

# Migration and Integration

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# Zeitschrift für Psychologie

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# Unveiling Naturalization

## A Multilevel Study on Minority Proportion, Conservative Ideologies, and Attitudes Toward the Muslim Veil

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**Abstract.** Anti-Muslim attitudes are widespread in Western countries, especially among conservative individuals. Yet, the Muslim veil sparks controversy across the ideological spectrum, potentially resulting in unwillingness to naturalize Muslim immigrants. Living in culturally diverse contexts is likely to affect how ideologies relate to anti-veil attitudes. This study examined the interplay between individual- and community-level ideologies and minority proportion in explaining anti-veil attitudes. Multilevel analyses with Swiss World Values Survey data ( $N = 1,006$ ; 125 municipalities) revealed that individual-level conservatism and conservative ideological climates increased anti-veil attitudes. Minority proportion in a municipality (i.e., proportion of ex-Yugoslavs and Turks representing the largest Muslim groups) shaped the impact of conservative ideologies on both levels: Stronger anti-veil attitudes were found in highly conservative communities when minority proportion was high rather than low, whereas low rather than high minority proportion strengthened anti-veil attitudes for nonconformist individuals and in progressive communities. This research highlights the need to simultaneously examine conservative ideologies and immigrant presence to understand host societies' views of immigrants' cultural practices.

**Keywords:** anti-Muslim attitudes, conservative ideologies, minority proportion, immigration, multilevel analysis

In recent years, Muslims have been the center of public, media, and political debates on immigration and naturalization in Western countries (Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007). In the Netherlands, anti-Muslim discourse has contributed to the electoral success of the far-right Party for Freedom (Verkuyten, 2013). In Switzerland, anti-Muslim referenda campaigns such as the ban of minarets have received tremendous public support (Fetzer & Soper, 2012). In parallel, events such as 9/11 or the Madrid bombings have drawn negative media attention to Muslim immigrants associating them with security threats and terrorism (Strabac & Listhaug, 2008). The Muslim veil – portrayed as an emblem of oppression toward women, undermining individual autonomy and conflicting with a secular state – has polarized feminist intellectuals and liberal politicians (Wallach Scott, 2007). This polemic discourse is likely to provide a fertile ground for anti-veil attitudes across the ideological spectrum.

The Muslim veil is often perceived as a symbol of unwillingness to assimilate and adopt the norms and customs of Western host societies (van der Noll, 2010). Considering the veil an obstacle to naturalization thus reflects a refusal to include Muslims displaying their religious membership within the symbolic boundaries of the national

ingroup. Such attitudes are likely to be anchored in conservative ideologies endorsed by individuals and shared within the ideological climates in which they are expressed. Living in culturally diverse contexts where everyday encounters with Muslims are frequent is likely to shape how such ideologies relate to anti-veil attitudes. This paper uses a multilevel approach to examine across Swiss municipalities the hitherto ignored interplay between conservative ideologies and the proportion of the largest Muslim groups (i.e., ex-Yugoslavs and Turks) in explaining anti-veil attitudes.

### Conservative Ideologies on Multiple Levels

Ideologies are understood as systems of beliefs and values regarding ideal societal arrangements or sociopolitical issues, such as immigration (Cohrs, 2012). Insofar as the maintenance of status quo and the avoidance of insecurity and threat are core features of conservative ideologies (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003), they have been shown to underlie anti-immigrant attitudes

(Cohrs & Stelzl, 2010).<sup>1</sup> Because ideologies are not only endorsed by individuals but represent essential features of communities and larger societies, an appropriate conceptualization of conservative ideologies needs to consider multiple levels of analysis.

On the individual level, conservative ideologies anchored in values related to *conformity* to ingroup norms, protection of customs and *traditions*, and concern for *security* and social order (Schwartz, 1992) have been shown to trigger anti-immigrant prejudice (Davidov & Meuleman, 2012). In a comprehensive study examining the impact of values, prejudice, and religiosity on anti-veil attitudes among the Belgian host society, Saroglou, Lamkaddem, Van Pachterbeke, and Buxant (2009) found that security values persistently predicted negative representations of and opposition toward the Muslim veil. This link was explained by Muslims being regularly associated with terrorism. Tradition values were linked to positive representations of the Muslim veil. Perceiving the veil as a tradition may indeed elicit sympathy among individuals valuing tradition. However, in a recent study on attitudes toward Muslims' civil liberties in the German public sphere, security, tradition, and conformity values predicted opposition to the Muslim veil (van der Noll, 2013). Individuals low on conservative ideologies, in turn, were found to exhibit more liberal and tolerant attitudes toward Muslims (Giugni & Morariu, 2010; see Velasco Gonzáles, Verkuyten, Weesie, & Poppe, 2008 for similar effects of multicultural ideologies).

The *ideological climates* (Green & Staerklé, 2013; Sarrasin et al., 2012) in which individuals live provide a framework of values, rules, and expectations that guide individuals' attitudes toward societal phenomena such as immigrants (Deaux, 2006; Moscovici, 1988; Schwartz, 2006). Indeed, conservative ideological climates are characterized by values and beliefs that support societal status quo (Staerklé, Clémence, & Spini, 2011). Conservative ideological climates of a nation or community depicted by stricter immigration policy (Weldon, 2006; for anti-veil attitudes, see van der Noll, 2010), conservative referenda results (Sarrasin et al., 2012), or right-wing party presence (Semyonov, Rajman, & Gorodzeisky, 2006) have been shown to foster exclusionary immigration attitudes, while progressive ideological climates characterized by tolerant norms generally yielded the opposite effect. Further, conservative ideological climates also have tangible political consequences. For example, conservative ideological climates have been related to lower naturalization rates across Swiss municipalities (Hainmueller & Hangartner, 2013; Helbling, 2010b), disadvantaging first and foremost individuals from Muslim countries.

## Minority Proportion and Exclusionary Attitudes

Attitude formation is affected by individuals' everyday experiences of the intergroup context in which they live. The proportion of immigrants in a given geographical region (e.g., nation, municipality) is one of the most studied intergroup context features shaping attitudes toward immigrants. Theories hold conflicting assumptions on the effect of the presence of ethnic and immigrant minorities. While ethnic competition theory predicts that large proportions of minorities elicit perceived competition and exclusionary attitudes in a host society (Scheepers, Gijssberts, & Coenders, 2002; see also Blalock, 1967), intergroup contact theory, in turn, claims that a large minority proportion facilitates intergroup contact, thereby improving outgroup attitudes (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). The beneficial effect of contact has especially been evidenced in small-scale contexts where a large proportion of immigrants reflects actual interaction opportunities that are likely to reduce perceived threat (e.g., Wagner et al., 2008). Moreover, beyond individuals' contacts with immigrants, frequent exposure to immigrant minorities may translate into more positive attitudes toward immigrants through familiarization with immigrants and their integration (Schneider, 2008).

These effects have also been studied with the proportion of Muslims. Muslim proportion on the national level was unrelated to exclusionary attitudes (Strabac & Listhaug, 2008). On a smaller scale, however, a large proportion of Muslims has been shown to elicit more frequent interactions, familiarization as well as increased threat perceptions (across Swiss municipalities: Green, Fasel, & Sarrasin, 2010; across Dutch regions: Savelkoul, Scheepers, Tolsma, & Hagendoorn, 2011), calling for a more thorough investigation.

## Interplay Between Conservative Ideologies and Minority Proportion

Ideologies provide a promising avenue for understanding how the proportion of ethnic and immigrant minorities shapes exclusionary attitudes (Fasel, Green, & Sarrasin, 2013). Because individuals and communities with conservative ideologies fundamentally differ in their values and beliefs from individuals and communities low on conservatism (Jost et al., 2003), they are also likely to react differently to the presence of ethnic and immigrant minorities.

<sup>1</sup> Conservative ideologies are often divided into two core dimensions, one labeled social conservatism, authoritarianism, or traditionalism versus autonomy and liberalism, and the other labeled economic conservatism, power, and hierarchy versus egalitarianism and social welfare (Duckitt & Sibley, 2010; Jost et al., 2003). While the values underlying the second dimension also relate to anti-veil attitudes (Saroglou et al., 2009; van der Noll, 2013), in this study, we chose to focus on the first dimension since it has been shown to be most strongly influenced by the intergroup context (Cohrs & Asbrock, 2009; Roccas & Amit, 2011).

Individuals endorsing conservative ideologies have been shown to react with more exclusionary attitudes toward immigrants when exposed to a large number of such minorities (Sibley et al., 2013; see also Roccas & Amit, 2011). Especially when immigrants are perceived as undermining ingroup cohesion and threatening social order, exclusionary attitudes are enhanced in conservative individuals (e.g., right-wing authoritarians; Cohrs & Asbrock, 2009; Cohrs & Stelzl, 2010; Thomsen, Green, & Sidanius, 2008). Conservative individuals also avoid interactions with immigrants, and their attitudes are therefore less often improved by positive intergroup contact (Pettigrew, Christ, Wagner, & Stellmacher, 2007; Sagiv & Schwartz, 1995). Similar patterns can be expected for the community level. Notably, where conservative ideological climates prevail and public debates fuel threat, a high proportion of ethnic and immigrant minorities may elicit exclusion (Hopkins, 2010). Further, in culturally diverse contexts marked by strong intergroup anxiety, positive intergroup interactions are generally avoided (Halperin et al., 2012). However, there is also evidence that conservative ideological climates result in exclusionary attitudes (Schlueter & Davidov, 2013) and little intergroup contact (Sarrasin et al., 2012) especially in homogenous contexts with few interaction opportunities.

Because their motivations are compatible with a high proportion of immigrants, individuals low on conservatism, in turn, should not react with exclusionary attitudes toward cultural and ethnic minorities. Indeed, individuals low on conservative values have been shown to express more tolerant and inclusive attitudes toward immigrants (i.e., asylum seekers) when cultural diversity was salient (Roccas & Amit, 2011, Study 3). Moreover, individuals low on conservative values have been shown to readily engage in intergroup contacts when intergroup interaction opportunities were available, thereby further improving their outgroup attitudes (Sagiv & Schwartz, 1995). On the community level, progressive and tolerant norms, customs, laws, and authority support have been suggested as central conditions for reducing exclusionary attitudes in culturally diverse societies (Allport, 1954; Blumer, 1958).

In summary, prior research indicates that individuals and communities varying in their endorsement of conservative ideologies react differently to the presence of ethnic and immigrant minorities. This is likely to further polarize their attitudes toward immigrants: While a high minority proportion should foster exclusionary attitudes in conservative individuals and communities, it should entail more tolerant attitudes in individuals and communities low on conservative ideologies.

## The Current Study

The current study examines how viewing the Muslim veil as an obstacle to naturalization in Switzerland relates to individual- and municipality-level conservative ideologies and minority proportion. Minority proportion in

municipalities is assessed with the proportion of the largest Muslim immigrant groups in Switzerland, immigrants from former Yugoslav countries (e.g., Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia) and Turkey. Though not all immigrants from these countries are Muslims, they are most strongly associated with Muslims by the Swiss population (Helbling, 2010b; Stolz, 2005).

Swiss survey research shows that attitudes toward Muslims have become more negative over the last decade (Helbling, 2010a). This trend is likely to be reflected in attitudes toward the naturalization of Muslim immigrants. In Switzerland where naturalization decisions are made on the municipality level, Muslims are more frequently denied citizenship than other immigrant groups (Hainmueller & Hangartner, 2013). To date, only 12% of the Muslim population living in Switzerland possess citizenship, despite many of them being born and raised in the country (Helbling, 2010a). This study thus examines when the veil – often perceived as a refusal to assimilate – is viewed as an obstacle to naturalization.

To sum up our predictions, on the individual level, we hypothesize that perceiving the Muslim veil as an obstacle to naturalization (hereafter *anti-veil attitudes*) is related to different facets of conservative ideologies (i.e., security, conformity, tradition values; H1). Among these facets, security should be most strongly related to anti-veil attitudes (Saroglou et al., 2009). Moreover, after accounting for individual-level ideologies and socio-demographic factors, anti-veil attitudes should be stronger in municipalities with conservative rather than progressive ideological climates (H2). Given the mixed findings in previous research on the proportion of ethnic and immigrant minorities, no hypothesis is formulated on the direct impact of the proportion of ex-Yugoslavs and Turks on anti-veil attitudes. However, we expect a high proportion of ex-Yugoslavs and Turks in a municipality to intensify the link between conservative ideologies and anti-veil attitudes. In conservative communities (H3a) and for conservative individuals (H4a), anti-veil attitudes should be stronger when the proportion of ex-Yugoslavs and Turks is high rather than low. In progressive communities (H3b) and for low conservative individuals (H4b), attitudes toward the veil should be more positive in municipalities with a high rather than low proportion.

As the veil is a salient feature of Muslim religious membership, exclusion based on the Muslim veil, or other religious symbols, may be driven by antireligious stances (Fetzer & Soper, 2012; Saroglou et al., 2009). We thus also examine the impact of religious affiliation and importance of religion.

## Method

### Data Set and Sample

We analyzed Swiss citizens' data from the 2005 wave of the World Values Survey (WVS; data collected in 2007 in Switzerland). Respondents who declared themselves

Muslims ( $N = 6$ ) were excluded. In order to keep a stable sample size across analyses, the sample was further reduced by excluding individuals with missing data on dependent and independent variables.<sup>2</sup> The final sample (age:  $M = 52.73$ ,  $SD = 15.99$ ; 44.7% male) included 1,006 individuals living in 125 municipalities ( $M = 8.94$  individuals per municipality,  $SD = 4.87$ , ranging from 1 [nine municipalities] to 32 [one municipality] individuals per municipality).

### Individual-Level Variables

*Anti-veil attitudes* were assessed with one item asking whether the veil was viewed as an obstacle to naturalization on a 4-point scale from 1 = *not a problem* to 4 = *a big problem*. To ensure the estimation of precise covariance estimates that is necessary to compute simple slopes, the range of the scale was linearly transformed to vary between 0 and 100 ( $M = 55.24$ ,  $SD = 31.97$ ).

As various facets of conservative ideologies, *conformity*, *tradition*, and *security* values were assessed by one item each included in the 10-item Schwartz Value Scale, a shorter version of the original 40-item Portrait Values Questionnaire (Schwartz et al., 2001). The items were formulated as a portrait of the aspirations and wishes of a gender-matched individual, and the respondent indicated if this person was 1 = *very much* to 6 = *not at all* like him/her. Items were reversed so that a high score indicated strong adherence (*conformity*:  $M = 4.04$ ,  $SD = 1.45$ ; *tradition*:  $M = 3.78$ ,  $SD = 1.48$ ; *security*:  $M = 3.43$ ,  $SD = 1.42$ ).<sup>3</sup> These measures of conservative ideologies were standardized.

We controlled for the following individual characteristics: *age*, *gender* (1 = *male*), *education* (*University/technical school*, reference category, 25.7%, compared to *no/obligatory education*, 7.6%, *lower vocational education*, 35.6%, and *higher vocational education*, 31.1%), *country of birth* (1 = *born in Switzerland*, 88.9%), *political orientation* (from 1 = *left* to 10 = *right*;  $M = 5.22$ ,  $SD = 1.96$ ), *income* (from 1 = *lowest tenth of salaries* to 10 = *upper tenth of salaries*;  $M = 5.37$ ,  $SD = 1.87$ ), *importance of religion* (recoded from 1 = *not at all important* to 4 = *very important*;  $M = 2.39$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ), and *religious affiliation* (*no religious affiliation*, reference category, compared to *Christian*, 77.3%, and *other religious affiliation*, 3.8%). Continuous individual-level control variables were only weakly related to each other (correlations ranged from  $-.02$  to  $-.23$ ). All continuous control variables were standardized.

### Municipality-Level Predictors

*Conservative ideological climate* was operationalized through referendum results from 1995 to 2006. The original dataset, for all Swiss municipalities (Hermann, 2006), contained nine thematic scores, of which three (foreign policy, changes in government, social liberalization) were extracted by a municipality-level factor analysis ( $\alpha = .95$ ; see Sarrasin et al., 2012) and used to create the measure of conservative climate. Municipalities ranged from  $-12.30$  (*most progressive*) to  $22.77$  (*most conservative*), with a mean of  $-0.35$  ( $SD = 7.26$ , the overall Swiss mean = 0).

*Minority proportion* was measured using the proportion of the largest Muslim immigrant groups in Switzerland, immigrants from former Yugoslav countries (e.g., Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia) and Turkey. The proportion of ex-Yugoslavs and Turks ranged from 0% to 19.40% ( $M = 4.68$ ,  $SD = 3.95$ ; Source: SFSO, 2000 census). Proportion of ex-Yugoslavs and Turks was unrelated to conservative ideological climate ( $r = .13$ ,  $p = .14$ ). Finally, *urbanization* was controlled for (1 = *urban*, 79.2%). The proportion of ex-Yugoslavs and Turks was higher in urban municipalities ( $M = 5.24$ ,  $SD = 4.06$ ) compared to rural municipalities ( $M = 2.67$ ,  $SD = 2.67$ ),  $t(123) = -3.19$ ,  $p = .002$ . No difference was found for conservative ideological climates in urban ( $M = -0.59$ ,  $SD = 7.16$ ) compared to rural municipalities ( $M = 0.56$ ,  $SD = 7.73$ ),  $t(123) = 0.72$ ,  $p = .47$ . Continuous municipality-level predictors were standardized.

### Results

Due to data being structured on two levels with individuals (level 1) nested within municipalities (level 2), we performed multilevel regression analyses (e.g., Hox, 2010), with Mplus 5.1 using maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors (MLR, Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2009). Anti-veil attitudes varied across municipalities ( $\sigma^2 = 54.99$ ,  $SE = 19.55$ ,  $p = .005$ ; ICC = 5.3%), indicating that a significant part of the total variance was a result of this clustering structure.

To examine the improvement of the model fit, we calculated the difference in deviance ( $-2 \times \log\text{likelihood}$ ; corrected with the scaling factor necessary for MLR estimations) between nested steps in the model building process (see bottom line of Table 1). All individual-level variables were entered in Model 1,  $\Delta\chi^2(14) = 86.20$ ,

<sup>2</sup> Due to a large number of missing values for income (10.54%) and political orientation (9.17%), data on these sensitive questions was imputed based on variables known to cause nonresponse for these questions (i.e., gender, age, education, and country of birth) using the Stata Uvis command (Royston, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Different facets of conservative ideologies are treated separately for conceptual reasons (Saroglou et al., 2009; Schwartz, 1992). Moreover, low reliability ( $\alpha = .53$ ) did not warrant a higher order value (i.e., conservation).

Table 1. Unstandardized multilevel regression coefficients and standard errors for individual- and municipality-level predictors of anti-veil attitudes

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4b
	Individual-level predictors	Individual- and municipality-level predictors	Municipality-level interaction	Cross-level interaction
Intercept	52.06 (4.96)***	53.22 (5.44)***	52.77 (5.31)***	51.43 (5.39)***
Individual-level predictors				
Security	2.88 (1.11)**	2.71 (1.11)*	2.78 (1.10)*	2.87 (1.07)**
Tradition	2.21 (1.27) <sup>†</sup>	2.07 (1.27)	2.12 (1.24) <sup>†</sup>	2.26 (1.24) <sup>†</sup>
Conformity	2.38 (1.41) <sup>†</sup>	2.47 (1.41) <sup>†</sup>	2.48 (1.41) <sup>†</sup>	7.22 (2.71)**
Municipality-level predictors				
Proportion of ex-Yugoslavs/Turks		-2.23 (1.32) <sup>†</sup>	-2.74 (1.10)*	-2.77 (1.11)*
Conservative climate		1.81 (1.10) <sup>†</sup>	2.51 (1.04)*	2.51 (1.04)*
Proportion of ex-Yugoslavs/Turks × Conservative Climate			4.57 (1.09)***	4.52 (1.09)***
Cross-level interaction terms				
Proportion of ex-Yugoslavs/Turks × Conformity				2.73 (1.08)*
Variance components				
Individual-level (% explained)	888.39*** (8.0%)			
Municipality-level (% explained)	38.68* (29.7%)	30.04 <sup>†</sup> (45.4%)	12.90 (76.5%)	
Random slope (conformity) (% explained)				24.22 (28.1%)
Deviance <sup>a</sup>	9,721.70	9,716.00	9,704.28	9,693.80 <sup>b</sup>

Notes. Standard errors in parentheses. Controlled for age, gender, education, income, political orientation, importance of religion, religious affiliation, country of birth, and urbanization. <sup>a</sup>-2 × Loglikelihood. <sup>b</sup>Deviance of random slope model (Model 4a) is 9,700.26. <sup>†</sup> $p < .10$ . \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

$p < .001$ . Adding level 2 predictors in Model 2 did not improve model fit,  $\Delta\chi^2(3) = 5.25, p = .15$ , yet the model fit was significantly improved when the level 2 interaction (Conservative Climate<sub>municipality-level</sub> × Proportion of Ex-Yugoslavs & Turks<sub>municipality-level</sub>) was included (Model 3 compared to Model 1;  $\Delta\chi^2(4) = 17.78, p = .001$ ). Allowing the relationship between conformity and anti-veil attitudes to vary across municipalities in Model 4a improved the model fit,  $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 223.78, p < .001$ . Finally, the cross-level interaction introduced in Model 4b (Conformity<sub>individual-level</sub> × Proportion of Ex-Yugoslavs & Turks<sub>municipality-level</sub>) further improved the model fit,  $\Delta\chi^2(2) = 6.82, p = .03$ .

### Individual-Level Effects

The results of the multilevel regression analyses are displayed in Table 1, from which socio-demographics and municipality control variables were omitted for the sake of readability. Findings of Model 1 partially confirmed our hypothesis (H1): Of the three facets of conservative ideologies, security was significantly and positively related to anti-veil attitudes. Tradition and conformity were also positively, though marginally related to anti-veil attitudes.

Moreover, in line with previous research on anti-veil attitudes and antireligious stances (Saroglou et al., 2009), individuals attributing low importance to religion displayed stronger anti-veil attitudes ( $b = -2.78, SE = 0.99, p = .005$ ). Stronger anti-veil attitudes were also found for older people ( $b = 2.24, SE = 1.07, p = .04$ ), with a right-wing orientation ( $b = 5.30, SE = 1.18, p < .001$ ), and with a vocational education compared to university/technical education (lower vocational education:  $b = 7.10, SE = 2.45, p = .004$ ; higher vocational education:  $b = 6.57, SE = 2.46, p = .007$ ). Individuals with no/obligatory education did not differ in their anti-veil attitudes from the reference category (i.e., university/technical education). Furthermore, religious affiliation, gender, income, and being born in Switzerland had no significant effect on anti-veil attitudes.

### Municipality-Level Effects

After controlling for individual-level effects and urbanization, in line with H2 (see Model 2 in Table 1), conservative ideological climate was positively, though marginally, related to anti-veil attitudes. A high proportion of ex-Yugoslavs and Turks was negatively, though also marginally, related with anti-veil attitudes, while urbanization was



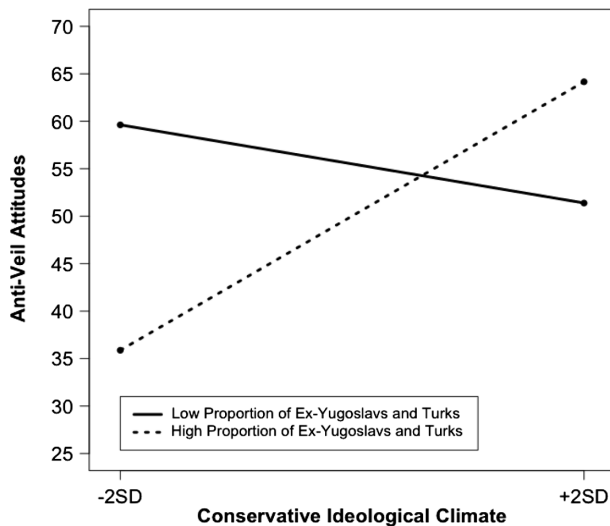


Figure 1. Municipality-level interaction between conservative ideological climate and proportion of Ex-Yugoslavs and Turks.

unrelated to anti-veil attitudes. Recall that as adding municipality-level main effects in Model 2 did not significantly improve model fit, these results are merely indicative.

In Model 3, the interaction term between conservative ideological climate and proportion of ex-Yugoslavs and Turks yielded a significant effect.<sup>4</sup> To interpret this finding, the interaction was decomposed using simple slope analyses (Preacher, Curran, & Bauer, 2006). Figure 1 illustrates how for municipalities with a high proportion of ex-Yugoslavs and Turks ( $M + 1 SD$ ), conservative ideological climate was positively related to anti-veil attitudes ( $b = 7.07$ ,  $SE = 1.50$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In municipalities characterized by low proportion of ex-Yugoslavs and Turks ( $M - 1 SD$ ), conservative ideological climate was unrelated to anti-veil attitudes ( $b = -2.06$ ,  $SE = 1.50$ ,  $p = .17$ ). To assess our predictions for municipalities with conservative versus progressive ideological climates, we further decomposed the interaction. Unexpectedly, for municipalities with conservative ideological climates ( $M + 1 SD$ ), anti-veil attitudes did not increase when proportion of ex-Yugoslavs and Turks was high compared to low ( $b = 1.83$ ,  $SE = 1.45$ ,  $p = .21$ ). However, when the most conservative municipalities were examined ( $M + 2 SD$ ), our hypothesis (H3a) received support and anti-veil attitudes were increased when the proportion of ex-Yugoslavs and Turks was high rather than low ( $b = 6.39$ ,  $SE = 2.33$ ,  $p = .006$ ). Finally, in line with our expectations (H3b), in progressive ideological climates ( $M - 1 SD$ ) anti-veil attitudes were attenuated when the proportion of

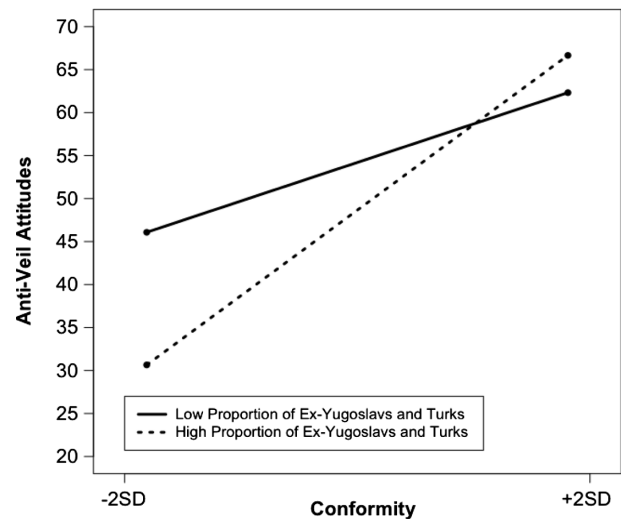


Figure 2. Cross-level interaction between conformity and proportion of Ex-Yugoslavs and Turks.

ex-Yugoslavs and Turks was high compared to low ( $b = -7.31$ ,  $SE = 1.63$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

### Cross-Level Interaction

To test whether the link between the different facets of conservative ideologies (i.e., conformity, tradition, and security) and anti-veil attitudes varied across municipalities, in unrepresented analyses, we allowed for the slopes between these variables to vary. To remove municipality-level variation in individual-level predictors, individual-level predictors involved in cross-level interactions were centered at the municipality mean (Enders & Tofghi, 2007). Only the slope between conformity and anti-veil attitudes varied significantly across municipalities ( $\sigma^2 = 33.69$ ,  $SE = 15.76$ ,  $p = .03$ ).<sup>5</sup> Cross-level interactions (Model 4b in Table 1) revealed that proportion of ex-Yugoslavs and Turks significantly predicted the variation between conformity and anti-veil attitudes.<sup>6</sup> As shown in Figure 2, in municipalities with a high proportion of ex-Yugoslavs and Turks ( $M + 1 SD$ ), conformity was positively related to anti-veil attitudes ( $b = 9.95$ ,  $SE = 3.21$ ,  $p = .002$ ). In municipalities with a low proportion of ex-Yugoslavs and Turks ( $M - 1 SD$ ), conformity was only marginally related to anti-veil attitudes ( $b = 4.49$ ,  $SE = 2.60$ ,  $p = .08$ ). Against our expectations (H4a), individuals high in conformity ( $M + 1 SD$ ) did not express accentuated anti-veil attitudes when the proportion of ex-Yugoslavs and Turks in their municipalities was high rather than low ( $b = -0.04$ ,  $SE = 1.66$ ,  $p = .98$ ).

<sup>4</sup> The preliminary analyses were also carried out including urbanization in interaction terms. While the main findings remained significant, neither of the added interaction terms reached significance.

<sup>5</sup> After preliminary analyses revealed no significant covariance between intercept and slope, it was set to 0.

<sup>6</sup> Urbanization yielded a marginal effect on the conformity-anti-veil attitudes slope.

Individuals low in conformity ( $M - 1 SD$ ), in turn, expressed more positive attitudes toward the veil when the proportion of Ex-Yugoslavs and Turks was high compared to low ( $b = -5.50$ ,  $SE = 1.43$ ,  $p < .001$ ), thereby confirming our assumptions (H4b).<sup>7</sup>

## Discussion

The present research across Swiss municipalities contributes to uncovering how individual- and community-level conservative ideologies and minority proportion (here measured with the proportion of ex-Yugoslavs and Turks in a municipality) jointly influence host society members' views on the Muslim veil as an obstacle to naturalization. While security was the facet of conservative ideologies most strongly related to anti-veil attitudes, tradition was marginally related to anti-veil attitudes. Conformity was also linked to anti-veil attitudes, but mainly in contexts with a high minority proportion. Similarly, community-level conservative climate increased anti-veil attitudes in contexts with a high minority proportion. Our findings confirmed that a high minority proportion polarized attitudes among individuals and communities: Anti-veil attitudes increased in conservative communities when minority proportion was high rather than low, whereas in such contexts, attitudes were more tolerant among nonconformist individuals and in progressive communities.

Our findings support previous research suggesting that due to a frequent association between Muslims and terrorism in the media and in public discourse, security concerns effectively spur anti-veil attitudes (Saroglou et al., 2009; van der Noll, 2013). Tradition and conformity may have triggered anti-veil attitudes because the veil elicited concern that Muslims undermine these values. On the contrary, our findings did not suggest that tradition elicited feelings of sympathy for a group struggling to uphold their own traditions (see Saroglou et al., 2009). Our findings are likely to be due to our measure tapping opposition to naturalization. Because naturalization implies granting ingroup membership status, individuals valuing tradition and conformity, in particular, may expect that naturalization candidates strictly comply with ingroup norms.

Unexpectedly, only the link between conformity and anti-veil attitudes was shaped by the minority proportion in a municipality. Moreover, highly conformist individuals did not express increased anti-veil attitudes when living in contexts with a high rather than low minority proportion. We can speculate on these findings in several ways. An increased salience of the presence of immigrant minorities

in experimental settings may be more susceptible to triggering exclusionary attitudes, while long-term exposure to ethnic and immigrant minorities in natural environments is likely to entail familiarization, attenuating an increase in anti-veil attitudes in conservative individuals. Particularly for individuals valuing conformity to social norms, living in culturally diverse environments may paradoxically buffer rather than enhance exclusionary attitudes (Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007). Indeed, where the veil becomes a common feature of every-day life, conformists may not be more opposed to the veil than in environments where the veil is uncommon. Moreover, while conservative individuals (i.e., right-wing authoritarians) are likely to avoid intergroup contact, they are also the ones most benefiting from the prejudice-attenuating effect of contact *once* it has been established (Asbrock, Christ, Duckitt, & Sibley, 2012). Further research is needed to clarify how the various facets of conservative ideologies relate to exclusionary attitudes in culturally diverse societies.

It is worth shifting the lens from contexts with a high proportion of ethnic and immigrant minorities to contexts offering no or limited interaction opportunities: We found that where interaction opportunities were sparse, the veil was widely perceived as an obstacle to naturalization, affecting first and foremost low conformists and municipalities with progressive climates. These findings indicate that where familiarization and direct intergroup encounters are reduced, the larger political and public debate may gain importance as a central source of information (Schlueter & Davidov, 2013; Wagner et al., 2008). Indeed, in Switzerland, the public and political debate portraying Muslims as conflicting with liberal and democratic values is likely to foster exclusionary attitudes (Fetzer & Soper, 2013). It is unsurprising that right-wing populist parties have blamed Muslims for undermining these values to address voters across the ideological spectrum and mobilize individuals generally least likely to adopt exclusionary stances (Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007; Verkuyten, 2013). Our study suggests that not only *individuals*, but also *communities* can be brought to adopt exclusionary stances when no opportunities are available to revise the threatening images suggested by media and political campaigns.

Some limitations of our research need to be addressed. Our findings are based on correlational data, impeding firm causal claims. While theory predicts that more abstract motivational constructs (e.g., ideologies) generally precede attitudes toward concrete objects (e.g., Duckitt & Sibley, 2010), further research is needed to test these causal assumptions. Moreover, our data does not allow accounting for residential selection (Hopkins, 2010). Personal ideologies, among other determinants, may lead individuals to

<sup>7</sup> To ensure the robustness of our findings, additional analyses were conducted including structural and sociocultural context variables potentially impacting immigration attitudes (see Sarasin et al., 2012). While attitudes towards the veil were more positive in German-speaking than in French-speaking municipalities and in municipalities characterized by a low compared to high unemployment rate, other municipality-level control variables (e.g., economic inequality, population size) had no effect. Importantly, predicted result patterns were unaltered. Moreover, findings remained significant when carried out on a reduced sample including a minimal number of individuals per municipality (e.g., min. 7 individuals/municipality,  $N = 889$ , in  $N = 92$  municipalities). Finally, results were not affected when municipality outliers in proportion of ex-Yugoslavs and Turks (two municipalities) or conservative climates (one municipality) were replaced by the cutoff value ( $M \pm 3 SD$ ).

select certain environments, which may bias interpretations of the impact of these environments. Further, it has been argued that it is a high immigrant proportion *together* with realized contacts that reduces prejudice by lowering threat (Wagner et al., 2008). Because our dataset did not include measures of actual intergroup contact, we were unable to demonstrate a link between a high minority proportion and realized contact. Thus, we cannot conclude whether the interplay between minority proportion and conservative ideologies was due to conservative ideologies hampering engagement in intergroup contact, reducing the effectiveness of intergroup contact, or even triggering negative intergroup contact experiences.

Finally, opposition toward the naturalization of veiled Muslims tapped anti-veil attitudes. Wearing the veil has been associated with a refusal to assimilate to Western norms and customs, most apprehended by individuals endorsing conservative ideologies (i.e., right-wing authoritarians; Thomsen et al., 2008), but also by individuals with antireligious stances (Saroglou et al., 2009). While our findings suggest that such assimilationist concerns also underlie opposition to the naturalization of veiled Muslims, opposition on these grounds may not necessarily coincide with a general dislike of Muslims (e.g., van der Noll, 2013). Yet, the context in which our study was conducted nevertheless speaks for a marked overlap. Unlike Belgium or France, many Swiss cantons have not adopted strict secular policies and religious symbols remain a common feature of public space (e.g., the crucifix in public schools). Objecting to the naturalization of Muslims based on a display of their religious membership is thus likely to reflect discriminatory and exclusionary stances (see Fetzer & Soper, 2012). This further highlights that justifications of exclusion based on religious symbols need to be considered in the context in which they are expressed. Future studies would do well taking into account local *and* larger scale contexts, such as national-level secularism or immigration policies.

Naturalization symbolically and legally includes immigrants into the national ingroup. Naturalized immigrants develop a greater sense of belonging to the nation and stronger national identification, which in turn improves educational outcomes, economic prospects as well as intergroup relations more generally (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2012). Our study showed that the *interplay* between individual- and community-level ideologies and minority proportion needs to be studied to understand opposition to naturalization of discriminated groups such as Muslims.

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