

DIFFERENTIAL AFFECT TOWARD IMMIGRANT ORIGINS

**Social Dominance Orientation and Differential Affect toward Immigrant Origin Groups:  
Evidence from Three Immigration-Receiving Countries**

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### **Abstract**

Recent evidence suggests that majority group members in immigration-receiving societies express differential levels of prejudice and stereotyping toward various immigrant origins. However, there is little research on whether this tendency to differentiate between more vs. less liked immigrant groups is informed by essential psychological motivations and systematically related to individual differences. In this paper, I test whether majority group members' propensity to express greater differences in affect toward immigrant origins is associated with social dominance orientation. Using survey studies carried out in the Netherlands, the United States, and Britain, I demonstrate that majority group members' tendency to express differential affect toward immigrant origins holds across national contexts. I also show that individual-level inclination to differentiate between more and less liked immigrant groups is consistently related to social dominance orientation in all three countries. Overall, my findings confirm the group-specific character of anti-immigration attitudes and highlight the role of social dominance motivations in prejudice toward immigrants.

*Keywords:* immigration, intergroup relations, prejudice, public opinion, social dominance

### **Social Dominance Orientation and Differential Affect toward Immigrant Origin Groups: Evidence from Three Immigration-Receiving Countries**

One major question in modern research on the psychology of attitudes toward immigration and immigrants concerns the extent to which they are universal or group-specific (for a review, see Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014). Some experimental studies have found that majority group members make no distinctions between different origins when perceiving immigration as threatening (Sniderman et al., 2004), or when deciding on hypothetical admissions of individual immigrants (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2015), thus suggesting that exclusionary attitudes are informed by generalized ethnocentric motivations (Kinder & Kam, 2009). At the same time, there is substantial evidence that majority group members' opinions and stereotypes about immigrants are origin-specific (Ford, 2011; Konitzer et al., 2019; Timberlake and Williams, 2012). In a similar vein, desire to restrict immigration is dominated by aversion toward specific origin groups, such as Hispanics/Latinos in the United States (Brader et al., 2008; Branton et al., 2011; Hartman et al., 2014; Newman & Malhotra, 2018; Valentino et al., 2013), and Muslims in Europe (Abdelgadir and Fouka 2020; Adida et al., 2016; Simonsen & Bonikowski, 2020). For instance, voters in now-discontinued citizenship referenda in Switzerland have been consistently discriminating against applicants of certain non-Western origins—even after being provided relevant information about their economic status and level of integration (Hainmueller & Hangartner, 2013, 2019).

Existing literature offers several potential explanations for why certain immigrant origin groups can face lower levels of prejudice from majority group members. They include cultural closeness and perceived willingness to integrate (Ostfeld, 2017; Sides and Citrin 2007), potential

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economic contribution and low burden on welfare (Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2010; Valentino et al., 2019), and racial similarity to mostly White majorities (Quillian, 1995; Schachter, 2016).

Most recently, it has been suggested that evaluations of immigrant groups depend on their perceived statuses rather than on the specific economic or cultural characteristics (Kustov, 2019). Overall, this is a promising approach that has a potential to reconcile the centrality of specific origins for mass imagination about immigration at-large with limited explanatory power of ethnicity for evaluations of individual immigrants. At the same time, if majority group members' tendency to distinguish between more and less liked immigrant origins indeed springs from motivation to maintain established hierarchies, it should be associated with social dominance orientation (SDO; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), a measure of preference for group-based inequality. However, so far this relationship has not been explicitly estimated and, as a result, the assumed psychological mechanism remains under-explored.

In this paper, I contribute to the literature by investigating the relationship between majority group members' tendency to express differential affect toward immigrant origin groups and individual differences in SDO across national contexts. I start from reviewing the basic tenets of the social dominance framework and the role of SDO as the measure of individual differences in preferences for group-based inequalities. Following these insights and recent empirical findings, I argue that SDO should be positively but differentially associated with prejudice toward immigrant origins. I test this hypothesis using original survey data from probability and convenience samples in three immigrant-receiving countries: the Netherlands, the United States, and Britain. My results confirm that, across different contexts, majority group members express differential affect toward immigrant origins and that these differences are greatest among those high in SDO. I also demonstrate that SDO is differentially related to

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prejudice toward specific immigrant groups and that respondents who are high on SDO express greater affective distances between various immigrant origins. In conclusion, I outline prospects for future research and discuss implications of my findings for politics of immigration in industrial democracies.

### **The Social Dominance Approach to Intergroup Relations**

Social dominance theory (SDT) has been developed to synthesize social, psychological, and evolutionary insights on the two universals of societal organizations: inequality on the one hand and importance of group categorizations and identities on the other hand (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Combining these two observations regarding social systems, SDT postulates that human societies tend to be organized as group-based hierarchies. Dominant groups control disproportionate shares of both material and symbolic social value whereas subordinate groups are deprived of the same resources. These hierarchies are created and maintained by a combination of social forces but an important part of them is actions of individuals who tend to exhibit preferences toward high-status groups, independently of their own group memberships.

Individual differences in preferences for nonegalitarian and hierarchically structured relationships among social groups within SDT are described by social dominance orientation (SDO). Recent evidence suggests that SDO incorporates two complementary dimensions: preference for some groups to dominate others and preference for nonegalitarian intergroup relations (Ho et al., 2012). Initial applications of concept have focused on group hierarchies within national borders and have demonstrated that high SDO is associated with positive affect toward high-status groups, independently of whether they are ingroups or outgroups (Levin & Sidanius, 1999). As the same time, the association between SDO and favoritism toward high-status groups is conditional upon perceived hierarchy stability (Federico, 1998), as well as upon

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the hierarchy being seen as legitimate (Levin et al., 2002). SDO is also related to prejudice but this effect is not uniform: It is strongest for prejudice toward low-status groups but can be weak or nonexistent for prejudice toward socially or culturally threatening groups (Duckitt, 2006). In the realm of politics and policy, high SDO is associated with opposition to government programs providing resources to disadvantaged groups (Sibley & Duckitt, 2010). Overall, SDO seems to reflect a general motivation to create and maintain group-based hierarchies that exists across cultures and cannot be reduced to psychological mechanisms based on group identity alone (Pratto et al., 2000; Sibley & Liu, 2010).

The effects of SDO, however, are not limited to hierarchies within national borders as they are also consistently found to be relevant for international relations. For instance, high SDO is associated with positive images of superior foreign powers (Alexander et al., 2005), lower support for violence against dominant international targets (Levin et al., 2003; Sidanius et al., 2004), and greater support for violence against subordinate targets (Henry et al., 2005). Recently, an association between high SDO and opposition to hierarchy-attenuating intergroup apologies in both domestic and international context has been reported (Karunaratne & Laham, 2019).

### **Social Dominance Orientation and Anti-Immigrant Affect**

Since SDO reflects preferences for group hierarchies both within and between national borders, it should be relevant for attitudes toward immigration. Indeed, high SDO is generally associated with anti-immigrant affect since they can be thought of as a manifestation of broader anti-egalitarian opinions (Kteily et al., 2012). This relationship is mediated by greater perception of threat from immigration among those high in SDO (Newman et al., 2014). At the same time, high SDO is associated with greater hostility against immigrants who are more willing to assimilate into the dominant culture because this may threaten established status boundaries

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between group (Guimond et al., 2010; Thomsen et al., 2008). In the realm of politics, respondents high in SDO are more likely to support restrictive immigration policies at home and abroad (Craig & Richeson, 2014). When it comes to immigrant integration policies, high SDO is associated with support for assimilation and opposition to multiculturalism (Levin et al., 2012), but this association depends on the national policy context (Guimond et al., 2013). The effect of SDO on opposition to pro-immigrant policies is greatest when the immigrant groups in question are seen as threatening (Costello & Hodson, 2011). Additionally, the effect of SDO on attitudes toward immigration is higher when ingroup identity and social categorization more generally are salient compared to when concerns of other groups or individual values are primed (Danso et al., 2007), highlighting the group-level rather than individual-level nature of social dominance motivations in anti-immigrant reactions.

A recent perspective on the role of social dominance motivations in attitudes toward immigration postulates that majority group members' tendency to express differential affect toward immigrant origins stems from the motivation to maintain group-based hierarchies (Kustov, 2019). Evidence from Spain as the case study shows that, first, residents in localities with greater levels of immigration from low-status origins exhibit greater levels of anti-immigrant attitudes and, second, majority group members have perceptions about hierarchies of potential immigrants and these perceptions predict attitudes toward immigration. Still, existing evidence on the importance of social dominance motivations for majority group members propensity to distinguish between more and less liked immigrant groups is only indirect as the association between individual-level tendency to express differential affect toward immigrant origins and SDO has never been estimated.

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### **Observable Implications and Outline of Studies**

The primary objective of this paper is to explore the relationships between SDO and affect toward immigrants of different origins. Theoretical discussion presented so far makes it possible to derive several testable predictions. On average, SDO should be negatively associated with affect toward immigrants but this association should differ across immigrant origins. On the level of individual respondents, SDO should be also associated with tendency to express differential affect toward immigrant groups: Those with stronger preference for group inequality should express greater affective distances between different immigrant origins. The societal level outcome of these psychological processes is existence of consistently more and less liked immigrant groups. But such differences in affect should exist primarily due to those high in SDO and be most strongly endorsed by them.

To test these predictions, I use data from survey studies in the Netherlands, the United States, and Britain. All three countries are industrial democracies that attract relatively large numbers of immigrants. Also, all three societies have European-heritage, phenotypically White, and historically Christian ethnic majorities. At the same time, the three studied countries differ in terms of prevalent immigrant origins, integration policies as well as ideologies behind them, and levels of social and economic inequality. Therefore, replicating the same pattern of relationship between SDO and differential affect toward immigrant origins will make a strong case for its context invariance. Given the nature of the research question, analyzed samples include only members of the respective majority groups (ethnic Dutch, White Americans, and White British).

Across all three studies, I follow the same analytic strategy to consequentially test the three observable implications: (1) majority group members' tendency to differentiate between more vs. less liked immigrant origins, (2) varying effects of SDO on affect toward immigrant

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groups, and (3) association between SDO and individual-level propensity to express differential affect toward immigrant origins. I start from describing affect toward more vs. less liked immigrant origin groups both within the full sample and by respondents' levels of SDO using group-specific mean feeling thermometer scores. High vs. low SDO categories are defined as, respectively, respondents above and below the sample-specific median value of the interval SDO scale—maximizing statistical power for the comparison. Then, I compare the effects of SDO on affect toward different immigrant origin groups and test the hypothesis that these effects are equal in sizes. Finally, I estimate an OLS regression model that predicts respondent-level tendency to express differential affect toward immigrant origin groups using SDO as the main explanatory variable and political ideology, age, gender, education, and geographic region as controls. The tendency to express differential affect toward immigrant origin groups is calculated as individual-level standard deviation of the group-specific feeling thermometer scores. This measure can be interpreted as one's tendency to assign dissimilar (high vs. low) affective ratings to different groups.

Table 1 presents the three studies' sampling procedures, sample sizes, and lists of immigrant origins. Immigrant groups were selected as the most prevalent immigrant-sending nations for each of the three countries corrected for diversity—that is, making sure that immigrant groups from different world regions were asked about. Following the individual studies, I also report estimates of standardized bivariate relationships between SDO and individual tendency to express differential affect toward immigrant origin groups for each studied sample as well as the estimate pooled across the three countries using a simple random effects model.

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**Table 1.** Outline of the three studies

Country	Sample	<i>N</i>	Immigrant origins
Netherlands	Probability	867	Surinamese, Turks, Poles, Moroccans, Romanians
United States	Convenience	645	Mexicans, Chinese, Salvadorans, Cubans, Koreans, Germans, Poles, Nigerians, Iraqis, Lebanese, Somalis
Britain	Convenience	440	Poles, Indians, Pakistanis, Romanians, Irish, Germans, South Africans, Nigerians

### Study 1: Netherlands

#### Data and Measures

Study 1 uses data from a comprehensive online survey on the topics of migration and integration in the Netherlands carried out on the probability panel of ethnic Dutch adults in February 2017 by GfK. The total of 867 respondents completed the questionnaire. Sample age was higher than the national average with median respondent being between 50 and 64 years. The gender ratio was 49% male to 51% female. College or university education was reported by 29.2% of respondents. In terms of ideology, 27.7% of the sample self-identified as politically left, 47.2% as centrists, and 25.1% as right-wing.

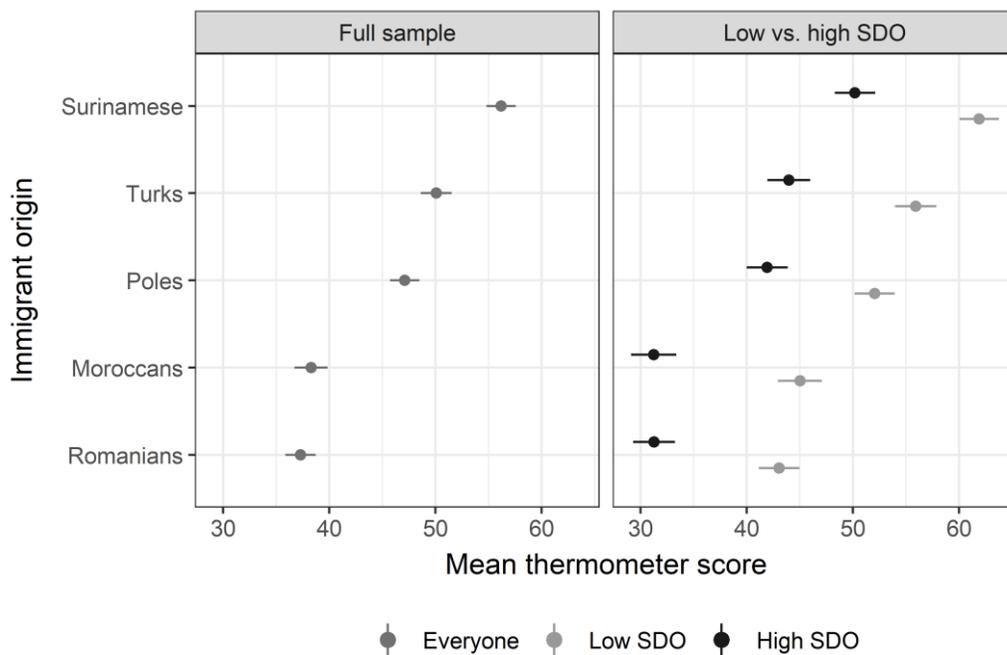
The survey asked respondents to express affect toward five major immigrant origins in the Netherlands using standard 100-point feeling thermometer scales (see Table 1 for the list of groups). It also included a shortened 6-item version of the SDO<sub>6</sub> battery (Pratto et al. 1994). Its reliability was .77 according to Cronbach's alpha. Respondents' political ideology was assessed using a 5-point scale from 1 = *Left* to 5 = *Right*. See Appendix for the English translations of survey questions.

#### Results

Figure 1 presents average affect toward immigrant origins in the Dutch sample by comparing groups' mean feeling thermometer ratings. On average, Dutch respondents distinguish between more and less liked immigrant groups with Surinamese having the highest

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mean feeling thermometer score and Moroccans and Romanians having the lowest. Estimated difference in mean feeling thermometer ratings between the most and the least preferred origins is almost 20 on the 0–100 thermometer scale. Interestingly, this picture does not differ much across respondents' levels of SDO. Effectively the same differences between more and less liked immigrant groups are found among low- and high-SDO participants. At the same time, those with high levels of SDO rate all immigrant origins approximately 10 point lower on the feelings thermometer scale.



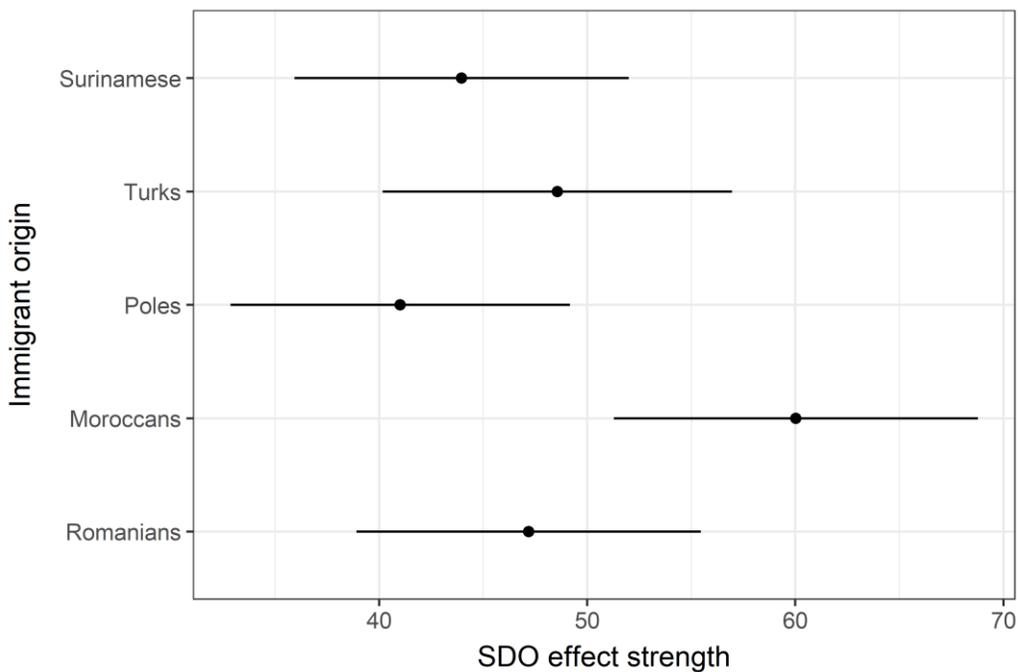
**Figure 1.** Average affect toward immigrant origin groups among all respondents (left) and by the level of SDO (right), Dutch sample. Estimates with 95% confidence intervals

Figure 2 presents the bivariate effects of SDO on affect toward different immigrant origin groups in the Dutch sample as estimated differences between respondents with the highest possible SDO score vs. those with the lowest score. Some differences can be noticed: the strongest effect is observed for Moroccans whereas the weakest effect is observed for Poles. Formally, an *F*-test rejects the null hypotheses that SDO is equally strongly associated with

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affect toward all five immigrant groups on the 95% confidence level ( $F_{4, 4325} = 2.92, p = .020$ ).

At the same time, every single effect on its own is positive and statistically significant on the 99.9% confidence level. Interestingly, there is no one-to-one correspondence in rankings of SDO effects to the immigrant groups' average feeling thermometer scores. Specifically, affect toward non-Western immigrant origins (e.g., Moroccans) seem to be associated with SDO more strongly. However, this conjecture cannot be tested formally with the data at hand.



**Figure 2.** Bivariate relationships between SDO and affect toward different immigrant origin groups, Dutch sample. Estimates with 95% confidence intervals. SDO effect strength = estimated difference in group affect between those scoring lowest vs. highest on SDO

Table 2 presents results of an OLS regression predicting individual-level tendency to express differential affect toward immigrant origins (calculated as individual-level standard deviations of all group-specific feeling thermometer scores) in the Dutch sample. According to the estimates, this tendency is higher among those high in SDO and respondents who identify as

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right-wing but lower among women. Age, education, and geographic region have no statistically reliable effect on propensity to distinguish between more and less liked immigrant origins.

**Table 2.** OLS regression results for differential affect toward immigrant origins, Dutch sample

	Estimate	SE
SDO	0.76*	(0.31)
Ideology (High = right-wing)	1.01***	(0.27)
Age	-0.08	(0.21)
Gender (Female)	-2.11***	(0.55)
Education	-0.66	(0.39)
Region (Randstad = ref.)		
West	-1.37	(0.93)
North	-1.47	(1.14)
East	-1.32	(0.96)
South	-0.83	(0.95)

Note.  $N = 867$ . SE = standard error

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

### Discussion

Results of Study 1 support the three observable implications regarding differential affect toward immigrant origins and its relationship to SDO. First, Dutch respondents distinguish between more and less liked immigrant groups. Affect toward immigrant origins does not differ much by respondents' levels of SDO—but this might be because they have been asked only about immigrant groups with relatively low perceived statuses vis-a-vis the Dutch majority. For instance, a question about affect toward Germans—by some calculations, the largest immigrant origin in the Netherlands—has not been asked. I address this limitation in Studies 2 and 3 by including questions about feelings toward groups with perceived higher statuses. Second, the effects of SDO on feeling thermometers are significantly different across immigrant origins, even when only lower-status groups are included. Third, SDO is significantly associated with individual-level tendency to express differential affect toward immigrant origins, even when controlled for political ideology and demographics.

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## Study 2: United States

### Data and Measures

Study 2 uses data from an online survey of U.S. adults carried out in May 2018. Respondents were recruited using Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), a crowdsourcing platform allowing to field fast and inexpensive survey studies with convenience samples that are more diverse than most subject pools (Buhrmester et al., 2011). Analysis was limited to those who reported their race/ethnicity as White. After excluding duplicate IP addresses and those who answered the questionnaire from outside of the U.S., the final sample consisted of 645 respondents. Mean age was 40.9 years. The gender ratio was 48.8% male to 51.2% female. College or university education was reported by 55.2% of respondents, which was substantially higher than the national average. The sample distribution of political ideology was skewed to the left with 51.8% of respondents self-identified as left-of-center.

The survey asked respondents to express affect toward 11 major immigrant origins in the United States using standard 100-point feeling thermometer scales (see Table 1 for the list of groups). It also included a shortened 8-item version of the SDO<sub>7</sub> battery (Ho et al., 2015). Its reliability was .93 according to Cronbach's alpha. Respondents' political ideology was assessed using a 11-point scale from 0 = *Left* to 10 = *Right*. See Appendix for the survey questions.

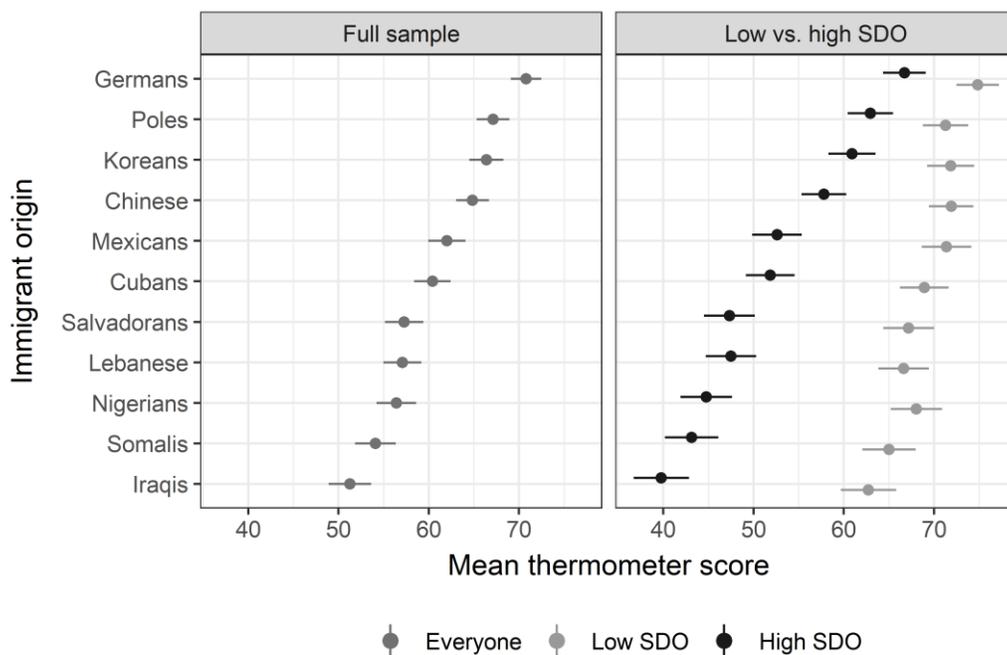
To assess participants' knowledge about different immigrant origins, the survey also included a mini-quiz, in which respondents were asked to identify the region of the world (Latin America, Asia, Europe, Africa, or Middle East) for each of 11 immigrant-sending countries corresponding to origins included in the feeling thermometer battery. Overall, respondents demonstrated good knowledge of the origin countries as, on average, they identified the region

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correctly in 93.6% of cases. As many as 65.4% of respondents made no mistakes at all whereas 86.8% of respondents made only one mistake or less.

### Results

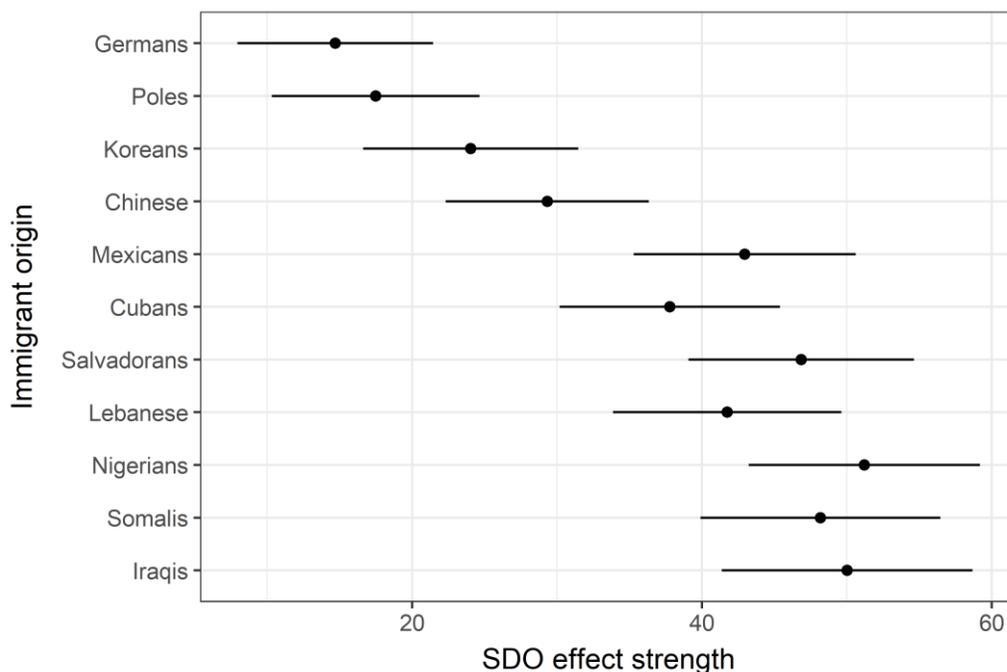
Figure 3 presents average affect toward immigrant origins in the U.S. sample by comparing groups' mean feeling thermometer ratings. On average, U.S. respondents distinguish between more and less liked immigrant groups with Germans having the highest mean feeling thermometer score and Iraqis having the lowest. Estimated difference in mean ratings between the most and the least liked origins is approximately 20 on the 0–100 thermometer scale. Unlike in the Dutch sample, this picture differs across respondents' levels of SDO. Specifically, low-SDO participants give different immigrant origins somewhat closer thermometer scores. Those with high levels of SDO rate all immigrant groups lower on the feelings thermometer scale—but this gap ranges from less than 10 points for Germans to almost 25 points for Iraqis.



**Figure 3.** Average affect toward immigrant origin groups among all respondents (left) and by the level of SDO (right), U.S. sample. Estimates with 95% confidence intervals

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Figure 4 presents the bivariate effects of SDO on affect toward different immigrant origin groups in the U.S. sample as estimated differences between respondents with the highest possible SDO score vs. those with the lowest score. The effects of SDO on affect differ across group: For instance, the estimated coefficient is approximately three times as high for Iraqis compared to Germans. An  $F$ -test rejects the null hypotheses that SDO is equally strongly associated with affect toward all 11 immigrant groups on the 99.9% confidence level ( $F_{10, 7073} = 11.46, p < .001$ ). At the same time, every single effect on its own is positive and statistically significant on the 99.9% confidence level. Similar to the Dutch sample, there is no one-to-one correspondence in rankings of SDO effects to the average thermometer scores by immigrant group. Specifically, affect toward immigrant origins from regions with lower average thermometer scores (Latin America, Middle East, and Sub-Saharan Africa) seem to be associated with SDO relatively similarly—and substantially stronger than affect toward immigrants from Europe and East Asia.



**Figure 4.** Bivariate relationships between SDO and affect toward different immigrant origin groups, U.S. sample. Estimates with 95% confidence intervals. SDO effect strength = estimated difference in group affect between those scoring lowest vs. highest on SDO

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Finally, Table 3 presents results of an OLS regression predicting individual-level tendency to express differential affect toward immigrant origins (calculated as individual-level standard deviations of all origin-specific feeling thermometer scores) in the U.S. sample. Similar to the Dutch sample, differences in expressed affect are higher among those high in SDO and respondents who identify as right-wing but lower among women. Age, education, and geographic region have no statistically reliable effect on propensity to distinguish between more and less liked immigrant origins—again, in line with what has been found in the Dutch sample.

**Table 3.** OLS regression results for differential affect toward immigrant origins, U.S. sample

	Estimate	SE
SDO	1.86***	(0.30)
Ideology (High = right-wing)	0.64***	(0.15)
Age	0.04	(0.03)
Gender (Female)	-1.71*	(0.78)
Education	-0.08	(0.29)
Region (South)	-0.07	(0.83)

*Note.*  $N = 642$ . SE = standard error

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

### Discussion

Results of Study 2 provide additional support for the three observable implications regarding differential affect toward immigrant origins and its relationship to SDO. First, U.S. respondents distinguish between more and less liked immigrant groups. Moreover, in contrast to the Dutch sample, differences in expressed affect vary by respondents' levels of SDO—with those low in SDO giving closer thermometer ratings to various immigrant origins. Second, the effects of SDO on expressed affect are significantly different across immigrant groups. Third, SDO is significantly associated with individual-level tendency to express differential affect toward immigrant origins, even when controlled for political ideology and demographics.

## Study 3: Britain

### Data and Measures

Study 3 uses data from an online survey of British adults carried out in August 2018 (sampling frame did not include Northern Ireland). Respondents were recruited using Prolific, a crowdsourcing platform that overrepresents Europeans as potential participants who also tend to be less experienced survey takers compared to MTurk workers (Peer et al., 2017). Using pre-screening allowed by the platform, I restricted the pool of potential participants to UK citizens. Analysis was limited to those who reported their race/ethnicity as White British. After excluding duplicate IP addresses and those who answered the questionnaire from outside of the UK, the final sample consisted of 440 respondents. Mean age was 38.9 years. The gender ratio was 32.4% male to 67.6% female, substantially deviating from the national average. College or university education was reported by 45.3% of respondents—again, higher than the national average. The sample distribution of political ideology was skewed to the left with 42.6% of respondents self-identified as left-of-center.

The survey asked respondents to express affect toward eight major immigrant origins in Britain using standard 100-point feeling thermometer scales (see Table 1 for the list of groups). It also included a shortened 8-item version of the SDO<sub>7</sub> battery. Its reliability was .86 according to Cronbach's alpha. Respondents' political ideology was assessed using a 11-point scale from 0 = *Left* to 10 = *Right*. See Appendix for the survey questions.

To assess participants' knowledge about different immigrant origins, the survey also included a mini-quiz, in which they were asked to identify the region of the world (Asia, Europe, or Africa) for six immigrant-sending countries (Ireland and South Africa were not asked about in the quiz). Overall, respondents demonstrated good knowledge of the origin countries as, on

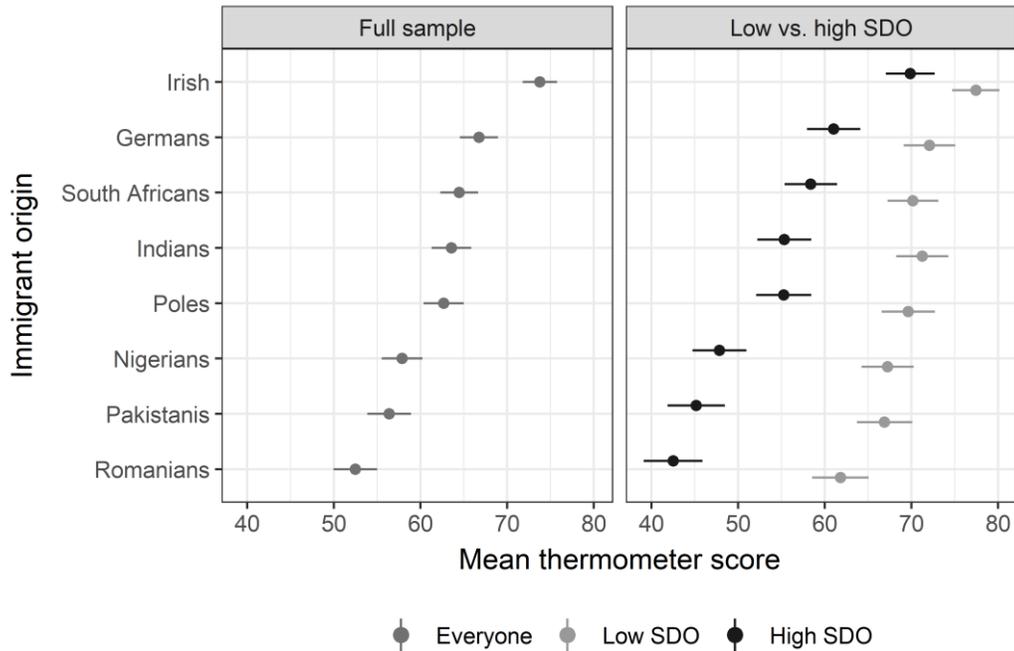
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average, they identified the region correctly in 98.2% of cases. As many as 92.7% of respondents made no mistakes at all.

### **Results**

Figure 5 presents average affect toward immigrant origins in the British sample by comparing groups' mean feeling thermometer ratings. On average, British respondents distinguish between more and less liked immigrant groups with Irish having the highest mean thermometer score and Romanians having the lowest. Estimated difference in mean thermometer ratings between the most and the least liked origins is more than 20 on the 0–100 thermometer scale. Unlike in the Dutch sample and like in the U.S. sample, this picture differs across respondents' levels of SDO. Specifically, low-SDO participants give different immigrant origins somewhat closer thermometer scores—although Irish and Romanians seem to be outliers in positive and negative direction respectively. Those with high levels of SDO rate all immigrant groups lower on the feelings thermometer scale—but this gap ranges from less than 10 points for Irish to approximately 20 points for Romanians.

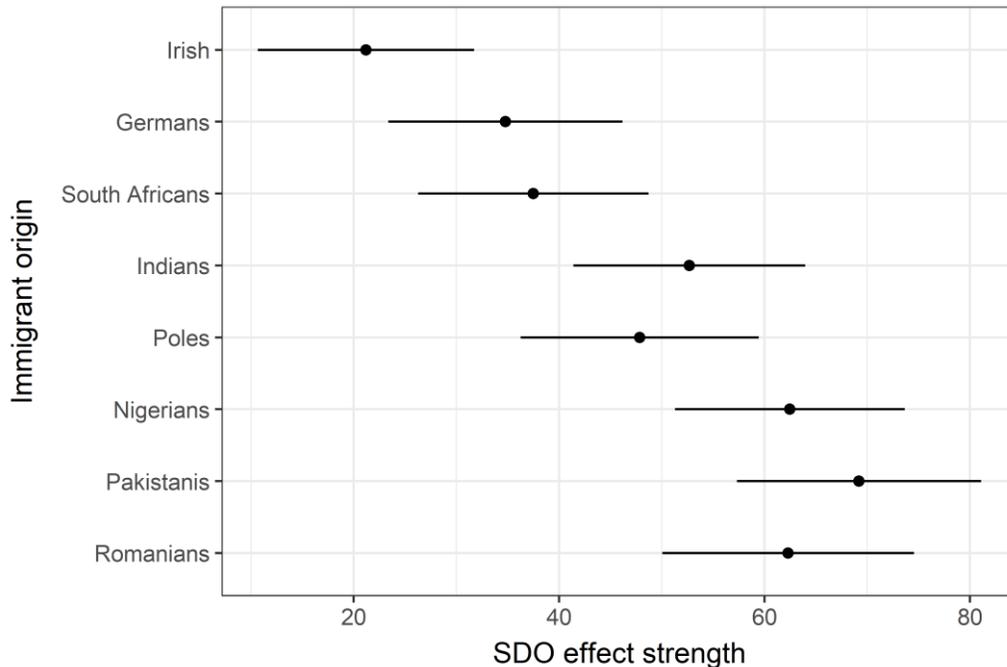
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**Figure 5.** Average affect toward immigrant origin groups among all respondents (left) and by the level of SDO (right), British sample. Estimates with 95% confidence intervals

Figure 6 presents the bivariate effects of SDO on affect toward immigrant origins in the British sample as estimated differences between respondents with the highest possible SDO scores vs. those with the lowest scores. The effects of SDO on affect differ a lot across immigrant groups: for instance, the estimated coefficient is approximately 3.5 times as high for Pakistanis compared to Irish. An  $F$ -test rejects the null hypotheses that SDO is equally strongly associated with feelings to all eight immigrant groups on the 99.9% confidence level ( $F_{7, 3496} = 7.92, p < .001$ ). At the same time, every single effect on its own is positive and statistically significant on the 99.9% confidence level. Similar to the Dutch and U.S. samples, there is no one-to-one correspondence in rankings of SDO effects on feelings toward immigrant origins to the average thermometer scores. Specifically, affect toward non-Western immigrant groups (e.g., Indians and Pakistanis) seems to be associated with SDO more strongly than affect toward Western groups that have comparable average thermometer scores (e.g., Poles and Romanians).

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**Figure 6.** Bivariate relationships between SDO and affect toward different immigrant origin groups, British sample. Estimates with 95% confidence intervals. SDO effect strength = estimated difference in group affect between those scoring lowest vs. highest on SDO

Table 4 presents results of an OLS regression predicting individual-level tendency to express differential affect toward immigrant origins (calculated as individual-level standard deviations of all origin-specific feeling thermometer scores) in the British sample. Similar to the Dutch and U.S. samples, differences in expressed affect are higher among those high in SDO. At the same time, education is negatively associated with tendency to express differential affect toward immigrant origins—an effect that has not been found in Studies 1 and 2. In contrast to the Dutch and U.S. samples, gender is not related to individual-level propensity to give immigrant origins differential affect scores. Age and region have no statistically reliable effects on propensity to distinguish between more and less liked immigrant origins—again, in line with what has been found in Studies 1 and 2.

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**Table 4.** OLS regression results for differential affect toward immigrant origins, British sample

	Estimate	SE
SDO	2.67***	(0.47)
Ideology (High = right-wing)	0.30	(0.26)
Age	-0.03	(0.04)
Gender (Female)	-1.19	(0.98)
Education	-0.59*	(0.30)
Region (Scotland or Wales)	-2.03	(1.35)

*Note.*  $N = 414$ . SE = standard error

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

### Discussion

Results of Study 3 corroborate the three observable implications regarding the differential affect toward immigrant origins and its relationship to SDO. First, British respondents clearly distinguish between more and less liked immigrant groups. Moreover, in contrast to the Dutch sample and similar to the U.S. sample, differences in expressed affect depend on respondents' levels of SDO—with those low in SDO giving various immigrant origins closer affect scores. Second, the effects of SDO on feeling thermometers are significantly different across immigrant groups. Third, SDO is significantly associated with individual-level tendency to express differential affect toward immigrant origins, even when controlled for political ideology and demographics.

### Pooled Result

Note that Studies 1, 2, and 3 discussed above use the same individual-level dependent variable, tendency to express differential affect toward immigrant origins (calculated as individual-level standard deviation of all group-specific feeling thermometer scores), and the same key explanatory variable, SDO. Therefore, results of the three studies can be pooled using a relatively simple meta-analytic framework (Hedges & Olkin, 1985). Specifically, I use the inverse-variance random effects model that allows the true effect of interest to vary across the

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three studies. Since the three samples come from different countries, fixed effects model assumption that there is a single true effect size for all three studies is too restrictive.

Table 5 presents bivariate relationships (estimated as standardized coefficients from simple OLS regressions) between SDO and tendency to express differential affect toward immigrant origins for the Dutch, U.S., and British samples as well as the pooled effect.

According to the presented estimates, SDO and tendency to express differential affect toward immigrant origins exhibit positive and significant relationships in all three countries. At the same time, the effect size in the Netherlands is reliably smaller compared to the United States and Britain. Still, the pooled effect across the three studies is positive and statistically significant.

**Table 5.** Sample-specific and pooled standardized bivariate relationships between SDO and differential affect toward immigrant origins

	Estimate	SE	95% CI	<i>N</i>	Weight
Netherlands	.17	.03	[.10, .23]	867	0.344
United States	.37	.04	[.30, .44]	645	0.328
Britain	.36	.04	[.28, .45]	439	0.328
Pooled	.30		[.16, .44]	1,951	

*Note.* SE = standard error. CI = confidence interval

Why estimated effect in the Dutch study diverges from the rest in terms of size, even though agreeing on the general conclusion: presence of a positive and significant relationship between SDO and tendency to express differential affect toward immigrant origins? The main reason for this difference is likely the fact that respondents in the Netherlands have not been asked about affect toward the relatively numerous immigrant origin groups with allegedly highest perceived statuses, such as Germans or Belgians. As a result, overall variance of attitudes to different origins is smaller thus suppressing magnitude of the covariance with SDO. It is also necessary to note that the Dutch study uses an older version of the SDO scale with somewhat lower reliability. At the same time, sample in the Dutch study is probability-based whereas U.S.

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and British studies rely on diverse convenience samples—but this consideration cannot be formally incorporated in the pooled result reported above.

### **General Discussion and Conclusion**

The goal of the present study has been to understand the psychological antecedents of majority group members' tendency to distinguish between more and less liked immigrant groups. Specifically, I have explored whether propensity to express differential affect toward immigrant origins is motivated by the desire to establish and maintain group hierarchies (Kustov, 2019). If this hypothesis is correct, there should exist an association between differences in affect toward various immigrant origins expressed by respondents and individual differences in motivation to preserve inegalitarian social structures. To implement this critical test, I have estimated the relationship between individual-level tendency to express differential affect toward immigrant origin groups and social dominance orientation (SDO), a measure of preference for group-based inequality, using original survey studies in three immigration-receiving countries: the Netherlands, the United States, and Britain.

Findings across the three studies reported in the paper provide strong and uniform support for the social dominance perspective on differential affect toward immigrant origins among majority group members. First, respondents in all three countries clearly distinguish between more and less liked immigrant groups. In the United States and in Britain, but not in the Netherlands, differences in expressed affect are much more pronounced among those high in SDO. Second, SDO is differentially associated with expressed affect toward specific immigrant origins. Third, individual-level tendency to express differential affect toward immigrant groups are positively associated with SDO even when controlled for political ideology and demographics. Moreover, SDO has emerged as the only predictor of differences in expressed

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affect toward immigrant origins that exhibits significant effects in the predicted direction in all three countries.

Some additional findings are of note as well. For instance, in the Netherlands and the United States, but not in Britain, women are found to be less prone to express differential affect toward immigrant groups than men, in accordance with some earlier insights on gender imbalances in social dominance motivations (Levin, 2004; Pratto et al., 1997; Sidanius et al., 2000; but cf. Batalha et al., 2011; Damburn et al., 2004; Wilson & Liu, 2003), although some of this effect is apparently direct and not mediated by SDO. In addition, affect toward non-Western immigrant origins in the studied White-majority countries seem to be more strongly associated with SDO—but this conjecture needs further testing.

These results have important implications for the literature on public attitudes toward immigration. They show that, across national contexts, majority group members clearly distinguish between more vs. less liked immigrant origins. Consistently positive associations between individual-level differences in affect toward immigrant groups and SDO strongly suggests that this phenomenon springs from motivations to construct and maintain status-based inequalities between social groups. Overall, my results emphasize the centrality of social categorization and group-level prejudice for the politics of immigration in industrial democracies.

The discussion above allows to outline at least three promising directions for future research on the tendency to express differential affect toward immigrant groups among majority group members. First, researchers can explore other potential individual-level predictors of differential affect toward immigrant origins such as right-wing authoritarianism, Big Five personality traits, and group empathy (Cohrs & Asbrock, 2009; McFarland, 2010; Sibley &

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Duckitt, 2008; Sirin et al., 2017; Whitley, 1999). Second, investigating the characteristics of immigrant-sending countries that impact differences in affect toward immigrant groups expressed by majority group members are definitely of interest. My analysis has not engaged with this question directly but reported feeling thermometer scores suggest that these differences can be affected by some combination of economic, cultural, racial, and security-related considerations. Detailed investigation of their relative contributions is beyond the purpose of this study—especially, given that these contributions cannot be estimated with the data at hand. Future research can use experimental techniques to manipulate salience of economy, culture, race, or security in evaluations of different immigrant origins and compare the effects of such manipulations on affect toward specific groups.

In sum, results presented in this paper demonstrate that, first, majority group members distinguish between more vs. less liked immigrant origins and, second, this tendency has essential psychological underpinnings. Specifically, I have shown that propensity to express differential affect toward immigrant groups is associated with social dominance orientation in three immigration-receiving societies: the Netherlands, the United States, and Britain. If majority group members' tendency to distinguish between more and less liked immigrant origins indeed springs from motivation to maintain group-based inequalities, immigrants are likely incorporated into the established hierarchies of the host societies on the basis of the statuses ascribed to their origin countries. This pattern may have important implications for both majority group members' opinions on immigration and immigrants' prospects to integrate. It also means that differences in affect toward specific immigrant groups deserve more attention in research on psychology of public attitudes toward immigration than they have been getting so far.

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## **Stimulus Materials**

### **Study 1: Netherlands**

#### **Group feeling thermometers**

“Below you see a so-called ‘feeling thermometer.’ We ask you to indicate your feelings about certain groups in the Netherlands by choosing a number on the scale below. The higher the number, the more positive feelings you have about this group and the lower the number, the more negative you feel about this group. If your feeling is not positive or negative, choose 50.”

- Romanians
- Poles
- Moroccans
- Turks
- Surinamese

Question order randomized.

#### **Social dominance orientation**

“To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?”

- Some groups are simply not equal to other groups.
- We should treat different groups equally as much as possible. (reversed)
- Some groups are simply worth more than others.
- Equality between groups should be our ideal. (reversed)
- To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other groups.
- We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups. (reversed)

Question order randomized.

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Answers coded from 1 = *Strongly disagree* to 7 = *Strongly agree*.

### **Ideology**

“Speaking of politics in general, you consider yourself mainly as...”

Answers coded from 1 = *Left* to 5 = *Right*.

## **Study 2: United States**

### **Group feeling thermometers**

“We would like to get your feelings toward some of the major immigrant groups in the United States. Please rate each group using a thermometer-like scale that runs from 0 to 100, where 0 means least warm and 100 means most warm.”

- Mexicans
- Chinese
- Salvadorans
- Cubans
- Koreans
- Germans
- Poles
- Nigerians
- Iraqis
- Lebanese
- Somalis

Question order randomized.

### **Social dominance orientation**

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“Please indicate how much you favor or oppose each idea below. You can work quickly; your first feeling is generally best.”

- An ideal society requires some groups to be on top and others to be on the bottom.
- Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups.
- No one group should dominate in society. (reversed)
- Groups at the bottom are just as deserving as groups at the top. (reversed)
- Group equality should not be our primary goal.
- It is unjust to try to make groups equal.
- We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups. (reversed)
- We should work to give all groups an equal chance to succeed. (reversed)

Question order randomized.

Answers coded from 1 = *Strongly disagree* to 7 = *Strongly agree*.

### **Ideology**

“In politics people sometimes talk of ‘left’ and ‘right.’ Where would you place yourself on this scale, where 0 means the left and 10 means the right?”

### **Study 3: Britain**

#### **Group feeling thermometers**

“We would like to get your feelings toward some of the major immigrant groups in Britain.

Please rate each group using a thermometer-like scale that runs from 0 to 100, where 0 means least warm and 100 means most warm.”

- Poles
- Indians

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- Pakistanis
- Romanians
- Irish
- Germans
- South Africans
- Nigerians

Question order randomized.

### **Social dominance orientation**

Same as in Study 2

### **Ideology**

Same as in Study 2