

*Political Underrepresentation and Domestic Terrorism: The Deficiency of  
Minority Descriptive Representation as a Causal Factor of Violent  
Radicalization in Western European Democracies*

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## **Abstract**

Electoral systems are vital in controlling the levels of minority descriptive representation in a government because each system contains characteristics that make it easier or more difficult for a member of a minority group to be elected to office. Because of this power, I focus on the role of electoral systems in Western European democracies as a possible, causal factor of domestic terrorism by way of their effect on the level of a country's minority descriptive representation, and therefore, levels of minority inclusion. To test my hypotheses, I use both quantitative and qualitative data in linear regression models, and a comparative case study of France and Denmark. The results of the data analysis indicate that countries that employ more exclusive electoral systems experience significantly higher rates of domestic terrorism than countries that employ more inclusive electoral systems. The findings of this study present a correlation between the descriptive underrepresentation of minority groups in Western European democracies and the corresponding levels of domestic terrorism experienced by these countries.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

On 7 January 2015, two Islamist gunmen forced their way into the Paris headquarters of *Charlie Hebdo* and opened fire, killing twelve. The shooters were later identified as French Muslims of Algerian descent. Over recent years, attacks similar to the ones committed at the offices of *Charlie Hebdo* have occurred throughout Western Europe. Democratic nations experiencing such violence has become a serious concern for policy makers in the European Union. The perpetrators of the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks were French citizens. They were born and educated in France. They didn't recently immigrate, and they didn't import terrorism from a foreign land where they were raised. They were radicalized at home, in France.<sup>1</sup> There are several causal factors as to why individuals commit these violent acts against their home countries including educational opportunities, unemployment, geographical region, personal grievances and alienation from one's society. Conventional wisdom suggests that the feeling of alienation creates an environment where it is more likely for an individual to turn towards violent extremism. However, how best to combat these feelings of isolation among European minority groups remains unclear.

In this thesis, I seek to explain the role of political representation in preventing or exacerbating minority violence. In an example of a large minority group in France, Muslims fill none of the 577 deputy posts in the National Assembly, and as a large minority group in Germany, only two people of Turkish descent are present among the

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<sup>1</sup> M.G. Oprea, *How France Grew Its Own Terrorists*, (Austin: The Federalist, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> Mirjam Dittrich, *Muslims in Europe: addressing the challenges of radicalization*, EPC

603 members of the German parliament.<sup>2</sup> Given these examples, it is fairly easy to assume that minority groups in these Western European states are extremely underrepresented.

Democracies are based upon the idea that the elected officials of a state should adequately represent the population that they govern. Despite this general notion, political scientists have continuously noted the fact that minority groups have been, and continue to be, vastly underrepresented in Western democracies. Are electoral systems the cause of the vast underrepresentation of minority groups in Western Europe, and therefore does this level of underrepresentation affect the level of domestic terrorism in those countries?

European Union integration policies of minority and immigrant groups are crucial in preventing radical extremism in Europe. The term integration is defined as “wanting to take part in the society in which you live. But it also means taking part.”<sup>3</sup> One of the essential factors of successful EU integration is participation in a member state’s democratic process and political decision-making.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, this participation and representation of minority groups is more difficult in some EU member states than others. For example, “ethnic groups are not recognized in French law, under which all are considered equal, so such a ‘positive discrimination’ policy would be difficult to implement; some policy makers in France and elsewhere in the EU also contend that such

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<sup>2</sup> Mirjam Dittrich, *Muslims in Europe: addressing the challenges of radicalization*, EPC Working Paper 23 (Brussels: European Policy Center, 2006), p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Gallis, Kristin Archick, Francis Miko, Steven Woehrel, *Muslims in Europe: Integration Policies in Selected Countries*, (Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2005), p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Gallis et al., *Muslims in Europe*, p. 6.

a policy could lead to further segregation of immigrants or ethnic minorities rather than less.”<sup>5</sup>

If integration policies fail, there can be serious implications for national security. In many works of political science, isolation or alienation has been noted as a core, driving factor of radicalization. The process of radicalization frequently begins by individuals feeling frustrated with their lives, international events or politics. They are searching for an identity and a cause, and they often find a solution in violent extremism. This prospect of being part of a group and feeling important is a major contributing factor in the progression toward radicalization.<sup>6</sup> If a minority group is underrepresented at the political level, it sends a message of exclusion to the group. As a consequence, it creates a situation of alienation that in turn can be a strong motivating factor for an extremist. If an individual feels as if they do not belong or are not welcomed in their society, they will search for other ways to feel included. Though alienation is not the sole, triggering factor of radicalization, it can play a large role. The solution to this issue lies in integration policies, especially political representation. If minority groups feel as if they have a voice in their society’s political process, the feeling of alienation in society lessens.

Why do we continuously see minority groups underrepresented in democracies? There exist several, different types of democracies with different electoral laws and systems as well as diverse types and sizes of minority communities within their populations. As is evident in just the last decade, a great number of democracies have experienced some category of violence perpetrated by minority citizens of that country.

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<sup>5</sup> Gallis et al., *Muslims in Europe*, p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Tomas Precht, *Home grown terrorism and Islamist radicalization in Europe*, (Copenhagen: Danish Ministry of Justice, 2007), p. 35-36.

Little research has been done on this topic to date, but I intend to explore the major types of political systems of democracies in an attempt to determine whether or not a particular form of democracy, whether its system be more inclusive or more exclusive to minority groups, impacts the level of domestic terrorism in that country. Therefore, the question my thesis seeks to answer is whether the political characteristics of a democracy increase the likelihood that it will experience domestic terrorism.

While I intend to link the electoral systems to the level of terrorism in Western European democracies, I note that individuals rarely resort to terrorism initially, but also participate in other crime and become delinquents before they turn to terrorism. "About 60 to 70 percent of all inmates in the country's prison system are Muslim, according to Muslim leaders, sociologists and researchers, though Muslims make up only about 12 percent of the country's population... 'The high percentage of Muslims in prisons is a direct consequence of the failure of the integration of minorities in France,'" said Moussa Khedimallah, a sociologist who has spent several years conducting research on Muslims in the French penal system."<sup>7</sup> In Britain, 11% of prisoners are Muslim while Muslims make up approximately 3% of the total population, according to the Justice Ministry. Research by the Open Society Institute, an advocacy organization, shows that 20% of adult prisoners and 26% of all juvenile offenders are Muslim in the Netherlands, and Muslims comprise about 5.5% of the country's population. In Belgium, Muslims from Morocco and Turkey make up at least 16% of the prison population, compared with 2% of the general populace, the research found.<sup>8</sup> The causal factors leading to the high

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<sup>7</sup> Molly Moor, *In France, Prisons Filled With Muslims*, (Washington D.C.: The Washington Post, 2008).

<sup>8</sup> Moor, *In France, Prisons Filled With Muslims*.



incarceration rates of Western European Muslims, including integration failures as suggested by Moussa Khedimallah, are similar if not the same factors that can eventually lead certain individuals to committing acts of terrorism. France, for example, is an assimilationist society, expecting immigrants to give up their original culture and language in order to more closely embody what it means to be “truly French”. In this type of society, it is virtually impossible for a minority group, such as French Muslims, to form a political party that is viewed as legitimate by the whole of French society and participate in French politics. The political integration of minority groups like Muslims in France has thus far been a failure, creating an environment of exclusion that often leads to violence on the part of minorities and, as this study suggests, terrorism. Although crime on the part of underrepresented minorities exists, this study focuses on the link between underrepresentation and terrorism. All countries experience crime, but the level and frequency of terrorism being experienced by Western Europe is a relatively new phenomenon with devastating consequences and therefore, a cause for great concern.

Minority representation in the political sphere is significant. In order to achieve this, two notions of representation have been developed, substantive representation and descriptive representation. Substantive representation describes the extent to which a governing actor advocates for the interests of a certain social group, without regard to shared characteristics.<sup>9</sup> For instance, a white, male politician may be able to represent the

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<sup>9</sup> Sophia J. Wallace, *Representing Latinos: Examining Descriptive and Substantive Representation in Congress*, (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2014), p. 918.

interests of a minority group, but despite this argument, the inherent lack of diversity still conveys a message of exclusion.<sup>10</sup>

Descriptive representation, is defined as the idea that elected representatives in democracies should not only represent the preferences of their voters, but should also embody their descriptive characteristics that are politically relevant, one of these characteristics being ethnicity. According to this definition, an elected body should resemble a distinctive section of the voters they are representing by their external characteristics. There are four main arguments for the importance of minority descriptive representation. First, minority descriptive representation carries symbolic implications. The legitimacy of a nation's political parties, as well as its political system as whole, is at risk when its minority groups are underrepresented. This underrepresentation calls in the question of whether a state is truly, by definition, a democracy if its representatives do not reflect the diversity of its population.<sup>11</sup> Second, without a certain level of diversity present in legislatures, a message of exclusion is automatically conveyed to minority groups, which in turn, can elevate the political alienation of those groups.<sup>12</sup> Third, the election of a politician belonging to a minority group can be viewed as a type of acceptance of that minority by the majority population of the country. It can also gauge the level of the socio-cultural and economic integration of the minority group.<sup>13</sup> Fourth, there can be serious consequences attached to the lack of statistical minority

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<sup>10</sup> Bloemraad, *Accessing the Corridors of Power*, p. 655.

<sup>11</sup> Irene Bloemraad and Karen Schönwälder, *Immigrant and Ethnic Minority Representation in Europe: Conceptual Challenges and Theoretical Approaches*, (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 565.

<sup>12</sup> Irene Bloemraad, *Accessing the Corridors of Power: Puzzles and Pathways to Understanding Minority Representation*, (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 654.

<sup>13</sup> Bloemraad, *Accessing the Corridors of Power*, p. 654.

representation in government. When elected, those representative members are able to work for their group by advocating specific policies, influencing the allocation of public resources and serving a role as the spokesperson for the concerns of their minority group. Without this representation, minority groups are at an automatic disadvantage and may also feel excluded from the whole of society.

When certain individuals feel as if they have no voice or say in the policy decisions of their government or feel they are being purposely excluded from the political process, they may reject the political system, completely. Unfortunately, this harsh rejection is sometimes expressed through violence, whether that results in violent protests, or the possibility of acts of terrorism against the seemingly oppressive and barring government system.

Didier Ruedin notes that only in nations where minority communities are properly included can conflict be avoided. He continues by saying that in areas where particular groups are being excluded, there will remain the potential for future conflict.<sup>14</sup> In addition to this theory, Rafaela Dancygier contends that increases in minority descriptive representation have been shown to lead to a lower incidence of anti-state violence on the part of minorities.<sup>15</sup>

The feeling of alienation in a person's society is a factor that continuously surfaces in discussions on terrorist radicalization.<sup>16</sup> Studies have been done linking minority group representation in government and the level of alienation felt by these

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<sup>14</sup> Didier Ruedin, *Ethnic Group Representation in a Cross-National Comparison*, (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 336.

<sup>15</sup> Rafaela M. Dancygier, *Electoral Rules or Electoral Leverage? Explaining Muslim Representation in England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 229.

<sup>16</sup> See the following: Dittrich, *Muslims in Europe*, Pretcht, *Home grown terrorism and Islamist radicalization in Europe* and Gallis et al., *Muslims in Europe*.

groups. This is not to say that low or non-representation of minority groups at the political level creates radical extremists from these groups, but it could play a role as one of the causal factors of the sense of alienation from the rest of the population. This feeling of being alienated, in turn, can be an influential element leading to acts of violence in a country.

Government and electoral institutions play a key role in the inclusion of a country's minority populations. If problems of minority underrepresentation are not addressed, feelings of alienation among members of Western Europe's minority groups will increase, creating situations in which domestic radicalization will become more likely. As evidenced by domestic terror attacks such as *Charlie Hebdo* (2015) in France, domestic radicalization is a critical issue that needs to be addressed by many governments of Western Europe. In this thesis, I argue that electoral institutions impact the likelihood of domestic terrorist attacks in a state. I theorize that a country's level of descriptive representation are important for Europe's minority groups when thinking of the level of communication, circumstances of uncrystallized interests, social context and de facto legitimacy. Higher levels of minority descriptive representation in government should decrease the likelihood of domestic terrorism by creating a sense of unity between a country's minorities and majority group. When members of a minority groups feel included in the society as a whole, feelings of alienation are reduced and minorities are less likely to turn toward violent extremism for a sense of belonging. Electoral systems are vital in controlling the levels of minority descriptive representation in a government because each system contains characteristics that make it easier or more difficult for a member of a minority group to be elected to office. Because of this power, I focus on the

role of electoral systems as a possible, causal factor of domestic terrorism by way of their effect on the level of a country's minority descriptive representation, and therefore, levels of minority inclusion.

In the following chapter of this thesis, I give a brief overview of the previous research on this topic and how it relates to this study. I draw upon research on the causal factors of radical extremism as well as examinations on the importance of descriptive representation in government. Continuing, I present a theory on the correlation between a state's type of electoral system and its level of minority descriptive representation and outline the hypotheses. Next, I present methods of analysis in addition to an explanation of the variables I use to test the hypotheses. I then provide the results of the data analysis and offer a discussion on the findings. Finally, I present a case study comparing the two countries of France and Denmark in order to further explore the results of the analysis, and I conclude with a discussion of the findings of this research and their possible implications.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

Previous research suggests that there exist a variety of factors that can lead to the radicalization of a member of a minority group to commit acts of terrorism. These factors include lack of integration or social exclusion, government policy and socio-economic hardship. It must be noted that none of these factors will inevitably lead an individual to turn toward radicalization, but in combination with one another and in addition to personal experiences or grievances, these elements create an environment where the process of radicalization is more likely to occur.

The socio-economic status of minorities is present in most works analyzing the radicalization process. Many members of minority communities in Europe work as laborers, and the existence of minorities in the middle and upper classes is quite rare. For example, in Belgium, the rate of unemployment for “foreign born” individuals is twice as high as the rate for native Belgians. Political scientist, Mirjam Dittrich contends that a weak socio-economic situation makes it difficult for minorities to exercise influence in the public sphere.<sup>17</sup> Syed Mansoob Murshed and Sara Pavan draw upon a collective action problem to describe how the socio-economic status of minority groups may lead to radicalization. In poor, culturally homogenous communities that suffer from high unemployment, group grievances transform into individual grievances. Individuals act upon these grievances. It is not the poverty of the one person that drives individual membership of a radical group, but the disadvantage faced by the group as a whole. These identity economics show the type of intragroup dynamics that lead to increasingly

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<sup>17</sup> Dittrich, *Muslims in Europe* p. 22.

extensive, radicalized collective action.<sup>18</sup> They continue in stating, “Individual utility functions associated with terrorism or radical acts are altruistic and based on the social positioning of the group and not the individual; these individuals are motivated by the plight of their impoverished and oppressed brethren. There is not only identification with a cause...but an imperative to participate in furthering that cause.”<sup>19</sup> Though a strong motivator of radicalization, not all minority group members who live in poverty become terrorists. Other research suggests that the root cause for the high rates of minority group unemployment is the level of education. Minority groups, more than any others, have lower completion rates of secondary schools, which in turn lead to the significantly higher unemployment rates among individuals of minority groups.<sup>20</sup> The reasoning behind the low levels of minority education stem from a variety of issues including low income as well as the poor schooling in minority dominated areas. Previous research has been conducted on the specific issue of minority education, but this issue is not included in the scope of this thesis.

A second factor that has the potential to lead minorities to radicalization is the influence of the media and public discourse. One-third of Europeans admit to being racist, and a majority believes that minority groups abuse their countries’ social benefits systems. A majority is also convinced that the presence of minority groups increases unemployment.<sup>21</sup> This notion results in many Europeans’ belief that the minority presence in their countries is a source of insecurity. For example, “The French media is

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<sup>18</sup> Syed Mansoob Murshed and Sara Pavan, *Identity and Islamic Radicalization in Western Europe*, Research Working Paper 16 (Brighton: MICROCON, 2009), p. 12-13.

<sup>19</sup> Murshed et al., *Identity and Islamic Radicalization*, p. 15.

<sup>20</sup> Dittrich, *Muslims in Europe*, p. 26.

<sup>21</sup> Dittrich, *Muslims in Europe*, p. 17.

filled with plaintive stories that the French ‘identity’ is being diluted by immigrants, and a strong consensus remains that the Republic’s central ideals must be preserved.”<sup>22</sup> In Britain 69% of persons polled feel that the rest of society does not regard the British, Muslim minority as an integral part of life in the country.<sup>23</sup> The availability of these opinions is widespread through media outlets, creating a general distaste for minority groups. This feeling of insecurity is exacerbated when a member of a minority group commits an act of violence. Reports in the media emphasizing the ethnicity of the perpetrator create a backlash from the majority population to that minority group as a whole. Increased media attention, and attention from police forces after a terrorist attack, fuel a growing sense of insecurity among minorities. When minorities feel insecure in their society or blamed for the actions of a single individual, they tend to cling to their communities and hold a negative view of the people placing blame upon their group, creating an atmosphere suitable for radicalization.

Thirdly, government policy of European countries has the potential to create grievances among minority groups that could later become grievances and part of the radicalization process of certain individuals. In recent years, the French government has refused to grant special privileges in public institutions, which has led to clashes with a small percentage of the Muslim population. That specific minority group has called for the allowance of a headscarf to be worn by Muslim girls in public schools and that only female doctors treat Muslim girls in public hospitals.<sup>24</sup> Mirjam Dittrich has found that “political statements by leading political figures have contributed to bringing xenophobic,

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<sup>22</sup> Gallis et al., *Muslims in Europe*, p. 31.

<sup>23</sup> Dittrich, *Muslims in Europe*, p. 19.

<sup>24</sup> Gallis et al., *Muslims in Europe*, p. 23.



racist and Islamophobic views into mainstream politics.”<sup>25</sup> Some may argue that it is reasonable for the host society to expect their non-native population to assimilate to the their way of life. Though some level of assimilation is reasonable and even necessary, at some point or another, a line must be drawn to signify how much assimilation is required and how much is too much. France emphasizes their belief in *laïcité*, the separation of church in state, but has created laws that target the Muslim faith. Wearing any type of “religious symbol” is prohibited in public schools, but most view this law as a direct attack on the hijab, the head covering worn by Muslim women. Learning the language of the host country is a necessary, assimilationist policy, but countries like France have created overbearing assimilationist policies that have only generated more conflict and a larger gap between the native and the non-native population of the country.

Another form of exclusion that has been touched upon in combination with other alienation factors is the presence of minorities in government. In Western European democracies, minority groups are severely underrepresented. Mirjam Dittrich notes a few examples in the article, *Muslims in Europe: addressing the challenges of radicalization*. “Muslim politicians active in national political life are a rarity throughout the EU. According to a report by the German *Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung*, there are less than 30 elected members of national parliaments representing the 15 million Muslims living in Europe. The Netherlands has seven Muslim MPs (with a Muslim population of 800,000) and the UK has six Muslims in the House of Lords and four in the House of Commons. France prides itself as being a country of *égalité* (equality), but none of the 555 (now 577) deputies in the National Assembly are Muslim. Germany, with a

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<sup>25</sup> Dittrich, *Muslims in Europe* p. 27.

population of 82 million, is home to 3.5 million Muslims, but there are only two people of Turkish descent among the 603 members of the German parliament.”<sup>26</sup> Dittrich notes the cause of this underrepresentation to be weak socio-economic situations, but does not go into further detail on the link between the two. Dittrich’s article continues in saying, “According to some observers, this is partly because the established political groups are fearful of a backlash from voters if Muslims are appointed to political office and promoted to leadership positions, even in youth groups.”<sup>27</sup> I intend to add to this observation by looking at different electoral systems in Western Europe to see if there are characteristics of certain systems that make it easier or more difficult for minorities to be elected. This level of integration is extremely important in combatting radical extremism as it has been noted that “Increases in minority descriptive representation have been shown to lead to more positive attitudes toward minority groups, to a lower incidence of antistate violence on the part of minorities, and to better substantive representation of minority interests.”<sup>28</sup>

The case for the importance of descriptive representation arises when the interests of a group cannot be sufficiently represented by individuals who are not a part of the group themselves. Political scientist Jane Mansbridge identifies at least two circumstances where the previous statement is true: 1) “when representatives who are members of a group tend to respond to group-relevant issues with greater concern than non-members, and 2) when representatives who themselves are members of a group can communicate better among themselves, with other representatives and with constituents

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<sup>26</sup> Dittrich, *Muslims in Europe* p. 22.

<sup>27</sup> Dittrich, *Muslims in Europe* p. 22.

<sup>28</sup> Dancygier, *Electoral Rules or Electoral Leverage?*, p. 229.

from that group.”<sup>29</sup> Descriptive representatives also play an influential role in symbolic terms by “making the statement to the entire citizenry, including its other representatives, that members of that group are capable of ruling.”<sup>30</sup> The personal experiences of representatives also play a crucial role. These experiences make them attentive to the needs of constituents who are similar to them and drive them to act on those needs. In Mansbridge’s article, *Quota Problems: Combatting the Dangers of Essentialism*, she explains that, “Descriptive representatives have, moreover, several advantages in communicating with other legislators. In listening, they can respond flexibly, drawing not just from what they have heard from their constituents, but also from what they know from their own lives.”<sup>31</sup> She continues by saying, “Even when the descriptive legislator is silent, his or her mere physical presence reminds the other legislators of the perspectives and interests of the group of which he or she is a descriptive member.”<sup>32</sup> Finally, descriptive representation aids in ameliorating the mistrust that potentially obstructs communication between the representatives and their constituents. “Descriptive representation thus has positive effects on outcomes important to a group through at least two mechanisms of investing more heavily through greater concern and communicating interests more thoroughly.”<sup>33</sup>

In review of previous research on the subject of minority representation in government, it has been noted that in many Western European democracies, minorities are significantly underrepresented. When considering systems of proportional

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<sup>29</sup> Jane Mansbridge, *Quota Problems: Combatting the Dangers of Essentialism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 624.

<sup>30</sup> Mansbridge, *Quota Problems*, p. 625.

<sup>31</sup> Mansbridge, *Quota Problems*, p. 626.

<sup>32</sup> Mansbridge, *Quota Problems*, p. 626.

<sup>33</sup> Mansbridge, *Quota Problems*, p. 627.

representation (PR), the political parties play the most crucial role. In systems of proportional representation, whether that is closed list, open list or semi-open list, competition among parties is normally, relatively strong. The party leadership itself wields a significant amount of power over who is put on the list by controlling appointment procedures. In terms of candidate procedure, party leadership priorities are based upon the composition of party factions in parliament. Whether or not a minority group member will be placed on the list is determined by the mainstream parties' decisions to recruit minority representatives. These decisions are made based on different types of concerns. Allotting even a single seat to any specific group is a costly act for the party; it is also a significant indicator of the party's commitment to the group. From the viewpoint of maximizing the number of votes, including minority representatives on party lists makes sense when it holds the promise of vote gain.<sup>34</sup> In order for a member of a minority group to be elected, a party must make the decision to place them on a list. Karen Bird states that the geographic location and concentration of a minority group are also important. The chance of a traditional party choosing a minority candidate is greatest where the party considers that such a candidate can generate new voter support where the party has not performed well in passed elections. Even so, parties will display caution in order to avoid being identified solely with the interests of minority groups. In order to win an election, they need to acquire votes not just from the minority communities, but

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<sup>34</sup> Oleh Protsyk, *Recruitment and Representation of Ethnic Minorities under Proportional Representation: Evidence from Bulgaria*, (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2012), p. 320.

also from the rest of the population.<sup>35</sup> That being said, it is primarily up to a state's political parties whether or not a minority group member will even have the chance at being elected. The preferential characteristics of the proportional representation system are key in determining whether or not minority groups are adequately represented.

Two additional types of electoral systems that can be employed within PR systems are single-member party districts (SMD) and multi-member party districts (MMD). These two systems are often compared when determining whether one form of electoral process or the other is more beneficial for minority groups. Rafaela Dancygier suggests that balancing of the ticket is not an option in the single-member system when only one seat is up for grabs in a particular election. In these circumstances, competition for a place on the ticket may be stronger, and strategic considerations about what type of candidate will most likely win, come to the forefront. In these situations, parties are more likely to run candidates belonging to dominant majority groups, not minorities.<sup>36</sup>

Most theoretical accounts assume that multi-member elections should lead to higher shares of ethnic minority representatives. This assumption is based on the facts that multi-member elections allow party leaders to balance the slate and many parties do so thinking that a balanced ticket will be attractive to new voting blocs. Statistically speaking, the more seats there are in play, the more likely it is that someone from a minority group will be elected, therefore minorities are likely to enter multi-member

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<sup>35</sup> Karen Bird, *The Political Representation of Women and Ethnic Minorities in Established Democracies*, Working Paper (Aalborg East: Academy for Migration Studies in Denmark, 2004), p. 17-18.

<sup>36</sup> Dancygier, *Electoral Rules or Electoral Leverage?*, p. 23.

district races. Many political scientists find the multi-member electoral system to be beneficial for the election of underrepresented groups.<sup>37</sup>

The failure of integration, and the social exclusion from which it stems, is a fundamental factor in what leads individuals to terrorism. Integration failures and feelings of isolation originate from a variety of circumstances in a society. The turn toward radicalization may be reinforced by relative deprivation factors including alienation, social dissatisfaction, experiencing discrimination and social exclusion.<sup>38</sup> Media plays a large role in exacerbating the feeling of social exclusion. The media blames immigrants and minority groups for national issues, such as unemployment rates. Many minorities have also experienced personal discrimination in their life, adding to the increased polarization between minority groups and the general population. As previously mentioned, an isolated area containing only one ethnic group can serve as an ideological sanctuary for breeding terrorists. Some political scientists argue, “the ethnic concentration in certain areas is enhancing social exclusion and creating parallel societies where minorities are not part of the major values in the society.”<sup>39</sup> After there are attacks in a country, this feeling of exclusion is exacerbated. Minorities feel that they are placed under a cloud of suspicion and “increased attention from the media and the police fuel a growing sense of insecurity among minorities.”<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Dancygier, *Electoral Rules or Electoral Leverage?*, p. 231-240.

<sup>38</sup> Mansoob et al., *Identity and Islamic Radicalization*, p. 43.

<sup>39</sup> Mansoob et al., *Identity and Islamic Radicalization*, p. 45.

<sup>40</sup> Dittrich, *Muslims in Europe* p. 27.

### **Chapter 3: Theory**

The terrorist attacks in Madrid in March of 2004 followed by the London attacks in July of 2005, brought to light that terrorism was no longer an imported, overseas occurrence, but instead was a homegrown issue for Europe. On 7 January 2015, two Islamist gunmen forced their way into the Paris headquarters of *Charlie Hebdo* and opened fire, killing twelve people. In November of the same year, the city of Paris was targeted again by a series of terrorist attacks that killed 130 people and injured 368 more. Over recent years, attacks such as these, have occurred throughout Western Europe. Such violence being experienced by democratic nations has caused serious concern for EU policy makers. “The threat level and the intensity of the desire to perpetrate mass-casualty attacks within Europe is not diminishing...It is also clear that the radicalization processes are becoming more challenging to address as it is simply not just a linear progression, a complex combination of push-pull factors or that people move in and out of roles and functions.”<sup>41</sup>

The process of violent radicalization is one full of complexities with no single source or mechanism that can be transferred from one case of radicalization to another. Instead, “it is the complex interplay between these factors being played out simultaneously across the global and local levels and across different geographic contexts down to the individual level. This is the very core as to why finding decisive factors has proven so difficult, if not almost futile. It is instead the combination of different factors that facilitate the journey towards radicalization.”<sup>42</sup> Some of these facilitating factors

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<sup>41</sup> Magnus Ranstorp, *Understanding Violent Radicalization: Terrorist and Jihadist Movements in Europe*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 2.

<sup>42</sup> Ranstorp, *Understanding Violent Radicalization*, p. 2-3.

include educational opportunities, unemployment, polarizing public rhetoric and stigmatism, geographical region, personal grievances, identity crisis, political polarization and alienation from one's society. Conventional wisdom suggests that the feeling of alienation creates an environment where it is more likely for an individual to turn towards violent extremism. However, how best to combat this feeling of isolation among European minority groups remains unclear. I hypothesize that there exists a correlation between the level of descriptive, minority representation in Western European democracies and terrorism, likely as a result of the minority group alienation brought upon by their descriptive underrepresentation at the national, political level. The failure of minority groups being represented at the political level may exacerbate the radicalization process by contributing to the factors that facilitate radicalization. The absence of a minority group can intensify feelings of alienation of that group from the rest of society. Without feeling as if they are a part of their society, individuals of minority groups could suffer from an identity crisis where they feel as if they do not belong in their own society. This lack of identity can lead individuals to search elsewhere for a feeling of belonging, sometimes leading them to radical extremist groups. Underrepresentation can also lead members of a minority group to hold personal grievances because they feel as if they have no voice in their societies. It is often that individuals are acting upon their personal grievances when they begin the radicalization process.

In the Federalist Papers No. 35, Alexander Hamilton wrote, "It is said to be necessary, that all classes of citizens should have some of their own number in the representative body, in order that their feelings and interests may be the better understood



and attended to.” Instead of Western European democracies containing legislative bodies of increased descriptive representation, there has been a noticeable trend of representative exclusion of ethnic, minority groups. In an example of a large minority group in France, Muslims fill none of the 577 deputy posts in the National Assembly, and as a large minority group in Germany, only two people of Turkish descent are present among the 603 members of the German parliament.<sup>43</sup> Democracies are presumed to be based upon the idea that the elected officials of a state should adequately represent the population that they govern. Despite this general notion, political scientists have continuously noted the fact that minority groups have been, and continue to be, vastly underrepresented in Western democracies. The previously specified examples of minority underrepresentation in Europe support the words of essayist, Agnes Repplier, that state, “Democracy forever teases us with the contrast between its ideals and its realities, between its heroic possibilities and its sorry achievements.” High levels of minority underrepresentation call into question the legitimacy of a democracy. It is difficult, if not nearly impossible to firmly uphold the core values of a democratic society when 3.5-5 million people in a country are not politically represented, as in the case of Muslim citizens in France.<sup>44</sup>

### **The Argument for Descriptive Representation**

Increases in minority, descriptive representation have been shown to lead to more positive attitudes toward minority groups, to a lower incidence of anti-state violence on the part of minorities, and to better substantive representation of minority interests. I use the term *descriptive representation* to mean the state of political representation in which

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<sup>43</sup> Dittrich, *Muslims in Europe*, p. 22.

<sup>44</sup> Euro-Islam.info, *Islam in France*, (Euro-Islam: News and Analysis on Islam in Europe and North America, 2016).

the representatives are “individuals who in their own backgrounds mirror some of the more frequent experiences and outward manifestations of belonging to the group.”<sup>45</sup> It is important to note that description does not solely come from visible characteristics such as skin color, but also shared experiences between the representative and constituent.

Despite any particular qualifications of a representative, there are situations in which the interests and perspectives of an ethnic, minority group cannot be sufficiently represented by anyone other than another member of that group. “In at least two circumstances, the interests and perspectives of members of a group cannot be adequately represented by others: 1) when representatives who are members of a group tend to respond to group-relevant concern than nonmembers, and 2) when representatives who themselves are members of a group can communicate better among themselves, with other representatives and with constituents from that group.”<sup>46</sup> Professor and political scientist, Jane Mansbridge offers four contexts in which disadvantaged groups gain advantages as a result of descriptive representation.

### **Communication**

The communication between members of one group and members of another can be interfered with by means of historical circumstances between the two groups, especially if one group is historically dominant and the other, historically inferior. In these situations, shared experiences of a representative and their constituents enable vertical communication between the two. “Representatives and voters who share some version of a set of common experiences and the outward signs of having lived through

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<sup>45</sup> Jane Mansbridge, *Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent “Yes”*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), p. 628.

<sup>46</sup> Mansbridge, *Quota Problems*, p. 624.

those experiences can often read one another's signals relatively easily and engage in relatively accurate forms of shorthand communication. Representatives and voters who share membership in a subordinate group can also forge bonds of trust based specifically on the shared experience of subordination."<sup>47</sup> In listening, descriptive representatives "can respond flexibly, drawing not just from what they have heard from their constituents, but also from what they know from their own lives. In speaking, they can call up anecdotes from personal experience to describe how a piece of legislation may affect their group. They can speak vividly with facts and emotion drawn from their experience. They can speak with authenticity and be believed. They can also call on the relationships they have with other legislators for the empathy that the others might need to understand the descriptive representative's position. Even when the descriptive legislator is silent, his or her mere physical presence reminds the other legislators of the perspectives and interests of the group of which he or she is a descriptive member."<sup>48</sup> Depending upon the historical circumstances at play between two separate groups, more descriptive representation is required to bridge the gaps between groups.

### **Circumstances of Uncrystallized Interests**

When issues arise that have not been present on the political agenda and candidates have not publicly expressed their platforms on them, they are considered to be uncrystallized. In these situations, descriptive representation is important when issues emerge in which different ethnic groups have differing interests on the developing issue. "Then, as issues arise unpredictably, a voter can expect the representative to react more or less the way the voter would have done, on the basis of descriptive similarity...Here,

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<sup>47</sup>Mansbridge, *Should Blacks Represent Blacks*, p. 641.

<sup>48</sup> Mansbridge, *Quota Problems*, p. 626.

the important communication is not vertical, between representative and constituent, but horizontal, among deliberating legislators. In this horizontal communication, a descriptive representative can draw on elements of experiences shared with constituents to explore the uncharted ramifications of newly presented issues and also to speak on those issues with a voice carrying the authority of experience.”<sup>49</sup> Pamela Conover, Burton Craige Distinguished Professor of Political Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, observed that,

The way we think about social groups depends enormously on whether we are part of that group. Try as we might, the political sympathy that we feel for other groups is never quite the same as that which these groups feel for themselves or that which we feel for ourselves.<sup>50</sup>

This observation explains how groups that are at a disadvantage may require descriptive representation in order to get uncrystallized interests represented with adequate strength.

### **Social Context**

In particular conditions, certain minority groups may suffer from a form of “second-class citizenship” in which historical circumstances have framed a certain group as incapable of governing. Sometimes the descriptive characteristics of a group carry with them a historical meaning that states, “persons with these characteristics do not rule,” possibly leading to “persons with these characteristics are not able to (fit to) rule.”<sup>51</sup> These circumstances convey a message of exclusion and isolation to minority groups by creating a political setting in which a group’s characteristics, rather than their ability or qualifications, determine their ability to govern. This argument of descriptive representation is unlike the previous two in that it is not a case for a right, but for a social good. Simply stated, the argument is that if costs are not too high, every measure is

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<sup>49</sup> Mansbridge, *Should Blacks Represent Blacks*, p. 644.

<sup>50</sup> Mansbridge, *Should Blacks Represent Blacks*, p. 648.

<sup>51</sup> Mansbridge, *Should Blacks Represent Blacks*, p. 649.

beneficial that increases the degree to which the society by and large views almost all groups as equally qualified to rule.<sup>52</sup>

### **De Facto Legitimacy**

When members of a minority group see their fellow, group members implementing the responsibility of ruling with complete status in the legislative body, de facto legitimacy is enriched by making members of the historically underrepresented group feel as if they themselves were participants in the legislative discussions. The benefit of de facto legitimacy is somewhat stemmed from the previously discussed benefits. “Easier communication with one’s representative, awareness that one’s interests are being represented with sensitivity, and knowledge that certain features of one’s identity do not make one as less able to govern all contribute to making one feel more included in the polity. This feeling of inclusion in turn makes the polity democratically more legitimate in one’s eyes. Having had a voice in the making of a particular policy, even if that voice is through one’s representative and even when one’s views did not prevail, also makes that policy more legitimate in one’s eyes.”<sup>53</sup> As similarly stated in the social context discussion of descriptive representation, diversity in legislatures should always be promoted if the costs associated with that promotion are not too high.

When certain individuals feel purposely excluded from the political process, they may reject the political system, completely. Sometimes, this rejection is followed by acts of violence in the form of protests or even acts of terrorism against what is viewed by them as a repressive and discriminatory government. Previous research suggests that in

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<sup>52</sup> Mansbridge, *Should Blacks Represent Blacks*, p. 650.

<sup>53</sup> Mansbridge, *Should Blacks Represent Blacks*, p. 651.

areas where certain minority communities are being excluded, the potential for future conflict will persist.<sup>54</sup>

Democracies are generally seen as the most inclusive type of government regime, but as evidenced in the national political institutions of many Western European democracies, exclusion rather than inclusion seems to be the pattern. All of the Western European governments presented in this study practice some form of a proportional representation, electoral system. As Western Europe continues to become more diverse, the level of descriptive representation present in the Western European, political institutions is extremely relevant. An increase in ethnic diversity creates more views and opinions when uncrystallized interests come into play in political decision making. One example of an uncrystallized interest at the forefront of Western European politics is the issue of immigration. People who themselves are of an ethnic minority in a country and/or are the descendants of immigrants, are likely to hold differing views from those of a white, native European. Without the adequate descriptive representation of those minority groups, the groups' viewpoints and interests are generally absent when discussing the formation of political platforms on uncrystallized issues.

As previously explained, social context is another critical area of focus of the descriptive representation of Western European minority groups. How these groups are viewed by the majority of society matters in the argument for the groups' greater political representation. A European Union-wide survey in 1997 revealed that the issue of race is problematic for Europe. 33% of the individuals who were interviewed for this survey

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<sup>54</sup> Ruedin, *Ethnic Group Representation*, p. 336.

openly described themselves as “quite racist” or “very racist”.<sup>55</sup> Only one in three of those interviewed said they felt they were “not at all racist”. One in three declared themselves “a little racist” and one third openly expressed “quite” or “very racist” sentiments. A more in depth look at the country-by-country results shows that “nearly 9% of interviewees put themselves at the top of the racist scale saying they were “very racist”. Belgium led with a large 22%, openly stating they were “very racist”. France (16%) and Austria (14%) followed. The same three countries were at the forefront when the “quite racist” score is added to the “very racist”, giving a total of 55%, 48% and 42% respectively. The countries with the lowest number of declared “very racists” were Spain and Ireland (4% in each), Portugal (3%) and Luxembourg and Sweden (2% each).<sup>56</sup>

Given the above statements, a question surfaces concerning the explanations of why we continuously see minority groups underrepresented in Western European democracies. There exist several, different forms of democracy comprised of different electoral laws and systems as well as diverse types and sizes of minority communities within their populations. As is evident in just the last decade, a great number of democracies have experienced some category of violence perpetrated by minority citizens of that country. Little research has been done on this topic to date, but I intend to explore the major types of political systems of democracies in an attempt to determine whether or not a particular form of democracy, whether its system be more inclusive or more exclusive to minority groups, impacts the level of minority violence in that country.

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<sup>55</sup> Eurobarometer Opinion Poll no. 47.1, *Racism and Xenophobia in Europe*, (The Hague: European Year Against Racism Conference, 1997), p. 1.

<sup>56</sup> Eurobarometer, *Racism and Xenophobia*, p. 2.

Therefore, the question my thesis seeks to answer is whether the political characteristics of a democracy increase the likelihood that it will experience minority violence.

Numerous political scientists have argued that one of the many factors that can lead people to committing acts of violence, as well as radical extremism, is the feeling of alienation in a person's society.<sup>57</sup> Studies have linked minority group representation in government and the level of alienation felt by these groups. These connections are not to say that low or non-representation of minority groups at the political level creates radical extremists from these groups, but it could play a role as one of the causal factors of the sense of alienation from the rest of the population. This feeling of isolation, in turn, can be an influential element leading to acts of violence and/or terrorism in a country.

### **Electoral Systems**

I will compare types of democratic electoral systems to the level of home grown terrorism in the states that use each system. The different systems are listed as follows: a comparison of leftist parties and rightist parties in power in states with proportional representation, electoral systems, multi-member party districts and single-member party districts. I will provide a brief description of the characteristics of each system as well as use these characteristics to form hypotheses about each system's implication on homegrown terrorism.

Based on previous research on this subject matter and upon reasoning stated in the introductory portion of this thesis, we can assume that employing electoral systems that create difficulty for minority group members to be elected will experience more acts of homegrown terrorism. That being said, states that employ electoral systems that create a

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<sup>57</sup> See the following: Dittrich, *Muslims in Europe*, Pretcht, *Home grown terrorism and Islamist radicalization* and Gallis et al., *Muslims in Europe*.



situation in which there is a greater chance of a member of a minority group being elected will experience fewer acts of homegrown terrorism.

### **Proportional Representation**

The ability of ethnic minorities to win legislative seats is usually seen as a result of electoral systems and the size and geographic concentration of minority populations. The argument that proportional representation systems promote the representation of ethnic minorities has typically rested on the idea that PR systems support the emergence of ethnic parties. Proportional representation systems do this by lowering the electoral threshold necessary to gain representation, thereby increasing the number of parties and making smaller ethnic parties more viable.<sup>58</sup> Political parties in proportional representation systems exercise a large amount of power in that they are the sole decision makers in determining who is placed on the party list. Therefore, it is primarily the decision of a country's political parties whether or not a minority group member will even have the chance of being elected. The preferential characteristics of the proportional representation system are key in determining whether or not minority groups are adequately represented, and the priorities and decisions of political parties vary from each party and each state. All of the countries included in this study employ some form of a PR electoral system, and because the political parties of this system are so influential, I will focus on the political party in power in each.

In many right-wing political parties, minorities suffer from what political scientist, Karen Bird, labels as "imputed prejudice". This situation is when the selectorate

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<sup>58</sup> Robert G. Moser, *Electoral Systems and the Representation of Ethnic Minorities: Evidence from Russia*, (New York: Ph.D. Program in Political Science of the City University of New York, 2008), p. 274.

of a party argue that voters are not ready for the election of a minority. In addition, as long as minorities are absent from the selectorate, parties will continue to nominate primarily white males as political candidates. In some cases, like Britain, the Conservative Party has promised to establish ways for ethnic minorities to participate more in furthering their knowledge of Conservative politics. Though some action by right-wing parties seem as if they are attempting to reach out to minority groups, Bird argues that these attempts are merely symbolic and do not create concrete changes within the parties. Continuing, Bird finds that even when minorities are involved in right-wing parties, they still find it difficult to speak for the interests of their groups.<sup>59</sup>

*H1a: Having a right-leaning party in power will increase the likelihood of domestic terrorist attacks.*

In contrast to right-wing parties, Bird suggest that when left-wing parties reach out to minority groups, there will be concrete changes to the traditional platforms in favor of minority interests. Left-wing parties have historically been more open and minority-friendly than those on the right of the political spectrum. As a result, minority groups frequently display a consistent allegiance to particular parties. For example, African Americans in the U.S. have overwhelmingly voted for the Democratic Party, and a similar situation exists among black voters in Britain with the Labour Party. Because of these historical ties, the cohesive support of minorities for generally left-wing parties will endure even when said party does not succeed to advance the interests of the minority group.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Bird, *The Political Representation of Women and Ethnic Minorities*, p. 17-18.

<sup>60</sup> Bird, *The Political Representation of Women and Ethnic Minorities*, p. 17-18.

*H1b: Having a left-leaning party in power will decrease the likelihood of domestic terrorist attacks.*

### **Multi-Member Party Districts**

Unlike single member districts, MMDs have more than one seat up for grabs in any given election, an attractive characteristic for minority groups because the more seats that have to be filled in a given election, the greater chance a minority has of being elected. Political party leaders in MMD electoral systems may also be more willing to absorb potential losses associated with a minority candidate if that candidate is not the only one in the running, and by balancing the slate in this fashion, parties are able to draw in new voting blocs for support. By contrast, the winner-take-all nature of SMD elections hampers reaching out to minorities in this way. In these circumstances, calculated decisions about what type of candidate has a greater chance of winning take center stage.<sup>61</sup> As previously stated, minority group members are more likely to be slated major parties and therefore have a greater chance of being elected, which leads me to *hypothesis 2: countries with a greater proportion of seats coming from multi-member districts are less likely to experience domestic terrorism*

### **Single-Member Party Districts**

Unlike the multi-member system, there is a “winner take all” nature that exists within the single-member system that rules out the possibility of a balanced slate. Balancing of the ticket is not an option in the single-member system when only one seat is up for grabs in a particular election. In these contexts, competition for a place on the ticket may be stronger, and strategic considerations about what kind of candidate will

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<sup>61</sup> Dancygier, *Electoral Rules or Electoral Leverage?*, p. 231-240.

most likely win, come to the forefront. In these situations, parties are more likely to run candidates belonging to dominant majority groups instead of a minority.<sup>62</sup> Given the “winner takes all” description of single-member party systems, *hypothesis 3: countries with a greater proportion of seats coming from single-member districts are less more to experience domestic terrorism.*

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<sup>62</sup> Dancygier, *Electoral Rules or Electoral Leverage?*, p. 231-240.

## **Chapter 4: Data and Analysis**

To test my hypotheses, I use a set of linear regression models on the occurrence of domestic terrorist attacks using a country-year database of 33 European countries that are considered to be democracies as determined by the ‘revised combined polity score’ defined in the Polity IV Annual Time Series, 1800-2014, in a time period of 1970 to 2006.<sup>63</sup> My unit of analysis is country year in order to model how the annual change in the independent variable corresponds with the change in the amount of terrorism/

### **Independent variables**

The majority of Western European democracies use some form of a proportional representation electoral system. Therefore, the political parties in a proportional representation matter in determining the causes of domestic terrorism in these states. In order to test hypotheses 1a and 1b, (*having right-leaning parties in power will increase the likelihood of domestic terrorist attacks and having left-leaning parties in power will decrease the likelihood of domestic terrorist attacks*) I created two, dummy variables, ‘right’ and ‘left’, from a variable defining a country’s ‘chief executive party orientation’ as described in the Database of Political Institutions (DPI). DPI defines this variable as party orientation with respect to economic policy, coded based on the description of the party. The dummy variable indicating a left-wing party in power is coded as 0, and the dummy variable indicating a right-wing party in power is coded as 1. These variables are

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<sup>63</sup> Monty G. Marshall, and Keith Jagers, *Polity IV Project, Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2013*, (Vienna: Center for Systemic Peace, 2014).

in reference to centrist parties, the omitted category.<sup>64 65</sup> Because the unit of analysis is country year, I am able to observe when the party in power changes each year, over time.

To test my second and third hypotheses, (*countries with a greater proportion of seats coming from multi-member districts are less likely to experience domestic terrorism and countries with a greater proportion of seats coming from single-member districts are more likely to experience domestic terrorism*) I use the variable as it is defined in Joel Johnston and Jessica Wallack's database of electoral systems, for the measurement of multi member districts.<sup>66</sup> The variable is described as the proportion of seats from multi-member districts (lower/only house).<sup>67</sup> Because this variable measures the proportion of seats that come from multi-member districts, the proportion of seats that come from single-member districts is found by subtracting the numeric value of the variable measuring the proportion of seats from multi-member districts from the total number of districts present. Therefore, it is not necessary to include a separate variable that measures the proportion of seats that come from single-member districts. Higher values in this variable indicate a greater share of seats form multi-member districts, while lesser values indicate a greater share of seats from single-member districts.

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<sup>64</sup> Jan Teorell, Stefan Dahlberg, Sören Holmberg, Bo Rothstein, Anna Khomenko and Richard Svensson, *The Quality of Government Standard Dataset*, (Gothenburg: The QoG Institute, 2016), p. 172.

<sup>65</sup> Thorsten Beck, George Clarke, Alberto Groff, Philip Keefer, and Patrick Walsh, *New tools of comparative political economy: The Database of Political Institutions*, (Bern: Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, 2001), p. 165-176.

<sup>66</sup> Joel W. Johnson, and Jessica S. Wallack, *Electoral Systems and the Personal Vote*, (Pueblo: Colorado State University, 2012).

<sup>67</sup> Teorell et al., *The Quality of Government Standard Dataset*, p. 398.

### **Dependent variable**

The dependent variable used in this study is a country-year count of domestic terrorist attacks adopted from a study by James A. Piazza.<sup>68</sup> Piazza uses a modified version of the Global Terrorism Database,<sup>69</sup> that restricts the terrorist events included to only domestic terrorist attacks.<sup>70</sup> The time frame of the variable is between the years 1970 and 2006, and the dataset is comprised of 5,783 incidents that are considered to be domestic. For these domestic incidents, the venue country matches the nationality of the identified victims, and there are no diplomatic or multilateral entities involved. Finally, these domestic terrorist incidents do not concern hostage events that included the interests from two or more countries.<sup>71</sup>

### **Variables of minority economic discrimination**

In order to measure levels of minority economic discrimination, I adopt two dummy variables constructed by Piazza in his previously mentioned study. To derive the dummy variables for his study, Piazza used the ‘ECDIS/Economic Discrimination Index’ variable published by the Minorities at Risk Project, housed at the Center for International Development and Conflict Management at the University of Maryland. The ECDIS variable measures the degree to which members of groups designated as ‘minorities at risk’ (MARs) – ethnopolitical communities in countries that collectively

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<sup>68</sup> James A. Piazza, *Poverty, minority economic discrimination, and domestic terrorism*, (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2011).

<sup>69</sup> National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). (2015). Global Terrorism Database [Data file]. Retrieved from <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>

<sup>70</sup> Walter Enders, Todd Sandler and Khusrav Gaibulloev, *Domestic versus transnational terrorism: Data, decomposition and dynamics*, (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2011).

<sup>71</sup> Piazza describes the procedure Enders et al. engage in in more detail (p. 343-344).

<sup>72</sup> Enders et al., *Domestic versus transnational terrorism*, p. 10.

suffer or benefit from systematic discrimination in comparison to other groups in society – face economic discrimination as a result of formal or informal governmental neglect, lack of opportunities or social exclusion, and whether or not they are afforded affirmative remediation.<sup>73</sup> In his article, Piazza gives the description for ECDIS as it is coded in the Minorities at Risk database.<sup>74</sup> Piazza constructs the dummy variables by reshaping ECDIS into a country-year indicator in which the highest measurement of discrimination across minority groups, if a country contains more than one, is recorded. The variable measuring the level of minority discrimination in a country is coded 1 for country-years containing at least one Minority at Risk group, but where ECDIS has a value of zero, indicating that minorities do not suffer from economic discrimination; ‘Remediation policy for minority economic discrimination’, and is also coded 1 for country-years containing at least one Minority at Risk group but where ECDIS has a value of 1, indicating that minorities either experience or have a legacy of economic discrimination, but where policies have been put into place to correct the effects discrimination. The second dummy variable I use from Piazza’s study measures the presence of minority groups at risk in a country. This variable is coded 1 for observations in countries where Minority at Risk groups are absent and coded 0 in countries where there is a presence of one or more of these groups.<sup>75</sup>

### **Control variables**

I also include several control variables that frequently appear in empirical studies of terrorism, in my linear regression models. I use the variable constructed by Kristian S.

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<sup>73</sup> Piazza, *Poverty*, p. 344.

<sup>74</sup> Piazza, *Poverty*, p. 344.

<sup>75</sup> Piazza, *Poverty*, p. 345.



Gleditsch as a measure of real GDP per capita and two other control variables found in Piazza's study.<sup>76</sup> To operationalize income inequality, Piazza uses the same measure used in several other empirical studies: national Gini coefficients. I apply this variable to my analysis as a control because Piazza notes that there has been some evidence found that countries with high, income inequality are more prone to terrorism. Piazza also references arguments that have been made in which at theory states, that nations with large populations are more likely to experience terrorism as a result of their higher, policing costs. Taking that argument into account, I use Piazza's variable that measures the natural logs of national populations.<sup>77</sup>

To begin the data analysis, I present a table containing the results of simple means tests I conducted to examine the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables measuring right and left parties at a basic level. I also include a means test for the effect of centrist parties on the dependent variable. This table merely offers a preliminary test of the hypotheses and acts as a way to display raw trends in the data as a precursor to the more in-depth analysis with the addition of the control variables that will be given thereafter.

### **Means Tests**

Average Number of Domestic Terrorist Attacks per Year for Countries with a Leftist Party in Power	7.399
Average Number of Domestic Terrorist Attacks per Year for Countries with a Rightist Party in Power	8.028
Average Number of Domestic Terrorist Attacks per Year for Countries with a Centrist Party in Power	15.307

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<sup>76</sup> Kristian S. Gleditsch, *Expanded Trade and GDP Data*, (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2002), p.712-724.

<sup>77</sup> Piazza, *Poverty*, p. 345.

The results of the means tests offer some suggestive evidence that countries with right-leaning parties in power experience a similar number of domestic terrorist attacks per year as countries with left-leaning parties in power. The results also indicate that a country with a centrist party in power is likely to experience far more domestic terrorist attacks per year than those with either a right or a left party in power. I discuss possible explanations of this finding in the results section of this thesis.

The following models express the results of a further, more in-depth analysis on the effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable of domestic terrorist attacks while including several, previously described covariates in the models.