey. Muslims, selected findings*. (EU Agency for Fundamental Rights: Luxembourg).

Evans M, Ward V, Mendick R, Farmer B, Dixon H and Boyle D (2017) Everything we know about Manchester suicide bomber Salman Abedi. The Telegraph, 26 May. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/05/26/everything-know-manchester-suicide-bomber-salman-abedi/ (Accessed 11 May 2021).

Fattah K and Fierke KM (2009) A clash of emotions: the politics of humiliation and political violence in the Middle East. *European Journal of International Relations* **1**, 67–93.

Forsyth A (2015) Paris attacks: is Molenbeek a haven for Belgian jihadis?. BBC.com, 17 November. Available at https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34839403 (Accessed 11 May 2021).

Gates S and Podder S (2015) Social media, recruitment, allegiance, and the Islamic State. *Perspectives on Terrorism* **9**, 107–116. ISSN 2334-374.

Gathak S (2016) Challenging the state: effect of minority discrimination, economic globalization and political openness on domestic terrorism. *International Interactions* **42**, 56–80.

Groppi M (2017) The terror threat to Italy: how Italian exceptionalism is rapidly diminishing. *CTC Sentinel* **10**, 20–27.

Gurr T (1970) *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hoffman B (2017) *Inside Terrorism*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Human Rights Watch (2014) France: face-veil ruling undermines rights. European Courts Uphold Discriminatory Ban. hrw.org, 3 July. Available at https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/07/03/france-face-veil-ruling-undermines-rights (Accessed 11 May 2021).

Italian Constitution (in English, official translation by the Italian Senate) (1948) Available at https://www.senato.it/documenti/repository/istituzione/costituzione_inglese.pdf (Accessed 2 June 2021)

Ivekovic R (2004) The veil in France: secularism, nation, women. *Economic and Political Weekly* **39**, 1117–1119.

Kavanagh J (2011) Selection, availability, and opportunity: the conditional effect of poverty on terrorist group participation. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* **55**, 106–132.

Kydd AH and Walter BF (2006) The strategies of terrorism. *International Security* **31**, 49–80.

Mariani L (2017) Sangue su Roma, 007: L'Isis voleva 2 stragi, al Colosseo e a Termini. E proprio a meta' settembre (In Italian). Available at https://www.secoloditalia.it/2017/09/sangue-su-roma-007-lisis-voleva-2-stragi-al-colosseo-e-termini-e-proprio-a-meta-settembre/ (Accessed 2 June 2021).

Messaggero Il (2018) Roma: Combattente dell'ISIS condannato a 8 anni: cosi pianificava un attentato (In Italian). Available at ilmessaggero.it/video/cronaca/roma_combattente_isis_condannato_8_anni-2403884.html (Accessed 2 June 2021).

Momigliano A (2018) Italy is safe for, and from, jihadis. Foreign Policy, 3 May. Available at https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/05/03/italy-is-safe-from-and-for-jihadis/ (Accessed 11 May 2021).

Nesser P (2018) *Islamist Terrorism in Europe: A History*. London: Hurst &Co.

Osborne S, Mortimer C, Lichfield J and Cendrowicz L (2016). Salah Abdeslam: World's most-wanted fugitive and last surviving Paris attacker captured in Brussels by the police. The Independent, 18 March. Available at https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/paris-attacks-suspect-salah-abdeslam-shot-and-wounded-brussels-anti-terror-raid-a6939216.html (Accessed 11 May 2021).

Pape RA (1997) The strategic logic of suicide terrorism. *The American Political Science Review* **97**, 343–361.

https://doi.org/10.1017/ipo.2021.22 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Pesante L (2018) Terrorismo. La rete di Amri progettava un attentato nella metro di Roma (in Italian). Available at tgcom24.mediaset.it/2018/video/terrorismo-la-rete-di-amri-progettava-un-attentato-nella-metro-di-roma_3052648.shtml, tgcom24.mediaset.it (Accessed 2 June 2021).

Piazza AJ (2011) Poverty, minority economic discrimination, and domestic terrorism. *Conflict Management and Peace Science* **48**, 339–353.

Piazza AJ (2012) Types of minority discrimination and terrorism. *Conflict Management and Peace Science* **29**, 521–546.

Polchi Vladimiro (2018). Muslims of Italy: they are one million and four hundred thousand, but the Christian-Orthodox are more. La Repubblica, 28 March (in Italian). Available at https://www.repubblica.it/solidarieta/immigrazione/2018/03/28/news/ismu-192426196/ (Accessed 11 May 2021).

Rabasa A and Benard C (2015). *Eurojihad. Patterns of Islamist Radicalization and Terrorism in Europe*. New York: The Rand Corporation, Cambridge University Press.

Reuters (2021) Hands off my hijab! Young Muslim women protest proposed French ban. Reuters.com, 4 May. Available at https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/hands-off-my-hijab-young-muslim-women-protest-proposed-french-ban-2021-05-04/ (Accessed 12 May 2021).

Roy O (2017) *Jihad and Death. The Global Appeal of Islamic State*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Sageman M (2008) *Leaderless Jihad. Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Saint-Blancat C and di Friedberg OS (2006) Why are mosques a problem? Local politics and fear of Islam in Northern Italy. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* **31**, 1083–1104.

Samaan J-L and Jacobs A (2018) Countering Jihadist terrorism: a comparative analysis of French and German experiences. *Terrorism and Political Violence* **32**, 401–415. https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2017.1415891.

Sayia N and Manchanda S (2019) Do burqa bans make us safer? Veil prohibitions and terrorism in Europe. *Journal of European Public Policy* **27**, 1781–1800.

Sciolino Elaine (2004) French assembly votes to ban religious symbols in schools. The New York Times, 11 February. Available at https://www.nytimes.com/2004/02/11/world/french-assembly-votes-to-ban-religious-symbols-in-schools.html (Accessed 11 May 2021).

Serhan Y (2016) France's disappearing mosques. The Atlantic, August 1. Available at https://www.theatlantic.com/news/archive/2016/08/french-mosques-islam/493919/ (Accessed 11 May 2021).

Shaffer R (2016) Jihad and counter-jihad in Europe: Islamic radicals, right-wing extremists, and counter-terrorism responses. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, **28**, 383–394. Available at http://www.start.umd.edu/Global Terrorism Database (GTD).

Stevenson J, Demack S, Stiell B, Abdi M, Clarkson L, Ghaffar F and Hassan S (2017) *The Social Mobility Challenges Faced by Young Muslims*. London: Social Mobility Commission.

Stranieri in Italia (2015) Mosques. Alfano: Easier to control than Prayer rooms. Stranieriinitalia.it, 9 January. Available at https://stranieriinitalia.it/attualita/moschee-alfano-occhi-aperti-ma-sono-piu-facili-da-controllare-dei-luoghi-di-preghiera-improvvisati/ (Accessed 11 May 2021).

Talbot M (2006) The Agitator: Oriana Fallaci directs her fury towards Islam. The New Yorker, May 28. Available at https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2006/06/05/the-agitator (Accessed 11 May 2021).

Tgcom24 (2017) Terrorist cell close to ISIS dismantled: Proselitism on the Web. TgCom24, 23 March (in Italian). Available at https://www.tgcom24.mediaset.it/cronaca/lazio/smantellata-cellula-terroristica-vicina-all-isis-proselitismo-sul-web_3063143-201702a.shtml (Accessed 11 May 2021).

The Independent (2015) 7/7 bombings, Profile of the four bombers who killed 52 people in the London attacks. theindependent.com, 15 July. Available at https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/7-7-bombings-london-anniversary-live-profiles-four-bombers-who-killed-52-people-london-10369984.html (Accessed 11 May 2021).

Thompson R (2011) Radicalization and the use of social media. *Journal of Strategic Security* **4**, 167–190. http://www.thearda.com, ARDA dataset.

Vargo ME (2021) *The French Terror Wave, 2015–2016. Al Qaeda and ISIS Attacks from Charlie Hebdo to the Bataclan Theatre*. McFarland, Jefferson (NC) (e-book).

Vidino L (2011) The Buccinasco Pentiti: a unique case study of radicalization. *Terrorism and Political Violence* **23**, 398–418.

Wojtowicz A (2012) Islamic Radicalization in the UK: Index of Radicalization. International Institute for Counterterrorism (IICT).

Cite this article: Dell'Isola D (2022). Discrimination against Muslims, the role of networks and terrorist attacks in Western Europe: the cases of United Kingdom, France, and Italy. *Italian Political Science Review/Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica* **52**, 118–133. https://doi.org/10.1017/ipo.2021.22

https://doi.org/10.1017/ipo.2021.22 Published online by Cambridge University Press