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A cross-national examination of prejudice toward immigrants: the role of education and political ideology

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Abstract

Purpose – *More than ever before, people from around the world are migrating away from their country of birth. Yet citizens of host countries do not always welcome these immigrants – instead, citizens sometimes express prejudice toward them. The purpose of this paper is to examine the factors that influence attitudes toward immigrants cross-nationally.*

Design/methodology/approach – *Secondary data from the International Social Survey Programme, which includes data from 30 countries across two time points, were analyzed.*

Findings – *Findings indicate that people with higher level of education tend to have more favorable attitudes toward immigrants, while those with more politically conservative leanings and those with a greater sense of national identity tend to hold more prejudicial attitudes toward immigrants. At the country/regional level, education is consistent in its relationship with more favorable attitudes. However, political conservatism is less consistent in predicting prejudice – the relationship is strong in western democracies, but is largely negligible in other parts of the world.*

Originality/value – *The present analyses carry implications for improving anti-immigrant prejudice throughout the world.*

Keywords *Education, Immigrants, Political ideology, National identity, Cross-national, Prejudice*

Paper type *Research paper*

More than 3 percent of the world's people are immigrants. With increasing global interconnectedness, this percentage is only likely to rise into the future. Sadly, recent events show that citizens of host countries do not always welcome immigrants. For instance, there have been a number of anti-immigrant protests in the USA in recent years; and in 2011 there was a tragic mass killing of 77 people in Norway by an anti-immigrant domestic terrorist. Therefore, it is important to understand the factors (e.g. education, political ideology) that influence citizens' attitudes toward immigrants, particularly prejudice.

The present paper examines citizens' attitudes toward immigrants cross-nationally using large data sets that include nearly 30 countries, respectively, across two time points. In particular, the paper will focus on how education and political ideology affect these attitudes. The underlying premise is that the sociocultural systems in which people interact influence their ideologies, identities, beliefs, and attitudes (Baecker, 2014). It is argued that not only should education and political ideology influence individuals' attitudes toward immigrants, but there may be important cross-national variations in these patterns requiring the examination of multi-country data sets.

The findings of this paper provide evidence for the above expected relationships: education and political ideology significantly affect individuals' attitudes toward immigrants. In particular, higher

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levels of education are associated with more favorable attitudes toward immigrants, while more conservative ideologies are related to less favorable attitudes (i.e. prejudice). Additionally, there are important cross-national differences in the relative strength of these relationships. Although education is consistent in its relationship with attitudes toward immigrants across countries/regions, political conservatism is not. Instead, political conservatism is most strongly tied with anti-immigrant prejudice in western democracies; in other parts of the world, there is little/no relationship between political conservatism and prejudice toward immigrants.

Conceptual background: attitudes, beliefs, ideology, and prejudice

It is important to distinguish between attitudes, beliefs, opinions, ideologies, and prejudices. First, an attitude is an evaluative position toward an attitude object or issue within the moment, whereas a belief is an enduring attitudinal state across context and time toward an attitude object or issue (Banaji and Heiphetz, 2010). An opinion is an affectively driven attitudinal state in which the perceiver usually cares a great deal about the object or issue of interest (Hastorf and Cantril, 1954). An ideology is a value-oriented belief system or an opinionated set of beliefs that a perceiver bases their evaluation toward an attitude object or issue upon (Jost *et al.*, 2008). Prejudice is conceptualized as positive or negative attitudes toward a target that is based on their group membership, which can be derived from the surrounding sociocultural context. In short, prejudice is an intergroup attitude (Allport, 1988). Individuals at the country level that experience prejudice and discrimination (i.e. indifferent treatment by another based on your perceived group membership) tend to have poorer physical and mental health and greater rates of mortality compared to those that do not experience prejudice and discrimination (e.g. Chae *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, understanding prejudicial attitudes contributes to the understanding of individual and community health.

Demographic background: immigrants and minority group status

An immigrant is conceptualized as anyone who lives outside their country of birth and who has not been naturalized in the country they currently reside in. Globally, statistics from 2013 estimated that about 3.2 percent of the global population lived outside their country of birth, with most immigrants traveling to Europe and North America (UN, 2013). Immigrants are a prime social group for cross-national analyses of prejudice for two reasons: immigrants across the world arguably share a similar status, experience, and treatment when they migrate away from their country of origin; and immigrants can typically be considered a type of minority group. A minority group is a social group with any combination of less power, privilege, prestige, and control over their lives than members of a majority or dominant group (Schaefer, 2006).

Factors affecting prejudice: education and political ideology

Two factors that likely contribute to increases and decreases in prejudice toward relevant out-groups are education and political ideology. Formal education is often thought of as a factor that contributes to decreases in intergroup bias (Wodtke, 2012). However, this is not always the case (Putnam, 2007). Generally, universities and other places of formal education serve to instill prominent attitudes and ideologies and to perpetuate the status of the time. Conversely, some research suggests that fulfilling a diversity course requirement can improve intergroup tolerance and in turn diminish intergroup prejudice (Hogan and Mallott, 2005).

Political ideology – political conservatism, in particular – seems to be based on value-oriented belief systems that promote intergroup bias (Cornelis and van Hiel, 2015; Duckitt, 2001). Right-wing political ideology is correlated with maintaining the status quo and perpetuating prominent cultural values, while left-wing political ideology is correlated with maintaining equality and equal rights across society (Graham *et al.*, 2009). Thus, it is not necessarily that politicians hold prejudicial attitudes toward minorities (e.g. immigrants) but instead it is that the opinionated belief system in which their ideology is based may perpetuate and foster prejudicial attitudes toward particular social groups.

The majority of research that examines how education and political ideology affect attitudes toward immigrants has been conducted within single countries; research that examines attitudes toward immigrants cross-nationally is less common (e.g. Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014). A review of this literature reveals that an association between perceived threat and unfavorable attitudes toward immigrants and immigration is present cross-nationally (Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010). In addition, a consistent finding is that increased national identity is associated with increased prejudice toward immigrants cross-nationally (Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010). This is consistent with social identity theory, which poses that people and groups have various social identities (e.g. national, ethnic, gender identities) to which they are committed (Stets and Burke, 2000). Commitment to a particular identity can promote in-group bias and out-group derogation (e.g. Devos and Banaji, 2005). Consistent with country level findings cross-national data support the association between increased education and favorable views toward immigrants. For instance, data from 21 European countries suggests that individuals with greater formal education are more trusting and tolerant of immigrants (Borgonovi, 2012). However such associations are less pronounced in Eastern European countries compared to Western European countries (Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010).

The current study

From a sociocultural approach, this paper statistically examines whether or not political ideology, education, and national identity are important factors in understanding prejudice toward immigrants cross-nationally. It is expected that increases in education will promote decreases in prejudice toward immigrants. In terms of political ideology, it is expected that political conservatism will be associated with increased intergroup bias and that political liberalism will be associated with increased intergroup equality toward immigrants. Similarly, it is expected that increased national identity will be associated with increased prejudice toward immigrants. Statistical analyses conducted in this paper on cross-national samples of respondents lend support to these expectations.

Methods

Participants

All data analyzed were secondary data from 2003 to 2013, which were collected from ISSP Research Group (2012, 2015). An IRB waiver was not obtained, because the present researcher conducted no original data collection. The following data set and participant characteristics are in regards to the 2013 data only. It should be noted, however, that the methods and participant characteristics are comparable across the two data sets[1]. The 2013 data set initially consisted of 33 distinct countries, however, upon assessment of missing data, it was determined that two countries (Taiwan and Israel) were not suitable for analyses based on missing data and were excluded. Reliability analyses for attitudes toward immigrants (DV) and national identity (IV) were conducted for each country. Reliability analyses for two of the countries yielded low α 's and were eliminated (India $\alpha = 0.16$, Philippines $\alpha = 0.34$). For α 's coefficients by country see Table I. It should also be noted that non-citizens were excluded from all analyses, because the focus are the attitudes majority group members (i.e. citizens) hold toward relevant minority group members (i.e. immigrants). The final sample consists of 29 distinct countries with 23,119 participants (53.9 percent female). Participants were 18 years of age and older. The average age across the entire sample was 50. See Table I for a list of countries and their immigrant populations. See Table I for means and standard deviations for the DV by country.

Sampling procedures

Independent institutions (e.g. National Opinions Research Center) from each country were responsible for obtain approval (e.g. IRB) and collecting data within their country (e.g. USA). The 2013 data for 29 countries was collected between October 2012 and March 2015 and was officially released in early 2016. The data for the majority of countries (60 percent) were collected

Table 1 ISSP 2013: number of participants, region, percentage of immigrants, and α 's across 29 countries

	<i>Number of participants</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Percentage of immigrants</i>	<i>(α) attitudes immigrants</i>	<i>(α) national identity</i>
Belgium	1,422	W Europe	10.4	0.86	0.69
Croatia	364	S Europe	17.6	0.79	0.71
Czech Republic	1,084	E Europe	4.0	0.76	0.66
Denmark	1,084	N Europe	9.9	0.84	0.68
Estonia	413	N Europe	16.3	0.72	0.65
Finland	703	N Europe	5.4	0.85	0.65
France	1,456	W Europe	11.6	0.90	0.70
Georgia	810	E Europe	4.4	0.75	0.55
Germany	1,096	W Europe	11.9	0.85	0.70
Great Britain	519	N Europe	12.4	0.86	0.69
Hungary	527	E Europe	4.7	0.73	0.71
Iceland	707	N Europe	10.4	0.79	0.67
Ireland	657	N Europe	15.9	0.83	0.69
Japan	730	E Asia	1.9	0.76	0.70
Korea (South)	1,089	E Asia	2.5	0.70	0.67
Latvia	393	N Europe	13.8	0.81	0.65
Lithuania	525	N Europe	4.9	0.74	0.62
Mexico	640	C America	0.9	0.71	0.68
Norway	1,193	N Europe	13.8	0.85	0.61
Portugal	329	S Europe	8.4	0.77	0.64
Russia	939	E Europe	7.7	0.71	0.65
Slovak Republic	627	E Europe	2.7	0.71	0.67
Slovenia	469	S Europe	11.3	0.80	0.60
South Africa	1,437	Africa	4.5	0.64	0.61
Spain	565	S Europe	13.8	0.83	0.74
Sweden	885	N Europe	15.9	0.89	0.63
Switzerland	483	W Europe	28.9	0.84	0.66
Turkey	1,203	W Asia	2.5	0.63	0.64
United States	770	N America	14.3	0.80	0.60
Overall	23,119			0.81	0.69

Notes: Number of participants is derived from the number of participant used in the current analyses; reliability analyses were calculated within each country

Source: Region and percentages of immigrants were taken from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division (2013)

over a one to four month period with one country (Iceland) collecting data over a 9-month period. In general, sampling procedures across countries consisted of partly simple and partly multi-stage stratified random sampling. Modes of data collection by percentages across countries include paper and pencil interview (PAPI) with no visual aids 15.8 percent, PAPI with visuals 21.6 percent, PAPI with a translator and visuals 11.4 percent, computer assisted personal interview (CAPI) with no visuals 0.7 percent, CAPI with visual 6.2 percent, CAPI with respondent reading the questionnaire 2 percent, self-completed (SC) through interview 5.2 percent, SC mailed back 23.8 percent, computer assisted self-interview 4.6 percent, self-complete web questionnaires 8.3 percent, CAPI phone 0.4 percent, and CA telephone interview 0.1 percent. Apart from Finland, Norway, and Great Britain each country collected data through one mode. ISSP members translated all survey materials to match the local language of each country.

Along with the standardized questionnaire materials participants were given the National identity questionnaire (the focus of the present analyses), which asked a series of questions about what groups one considers important to their country, national pride, perceived national identity, and various attitudes toward national interests (e.g. economy, environmental pollution), immigrants, etc. In general respondents were no compensated for their participation.

Variables

Dependent variable: prejudicial attitudes toward immigrants. To assess attitudes toward immigrants, a set of nine statements will be used. These nine statements are labeled as opinions

in the original survey. However, it is likely that these statements are actually more characteristic of attitudes, as the participants were being asked to take an evaluative position toward immigrants. Thus, the following statements were used as a dependent measure of prejudice toward immigrants.

Participants were presented with the following statements and prompt: "There are different opinions about immigrants from other countries living in (COUNTRY). (By 'immigrants' we mean people who come to settle in (COUNTRY)). How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?"

Following the above question, participants were instructed to respond to the following questions on a five-point scale ranging from 1 "agree strongly" to 5 "disagree strongly": "(a) Immigrants increase crime rates, (b). Immigrants are generally good for (COUNTRY'S) economy, (c). Immigrants take jobs away from people who were born in (COUNTRY), (d). Immigrants improve (COUNTRY NATIONALITY) society by bringing in new ideas and cultures, (e). (COUNTRY'S) culture is generally undermined by immigrants, (f). Legal immigrants to (COUNTRY) who are not citizens should have the same rights as (COUNTRY NATIONALITY) citizens, (g). (COUNTRY) should take stronger measures to exclude illegal immigrants, (h). Legal immigrants should have equal access to public education as (COUNTRY NATIONALITY) citizens." Lastly, this question follows the above set: "Do you think the number of immigrants to (COUNTRY) nowadays should be [...] increased a lot; increased a little; remain the same as it is; reduced a little; or reduced a lot.

The above nine statements were combined to create a measure of prejudicial attitudes toward immigrants with (a), (c), (e), and (g) reflecting negative prejudicial attitudes toward immigrants and with (b) and (d) reflecting positive prejudicial attitudes toward immigrants. Therefore, items (b), (d), (f), (h), and "number of immigrant" statement were reversed coded, with lower numbers reflecting negative prejudicial attitudes toward immigrants and higher numbers reflecting positive prejudicial attitudes toward immigrants ($\alpha = 0.80$).

Independent variables (IVs). Various country level and individual level IVs will be included in the analyses with a focus on political orientation, national identity, and level of formal education. A political orientation measure was taken across countries in which participants were asked to identify with the political: far left; left center; center; right center; or far right. A national identity measure was created from three items on a five-point scale ranging from 1 "agree strongly" to 5 "disagree strongly": "(a). I would rather be a citizen of (COUNTRY) than of any other country in the world, (b). The world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like the (COUNTRY NATIONALITY), and (c). Generally speaking, (COUNTRY) is a better country than most other countries." These three items were coded such that higher values reflect greater national identity ($\alpha = 0.70$). Level of education was measured on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 – no formal education to 7 – advanced degree completed. In addition, two individual level variables (gender and age) were included in the analyses. Gender and age were included in the analyses as control variables to account for the variability across individuals.

Three country-level variables: gross domestic product (GDP), percentage of immigrants within the country, and family income inequality were included as control variable. Specifically, GDP and family income inequality indirectly measure the strength and health of a country's economy. Research indicates that perceived economic threat is associated with prejudice toward immigrants (e.g. Ceobanu and Escandell, 2010). GDP and family income inequality coefficient were selected as control variables to account for economic variability across countries. Furthermore, percentage of immigrants as a country-level variable was included in the analyses as a control to account for the variability of the distribution of immigrants across countries.

Data were gathered and cross-referenced to best match with the year in which the 2013 ISSP data were collected (2012 through 2015). GDP was obtained through The World Bank (2015) statistics. In addition, the percentage of immigrants statistic was obtained from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division, titled International Migration 2013 (UN, 2013). Lastly, a Gini coefficient calculation/index of family income inequality

was gathered from both the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (2015) World Facts and World Banks' (2015) archives. Gini coefficient is a calculation, in this case, of the amount of family income that would need to be redistributed to result in an equal distribution across a population.

Results

Several multiple linear regressions across the two data sets were conducted. Emphasis was placed on the ISSP 2013 data set, however findings across the two data sets are consistent with one another. Each variable was checked for normality. GDP, percentage of immigrants, and Gini were transformed and after the transformation some cases were identified as outlying. However, analyses with and without these cases did not vary in terms of their results; these cases were kept. Homoscedasticity was examined through various scatter plots of residuals and based on these plots acceptable distributions were found throughout. Correlations across all IVs and the DV were examined. Key variables (e.g. political orientation, national identity, and level of education) are correlated with attitudes toward immigrants suggesting a linear relationship. The correlation among the IVs are not large (-0.06) and control variables expected to co-vary together correlate well (e.g. percentage of immigrants and GDP, 0.65). In short, multicollinearity is not likely an issue.

Before discussing the main results, it is important to note that with a large sample size traditional significant criterion of $p < 0.001$ is not very useful. Therefore, $p < 0.001$ was used as a guide instead of an indicator of statistical significance. Although p -values and confidence intervals are reported, an emphasis was placed on predictors with standardized coefficients (β) of 0.10 and greater. This criterion was chosen because standardized coefficients of 0.10 and higher arguably contribute more greatly to the overall model. Therefore, significant variables had to meet both criterion of $p < 0.001$ and standardized coefficient greater than or equal to 0.10 .

To investigate the factors that are associated with attitudes toward immigrants across countries a multiple linear regression was performed. To examine attitudes toward immigrants within countries 29 additional regression analyses were conducted. Lastly, to examine attitudes toward immigrants within region of the world, nine additional regression analyses were conducted. Region was divided based upon the way in which the UN (2013) categorizes the world. It should be noted that mode of data collection was included as a control variable across all analyses when applicable. With the acceptance of Iceland, mode of data collection was not a significant factor based on the above criterion.

Overall results

The overall model predicts 18 percent of the explained variance in attitudes toward immigrants cross-nationally $F(10, 23,118) = 494$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.176$ (see Table II for standardized coefficients). Both political orientation and national identity are negatively associated with attitudes toward immigrants. In particular, people who are more politically conservative ($\beta = -0.18$) tend to display less favorable attitudes toward immigrants $t = -29$, $p < 0.001$, $CI(-0.14, -0.19)$. People with a greater sense of national identity ($\beta = -0.20$) tend to display less favorable attitudes toward immigrants $t = -31$, $p < 0.001$, $CI(-0.16, -0.20)$. Level of education ($\beta = 0.20$) is a significant predictor of attitudes toward immigrants, in which those with higher education tend to have more favorable attitudes toward immigrants $t = 31$, $p < 0.001$, $CI(0.08, 0.10)$. These findings are consistent with the majority of the literature.

Country level results

A regression analysis was conducted within each country each of the three primary IVs political orientation, national identity, and level of education were examined (see Table II for standardized coefficients and means of the DV by country). Education and national identity were the most consistent findings. Only 12 of the 29 countries reach significance ($p < 0.001$) when it came to the negative association between political orientation and attitudes toward immigrants with standardized coefficients ranging from $\beta = -0.14$ (Finland) to $\beta = -0.46$ (France). Most of these countries were Western and Northern European countries (e.g. Germany, France, Finland).

Table II ISSP 2013 regression results by country: Adj- R^2 , standardized β 's, means and standard deviations of attitudes toward immigrants

	Adj- R^2	(β) political orientation	(β) level of education	(β) national identity	Attitudes immigrants means (SD)
Belgium	0.26	-0.340***	0.251***	-0.149***	2.73 (0.80)
Croatia	0.09	-0.008	0.144**	-0.257***	2.94 (0.64)
Czech Republic	0.07	0.116***	0.167***	-0.105***	2.56 (0.61)
Denmark	0.37	-0.374***	0.181***	-0.323***	2.98 (0.82)
Estonia	0.07	-0.063	0.131**	-0.081	2.88 (0.61)
Finland	0.19	-0.142***	0.211***	-0.320***	2.88 (0.68)
France	0.45	-0.458***	0.242***	-0.241***	2.94 (0.94)
Georgia	0.04	0.120***	0.014	-0.133***	2.68 (0.68)
Germany	0.22	-0.191***	0.193***	-0.287***	3.22 (0.70)
Great Britain	0.23	-0.102	0.364***	-0.239***	2.67 (0.71)
Hungary	0.04	-0.078	0.202***	0.027	2.60 (0.58)
Iceland	0.27	-0.148***	0.230***	-0.324***	3.40 (0.51)
Ireland	0.11	-0.076	0.258***	-0.174***	3.05 (0.67)
Japan	0.09	-0.077**	0.118***	-0.185***	3.13 (0.62)
Korea (South)	0.03	-0.029	0.196***	0.036	3.08 (0.52)
Latvia	0.09	-0.133	0.016	-0.176***	2.67 (0.68)
Lithuania	0.02	-0.047	0.150***	-0.052	2.92 (0.49)
Mexico	0.02	-0.038	0.102	-0.110**	3.05 (0.58)
Norway	0.24	-0.339***	0.184***	-0.249***	2.96 (0.63)
Portugal	0.19	-0.025	0.278***	-0.213***	3.18 (0.57)
Russia	0.01	0.005	0.013	-0.111***	2.52 (0.63)
Slovak Republic	0.02	0.006	0.101	-0.057	2.62 (0.58)
Slovenia	0.13	-0.237***	0.185***	-0.149***	3.08 (0.60)
South Africa	0.00	-0.009	0.05	0.025	2.60 (0.63)
Spain	0.18	-0.196***	0.248***	-0.196***	3.10 (0.74)
Sweden	0.30	-0.253***	0.322***	-0.320***	3.22 (0.78)
Switzerland	0.42	-0.370***	0.109**	-0.352***	3.02 (0.65)
Turkey	0.00	0.059	0.032	-0.048	2.55 (0.58)
United States	0.20	-0.253***	0.230***	-0.188***	3.19 (0.62)
Overall	0.18	-0.175***	0.199***	-0.201***	2.89 (0.72)

Notes: The following are the means and standard deviation of all variables in the overall model: individual-level IVs political orientation 3.00 (0.97), education 4.46 (1.6), national identity 3.52 (0.85), and age 50 (16.5); country-level IVs GDP US 35,766.19 (24,3411.42), percent of immigrants 9.1 percent (5.6 percent), and Gini 33.8 percent (10 percent); and DV attitudes toward immigrants 2.89 (0.72). ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.001$

Of the 29 separate models seven (Georgia, Latvia, Mexico, Russia, Slovak Republic, Turkey, and South Africa) failed to reach significance when it came to the positive association between education and attitudes toward immigrants. The other 22 models reached significance at the $p < 0.05$ with standardized coefficients ranging from $\beta = 0.11$ (Switzerland) to $\beta = 0.36$ (Great Britain). Three of the seven countries in which education was not a significant variable associated with attitudes toward immigrants were Eastern European countries (Georgia, Slovak Republic, and Russia).

Of the 29 separate models seven (Estonia, Hungary, South Korea, Lithuania, Slovak Republic, Turkey, South Africa) failed to reach significance when it came to the negative association between national identity and attitudes toward immigrants. The other 22 models reached significance at the $p < 0.05$ with standardized coefficients ranging from $\beta = 0.11$ (Mexico, Russia) to $\beta = 0.35$ (Switzerland). Although these results do not meet the previously set criterion, they are worth mention. Two of the seven countries in which national identity was not significantly associated with attitudes toward immigrants were Eastern European countries (Hungary, Slovak Republic).

Regional level results

Following assessment of the country-level regression analyses, a categorical variable based upon region was developed which grouped countries into one of nine categories (Western, Eastern,

Southern, or Northern Europe, East or West Asia, North or Central America or Africa). Unfortunately, four of the regions are comprised of only one country (West Asia = Turkey, North America = USA, Central America = Mexico, and Africa = South Africa). Therefore, regional comparisons will be exclusive to the other five regions.

Findings from Western, Southern, and Northern European countries were consistent with expectations in that political orientation ($\beta = -0.15$ to -0.35) and national identity ($\beta = -0.20$ to -0.27) were negatively associated with attitudes toward immigrants and education ($\beta = 0.20$ to 0.23) was positively associated with attitudes toward immigrants. In comparison, Eastern European countries were consistent with expectation in that national identity ($\beta = -0.10$) was negatively associated and education ($\beta = 0.10$) was positively associated with attitudes toward immigrant. Inconsistent with expectations, political orientation ($\beta = 0.05$, $p = 0.002$) was positively associated with attitudes toward immigrant, meaning increased conservative political ideology is associated with more favorable attitudes toward immigrants. It should be noted that political orientation does not meet the standard coefficient cutoff criterion, however it was worth mentioning.

Results of ISSP 2003 data set

In total, 20 of the countries included in the ISSP 2013 data set were also included in the ISSP 2003 data set. Identical cut-off criteria and analyses were conducted with this data set. Reliability analyses of the DV and national identity within each country ranged from 0.62 to 0.88 and 0.58 to 0.78 respectively. Findings from the 2003 data set are consistent with the findings from the 2013 data set[2].

Discussion

The current study examined factors such as level of education, political orientation, and national identity association with prejudicial attitudes toward immigrants cross-nationally, controlling for individual- and country-level factors. Secondary data sets from the ISSP's National Identity model, UN, World Bank, and CIA's were analyzed. Results overall indicate that increased levels of education are associated with decreases in prejudice, while increased political conservatism and national identity are associated with increases in prejudice toward immigrants. These findings were expected based on previous literature.

When analyses are broken down by country, findings are not always consistent. Cross-nationally, it appears that political conservatism promotes value-systems that perpetuate general out-group denigration, which is reflected here as increased prejudice (i.e. less favorable attitudes) toward immigrants. However, this is only the case for western democracies (Western, Southern, Northern European countries and the USA), which are where the majority of the country level research has been conducted (e.g. right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation converge and predict prejudice toward relevant out-groups; see Duckitt, 2001). For Eastern European countries the association between political conservatism and prejudice is in the opposition direction. Furthermore, for Eastern Asia countries (Japan, South Korea) there is little to no significant association between political orientation and prejudice toward immigrants.

A more consistent finding cross-nationally is the association between increased national identity and increased prejudice toward immigrants. These findings are consistent with social identity theory and previous analyses with early versions of a comparable data set (ISSP Research Group, 2012 Pehrson *et al.*, 2009). According to social identity theory increased national identity promotes in-group favoritism of host country members and out-group bias toward those perceived as non-country members (i.e. immigrants). Therefore, those participants with increased national identity should also display increased prejudice toward immigrants, which is consistent with results, however there are countries in which this findings is considerably weak ($\beta > 0.10$) or non-significant. In 2013 data set, Northern (Estonia, Lithuania), Eastern (Hungary, Slovak Republic), and East Asian (South Korea) national identity does not appear to be a significant factor when it comes to understanding perceived attitudes toward immigrants.

The most consistent finding across countries is the association between increased formal education and decreased prejudice toward immigrants. With the exception of Georgia, Russia, Slovak Republic, Latvia, Turkey, Mexico, and South Africa in the 2013 data set and Latvia, Russia and Slovak Republic in the 2003 data set all other country level analyses revealed a significant association ($\beta \leq 0.10$ and $p < 0.05$) between increased education and decreased prejudice toward immigrants. These patterns emerged consistently across two time periods (2003 and 2013), suggesting that the impact education and political ideology or lack there of have on prejudice toward immigrants cross-nationally is relatively constant across time.

Assumptions and limitations

Secondary data are always limited by the materials and methods used by the primary researchers. Although ISSP goes through great lengths to ensure comparable data sets across countries, specific differences across counties may emerge. Although α levels are relatively consistent across two time points and countries, lack of equivalence of items across country such as national identity in which countries distinguish between types of national identity could still be present (Heath *et al.*, 2009). However, the large sample size of the data helps offset these concerns. The current data are cross-sectional at two time points, some longitudinal data suggests that association between education and favorable attitudes toward immigrants could be a result of self-selection and not a result of ideologies and values gained through the experience of formalized education (Lancee and Sarasin, 2015).

Future directions

A much-needed future direction would be to examine the relationship between prejudicial attitudes toward immigrants and discriminatory behaviors expressed toward immigrants cross-nationally. Such a study or program of research would be quite an undertaking, however attitudes contribute only one piece of the dynamic picture of cross-group relations between immigrants and their respected host countries. Furthermore, it is in the interest of society to understand not only the conditions and circumstances that promote positive intergroup contact and reduce intergroup bias, but also the conditions that promote a divergence between majority and minority group attitudes, which foster social change. A minority group's position that conflicts with the attitudes and actions of a majority can promote and perpetuate social change (e.g. American Civil Rights Movement). Tracking the collective action that the majorities across host countries takes or does not take on behalf or against immigrant population would inform the conditions and circumstance that promote and reduce intergroup bias, as well as factors that contribute to the divergence between majority and minority group attitudes, behaviors, and potential collective action.

Conclusion

Immigration is on the rise, with the bulk of immigrants moving to western democracies (UN, 2013). With increased immigration comes an increased opportunity of intergroup and intercultural interactions. Furthermore, immigrants represent a general social group that often symbolizes a type of minority group cross-nationally. In other words, immigrants vary cross-national (e.g. Mexican immigrants residing in the USA, Syrian immigrants residing in Europe). However quite unanimously, immigrant populations are of a group with less power, privilege, and prestige that is embedded in a large context dominated by a majority. Thus, immigrants are a suitable group for cross-national examinations integral to the understanding of prejudice and intergroup relations between immigrants and members of host countries.

Prejudicial attitudes do not necessarily directly predict downstream discriminatory behaviors; instead, intergroup bias represents an important component in the understanding of the dynamic between a minority and a majority group. Prejudicial attitudes reveal the ways in which people (e.g. citizens) think about a relevant group (e.g. immigrants). A consistent finding across two time points and at both the country and regional levels emerged between education and prejudice

in which increased education was associated with decreases reports of prejudice toward immigrants. Less consistent, however, were patterns between political ideology, national identity, and prejudice toward immigrants. In comparison to Eastern European and Asian countries political ideology and national identity appear to be significant factors, more so, for western democracies. These findings carry implications for improving anti-immigrant prejudice throughout the world.

Notes

1. Contact the author for detailed methods of 2003 data.
2. Contact the author for full results.

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Further reading

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