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# Prejudice and Discrimination Toward Immigrants

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## Keywords

attitudes toward immigrants, prejudice toward immigrants, discrimination toward immigrants, anti-immigrant bias, prejudice and discrimination, employment discrimination, housing discrimination, perceived discrimination

## Abstract

Prejudice and discrimination toward immigrants, and the consequences of these negative attitudes and behavior, are key determinants of the economic, sociocultural, and civic-political future of receiving societies and of the individuals who seek to make these societies their new home. In this article I review and organize the existing literature on the determinants and nature of prejudice and discrimination toward immigrants, summarizing what we know to date and the challenges in attributing effects to immigrant status per se. I also discuss the consequences of discrimination against immigrants for immigrants themselves, their families, and the societies in which they settle. I conclude by presenting key research questions and topics in this domain that should be at the top of the research agenda for those interested in intergroup relations in this age of mass migration.

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## INTRODUCTION

There is greater international migration in the world today than ever before, and this trend is expected to continue. Fifty years ago, in 1970, the number of international migrants was estimated to be approximately 70 million. In 2020, that number had increased to approximately 272 million, based on a definition of international migrants as individuals who are voluntarily or involuntarily living outside of their country of birth for an extended period of time (Int. Organ. Migr. 2020). Indeed, Gallup surveys conducted between 2015 and 2017 found that more than 750 million people worldwide would migrate permanently to another country if they could (Esipova et al. 2018).

Given the scope of international migration, and the variety of potential migrants—from involuntary asylum seekers fleeing conflict and war to international students and skilled migrants voluntarily seeking new opportunities—it is not surprising that migration has emerged as a dominant and divisive issue in international politics. Yet migration flows are inevitable, and whether immigrants make significant contributions to their new societies or experience roadblocks preventing them from doing so will largely depend on how immigrants are viewed and treated by receiving communities. As a result, prejudice and discrimination toward immigrants can be viewed as key determinants of the economic, sociocultural, and civic-political future of receiving societies and of the individuals who seek to make these societies their new home (Goldin et al. 2011).

## PREJUDICIAL ATTITUDES TOWARD IMMIGRANTS

Attitudes toward immigrants among members of receiving societies are important because they may influence support for immigration policies within a nation, the treatment and acceptance of immigrants, the success of immigration policies, the life outcomes of immigrants, and, ultimately, the degree of harmony or discord within the nation. For example, attitudes toward immigrants among members of a receiving society may influence the absolute number of immigrants who are allowed entry each year, the stringency and punitive nature of immigration policies, and the types of supports offered to new arrivals (Reyna et al. 2013). As I discuss further in the section titled *Discrimination Toward Immigrants*, the attitudes of members of receiving societies may also influence their treatment of immigrants, with downstream effects on both immigrants and members of the receiving communities themselves (Fussell 2014). These attitudes may also set the tone for intergroup relations more generally, affecting the social and cultural integration of immigrants in their new country, including identification and sense of belonging (Christ et al. 2013). Ultimately, the degree of social cohesion and conflict in a society is affected by the warmth of the welcome that is presented to immigrants in their new country (Fussell 2014).

### Macro-, Meso-, and Micro-Level Determinants of Prejudice Toward Immigrants

Among a number of determinants of prejudice toward immigrants, I discuss six important determinants here (see Esses et al. 2019 for the first five; see also reviews in Dempster & Hargrave 2017, Fussell 2014, Hainmueller & Hopkins 2014).

**Construal of the national ingroup and forms of national attachment.** How members of receiving societies construe national identity and the form that their national attachment takes play important roles in determining attitudes toward immigrants (Esses et al. 2005). Some individuals hold nativist perceptions of national identity, believing that national identity stems from being born in a particular country (or having lived there for a long time), a common ethnic heritage, and practicing the country's dominant religion. In contrast, others hold civic/cultural perceptions of national identity and believe that national identity is based on a personal commitment to the country's laws and institutions as well as a feeling of belonging to that country's national group. These different forms of national identity relate to different attitudes toward immigrants, with those holding nativist perceptions also holding more negative attitudes toward immigrants (e.g., Esses et al. 2005, Pehrson & Green 2010).

Two forms of national attachment that affect attitudes toward immigrants are nationalism and patriotism. Researchers have demonstrated that individuals who are higher in nationalism—i.e., who believe that their nation is superior to others—view immigrants as competitors and hold more negative attitudes toward immigrants. In contrast, individuals who are higher in patriotism—i.e., who express pride and love for their nation—do not hold such negative attitudes toward immigrants (e.g., Jeong 2013). The difference between blind and constructive patriotism exhibits a similar pattern. Blind patriotism involves unquestioning support for one's nation and its policies, and constructive patriotism involves willingness to criticize one's nation due to positive attachment and a desire to see positive change. Blind patriotism tends to lead to negative attitudes toward immigrants, whereas constructive patriotism does not (Willis-Esqueda et al. 2017). In an interesting demonstration of how nationalism may play a role in attitudes toward immigrants, McDaniel et al. (2011) demonstrate that Christian nationalism in the United States—i.e., the belief that the United States has a special relationship with God, placing it above other nations—strongly predicts prejudice toward immigrants.

**Ideological climate.** Ideological climate, including political narratives and media reporting on immigration issues, and a nation's policies and practices surrounding immigration may all influence prejudice toward immigrants (Messing & Ságvári 2019, Schemer 2012, Wirz et al. 2018). This may help to explain the country-level differences in attitudes toward immigrants discussed next. Fussell (2014) suggests that political elites use symbols, words, and even laws to influence the public's emotional reactions to national issues and to assign blame for social problems. In the case of immigrants, political elites may use symbols to increase perceptions of threat from immigrants and support for restrictive immigration policies. Once these policies are in place, they may be justified by attributing negative characteristics to immigrants, garnering further support for restrictive policies (Matthes & Schmuck 2015). In analyses of data from 20 countries, Cochrane & Nevitte (2014) further demonstrate that a high unemployment rate in one's country increases susceptibility to anti-immigrant rhetoric, which leads to prejudice toward immigrants.

**Personality and individual differences.** Several personality dimensions and individual difference variables have been studied as predictors of prejudice toward immigrants. In terms of personality, there is evidence to suggest that agreeableness and openness to experience are significant predictors of more positive attitudes toward immigrants, whereas neuroticism is a significant predictor of more negative attitudes (Gallego & Pardos-Prado 2014, Hodson & Dhont 2015). Social dominance orientation (the preference for intergroup hierarchies and inequality) is strongly linked to perceptions of competition from immigrants (Duckitt & Sibley 2010), and as a result, people higher in social dominance orientation have been found to consistently hold more negative attitudes toward immigrants (e.g., Kupper et al. 2010). Right-wing authoritarianism—involving conventionalism, authoritarian submission, and authoritarian aggression—has also been linked to negative attitudes toward immigrants, particularly when immigrants are seen as a threat to collective security and safety (Cohrs & Stelzl 2010).

**Perceived threat and competition.** The drivers of prejudice toward immigrants most studied in the literature are perceived threat and competition (e.g., McKay et al. 2012, Murray & Marx 2013, Pichler 2010). Perceptions of threats and competition with immigrants may occur in a variety of domains, including the economic realm, the cultural sphere, safety and security issues, and demographic threat and competition. Psychological theories developed to explain the role of threat and competition in attitudes toward immigrants include the unified instrumental model of group conflict (Esses et al. 2010b) and the integrated threat theory of prejudice (Stephan & Stephan 2000). In terms of perceived economic threat and competition, the literature indicates that perceptions of the economic situation of one's own group and one's nation are strong predictors of attitudes toward immigrants among members of receiving communities (Fussell 2014). Relatedly, the belief that immigrants take jobs and other economic resources (e.g., social service funding) from members of receiving societies negatively affects attitudes toward immigrants (Card et al. 2005, Esipova et al. 2015). The literature is clearest in demonstrating the role of perceived economic competition and threat at the group level in prejudice toward immigrants. It is less clear whether perceptions of one's own economic situation and objective indicators of economic threat and competition (e.g., unemployment rate per se) influence attitudes toward immigrants, with some evidence supporting and other evidence opposing this possibility (see Berg 2015, Ceobanu & Escandell 2010, Papademetriou & Banulescu-Bogdan 2016, Wilkes & Corrigan-Brown 2011).

Perceived cultural threat and competition with immigrants revolve around the belief that immigrants may come to dominate national culture, thus weakening the receiving society's culture and eroding national values (Esses et al. 2010b). It has been suggested that the more different or unfamiliar an immigrant group's culture and norms are from those of the receiving society, the

more likely it is that cultural threat will be elicited. Papademetriou & Banulescu-Bogdan (2016) suggest that the perception of cultural threat is particularly likely to be high when immigrants are perceived as not adapting to the receiving society's culture and identity or are seen as bringing in and retaining cultural norms and practices that are fundamentally in conflict with those of the receiving society. Immigrant communities that segregate themselves from the receiving society—religiously, ethnically, or linguistically—can reinforce perceptions of cultural threat (Papademetriou & Banulescu-Bogdan 2016). Similarly, immigrants who are high in cultural adaptation are perceived as less threatening than immigrants who are low in cultural adaptation (Burhan & Leeuwen 2016). In turn, perceived cultural threat leads to negative attitudes toward immigrants (e.g., Schmuck & Matthes 2015, 2017).

In terms of safety and security, immigrants may elicit concerns about terrorist threat, crime, and disease (Ceobanu 2011, Esses et al. 2019, Landmann et al. 2019, Medianu et al. 2015), all of which have been highlighted in the media in North America and Europe in the last decade. Hellwig & Sinno (2017) demonstrate that the context framing immigration concerns leads members of receiving societies to associate different types of immigrants with different threats. Using an experiment embedded in a public opinion survey in Britain, they demonstrate that when immigration is framed as a security threat, more negative attitudes toward Muslim immigrants result; when immigration is associated with crime, it is attitudes toward East European immigrants that are adversely affected. Recently, threat from COVID-19 has come to the fore, and early research on the effects of this existential threat suggests that overall anxiety about the pandemic predicts anti-immigrant attitudes, particularly for individuals higher in right-wing authoritarianism (Hartman et al. 2020).

Perceived demographic threat from immigrants is related to the perceived size of the immigrant population, with some evidence that large groups of arriving immigrants, particularly when they are more culturally distinct from the receiving society, are perceived as threatening (Ceobanu & Escandell 2010). Papademetriou & Banulescu-Bogdan (2016) argue, however, that rather than the absolute size of immigrant populations in receiving countries, it is the rate of arrivals that is more influential in driving threat and prejudice. They suggest that the arrival of large numbers of immigrants that are expected and consistent with the receiving country's expectations is perceived as less threatening than the arrival of large numbers that seem to surpass the receiving society's expectations and capacity for integration. Further, Papademetriou & Banulescu-Bogdan (2016) argue that decreased confidence in the governments' ability to stabilize migration flows exacerbates these perceptions of threat (see also Greenaway et al. 2013, Harrell et al. 2017 on perceived control and attitudes toward immigrants). Similarly, Hopkins (2010) has demonstrated that negative attitudes toward immigrants are the result of the confluence of sudden demographic changes in one's community linked to rising numbers of immigrants and national rhetoric about immigration that politicizes the issue. Strabac (2011) provides evidence that it is the perceived size of immigrant populations, rather than their actual numbers, that may drive these effects (see also Gorodzeisky & Semyonov 2020, Pottie-Sherman & Wilkes 2017).

**Emotions and stereotypes.** Several scholars have examined the role of emotions in determining attitudes toward immigrants, either as direct determinants of attitudes or as mediators between perceived threat and attitudes. For example, Tropp et al. (2016) examine the role of empathy (concern for others and their experiences) and apathy (a lack of concern for others' welfare) in predicting attitudes toward Mexican immigrants in the United States. Their findings indicate that empathy is a better predictor of these attitudes among African Americans, and apathy is a stronger predictor among Whites. In addition, among Whites, higher quality contact with Mexicans reduces apathy, leading to more positive attitudes toward immigrants. There is also

evidence that emotions such as anxiety, anger, fear, and contempt mediate the relation between some of the threats mentioned above and prejudice toward immigrants (Brader et al. 2008, Gadarian & Albertson 2014, Landmann et al. 2019).

Research on the stereotype content model suggests that prejudice toward immigrants is often a function of ambivalent, rather than purely negative, stereotypes of immigrants (Lee & Fiske 2006). The stereotype content model asserts that there are two main dimensions to perceptions of groups: warmth (e.g., trustworthiness), derived from perceptions of a group's intentions and competitive/cooperative nature, and competence (e.g., capability), derived from perceptions of a group's status and economic success (Fiske 2012). Though generic immigrants and undocumented immigrants in the United States and refugees in Germany are seen as low in both warmth and competence, most immigrant groups are viewed as higher on one dimension than the other (Fiske 2012, Kotzur et al. 2019). In turn, these ambivalent stereotypes may lead to different emotional reactions to the groups, with immigrant groups seen as low competence/high warmth (e.g., Italian immigrants in the United States) eliciting pity and sympathy, and immigrant groups seen as high competence/low warmth (e.g., East Asian immigrants in the United States) eliciting envy and jealousy (Fiske & Lee 2012).

**Contact with immigrants.** As predicted by the contact hypothesis (Pettigrew & Tropp 2006), contact with immigrants does not have a uniformly positive impact on attitudes. Whereas having friends and acquaintances who are immigrants may have positive effects, when not all of the optimal conditions for positive effects of contact are met, contact may have no, or even deleterious, effects on attitudes toward immigrants (Escandell & Ceobanu 2009). In addition, Kotzur et al. (2018) point out that just as positive experiences of contact may improve attitudes toward immigrants, negative contact experiences, particularly when they are associated with feelings of intergroup anxiety and threat, can increase prejudice toward immigrants.

### **Country-Level Differences in Attitudes Toward Immigrants May Be Driven by Historical Context and Perceptions of Immigrant Flows**

Overall, attitudes toward immigrants vary widely among immigrant-receiving countries. For example, using the migrant acceptance index, a measure of reactions to contact with immigrants, a Gallup poll of 140 countries conducted in 2016–2017 found average country ratings of immigrants ranging from 1.47 to 8.26 on a 9-point scale (Esipova et al. 2017). Countries such as Iceland, New Zealand, Rwanda, and Canada were the most accepting of immigrants, whereas others such as Serbia, Hungary, Montenegro, and Macedonia were the least accepting. Similarly, a 2018 Pew Research Center survey of 18 immigrant-receiving countries found that majorities in 10 of the countries viewed immigrants as a strength rather than a burden (with Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom at the top of the list), whereas this was not the case in 8 of the countries (with Hungary, Greece, and Italy at the bottom; see Gonzalez-Barrera & Connor 2019). In terms of European countries, Heath & Richards (2019) found that Nordic countries such as Sweden, Norway, and Finland tend to have the most favorable attitudes toward immigrants, whereas Eastern European countries such as the Czech Republic and Hungary have the least favorable. These countries differ in a variety of ways, including their histories of immigration and perceptions of immigrant flows.

Indeed, how the term “immigrants” is being interpreted may vary widely among countries based on historical context, discourses and policies surrounding immigration, and the types of immigrants most likely to be entering the country (Braun et al. 2013, Ceobanu & Escandell 2010). Blinder (2015) argues that public opinion surveys on attitudes toward immigrants often ignore the

essential question of how receiving community members interpret the term “immigrants,” which might be an essential factor driving their attitudes. In the absence of explicit information about what types of immigrants they are being asked about (e.g., asylum seekers, immigrants from a specific source region), whom do individuals imagine when asked for their opinions about immigrants? Using Ipsos MORI survey data from Britain in 2011 to explore this question, Blinder (2015) finds that asylum seekers predominated the public’s perceptions of who immigrates to Britain (which contrasts with actual statistical data on immigration). The perception of who immigrants are (what Blinder calls “imagined immigration”) may influence in turn overall attitudes toward immigrants and immigration policy preferences. For example, Blinder finds that individuals who think of immigrants as asylum seekers are especially likely to support reduced immigration levels. Examining a similar issue in a representative sample of Germans, Wallrich et al. (2020) find that when asked whom they think of when thinking about foreigners living in Germany, Germans disproportionately think of Muslims, and this salience is associated with more negative attitudes toward foreigners overall (see also Asbrock et al. 2014).

### **Different Types of Immigrants Are Associated with Different Levels of Prejudicial Attitudes**

Research that has compared attitudes toward different types of immigrants has focused on such characteristics as immigration category, legality, skill level, national origin/ethnicity, and religion.

In terms of immigration category, the most common comparison in the literature is between attitudes toward refugees and toward other classes of immigrants. In a review of the literature, Dempster & Hargrave (2017) find that studies across a variety of countries have historically shown a distinction between attitudes toward those recognized as refugees and toward other types of migrants, with a general preference for recognized refugees (but not asylum seekers; see also De Coninck 2020). However, the strength of this effect depends on the country in question and its dominant narrative about newcomers. In addition, this effect may be changing in a number of European countries because of the large number of refugee arrivals and the fear of security threats (Dempster & Hargrave 2017, Wike et al. 2016). It may also be affected by the narrative that many refugee claimants are bogus and do not have a legitimate claim to asylum. This belief has become prevalent in many countries, and as a result, there is a growing tendency now to view both refugees and asylum seekers less favorably (e.g., Dempster & Hargrave 2017, Ipsos 2016).

The issue of legality plays a large role not only in attitudes toward refugees and asylum seekers but also in attitudes toward immigrants more generally. Using experimental evidence from two US national surveys, Wright et al. (2016) demonstrate that the issue of legality tends to overshadow the individual characteristics of immigrants (e.g., human capital, race) in determining categorical reactions to them, with “illegal” immigrants generally triggering negative attitudes with a moralistic foundation. Murray & Marx (2013) similarly find more prejudicial attitudes toward “illegal” than toward “legal” immigrants in the United States. Demonstrating the role of labels in this effect across five studies in the United States, Rucker et al. (2019) find that negative labels—including “illegal immigrants,” “illegal aliens,” and “undocumented aliens”—elicited more negative attitudes toward the group than more neutral labels such as “undocumented immigrants” and “noncitizens” (with the latter described as “those who have come to the United States without documentation or visas”).

Despite the dominant effect of legal status, other characteristics of immigrants also influence attitudes toward them. Given the concern with the economic impact of immigration, a common factor examined in immigrant attitude research is skill level. Overall, attitudes toward high-skilled potential immigrants and asylum seekers tend to be more favorable than attitudes

toward low-skilled potential immigrants and asylum seekers in Europe, the United States, and Canada (e.g., Bansak et al. 2016, Dempster & Hargrave 2017, Donnelly 2017, Ford & Mellon 2020, Hainmueller & Hopkins 2015, Wright et al. 2016).

Given the concern with potential cultural tensions and clashes of values with immigrants, researchers have also focused on comparing attitudes toward immigrants from dissimilar versus similar ethnic backgrounds to those of the receiving nations, and toward immigrants with differing religious affiliations. Ford (2011) finds a consistent hierarchy of attitudes toward immigrants in Britain, with White and culturally more similar immigrants (e.g., immigrants from Australia and Western Europe) viewed more favorably than non-White and culturally less similar immigrants (e.g., immigrants from the West Indies and South Asia). Heath & Richards (2019) similarly find that across Europe, immigrants from the same racial or ethnic group as the country majority were preferred to those from a different ethnic group or those from poorer countries in Europe, who in turn were preferred to those from poorer countries outside of Europe. In a conjoint experiment in the United States in which nine attributes of immigrants were manipulated, Hainmueller & Hopkins (2015) found evidence of less favorable attitudes toward immigrants from Iraq, Somalia, and Sudan, in particular (see also Wright et al. 2016). A similar experiment conducted in Canada (Donnelly 2017) also found that immigrants from Sudan were especially likely to be rejected.

Within the context of the stereotype content model, Lee & Fiske (2006) examine whether immigrants' national origins determine Americans' perceptions of their competence and warmth. Their hypotheses as to where specific immigrant groups would fall on the competence–warmth matrix are based not only on nationality per se, but also on the history of immigrants to the United States from that national origin and the circumstances of their arrival. Their results reveal a five-cluster configuration of immigrant groups, with stereotypes based on both nationality and social class (e.g., with African and Mexican immigrants clustered in the low warmth/low competence group, Irish and Italian immigrants clustered in the high warmth/low competence group, and Chinese and Korean immigrants clustered in the low warmth/high competence group).

In terms of attitudes toward immigrants of different religious affiliations, in conjoint experiments in 15 European countries in which respondents were asked to evaluate profiles of asylum seekers who varied on nine attributes, Christian asylum seekers (and, to a lesser extent, agnostic asylum seekers) were consistently rated higher than Muslim asylum seekers (Bansak et al. 2016). Similar derogation of Muslim immigrants has been evident in survey findings in Europe (Heath & Richards 2019, Wike et al. 2016) and in the United States (Wright et al. 2016).

### **Media Depictions Influence the Dehumanization of Refugees and Asylum Seekers**

There were an estimated 26 million refugees worldwide in 2019, with an additional 4.2 million asylum seekers (UNHCR 2020). Members of the public often conflate the concepts of refugee and asylum seeker so that they are perceived as one group. This large numbers of individuals seeking resettlement opportunities in new countries may be overwhelming, particularly when they arrive at one's borders, leading the media and political elites to portray these individuals as marauders, swarms, and waves who threaten to flood or invade Western countries. The legitimacy of their claims may also be questioned, leading to portrayals of them as illegitimate, as bogus, as individuals trying to cheat the system, and as terrorists. There is considerable evidence of the prevalence of such depictions in Western media (for a review, see Esses et al. 2020).

Experiments have demonstrated the causal role of these media depictions in the implicit and explicit dehumanization of refugees. Dehumanization involves the denial of full humanness to others and their removal from the human species (e.g., Bar-Tal 2000, Haslam 2006). Haslam &



Loughnan (2014) suggest that an important way in which others may be denied full humanness is in an animalistic sense in which they are seen as not having risen above their animal origins. Dehumanization has been empirically distinguished from negative evaluations in terms of its correlates and consequences (e.g., emotions, behavior; see Esses et al. 2008, Sutter 2017), and dehumanization and dislike have also been shown to activate different regions of the brain (Bruneau et al. 2018a).

Across nine studies conducted with EU nationals and residents, Azevedo et al. (2019) find that when participants were presented with visual depictions of refugees in large groups without recognizable facial features, they were especially likely to dehumanize refugees, as assessed in terms of attributions of primary versus secondary emotions to them. This effect was particularly strong when the refugees were depicted in a sea context. Focusing on claims about the legitimacy of refugee claimants, Esses et al. (2013, 2011) examine individuals' explicit and implicit dehumanization of refugees after reading media accounts portraying refugees as bogus asylum seekers or as terrorists seeking to enter Canada illicitly. They find that in both cases, such depictions led to the dehumanization of the refugees in question and of refugees in general. Theorizing on dehumanization suggests that, in turn, dehumanization leads to the belief that members of a group are not worthy of fair, humane treatment, legitimizing their further victimization (e.g., Bar-Tal 2000, Haslam 2006, Opatow 1995).

## **DISCRIMINATION TOWARD IMMIGRANTS**

Discrimination toward immigrants is evident when immigrants receive differential treatment compared to native-born individuals in a particular domain (Acolin et al. 2016). The classic economic literature on discrimination distinguishes two types or sources of discrimination, with the first considered more problematic than the second (e.g., Acolin et al. 2016, Koopmans et al. 2019). The first is taste-based discrimination, which is bias based on individual prejudice against certain groups; this bias stems from dislike of a group per se rather than from expected performance outcomes. Statistical discrimination, on the other hand, is discrimination based on specific characteristics—known as productivity-determining characteristics—that are correlated with group membership and could potentially influence outcomes. For example, if immigrants generally have lower income levels than native-born individuals, landlords may use statistical discrimination to assume that immigrants are at greater risk of not paying rent. Similarly, if immigrants have poorer language fluency, this could influence their job performance. It is argued that statistical discrimination is not based on dislike of a group but rather on expectations about group members' performance in a particular domain. Nonetheless, I would argue that both types of discrimination are based on prejudice, with taste-based discrimination being more affectively based and statistical discrimination being more likely to be based on stereotypes (Esses et al. 1998).

Documenting discrimination on the basis of immigrant status per se can be difficult because it is often not clear whether immigrant status is indeed the source of the differential treatment. Being an immigrant is potentially associated with a variety of other characteristics, such as race/ethnicity, religion, and location of education. Thus, whether it is immigrant status per se that is driving differential treatment or these other characteristics is often unclear. In addition, immigrant status and these characteristics may interact to drive discriminatory treatment (e.g., only racial minority immigrants may be the target of discrimination), and characteristics such as the presumed suitability of education/skills can be used as justifications for discrimination on the basis of immigrant status. Whether the latter characteristics are driving the effects or used post hoc to justify them is often unknown.

A partial solution to the problem of distinguishing between taste-based discrimination and statistical discrimination, and of determining whether immigrant status per se is driving effects, is the use of correspondence audits. Correspondence audits are a form of field experiment in which researchers send written applications for employment or housing in response to real job or housing advertisements, manipulating information about the correspondents. These experiments allow control over potentially confounding variables that could be considered relevant to statistical discrimination such as language ability, skill level, or income, as well as possible perceived confounds with immigrant status such as ethnicity/race and religion. Correspondence audits allow for the manipulation of a wider range of variables and are less subject to confederate bias and confounds than are in-person audit studies, while allowing for strong causal claims (Gaddis 2018). By applying for a wide variety of jobs or housing units, researchers can also examine contextual characteristics that may lead to higher or lower levels of discrimination (e.g., location of housing unit, size of the company). I turn now to a discussion of discrimination toward immigrants in the domains of employment and housing, two arenas that are considered most crucial for the successful integration of new migrants (Esses et al. 2010a).

### **Employment Discrimination Toward Immigrants Depends on Both Immigrant and Company Characteristics**

Research conducted primarily in Europe and North America has consistently demonstrated evidence of employment discrimination toward immigrants applying for jobs (see Rich 2014, Zschirnt & Ruedin 2016 for reviews). The research also demonstrates, however, that as with prejudicial attitudes, not all immigrants are equally the target of this discrimination. When the national origin of immigrants is manipulated, differential effects are evident, with presumed cultural dissimilarity and religion also playing important roles.

For example, in reviewing the literature on discrimination in the labor market in Western Europe, Dancygier & Laitin (2014) conclude that while recruiters in Western European countries seem to prefer native-born job candidates over immigrants from other European countries, they also show a preference for immigrants who are coethnics or from the same religion over immigrants who seem to be more culturally distant. Using a cross-national correspondence audit, Veit & Thijsen (2019) provide a demonstration of the role of cultural similarity and difference through an examination of how employers in five Western European countries (Germany, Spain, Norway, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom) responded to foreign and domestic applicants from European, Middle Eastern, or African backgrounds. Domestic-born and European-origin applicants were considered to be more likely to be viewed as similar to the recruiters, and foreign-born and Middle Eastern or African origins were assumed to signal cultural distance. Human capital that could potentially relate to performance (e.g., language skills, educational credentials, and work experience) was held constant. Their results demonstrate that overall, immigrant status and ethnic background had an additive effect on employer responses, with foreign-born Middle Eastern and African origin applicants receiving the least favorable responses (i.e., most likely to receive explicit rejection or nonresponse). Immigrant status (birthplace), however, seemed to have a smaller effect than ethnic origin in driving effects, perhaps because the immigrant applicants were specifically described as immigrating at the age of six. This small differentiation between first- and second-generation immigrants is evident throughout the literature; it may reflect assumptions about the immigrant status of ethnic minorities in Western European countries, or it may reflect the dominant role of culture and ethnicity in comparison to immigrant status per se in determining effects (e.g., Carlsson 2010; see also Zschirnt & Ruedin 2016).

A similar bias against ethnic minority immigrants from China, India, and Pakistan was demonstrated in a correspondence audit study conducted in Canada (Oreopoulos 2011). In particular, Canadian-born individuals with English-sounding names were much more likely to receive a callback for a job interview compared to foreign-born individuals, even when foreign degrees were obtained from prestigious schools. Additional analysis of these data indicates that this discrimination was especially likely to occur in smaller compared to larger organizations, perhaps because smaller companies are less likely to have experience with diversity and have fewer resources for recruitment (Banerjee et al. 2018; see also Kaas & Manger 2011). In reviewing the literature on OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries, Zschirnt & Ruedin (2016) also indicate that private companies display higher levels of discrimination in correspondence audits compared to public companies, potentially because public companies are more likely to have rules and procedures for employment decisions that reduce the opportunities for prejudice to play a role. Similarly, there is some evidence that employment agencies are less likely to show discrimination against immigrants, likely for similar reasons (Carlsson 2010). Analyses of whether job characteristics (e.g., skill level) influence the extent of discrimination have yielded inconsistent findings (Andriessen et al. 2012, Carlsson 2010, Zschirnt & Ruedin 2016, Weichselbaumer 2016b).

The role of immigrants' religious affiliation and religiosity has also been examined and interpreted in this context of dissimilarity. Pierné (2013) conducted a correspondence audit study in France to assess the effects of national origin (French versus North African) and religious affiliation (not indicated, Catholic, or Muslim) on responses to job seekers. Religious affiliation was manipulated through information about volunteer experience. Productivity-determining characteristics (e.g., skills, degree, work experience) were held constant as much as possible. The results demonstrate that being North African or Muslim reduces the likelihood of a positive response, with an additive effect. In Germany, a correspondence audit study that examined the impact of wearing a headscarf among female Turkish immigrants (through manipulation of the photograph attached to the job application) also demonstrated a penalty associated with a visible symbol of Muslim affiliation (Weichselbaumer 2016a). While discrimination was evident toward the Turkish immigrant (in comparison to the German applicant), the headscarf exacerbated this effect so that the job prospects for the Turkish immigrant wearing a headscarf were severely reduced. This effect was evident despite the fact that German norms allow for the provision of a considerable amount of information in job applications, so that an inordinate number of productivity-determining characteristics could be controlled in this experiment.

A more direct demonstration of the relation between prejudice and employment discrimination is provided by research conducted in Sweden by Rooth (2010). In two studies concerning responses to Arab Muslim male job applicants, the Implicit Association Test (IAT), which assessed the strength of implicit associations between positive versus negative concepts and Arab Muslim versus Swedish men, was administered to a subset of recruiters who had previously (unknowingly) participated in correspondence audits. In one study, the concepts used in the IAT involved negative and positive work productivity-related words, designed to test for statistical discrimination; in the other, the IAT involved negative and positive attitudes, designed to test for taste-based discrimination. Across both studies, and thus irrespective of the content of the IAT, the results demonstrate that the tendency to show negative implicit associations with Arab Muslim men (in comparison to Swedish men) strongly predicted the recruiters' probability of inviting an Arab Muslim man for an interview in the correspondence audit.

One explanation for this consistent evidence of employment discrimination toward Muslim immigrants is that Muslims are seen as particularly likely to lack the soft skills required for success in certain job roles due to their religious affiliation. Soft skills are personal characteristics that may

enhance an individual's interaction skills, including communication and teamwork (as opposed to hard skills, including technical and position-related skills that can be taught; see Tews & Tracey 2008). Soft skills are particularly relevant to immigrant employment because they may be seen to be culturally specific (Tews & Tracey 2008) and related to the ability to fit within the local work culture, an aspect that may be perceived to be a barrier for foreign-trained newcomers from other cultures. In addition, however, soft skills have been described as subjective and highly susceptible to the influence of preexisting biases (Krings & Olivares 2007), suggesting that they may be used as a post hoc justification for discrimination. Support for the subjective interpretation of soft skills comes from an experiment conducted in Canada in which participants were presented with the résumé of a male job applicant and a 10-minute video of his job interview (Esses et al. 2014). His résumé made clear that he was either Canadian-born or an immigrant, and that he was Christian, Muslim, or had no religious affiliation (as determined by participation in voluntary organizations and a pendant visible in the video before the interview began). Although participants viewed the exact same video clip of the interview, when the applicant was a foreign-trained immigrant, being Muslim led to perceptions of poorer performance in the interview, and specifically poorer soft skills. This did not occur when the applicant was Canadian. It might be claimed that discrimination on the basis of presumed soft skills is a form of statistical discrimination whereby Muslim individuals are perceived as less likely to perform well on the job because they lack soft skills. In the current case, however, the same video was being viewed but it was interpreted differently based on the presumed religious affiliation of the immigrant applicant.

These findings highlight the problematic nature of the distinction between taste-based and statistical discrimination, where purported characteristics may be used to justify what is in fact driven by taste-based discrimination (see also Veit & Thijsen 2019). In addition, both taste-based and statistical discrimination are driven by prejudice, with the former being more affectively based and the latter more cognitively based (Esses et al. 1998). Theories of subtle prejudice and the role of justification in the expression of prejudice and discrimination (e.g., Crandall & Eshleman 2003, Dovidio & Hebl 2005) may also suggest new ways of looking at these types of discrimination and their root causes.

### **Housing Discrimination Toward Immigrants Depends on Both Immigrant and Neighborhood Characteristics**

Correspondence audit studies have also been conducted to examine housing discrimination toward immigrants in Europe and North America, though far fewer studies have focused on housing than on employment. As is the case with employment, these studies generally examine influences on the first stage of obtaining housing—i.e., the responses received when individuals first correspond with potential landlords who have posted rental advertisements. In a review of the housing discrimination literature, Rich (2014) concludes that there is prevalent discrimination against Middle Eastern and Moroccan immigrants in Europe. Positive information on socioeconomic characteristics improved the situation for these groups but did not completely eliminate the housing discrimination they experienced. For example, in a study conducted in Sweden, Ahmed et al. (2010) sent emails from presumably Swedish or Arab Muslim immigrant men in response to rental postings. In order to test for the role of statistical discrimination, they also manipulated the information presented in application letters: little additional information versus information about education, employment, and marital status. Without the additional information, the Swedish applicant received a positive response more often than the Arab Muslim immigrant. The additional information led to a more positive response rate for the Arab Muslim immigrant. However, when both applicants provided additional information, it was still the case that the Arab Muslim immigrant did not fare as well as the Swedish applicant.

A study conducted in the Spanish rental market comparing Spanish applicants to Moroccan immigrant applicants produced a similar effect, with positive information about the socioeconomic status of the Moroccan candidate increasing the probability of a positive response but not completely eliminating discrimination (Bosch et al. 2010). Similarly, a study conducted in Italy examining housing discrimination against Arab and Eastern European immigrants found higher levels of discrimination against Arab immigrants compared to Eastern European immigrants, and this discrimination was reduced somewhat, but not altogether, by additional information about job and family conditions (Baldini & Federici 2011).

Of note, it has been suggested that landlords may at times discriminate against particular groups because they are worried that their decisions might influence the behavior of other (potential) tenants who may hold prejudicial attitudes (e.g., increased turnover by other tenants if the landlord rents to immigrants). This type of discrimination has been tested for by examining whether the immigrant/nonimmigrant composition of the neighborhood or building in which rental units are available affects decision making, with the assumption that discrimination against immigrants should be greater in locations in which nonimmigrants are the primary residents.

In support of this perspective, in follow-up research to their 2010 study of housing discrimination in Spain, Bosch et al. (2015) examined the extent of discrimination against Moroccan immigrants in areas with lower or higher concentrations of immigrants. Their results reveal that housing discrimination decreased in a linear fashion in relation to immigrant concentration in an area, such that housing discrimination against Moroccan immigrants was reduced in areas with larger shares of immigrants. In a study conducted in 21 metropolitan areas in the United States, Hanson & Santas (2014) found greater housing discrimination against Hispanics portrayed as recent immigrants than against Hispanics seen as more assimilated into American culture. However, in contrast to the findings of Bosch et al. (2015), discrimination against recent Hispanic immigrants was highest in areas where there were some Hispanics, but not very few or a large number. A potential explanation provided for this effect is that the exclusion of Hispanic immigrants from locations with a moderate number of Hispanics was intended to avoid a tipping point of immigrant concentration at which native-born Whites would leave the area. Studying housing discrimination against immigrants from a variety of national origins in France, Acolin et al. (2016) found the greatest housing discrimination against North African, Sub-Saharan African, and Turkish immigrants. In this case, however, more discrimination against immigrants was evident in regions with higher concentrations of immigrants (see Auspurg et al. 2017 for a similar finding in Germany). Finally, in a telephone audit study conducted in Belgium, Van der Bracht et al. (2015) found evidence of housing discrimination against Arab immigrants, but no evidence that neighborhood composition made a difference. These discrepant findings regarding levels of housing discrimination in areas with differing concentrations of immigrants suggest that additional research is needed to unpack this phenomenon.

### **Restrictive Immigration Policies and Practices as Forms of Discrimination**

The framing of immigration policies and how immigration is viewed by members of the public vary widely among nations and within nations over time (e.g., Borghonovi & Pokropek 2019, Wilkes & Corrigan-Brown 2011). I argue here that support for and implementation of restrictive immigration policies and practices may be considered forms of discrimination. One basis for this claim is that attitudes toward immigrants and attitudes toward immigration are highly correlated (Ceobanu & Escandell 2010, Esses et al. 2019), so that one determinant of restrictive immigration attitudes may be prejudice toward immigrants. Indeed, immigration policies and practices may both reflect and influence public attitudes.

An example of the differential framing of immigration policies among countries is the language used to describe these policies in Canada and in the United States. In Canada, immigration “targets” are set each year and framed in terms of goals for how many immigrants the country hopes to admit. In contrast, in the United States, the language of immigration policy focuses on “limits” and “controls” within a framework of restricting who can enter the country (Esses 2005).

These restrictions are not only established to prevent the admission of too many immigrants. The fact that they also target specific categories of immigrants and even immigrants of particular religious affiliations is telling. For example, Donald Trump’s Muslim travel ban and severe restriction on the number of refugees allowed admittance to the United States (from close to 85,000 under Obama in 2016 to 30,000 under Trump in 2019; see Krogstad 2019) match his rhetoric on the negative characteristics of Muslims and many refugee groups, suggesting that prejudice has a role to play in these decisions. It is also the case that dehumanization leads to support for such restrictive refugee policies (see Bruneau et al. 2018b, Esses et al. 2013).

Many countries have repealed immigration restrictions that are explicitly based on race or religion because of their discriminatory nature (e.g., Triadafilopoulos 2010). Yet restrictive immigration policies may still be targeting particular national groups when they clearly affect certain groups in a disproportionate manner. For example, high income requirements and pre-entry language tests for family sponsorship that are increasingly being implemented in a variety of Western countries place a larger burden on some national groups applying for family sponsorship than others, and some would argue that these requirements are specifically put into place to reduce the immigration of particular national and religious groups. For example, Ellermann (2020) asserts that pre-entry language tests for spouses who wish to immigrate to Germany and the Netherlands disproportionately target Muslim women from Turkey and Morocco. In the Netherlands, a number of other national groups, such as immigrants from the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and South Korea are exempted (Goodman 2011), and in Germany the list of exempt national groups is even longer (Gutekunst 2015). The prejudice underlying these requirements is evident in the claim by Dutch legislators that “family migrants from Turkey and Morocco . . . bear ‘characteristics that are unfavorable for good integration into Dutch society,’” and in Germany, those proposing pre-entry language tests for spouses explicitly justified the targeting of Muslim immigrants because of their “cultural backwardness” (Ellermann 2020, p. 2468).

The study of prejudice and discrimination as applied to immigration policy is a fruitful arena for researchers interested in expanding their models of intergroup bias beyond the level of specific local contexts. In this domain, national and cross-national research would not only provide new insights into the basis of immigration policies but would also provide new directions for research on intergroup bias.

### **Immigrants’ Perceptions of Discrimination and the Role of National Origin and Context**

Perceived discrimination is the subjective experience of being unfairly or unequally treated based on social group membership (Schmitt et al. 2014). Perceptions of discrimination among immigrants are important because, as discussed in the next section, they are linked to significant negative outcomes for both immigrants and receiving societies. These relations may occur irrespective of whether actual discrimination takes place (e.g., Marrow 2011). This is important because perceptions of discrimination may derive from actual experiences of discrimination, but there is not a one-to-one correspondence between acts of discrimination and perceptions of discrimination. At times immigrants may fail to detect discrimination when it occurs; alternatively, they may perceive

discrimination in situations in which it is not occurring and a valid alternative explanation is available. Irrespective of actual experiences of discrimination, negative outcomes may result from the perceptions per se. For example, in a study conducted in rural North Carolina, Marrow (2011) demonstrates that many Hispanic immigrants perceive that Hispanics are more discriminated against by Blacks than by Whites, despite evidence that this is likely not the case. Irrespective of their accuracy, these perceptions predict anti-Black resentment, stereotyping, and distancing (Marrow 2011).

The disconnect between actual discrimination and perceptions of discrimination may be exacerbated in contemporary society because the expression of bias can be both explicit and more subtle and ambiguous (Dovidio et al. 2017). The prevalence of subtle bias means that targets of discrimination may not be sure whether the cues they are using to identify bias are accurate (Jones et al. 2016). In the case of immigrants in a new country, this ambiguity may be enhanced by potential miscommunications based on language proficiency and use of language, as well as uncertainty about what constitutes discrimination in the new society. Thus, for immigrants today, the disconnect between actual discrimination and perceived discrimination may be quite large.

Perceptions of discrimination have been found to differ among immigrant groups. For example, the results of a German study examining the effects of perceived discrimination on the basis of national origin (Schunck et al. 2015) demonstrate that immigrants from Turkey, and to a lesser extent Eastern Europe/Russia, perceived more discrimination on the basis of their origin than immigrants from other countries. In addition, immigrants of lower socioeconomic status perceived more discrimination than immigrants of higher socioeconomic status. Similarly, in a large-scale study conducted in Spain (Agudelo-Suárez et al. 2011), immigrants from Morocco reported markedly higher levels of perceived discrimination than immigrants from Ecuador, Romania, and Colombia. In a study conducted in Texas examining perceived discrimination by Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Salvadoran, Mexican, and Nigerian immigrants at both the group and individual level, differences between the immigrant groups were similarly evident (Brettell 2011). At the group level, Mexican, Salvadoran and Nigerian immigrants perceived more discrimination than Vietnamese and Indian immigrants (i.e., they perceived that their national origin group faced discrimination in the United States). In contrast, at the personal level, only Nigerians stood out as reporting higher levels of perceived discrimination. Overall, it is suggested that in the United States, immigrants with darker skin tones and lower language proficiency have higher perceptions of personal discrimination (Szaflarski & Bauldry 2019).

In terms of the perceived basis of discrimination, Brettell (2011) reports that immigrants in the United States perceive discrimination on the basis of a wide variety of factors, including not only race and immigrant status but also language ability, class, and perceived foreignness. This perceived discrimination is reported to occur in a wide variety of contexts, including, for example, employment, customer service, encounters with the police, and neighborhood relations (Brettell 2011). Similarly, in looking at discrimination experienced by immigrants in Canada, Nangia (2013) finds that immigrants most frequently perceived discrimination based on ethnicity/culture, race, and language. In terms of context, this discrimination was seen as most likely to occur at work or when applying for a job, in a customer service situation, and on the street (Nangia 2013).

There also seems to be an indication that perceptions of discrimination in the United States increase with length of time in the country (Szaflarski & Bauldry 2019). Similarly, in examining perceptions of everyday discrimination among immigrants in Canada, Vang & Chang (2019) find that recent immigrants report less perceived discrimination than immigrants who have been living in Canada for a longer period of time. These findings may be attributable to changing expectations about equal treatment and an increased ability to recognize and identify discrimination in a new country over time. In line with the role of expectations in perceiving discrimination,

Vang & Chang (2019) find some support for their proposal that expectations of inclusion in the receiving society, learned through early socialization in Canadian schools, influence immigrants' perceptions of discrimination. In particular, in line with the hypothesis that immigrants who attended Canadian schools as children would be more sensitive to unequal treatment and attribute it to discrimination, the authors find that immigrants who arrived in Canada as children reported markedly higher levels of perceived discrimination than those who arrived in Canada at an older age. An additional demonstration of the role of large-scale contextual factors in influencing perceptions of discrimination is provided by Rousseau et al. (2011). Their examination of perceptions of discrimination by Arab and Haitian immigrants in Montreal over time—and specifically before and after 9/11—indicates higher levels of perceived discrimination by both Arab and Haitian immigrants in 2007 than in 1998. While one might expect that reactions to 9/11 and increased negative media portrayals of Middle Easterners would affect Arab immigrants more than Haitians, Rousseau et al. (2011) suggest that the general atmosphere of tension and public discourse on national security after 9/11, paired with debates about the possible failure of multiculturalism, may have affected all immigrant communities at the time.

One exception to the proposal that context influences perceptions of discrimination is provided by Hopkins et al. (2016) in their analysis of the spatial clustering of perceived discrimination. The premise of this research is that if some communities are more likely to harbor anti-immigrant attitudes than others, immigrants in those communities will be sensitive to this reality and perceive more discrimination. Using data from national surveys, however, the authors find little evidence of spatial clustering in immigrants' individual-level perceived discrimination in the United States, despite the fact that the attitudes of native-born individuals toward immigrants show substantial evidence of such geographic clustering. In other words, while native-born individuals' attitudes toward immigrants vary across localities, immigrants' perceptions of discrimination do not, suggesting a disconnect between native-born individuals' attitudes toward immigrants and immigrants' perceptions of discrimination. This finding serves to remind us of the perceptual nature of perceived discrimination, which can be several steps removed from actual discrimination. This leaves plenty of room for researchers to study the factors that are influencing perceptions of discrimination among immigrants, whether at the individual or group level, contributing both to our understanding of immigrant experiences and to the extensive literature on the causes and consequences of perceptions of discrimination.

## **CONSEQUENCES OF DISCRIMINATION**

The consequences of discrimination for immigrants and for the receiving societies in which they live are significant. While actual discrimination has serious consequences at a concrete level, such as unemployment, underemployment, and reduced life prospects, perceived discrimination may also have major effects, with many (though not all) occurring at a more psychological level.

### **The Impact of Discrimination in Employment, Housing, and Immigration Policy for Immigrants, Immigrant Families, and Receiving Societies**

Just as the discussion of discrimination focused on the domains of employment, housing, and immigration policy, the analysis here of the impact of discrimination focuses on the consequences of discrimination in these three domains.

**Consequences of employment discrimination.** Many Western countries with advanced economies are moving toward immigration policies that emphasize the admittance of highly skilled immigrants (Aydemir 2014). This is the basis of points-based systems of immigrant



selection that focus on the skills and qualifications that immigrants bring with them to the receiving society. However, if discrimination toward these individuals is occurring, both the immigrants and the receiving society lose out, with the skills of new immigrants not being fully utilized.

Related to the extensive evidence of employment discrimination toward immigrants, particularly toward racial and ethnic minority immigrants and toward Muslims, there is evidence that, despite their educational qualifications and foreign work experience, many skilled immigrants who have migrated to Western nations are unemployed or underemployed, working in jobs that underutilize their education, skills, and previous work experience. This leads to lower economic and psychological well-being for immigrants, and it undermines the value of policies designed to specifically attract and utilize the skills of these immigrants. It may also be a threat to social cohesion within a society (Reitz & Banerjee 2007).

For example, in Canada, while more than 60% of newcomers are accepted each year based on their skills, many face unemployment and underemployment (e.g., Reitz et al. 2014, Xue & Xu 2010). As a result, the Canadian government has become concerned about two issues: flight capital and economic losses due to underutilized labor. Flight capital is defined as the loss of skilled immigrants to competing markets that value their skills (Grewal 2007). For example, in a study of Asian computer professionals in Canada, over 60% of the individuals surveyed were considering moving to the United States to more fully utilize their skills (Rao 2001). The second point of concern is the economic losses resulting from the unemployment and underemployment of immigrants, which not only indicate the failure of an immigration system intended to address labor shortages but also cost the Canadian economy over C\$11 billion annually (calculated in lost earnings when immigrants work in jobs below the level of equally qualified nonimmigrants; see Reitz et al. 2014).

The United States has also moved to a focus on skilled immigrants, with almost half (48%) of the immigrant adults who entered the United States between 2011 and 2015 being college graduates (Batalova et al. 2016). Despite this emphasis on skilled immigrants, however, there is evidence that their skills may not be fully utilized. Batalova et al. (2016) find that during the 2009–2013 period, 1.9 million college-educated immigrants—approximately 25% of the total college-educated immigrant population—were either unemployed or underemployed, with underemployment particularly evident for Hispanic and Black immigrants. A study conducted in Pennsylvania also found that more than 25% of skilled immigrants with earned income earned less than US\$30,000 annually (Welcoming Cent. New Pennsylvanians 2013). This immigrant skill underutilization results in billions of dollars in lost tax revenues each year. Batalova and colleagues estimate that the underemployment of college-educated immigrants in the United States leads them to forgo US\$39.4 billion in annual earnings they would have received if they had worked in higher-level jobs. This translates into US\$10.2 billion in lost tax revenues annually. As suggested by Batalova et al. (2016), skill underutilization can also have cascading effects, leading to the degradation of skills and education over time if they are not put to productive use, as well as poverty and its transmission to the next generation. The COVID-19 crisis has also underscored the fact that immigrants with health-related degrees face significant underemployment and unemployment in countries such as the United States and Canada, where their untapped skills are sorely needed to support health care systems—including in hospitals, clinics, and long-term care facilities—during the current pandemic and beyond (Batalova & Fix 2020, Hou & Schimmele 2020).

In considering the role of discrimination in these effects, it is important to note that many of the highly skilled immigrants migrating to advanced economies are racial, ethnic, or religious minorities; that these minorities are especially likely to experience employment discrimination, as reviewed earlier; and that these groups are also especially likely to face underemployment and unemployment. In Batalova et al.'s (2016) analyses, for example, logistic regressions indicate that

when other factors such as language proficiency and degree level are controlled, Hispanic and Black immigrants are still more likely to be working in low-skilled jobs than their White counterparts, with a particularly strong effect for Black men. Similarly, in Canada, skilled ethnic and religious minority immigrants are particularly likely to experience employment disadvantage, even when potentially relevant factors are taken into account (e.g., Ng & Gagnon 2020, Reitz 2007). For example, immigrants from Asia, Latin America, and Africa have higher unemployment rates than native-born Canadians, whereas immigrants from Europe and the Philippines do not (Ng & Gagnon 2020).

Adequate employment also has implications for the families of immigrants, including their children. When immigrants are stressed and worrying about unemployment and job loss, this exacerbates low socioeconomic status in influencing their health outcomes (Ayón 2015). In addition, the unemployment and underemployment experienced by immigrants can mean that immigrant children are raised in poverty, which is linked to poorer developmental, health, and educational outcomes. For example, there are fewer resources to secure educational opportunities to support the children's healthy development (Ayón 2015). In addition, when parents are forced to work long and irregular hours in order to survive, they have less time to spend with their children, and their children's development and mental well-being also suffer (Ayón 2015). All in all, then, employment discrimination toward immigrants can have many severe direct and downstream consequences for immigrants, for their families, and for the receiving societies in which they have settled.

**Consequences of housing discrimination.** As with employment discrimination, housing discrimination can have widespread negative impacts. Immigrant enclaves—i.e., neighborhoods with high immigrant concentrations, often from a specific source country—may be the result of both personal choice and discrimination (Ayón 2015). And there are both benefits and disadvantages to these enclaves. The benefits include feelings of comfort in daily interactions with co-ethnics; the disadvantages include barriers to accessing mainstream services and resources as well as barriers to economic opportunities and the establishment of social capital outside of one's immigrant group. In particular, neighborhood differences in services, resources, and social network opportunities mean that if immigrants are excluded from certain neighborhoods (those with many resources and services) and are shunted into others (those with fewer resources and services) they lose out. Housing discrimination can also lead to a spatial mismatch whereby immigrants have poorer access to good jobs and high quality schools, longer commutes to work, inadequate access to medical care, and resultant poorer health outcomes (Acolin et al. 2016, Ayón 2015). Indeed, in investigating spatial disparities between the places where immigrants live and those where employment opportunities are located in the 60 largest immigrant metropolitan areas in the United States, Liu & Painter (2012) find that immigrants are more spatially mismatched with jobs than are native-born Whites, but less so than native-born Blacks. In addition, job growth tends to occur close to where native-born Whites live and away from immigrants. These disadvantages can influence the long-term outcomes of immigrant families and children. Isolation from mainstream institutions and opportunities, and limited sources of support, can negatively affect the physical and mental health of immigrant parents and their children (Ayón 2015).

**Consequences of discrimination in immigration policy and practice.** Restrictive immigration policies and practices have the potential to influence the future life prospects of individuals worldwide. For example, restrictive refugee policies mean that the opportunity to migrate to new countries and be accepted as permanent residents is extremely low for the millions of refugees waiting to be resettled year upon year (Esses et al. 2017). As discussed, these restrictive policies are to some extent based on prejudice toward asylum seekers, particularly Muslims, and on their

dehumanization. This means that millions of refugees are left to languish in refugee camps or in situations of danger. For example, the low refugee limits set by the United States for 2019 as compared to 2016 meant that in 2019, 55,000 more refugees faced an uncertain and potentially dangerous future than if 2016 levels were in effect. Given that approximately half the refugees worldwide are children (UNHCR 2020), this takes on added meaning.

Immigration policies with restrictions that disproportionately affect particular groups can also have devastating long-term consequences. For example, the pre-entry language requirements for spousal immigration established in Germany, the Netherlands, and a number of other Western nations may lead to exclusion based on cost and inability to fulfill requirements (Goodman 2011). As a result, family reunification or family forming is prevented, and spouses may be separated for years, if not permanently (Gutkunst 2015). Because these requirements only apply to certain source countries, the result is hardship not for all individuals seeking to bring a spouse into the country, but only for individuals from the targeted source countries, who tend to be Muslim.

### **The Impact of Perceived Discrimination: Psychological and Health-Related Correlates**

Much of the research on the potential impact of perceived discrimination as experienced by immigrants has focused on the psychological and health-related correlates of such perceptions. Because of the correlational nature of this research, strong causal conclusions cannot be drawn as to whether perceived discrimination directly or indirectly causes these effects. Nonetheless, the consistent findings are suggestive in this regard, as is research that has tested various possible causal directions of these effects.

**Trust and life satisfaction.** Several lines of research demonstrate that perceived discrimination by immigrants is related to both trust in others (the belief that others can be relied on) and life satisfaction. The literature suggests that, in general, immigrants tend to trust others less than nonimmigrants (e.g., Smith 2010). Wilkes & Wu (2019) provide a demonstration of how perceived discrimination among immigrants may lead to this lower level of trust in others and of how race may also play a role. Using data from a large Canadian survey, they employ a mediational model to demonstrate that perceived discrimination explains more of the trust gap between racialized immigrants and native-born White individuals than of the gap between White immigrants and native-born White individuals. This fits with the findings reviewed above indicating that racial minority immigrants are especially likely to be the targets of prejudice and discrimination.

Perceptions of discrimination are also related to lower levels of life satisfaction among immigrants. Using data from the European Social Survey, Safi (2009) examined the role of perceived discrimination in predicting life satisfaction in 13 European countries. The results demonstrate that after the first year post-migration (sometimes considered the honeymoon period), immigrants, particularly those from African, Asian, and Turkish backgrounds, report lower levels of life satisfaction than the native born, and that these differences are reduced significantly when perceived discrimination is taken into account. In a Canadian sample, Houle & Schellenberg (2010) similarly find that perceptions of discrimination strongly predict life satisfaction among immigrants 4 years after arriving in Canada.

**Mental and physical health.** In addition to a growing literature on discrimination toward immigrants in access to health care (see Edge & Newbold 2013), there is considerable research focusing on the role of perceived discrimination in the mental and physical health of immigrants (Viruell-Fuentes et al. 2012). For example, Noh et al. (2007) examine the potentially differing effects of

perceived overt and subtle racial discrimination on the mental health of Korean immigrants in Toronto. The results show that perceptions of overt discrimination were associated with lower positive affect experienced by the immigrants, whereas perceptions of subtle discrimination were associated with depressive symptoms (see also Berg et al. 2011). In addition, the latter relation was mediated by cognitive appraisals of the discrimination as frustrating and excluding, and as a source of feelings of powerlessness and shame.

Extending work in this area to include physical health as well as mental health, Agudelo-Suárez et al. (2011) examine the relation between perceived discrimination and the reported mental and physical health of immigrants in Spain. Their results indicate that immigrants' perceptions of discrimination, particularly workplace-related discrimination, significantly predicted reported health problems, including both mental (e.g., anxiety, stress) and physical symptoms (e.g., headache, muscular problems). Using data from a large national longitudinal survey, Schunck et al. (2015) test various models of the relations among perceived discrimination based on national origin, mental health, and physical health among immigrants in Germany. Of note, their findings indicate that the effects of perceived discrimination on physical health were mediated by its effects on mental health: Perceived discrimination led to poorer mental health, which in turn led to poorer physical health. Though immigrants from Turkey reported higher levels of perceived discrimination, the effects of perceived discrimination on mental health and thus physical health were not moderated by country of origin. In addition, the findings do not support other directions of causality, such as the possibility that poorer mental health might lead to higher reporting of perceived discrimination.

The research discussed to this point has examined the relation between perceived discrimination and reporting of health symptoms or health status, as assessed through self-reports by immigrants. McClure et al. (2010) go one step further in examining the relation between perceived discrimination and actual health measures (blood pressure, body mass index, fasting glucose) among Latino immigrants in Oregon. Their results reveal that perceived discrimination that was experienced as stressful predicted poorer health across all three measures, with some sex differences evident. This body of research thus consistently provides evidence of an association between perceived discrimination by immigrants and negative health outcomes.

## **FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS AND CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

The literature reviewed here provides ample evidence of prejudice and discrimination toward immigrants, particularly immigrants who are racial minorities or ethnically, culturally, or religiously different from members of receiving societies. Country-level differences in attitudes toward immigrants are also evident and may be linked to the variety of determinants of attitudes highlighted in this review. What is less evident is how determinants of anti-immigrant prejudice at different levels of analysis—macro, meso, and micro—interact and are mutually reinforcing in driving anti-immigrant prejudice and discrimination. In addition, we know little about the underlying mechanisms and processes linking anti-immigrant prejudice to discrimination and linking discrimination to its consequences.

Research examining the interactive and mutually reinforcing determinants of prejudice toward immigrants requires a multidisciplinary, multilevel approach. Questions to be addressed include the joint effect of political climate, national identity, and national attachment on perceptions of threat and competition from immigrants; the types of individuals who are most susceptible to acquiring such perceptions; the role of emotions and stereotypes in driving (and justifying) the anti-immigrant prejudice that may result; and the types of immigrants who are most likely to be targeted. How such prejudice is expressed, whether in blatant or subtler forms, would also

be of interest (e.g., Dovidio et al. 2017, Jones et al. 2016). Psychological theories of threat and competition (e.g., Esses et al. 2010b, Stephan et al. 2016), emotions and stereotypes (e.g., Fiske & Lee 2012, Mackie & Smith 2015), and the expression of prejudice (e.g., Crandall & Eshleman 2003, Dovidio et al. 2017) will all be of value in providing testable hypotheses in this domain. In addition, intersectionality would be of interest. Though research to date has extensively examined the intersections of immigrant status and race/ethnicity/religious affiliation, additional research examining prejudice toward other possible intersections, such as immigration category (refugees, family-sponsored immigrants, or economic immigrants) and race/ethnicity/religious affiliation, would be of value. Conjoint studies would be useful in this regard.

Much of the work on discrimination against immigrants has been conducted by researchers other than psychologists, including sociologists, economists, and political scientists. As a result, psychological theories and models have not generally been applied in this area, and there is limited research on the underlying mechanisms driving this form of discrimination. With a few exceptions, there is also little research directly linking discrimination against immigrants back to anti-immigrant prejudice. The application of psychological theories of prejudice and discrimination will be useful for guiding future research on this topic and will allow researchers to identify when prejudice, including its affective (taste-based) and cognitive (statistical) components, is operating.

In the domains of employment and housing discrimination toward immigrants, recent research has primarily focused on discrimination at the point of access—i.e., on whether immigrants obtain interviews for jobs and are shown housing for which they apply. Discrimination may also occur throughout the process of employment and housing, however, and these points of discrimination should also be investigated. In terms of employment, discrimination may occur at the level of job offer, salary, promotion, additional training opportunities, and firing, as well as discrimination by coworkers and clients (see also Esses et al. 2014, Krings et al. 2014). In housing, discrimination may occur in the types of housing shown, in requiring damage deposits and prepayment of rent, in not making repairs to properties rented by immigrants, and in restrictive regulations for renting property, including maximum occupancy ordinances (Martos 2010).

Despite claims of discrimination in immigration policies and practices, in this domain too there is little research directly linking these policies and practices to prejudice toward immigrants. Theories and research linking ideology and group norms to prejudice and discrimination (Foels & Pratto 2015, Louis et al. 2007) as well as psychological theories of attitude formation and change (e.g., Albarracín & Shavitt 2018) would make a significant contribution in this regard. For example, research on how specific messages from politicians and from the media are processed, and how this influences support for restrictive immigration policies, is greatly needed.

Though discrimination against immigrants in employment, housing, and immigration policies and practices are all important areas of study, there are a large number of additional domains in which discrimination against immigrants may occur. It would thus be useful to expand research on discrimination toward immigrants beyond the areas reviewed here, including for example access to social services (e.g., expansion of the public charge rule in the United States; see Suleymanova 2020) and educational opportunities (see Adair 2015). In addition, theories that take into account the role of immigrants' responses to discrimination in perpetuating discrimination and disadvantage may provide insight into the longer-term outcomes for immigrants (Barreto 2015, Ellemers & Barreto 2015, Schmader et al. 2015).

Examining the consequences of discrimination against immigrants is another area ripe for future research. This may include consequences of discrimination and of perceived discrimination that have been examined for other groups, such as psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and health care disparities (e.g., Jones et al. 2016, Penner et al. 2013, Schmitt et al. 2014), as well as

outcomes that may be unique to immigrants, particularly integration and acculturation in the receiving society. It will be important to link these outcomes for immigrants to the prejudice and discrimination they may experience and to demonstrate the causal effects.

Finally, there is a great need for research on strategies to improve attitudes toward immigrants so that they can integrate, succeed, and contribute to their receiving societies. The research to date on the effects of positive contact with immigrants holds considerable promise (Kotzur et al. 2018; see also Ramos et al. 2019), and additional research on this strategy and others is needed. Additional strategies that research suggests may hold promise include promoting discourse that focuses on a common national identity (Esses et al. 2005); positive messaging by politicians that appeals to an inclusive national identity and its humanitarian nature, paired with system justification motivations (Gaucher et al. 2018); and informational interventions that provide accurate statistics on immigrants' characteristics (contrasting the tendency to overestimate their negative characteristics; see Grigorieff et al. 2016). Further understanding of the roots of negative attitudes toward immigrants, whether based on emotions or specific beliefs about immigrants, may also provide additional insights into potential prejudice-reducing strategies.

This work will advance our understanding of prejudice and discrimination toward immigrants and it will help us build new, comprehensive, multilevel models and theories of prejudice and discrimination that take into account new findings in the context of immigration. As nations continue to debate immigration policies and practices and an ever-increasing number of immigrants seek new homes, this research will also have immeasurable practical implications for building the future societies in which we wish to live.

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