The *Hijab* Penalty:
Feminist Backlash to Muslim Immigrants

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Abstract

Why do native Europeans discriminate against Muslim immigrants? Can shared ideas between natives and immigrants reduce discrimination? We hypothesize that natives' bias against Muslim immigrants is shaped by the belief that Muslims hold conservative attitudes about women's rights and that this ideational basis for discrimination is more pronounced among native women. We test this hypothesis in a large-scale field experiment conducted in 25 cities across Germany, during which 3,797 unknowing bystanders were exposed to brief social encounters with confederates who revealed their ideas regarding gender roles. We find significant discrimination against Muslim women, but this discrimination is eliminated when Muslim women signal that they hold progressive gender attitudes. Through an implicit association test and a follow-up survey among German adults, we further confirm the centrality of ideational stereotypes in structuring opposition to Muslims. Our findings have important implications for reducing conflict between native-immigrant communities in an era of increased cross-border migration.

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1 Introduction

Why do native Europeans discriminate against Muslim immigrants? Such bias has been connected to the perception of identity threats generated by the cultural distance that divides natives from immigrants (see e.g. Sniderman, Hagendoorn and Prior, 2004; Dinesen, 2013; Enos, 2014; Creighton and Jamal, 2015). Key insights from theories of social identity (Tajfel, 1981), prejudice (Allport, 1954; Paluck and Green, 2009), and ethnocentrism (Kinder and Kam, 2010), suggest that sentiments toward immigrants are a manifestation of the host population's in-group identity, and of the extent to which immigrant groups are perceived to be "distinct," and therefore "distant," from their own (Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2015; Kauff et al., 2015; Mummendey and Wenzel, 1999; Schildkraut, 2010; Stephan and Stephan, 2000). We build on these insights to explore the role of norms and ideas in shaping perceptions of social distance between natives and immigrants, and to suggest ways to overcome that distance and reduce anti-immigrant discrimination.

We explore the sources of anti-immigrant discrimination in a large-scale field experiment conducted in 25 cities in Germany, in which 3,797 unknowing bystanders were exposed to brief social encounters with confederates. We varied the ethno-religious identities of confederates as well as whether they share ideas that are widespread among natives. We show that natives' discriminatory behavior against immigrants is shaped by stereotypes about ideological differences and a divergence in (non-material) interests that define native and immigrant group identities. When natives and immigrants share ideas about valued social norms, discrimination is reduced and ascriptive traits of ethno-religious difference become less important.

The commitment to democratic egalitarianism in the dominant model of multiculturalism in Europe can result in a mosaic of identities and shared allegiances based on a normative orientation to preserve the cultural autonomy and identity of minority groups (Benhabib, 2002; Kymlicka, 1995). This accommodation of cultural difference has the potential to impact valued local norms, forcing natives to come to terms with ideas and practices that might be antithetical to how they define their own social identities. Depending on the salience of these norms in the native population –and of the social identities that they help define– accommodation of a "foreign" set of norms and

ideas will be perceived as a threat by natives, and can generate discrimination against immigrants. That threat will be felt more strongly among subgroups of the native population whose identities are more directly tied to the norms being challenged by immigrants. This paper explores the connection between discrimination and this type of normative and ideational conflict.

Immigration from Muslim countries poses different types of ideational threat to different subgroups of the native population. We focus specifically on the widely held belief that Muslims hold regressive ideas about gender roles, and explore how this affects the behavior of native women and men toward Muslim immigrants. Regressive ideas about gender roles threaten to reverse advances in women's rights since immigration can over time reshape the preconditions for political legitimacy in liberal democracies. Multiculturalism shapes the foundations of political legitimacy as new norms and ideas reflected in the values of immigrant groups can shape the set of shared social norms and values that define an evolving citizenship identity (Habermas, 1993). In that context, accommodating cultural practices that are antithetical to one's own social identity constitutes an identity threat. For progressive women, accommodating immigrants with regressive ideas about gender roles threatens to create new social norms that negate hard-won advances in women's rights.

The threat emanating from the perceived regressivity of Islam with respect to women's rights has shaped public debates on immigration in Europe and is reflected in the perception that the veil (hijab) is an oppressive symbol of political Islam (Al-Saji, 2010; Benhabib, 2010; Bourhis, 2013; Goldberg, 2005). Combating ideologies of Christianity and Islam have made the female body the site of "symbolic confrontations between a re-essentialized understanding of religious and cultural difference and the forces of state power, whether in their civic-republican, liberal-democratic or multicultural form" (Benhabib, 2010, 453). We explore the power of this ideational conflict to shape everyday behavior toward Muslims in Germany and provide evidence regarding gender norms and ideas as mechanisms underlying discriminatory behavior by German women. We explore both implicit and explicit bias toward Muslims and identify the main sources of explicit bias, which highlight the impact of beliefs that Muslims hold regressive views about women. This evidence

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suggests a secularist, feminist backlash to Islam.[1]

2 The Role of Ideas in Forging a Common Identity

From the perspective of social-psychological theories of inter-group conflict, discrimination and hostility against a minority out-group by a majority in-group are symptomatic of ascriptive, cultural, or other differences that divide those groups. Those differences make group identities cognitively salient, resulting in bias and out-group derogation if the majority holds negative stereotypes about the minority (Kalla and Broockman, 2020). Under conditions of competition over economic resources or social status, prior literature has shown that inter-group contact can generate conflict due to the perception of identity threat (Allport, 1954; Brewer, 1996; Pettigrew, 1998). However, perceptions of threat can be diminished if majority-minority competition subsides and individuals from the two groups are re-categorized as members of a common in-group identity (Gaertner and Dovidio, 2000).

Could a simple cognitive shift that emphasizes a shared identity be sufficient to reduce bias and conflict between natives and immigrants? A premise for such an argument is that a shared identity exists and that it has the same meaning for both immigrants and natives. A key example is the role of a common national identity in reducing conflict between ethnic, religious, or partisan groups (Levendusky, 2018; Ricke et al., 2010; Wimmer, 2018). This conflict-reducing effect is only possible when the national identity is open and inclusive, and when all groups share the same concept of the nation (Nair and Sambanis, 2019). National identity is unifying if it encapsulates a shared respect for a common set of values and interests and if it promotes shared norms and ideas about group rights and civic responsibilities.

We draw on this insight to make two advances over previous applications of the "Common Ingroup Identity Model" (CIIM) to study group conflict between natives and immigrants. First, we

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[1]We use the term "feminist" to refer to a commitment to women's rights and gender equality. "Feminist backlash" in this paper refers to a negative response to individuals perceived to threaten hard-won advances in women's rights and to those who support regressive views on gender roles.

define common identities as implying common interests and shared ideas; it is the *shared content* of social identities that gives them meaning and power to shape individual behavior. Simply sharing attributes (e.g. phenotypical differences) is not enough to induce the salience of a common social identity. In the absence of a shared understanding of the meaning of a super-ordinate identity, invoking that identity can cause more conflict rather than less (Brewer, 1996; Klar, 2018).[2] We focus on gender identity as potentially unifying native and immigrant women but only when they share the same norms about women's rights and freedoms. In our empirical analysis, we test this idea by creating a "micro-environment" (Enos, 2014; Sands, 2017) in which confederates deliver different messages that reveal their stance with respect to gender roles and explore whether others' behavior toward these confederates varies by their position on gender norms.

Second, we contribute to the literature on social identity complexity (Roccas and Brewer, 2002) by exploring the implications of the inter-sectionality of gender, religion, and nationality in the formation of attitudes and behavior toward immigrants. The inter-sectionality (cross-cuttingness) of social identities has implications for the application of the CIIM as a conflict-mitigation strategy. When identities cross-cut, any identity could become super-ordinate for a subset of the population; by sharing multiple cross-cutting identities, prior research has shown that each identity can "constrain and modify the other" (Kang and Bodenhausen, 2015, 550). Cross-cutting identities can help reduce the salience of any single dimension of differentiation (Urada, Stenstrom and Miller, 2007) and, by doing so, they can reduce the intensity of social conflict (Kang and Chasteen, 2009; Roccas et al., 2008).[3] Gender could serve as a super-ordinate identity that unifies native and immigrant women; however, consistent with the previous discussion, this could only be so if native and immigrant women share the same concept of what it means to be a woman. If natives and Muslims have salient differences with respect to their ideas about appropriate gender roles, then making gender

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[2]In other contexts, research has found that national identity primes fail to reduce social distance between ethnic, religious, or racial sub-national groups when minorities perceive the national identity as exclusionary (Dach-Gruschow and Hong, 2006; Nair and Sambanis, 2019).

[3]A large literature in political science explores the conflict-reducing impact of cross-cutting ethnic, class, or party cleavages. Classic studies include Coser (1956); Dahrendorf (1959); Horowitz (1985); Lipset and Rokkan (1967); Mutz (2002).

identity salient should induce *more* conflict rather than less. If a commonality of ideas and interests among native and immigrant Muslim women can be established, this should eliminate a key source of bias and inter-group conflict. This mechanism of conflict reduction would generate differential effects across gender as men are an out-group with respect to gender identity and the hijab would generate different types of symbolic threats to men and women.

2.1 Measuring Discrimination

In order to unobtrusively observe discrimination against immigrant minorities in the field, we focus on assistance offered by individuals (or *helping behavior*) toward strangers in need during everyday social interactions. We use a standard definition of discrimination as the unequal treatment of different categories of people on the grounds of ascriptive characteristics (ethno-racial or religious differences). *Differences* in helping behavior offered to confederates of different ethno-religious background constitutes our key measure of discrimination.

Our choice to use "helping behavior" as a medium through which to observe discrimination is motivated by a broad set of studies that explore the causes of variation in helping behavior in different contexts. These studies test for differences in help offered to in-group and out-group members asking for money (Bickman and Kamzan, 1973); retrieving dropped items (Balafoutas, Nikiforakis and Rockenbach, 2014*a*) or finding lost ones (Benson, Karabenick and Lerner, 1976); needing medical assistance (Piliavin, Rodin and Piliavin, 1969); having car trouble (West, Whitney and Schnedler, 1975), or escaping emergency situations (Saucier, Smith and McManus, 2007). Helping behavior is generally considered a good measure of prosociality, though studies identify different motives for providing help (Cialdini et al., 1987; Maner et al., 2002), such as concern over self-presentation (Dovidio et al., 2006), social norms and peer-pressure (Archer et al., 1981; Moss and Page, 1972); expectations of material rewards (Moss and Page, 1972) or reciprocity (Regan, 1971; Whatley et al., 1999); or other cost-reward calculations (for a review, see (Saucier, McManus and Smith, 2010)). We build on prior literature by designing a new intervention that places confederates in need of assistance and allows us to isolate specific features of the confederate's identity to

measure the impact of that identity on helping rates.

The importance of studying everyday interactions cannot be over-stated. Much of political science is focused on 'big events' – elections, wars, treaties, or independence campaigns. Such events are important to study because they punctuate the equilibria of our everyday lives that are typically much less eventful. However, the usually less noticed–seemingly mundane–everyday interactions between immigrants and natives occur much more frequently and are usually more personal than those remote, 'big events.' Thereby, they can play an immensely important role in shaping our perceptions, biases, and behavior. If native-immigrant interactions are characterized by several, repeated small acts of mutual disappointment, hostility, and discrimination, these daily experiences will resemble "death by a thousand cuts" and result in pervasive, lasting barriers to integration.

2.2   Hypotheses

This discussion leads to the following testable hypotheses, which were registered in a pre-analysis plan filed with the Evidence in Governance and Politics (EGAP) prior to commencement of data collection.

All hypotheses focus on the role of social identification in motivating discriminatory behavior toward immigrants.

H1: Religious discrimination   Natives are more likely to discriminate (provide less help) against immigrants wearing religious attire (hijab) than immigrants who do not.

H2: In-group bias   Natives are less likely to help immigrants wearing religious attire (hijab) than German natives.

H3: Gender attitudes   Natives are less likely to help immigrants who reveal regressive gender attitudes than immigrants who hold progressive or neutral gender attitudes.

H4: Feminist backlash   Female natives are less likely to help Muslim immigrants if they hold regressive ideas about gender roles.

H5: Gender solidarity   Female natives will not discriminate against female Muslim immigrants who hold progressive ideas about gender roles.

3   Empirical Application: A Field Experiment in Germany

We test our theory by designing a novel field intervention in Germany that allows us to test whether native Germans discriminate against Muslim immigrants, and whether such discrimination is shaped by ideational factors, specifically by the perception that Muslims hold regressive positions with respect to women's rights and women's role in the family. Taking our theory to the field rather than testing it in the lab or through surveys overcomes some of the concerns regarding demand effects or social desirability bias, which is especially relevant in research on sensitive issues such as immigration and minority discrimination (Blair, Chou and Imai, 2019; Creighton and Jamal, 2015).

3.1   Designing a Micro-Environment to Observe Behavior

Our intervention was set up to observe the behavior of unknowing experimental subjects (bystanders) who are exposed to a highly realistic and carefully choreographed sequence of social encounters in public spaces.[4] The intervention followed four steps: first, a female confederate approaches a bench at a train station where other individuals are waiting for their train and draws their attention by asking them a question ("Do you know if I can I buy tickets on the train?"). Shortly thereafter, and in the presence of the bystanders, the confederate receives a phone call (from one

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[4]Our study is part of a vast literature on minority group discrimination in psychology (Fiske, 1998; Mummendey and Wenzel, 1999), sociology (Pager and Shepherd, 2008), and economics (Bertrand and Duflo, 2016; Bertrand and Mullainathan, 2004). We modify the design in Choi, Poertner and Sambanis (2019), which expands on earlier studies of helping behavior in the field (Balafoutas, Nikiforakis and Rockenbach, 2014*a*,*b*) (see section 2.1 for a review of prior research on helping behavior). Experimental studies in economics and political science have explored causes of discrimination usually with a focus on the marketplace (Adida, Laitin and Valfort, 2010; Bertrand and Mullainathan, 2004); see Bertrand and Duflo (2016) for a review. With few exceptions (Choi, Poertner and Sambanis, 2019; Winter and Zhang, 2018) these studies have not considered the effect of norms on behavior.

of the other confederates who was not acting in the specific iteration), and audibly converses with the caller in German (for immigrant confederates this indicates that they are likely integrated in German society) regarding a member of her family (her sister). The conversation is scripted in a manner that reveals the confederate's position on the women's right to work versus staying home to take care of the family. At the end of the phone call, a bag that the confederate was holding seemingly tears, making her drop a number of lemons, which disperse on the train platform and the confederate appears to be in need of assistance to pick them up. In the final step, team members who were not a part of the intervention record whether each bystander helped the confederate retrieve her lemons. A collage of photographs that capture the key sequences of our experimental intervention are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Experimental intervention in action

Notes: Unknowing bystanders watch and listen as the confederate takes a call and conducts a conversation with a friend (A), in the process revealing her attitudes towards the role of women in society (family and work). Following the phone call, the confederate drops her possessions (lemons), which disperse on the platform (B). We observe whether bystanders assist the confederate in collecting her possessions (C).

3.2 Experimental Manipulations

The treatment and control conditions for this experiment are presented in Table 1.

Dimensions 1, 2: Ethnicity and religiosity of confederate We experimentally varied the identity of the confederate (who is always female); the confederate was either a member of an immigrant minority group (from the Middle East) or a native German. We also manipulate her religiosity by having the *same* immigrant confederate wear religious attire (a hijab) as opposed to modern Western clothes with no religious symbols (Figure 2). Linguistic proficiency is held constant (all confederates speak fluent German with a very faint accent). In the immigrant control condition, they are dressed with clothes similar to those worn by native confederates and they appear to be from a similar age bracket and socio-economic background. The German confederate always wears no distinctive religious symbols.

Table 1: Treatment conditions for phone call experiment

Condition	Ethnicity	Religious symbol	Gender attitudes
1	Immigrant	Hijab	Progressive
2	Immigrant	Hijab	Regressive
3	Immigrant	Hijab	Neutral
4	Immigrant	No hijab	Progressive
5	Immigrant	No hijab	Regressive
6	Immigrant	No hijab	Neutral
7	Native	-	Progressive
8	Native	-	Regressive
9	Native	-	Neutral

Notes: Our experimental manipulation renders a total of nine treatment and control conditions. We do not manipulate the religious dimension of the native German confederate. The scripts used for the manipulation of the gender attitudes dimension, with the exact wording can be found in section 1 of the SI Appendix under treatment dimension.

Dimension 3: Content of the phone conversation To reveal confederates' attitudes about gender roles, we also manipulated the content of the phone conversation.[5] The conversation is intended

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[5]To ensure that a phone conversation would be an adequate medium for treatment delivery, we conducted a pilot study and partial replication of the intervention with manipulation tests. These assessments were specifically designed to evaluate whether i) the bystanders had listened to the phone conversation being conducted by the confederate and ii) could recall details of its content. We did this by conducting a debriefing survey after the intervention was executed. 97.8% of bystanders reported noticing the call. Despite strong social desirability not to admit to overhearing other peoples' private phone conversations, 80.8% of bystanders were *willing* and *able* to recall full details of the call, including whether the confederate held progressive or regressive attitudes towards women's role in society, without being given

Figure 2: Varying treatment dimensions 1 and 2: ethnicity and religiosity of confederate

Immigrant Hijab   Immigrant No Hijab   Native

Notes: We vary treatment dimensions 1 and 2 by having different individuals assume the role of the confederate in our intervention. We mitigate concerns about actor-specific heterogeneity affecting outcomes by having the same immigrant confederate play the Muslim and non-religious roles. We employ a total of 14 actors to play the confederate (7 immigrant + 7 native German) role across 6 teams.

to be sufficiently loud for bystanders to overhear.[6] This dimension takes on *three* values. In the *regressive* gender attitude condition, the confederate expresses disappointment with her sister, who has decided to get a job rather than stay at home and take care of her husband and kids. The confederate states that she believes her role as a woman is to stay at home and take care of her family (the full script for the conversation is provided in SI Appendix, section 1). In the *progressive* attitude condition, the confederate expresses her approval of her sister's decision to get a job rather than stay home and take care of her husband and kids. She states that she believes that women should not sacrifice their careers to stay at home and take care of their family.[7] In the neutral control condition, the confederate has a conversation of roughly equal length about an innocuous matter *unrelated* to her attitudes regarding women and of no socio-political valence. The specific

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any answer choices regarding the content of the phone call within the survey (see Table A3, Appendix).

[6]The analysis includes fixed effects for bystanders with earphones and other bystander characteristics. In the SI Appendix, we show that we have balance with respect to these characteristics across treatment conditions. Furthermore, we note that noise levels were low enough to ensure that bystanders could hear the phone call conversation. The mean background noise was 62 dB; the median was 57 dB, according to noise measurements we took for a sample of the iterations (at the exact locations of the interventions on the platforms). This is relatively quiet (comparable to the noise level of a refrigerator or AC unit a 100 feet away) and allowed bystanders to easily listen to a conversation right in front of them.

[7]Confederates signal their immigrant status verbally at the end of the phone call; immigrant confederates refer to time "since they moved to Germany."

issue of women's career advancement was chosen because it has been a crucial concern of the women's rights movement in Germany; most—but not all—native women hold progressive views (see Figure A3 in the SI Appendix for over-time public opinion data among Germans with respect to career gender equality).[8]

3.3 Data Collection

The experimental interventions were conducted in 26 train stations across North Rhine-Westphalia, Saxony, and Lower Saxony in 5 weeks during July and August 2019, following a pilot study in May 2019. These states were not chosen at random; rather, we arrived at the decision to conduct these interventions in the three states after carefully weighing a combination of state and region-level socio-demographic factors that we believed would be of interest.[9]

The most obvious difference between North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) and Lower Saxony versus Saxony is that they fell under West and East Germany prior to reunification. In addition, these two areas have traditionally been exposed to very different levels of immigration in Germany's post war history. Whereas NRW and Lower Saxony are considered among the most ethnically diverse federal states, Saxony has remained relatively ethnically homogeneous.

Furthermore, the "refugee crisis" due to protracted conflicts in the Middle East have also had a differential impact on the three states. The Königstein quota system, which combines state level tax revenues and population to assign asylum seekers, has naturally resulted in a high influx of refugees into states in the Former West, which happen to be among the most populous and affluent states in Germany, and a low influx of refugees to Brandenburg and Saxony, which are sparsely populated and lag behind western German states in terms of tax revenue. But perhaps most importantly, there is ample reason to suggest that the level of racial resentment might vary significantly across the

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[8]This message treats bystanders with ideas about gender roles but also about the confederate's work ethic. However, there is no reason to expect that all bystanders would regard the decision to work at home as indicative of a diminished work ethic relative to a woman who joins the labor market. In the SI appendix (section 9), we explore this question further and show that our results are inconsistent with a "work ethic" interpretation of our treatment.

[9]For details on study locations see SI appendix, section 2.

west (NRW, Lower Saxony) and the east (Saxony); the level of electoral support for the far-right *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD), which primarily campaigned on an anti-immigration agenda, in state and federal elections has been markedly higher in the East in comparison to the west. In some parts of Saxony, the AfD managed to secure the largest party vote share.

Figure 3: Study sites - 26 train stations in 3 German states
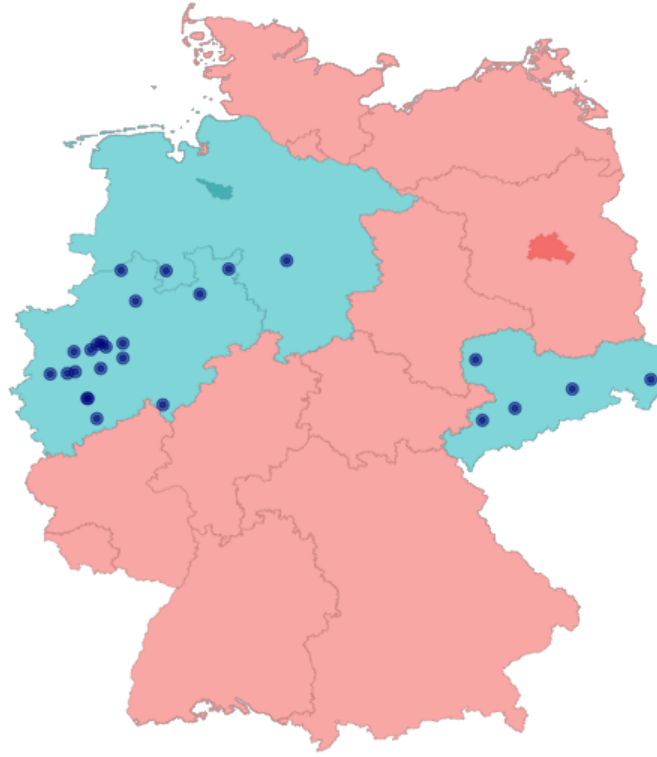
Notes: The study sites were located across 3 German States (*Bundesländer*) in the former East and West. Information regarding each station, including the name of the stations, as well as other miscellaneous details are included in the SI Appendix.

We implemented a total of 1,830 iterations of the intervention, involving 3,797 bystanders. The specific locations of study sites are presented graphically in Figure 3. For each iteration, enumerators who did not participate in the intervention recorded the behavior of bystanders who observed the intervention (coders were not blinded; see SI Appendix for more discussion). The main outcome of interest, which was coded at the *iteration level*, was whether *any* bystander offered assistance to the female confederate in retrieving her possessions. For each iteration we coded the behavior of

anywhere from 1-5 bystanders within earshot (i.e. a radius of 3 m around the confederate).

Outcomes were also coded at the individual level. We collect the following information per each iteration: how many bystanders are there within 3 meters of the confederate; and for each bystander: whether they offered assistance; their perceived gender (subjective estimate); perceived age bracket (subjective estimate); perceived immigrant minority status (subjective estimate); and whether they were wearing earphones.

Following each iteration, two enumerators approached the bystanders and invited two of them to participate in a seemingly unrelated, incentivized survey. These data are used in section 7 of the SI appendix in an exploratory analysis of heterogeneous treatment effects.
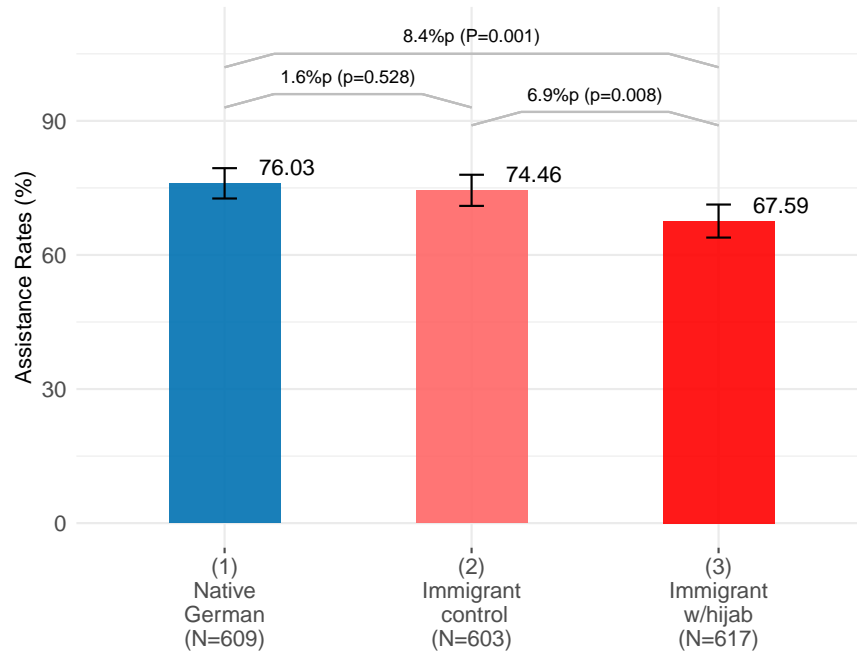
4 Results

4.1 Iteration-Level Analysis

We begin by presenting results from analyses conducted at the *iteration level*, which was pre-registered as our main empirical approach.[10] First, our analyses provide strong evidence in support of hypotheses 1 and 2, which posited that native populations will discriminate against immigrant minorities. As Figure 4 shows, discrimination is driven by religious difference; Muslim immigrants receive markedly less assistance from bystanders (column 3, 67.59%) than either native Germans (column 1, 76.03%) or immigrants who do not wear religious attire (column 2, 74.46%). The differences between the native and immigrant without religious attire condition versus the immigrant with hijab condition are large in magnitude and statistically significant at conventional levels (8.4%p, p=0.001, and 6.9%p, p=0.008, respectively).

Next, and perhaps more importantly, we turn to the effect of gender attitudes on discrimination. We restrict our analyses to comparisons of natives vs. hijab-wearing immigrant conditions only, since we observed no evidence of discrimination toward immigrants without a hijab. Consistent

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[10]The research protocol was reviewed and approved by the University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board (IRB Protocols xxxx)]. A waiver of the consent process was obtained. See SI Appendix for additional information on ethical and safety considerations.

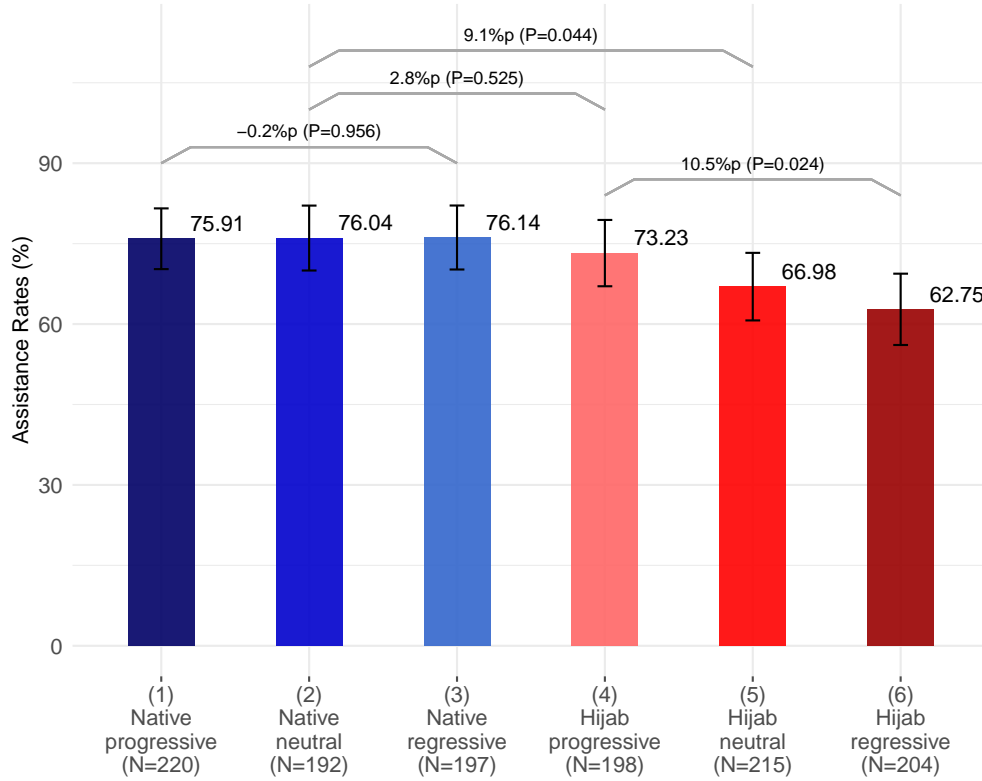Figure 4: Parochialism in the level of assistance offered to strangers

Notes: Bars represent the mean rates of assistance for the treatment conditions. The error bars present 95% confidence intervals for the means. The brackets and accompanying information report results of a standard two-tailed difference in means test of treatment conditions with p-values in parentheses.

with hypothesis 3, Figure 5 shows that bystanders are less likely to help Muslim women who reveal that they hold regressive ideas about gender roles. Muslim immigrants who hold regressive views (column 6) are significantly less likely (13%p) to receive assistance than similarly regressive native German women (column 3). The regressive message of the phone call likely confirms negative stereotypes against Muslims held by bystanders (we return to this in the next section, where we further explore these mechanisms in follow-up survey experiments).

By contrast, when the phone call reveals that Muslim women hold progressive ideas with regard to gender roles (column 4, 73.2%), discrimination toward them is reduced and assistance increases roughly up to the level offered to natives (column 1, 75.9%). The positive effect of the progressive message fully offsets the discrimination generated by the hijab, which is likely seen as a symbol of regressive beliefs about gender roles. The fact that Muslim women in the neutral message condition

Figure 5: Offsetting effects of progressive gender attitudes on discrimination

Notes: Bars represent the mean rates of assistance for the treatment conditions. The error bars present 95% confidence intervals for the means.The brackets and accompanying information report results of a standard two-tailed difference in means test of treatment conditions with p-values in parentheses.

(column 5, 66.9%) receive significantly less assistance than native women in the control condition

(column 2, 76.0%) is consistent with the view that enough bystanders share negative assumptions

about Muslim immigrants and that the hijab makes those assumptions cognitively salient.[11]

Interestingly, we find no evidence that the phone call message affects behavior toward natives.[12]

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[11]In section 5.2 of the supplementary appendix, we show that our results are robust to dropping bystanders whom our coders perceive as potentially of immigrant origin. The sample does not include enough immigrants to explore patterns just among immigrants.

[12]In order to alleviate concerns that this finding might be driven by bystanders paying more attention to veiled confederates' phone calls, we implemented manipulation checks during our pilot study and a partial replication study (see Table A3, Appendix). Confederates across the different treatment conditions were noticed almost always and the content of their phone calls was recalled correctly at similar rates.

Native German women who hold regressive beliefs (column 3) are no less likely to receive assistance than native women who hold progressive beliefs (column 1). This asymmetry in the results may suggest another, more subtle form of bias: while co-ethnics are allowed to have a diversity of beliefs about issues that are salient to women, the same privilege is not recognized for Muslims, who must conform to dominant norms and ideas about gender to be treated the same way as native Germans. In other words, native women are likely seen as individuals, who are not necessarily representative of their group and bystanders may hold no priors about native women's ideology vis-à-vis women's rights. By contrast, hijab-wearing women are seen as representatives of their group (Muslims; immigrants); and bystanders use the cues provided in the phone call conversation to update their negative stereotypes about the group. Consistent with prior literature (Hewstone and Brown, 1986), our results suggest that group salience does not change due to positive contact (progressive condition) unless the confederates with whom the bystanders interact are seen as fairly typical representatives of their group.

4.2   Individual-Level Analysis

Having established that ideas and norms about gender roles exert an important effect on behavior toward Muslims, we now consider whether these effects are different for men and women. To disaggregate the effects by bystander gender, we must draw on the individual-level coding of whether bystanders offered assistance and the characteristics of each bystander as coded by our enumerators.[13] Table 2 presents individual-level data analysis of the difference in help rates towards hijab-wearing immigrants versus native Germans, disaggregated by the bystanders' gender.

First, it is worth noting that both men and women discriminate against Muslim women with regressive ideas about gender roles (columns (3) and (4)); yet only women bystanders (column 1) are responsive to a progressive message vis-à-vis gender roles and no longer discriminate against

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[13]For a discussion of potential behavioral spillovers that can occur when there are multiple bystanders, see SI Appendix Section 8. The analysis suggests that behavioral spillovers are unlikely to pose a huge threat to individual-level estimates of our experimental treatment effects, and should partially be remedied by the fixed effects approach taken in the regression analysis of individual behavior.

Table 2: Effects of ideas on bias by gender

	Hijab vs native comparison					
	Outcome: Did an individual bystander help?					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Hijab vs Native	−0.031	−0.156**	−0.145**	−0.134*	−0.094†	−0.086
	(0.048)	(0.053)	(0.050)	(0.056)	(0.050)	(0.054)
Gender Attitude Condition	Progressive	Progressive	Regressive	Regressive	Neutral	Neutral
Bystander Gender	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	465	338	415	323	425	326

Notes: Models are estimated with linear regression. Robust standard errors clustered at the iteration level in parentheses. †p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01. Fixed effects included number of bystanders at the iteration level, as well as all individual level attributes that enumerators coded; these included, perceived age bracket, whether or not the bystander was wearing earphones.

Muslim women after establishing that they are not regressive.[14] More importantly, and consistent with our theoretical expectations, men (column 2) are not responsive to the progressive message; assistance rates to progressive immigrant women are markedly lower than in the neutral condition. On the other hand, women respond to the progressive message and increase help towards veiled immigrants, to the extent that the difference in help rates are no longer distinguishable from zero at conventional levels (column 1).[15] In SI Appendix (section 7), we present additional pre-specified exploratory analysis drawing on data from a post-intervention survey that allows us to explore differences in the characteristics of bystanders who helped compared to those who did not help. We find that the progressive message resonates more with secular (non-religious) female bystanders, consistent with our expectations.[16]

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[14]We present these results from the perspective of the progressive vs regressive message effects, disaggregated by the identity of the confederate and the gender of the bystander in Supplementary Information Table A7.

[15]These results are obtained via OLS regressions that control for different types of team and bystander fixed effects (see SI appendix, section 4, for more discussion).

[16]We also find that bystanders who believe that immigrants are a threat to German culture (as reported in the post-intervention survey) are around 16% points *less* likely to help veiled immigrants (p=0.025, two-tailed test).

5 Additional Evidence on the Mechanisms

Our field experiment was designed to assess the role of ideas and identities as a specific mechanism underlying discrimination against Muslims. We now present results from additional analyses involving novel survey-based studies that allow us to further explore the hypothesized mechanisms. Specifically, we explore whether the 'hijab penalty' is due to implicit or explicit biases; and whether implicit bias against Muslims is greater among women relative to men. We further explore possible mechanisms underlying explicit (i.e. conscious) biases among both men and women. Our surveys therefore allow for tests of alternative explanations and offer in-depth data on the meaning of the hijab in German society.

Figure 6: The implicit association test in practice

Notes: A screen capture of the implicit association test. We used 8 pictures each for the immigrant with hijab and the immigrant without hijab categories. The IAT is generated using the `R` package `IATGEN` created by Carpenter et al. (2019).

5.1 Study 1: An Implicit Association Test

Implicit association tests (IATs) measure differential association of two target concepts (e.g. Muslims vs Christians; Blacks vs Whites) with an attribute (e.g. "good" or "bad") (Greenwald, McGhee and Schwartz, 1998). They have been used extensively to measure unconscious bias across countries and contexts. Scholars in psychology and political science have used the IAT to assess the extent of implicit attitudes towards a diverse set of social categories including racial, religious, and

other minority groups such as women, LGBT groups, as well as people with disabilities (Nosek et al., 2007). Although there has been a protracted debate about whether the IAT is a valid method for measuring implicit bias, large scale meta-studies and replications have recently shown that implicit attitudes are pervasive, correlated with explicit bias, and the test successfully predicts individual behavior (Greenwald, Nosek and Sriram, 2006; Greenwald et al., 2009).

We use an IAT to measure whether native German populations hold implicit (negative) biases against the hijab. Our IAT was conducted on a stratified sample of 1,317 adult Germans, recruited through the online survey platform `Qualtrics Panels`. The IAT presented respondents with pictures of Middle East immigrant women with or without a hijab and then measured their associations of these two groups with positive and negative valence terms "pleasant" and "unpleasant." Figure 6 presents a typical IAT screen presented to the respondents. The measure of implicit bias was computed by comparing the mean response times for discordant pairings of our hijab vs no hijab categories to valence categories (*hijab-pleasant* and *no hijab-unpleasant*) to concordant pairings (*hijab-unpleasant* and *no hijab-pleasant*).

Our IAT reveals that German native populations hold strong implicit (negative) biases against veiled immigrant women. The mean D-score for our full sample is 0.72 (SD=0.44), which is around double the implicit racial bias, skin tone bias, and bias against Arab Muslims (D scores of 0.37, 0.30, and 0.14 respectively) measured in IATs on large samples of the US population as reported by Nosek et al. (2007). Disaggregating the mean D scores by the self-reported gender of the respondents reveals that native German men hold somewhat stronger implicit biases than women. The mean D score for men is 0.74 (SD=0.42). For women, it is around 0.06 smaller at 0.68 (SD=0.45).

The small magnitude of the differences leads us to question whether they can account for the heterogeneous responses to the gender attitude treatment observed in our field experiment. In the subsequent subsection, we turn to an analysis of *explicit* attitudes to explain the differential responsiveness of men and women to the progressive message about gender roles.

5.2 Study 2: Additional Survey Evidence

In early 2020, we fielded an online survey on a stratified sample of 1,515 German adults, recruited through `Qualtrics Panels`.[17] Our survey results provide further support for our experimental findings.

Figure 7: Evaluations of video of experiment: "Why do native women not help hijab-wearing women?"
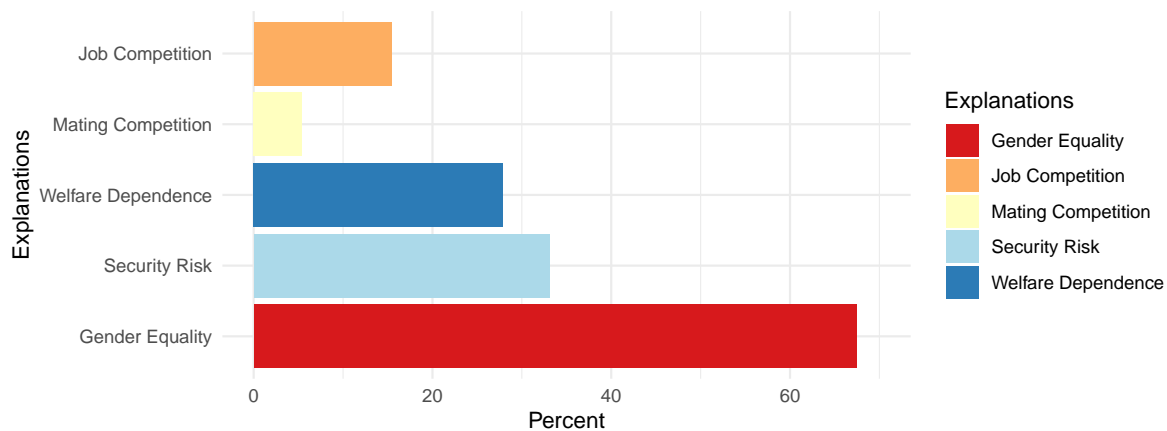
We tested what types of symbolic or realistic threat are made salient by the hijab for men and women by presenting respondents with video recordings of the experimental intervention in which bystanders at train stations did not provide assistance to female confederates wearing a hijab. These respondents were likely to be similar in many ways to the bystanders in our field experiment and we asked them why they thought the bystanders in the videos did not help the Muslim woman needing help. Respondents were given a list of plausible reasons for why native women might not help women wearing a hijab and asked to choose all that applied. The answer options included that native women "are upset that Muslim immigrants are taking away jobs" (job competition mechanism), "are jealous of young Muslim women" (mating competition mechanism), "think that Muslim immigrants receive too much financial support from the state" (welfare dependence mechanism), "are afraid that migrants with a hijab could be dangerous to them" (security risk mechanism), and/or that "they think that women with a hijab have views about gender equality that are outdated" (gender equality

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[17]In order to improve representativeness of the sample, we used population-proportional stratas for the 16 German states (*Bundesländer*), gender, and age groups.

mechanism).

While we find some support for commonly discussed sources of discrimination such as fear of job competition, mating competition, and perceptions that immigrants are welfare-dependent or pose a security risk, the most chosen explanation by far is the gender equality mechanism. In fact, 67.4% of respondents indicated that they thought that German women do not help because hijab-wearing women have regressive attitudes about gender equality.

Figure 8: Word cloud of open-ended responses on the meaning of the hijab

(a) Male Respondents

(b) Female Respondents

Notes: Word cloud generated from answers from male (panel (a)) and female (panel (b)) respondents. For male respondents, the three most common terms were "Religion (religion)", "religiös (religious), and "Islam (islam)." For female respondents, the three most frequently used terms were "**unterdrückt (oppressed)**," "Religion (religion)", and "religiös (religious).

This perception of the hijab as a symbol of regressive attitudes about gender equality is also evident in the survey responses to a number of other survey items. Most natives (59.9%) believe that hijab-wearing women are more regressive than non-Muslim women in Germany; and the majority of native respondents (54.0%) see the hijab as being forced on their wearer, with only a minority (27.2%) stating that wearing a hijab is a free choice. When presented with a statement by a well-known German journalist and feminist saying that the hijab is not a religious symbol, but rather an

attempt to control the female body,[18] 51.4% of native respondents agree with the statement and only 21.0% disagree. Moreover, women are more likely to agree with this characterization of the hijab as a symbol of oppression of women than men,[19] as are respondents who were socialized after the 1960s, when gender-equality norms became more prevalent in Germany.[20] Consistent with these views, only 20.9% of natives state that the hijab is "compatible with German culture," whereas 48.5% see it as incompatible.

These negative cultural interpretations of the hijab are even more prevalent among female respondents. In responses to open-ended questions about what people think when they see a woman with a hijab, we see a clear pattern highlighting the fact that women are more likely than men to see the hijab as a symbol of oppression of other women. Figure 8 shows this pattern clearly by plotting the words that are used frequently in these open-ended responses. The most frequently used term among female respondents is "oppressed" (*unterdrückt*) whereas this word is significantly less prevalent among men's responses, which overall do not reveal any clear associations of the hijab with gender norms.

6 Discussion

Via a large-scale field experiment in 25 cities in Germany and two follow-up studies, we find evidence that natives' behavior toward Muslim immigrants is shaped by stereotypes about ideological differences with respect to gender norms. German women, most of whom share progressive views about gender, discriminate against Muslim women because they assume that Muslims hold regressive views on gender. When Muslims' behavior challenges those beliefs in the context of everyday

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[18]The text of the statement by Alice Schwarzer was: "The hijab is the flag of political Islam" (Focus, 05/09/2019); "The hijab is a not a religious commandment. Only for the Islamic fundamentalists is the obsessive veiling of women as the prohibition of abortion for Christian fundamentalists. It is always about the control of the female body" (Die Zeit, 07/25/2019).

[19]54.4% agreement among women vs. 48.5% among men (p=0.035)

[20]60.4% of respondents who came of age after 1968 agree with the characterization, compared to 50.0% of those growing up earlier (p= 0.012).

interactions with natives, German women no longer discriminate against Muslims.

We analyze helping behavior in the field and go beyond previous studies by exploring specific mechanisms underlying that behavior. We highlight the role of ideas and norms about gender as a key factor shaping perceptions of cultural difference between natives and immigrants. Our findings are surprising from the prism of a large literature on immigration, which has not yet explored gender identity as a key determinant of anti-immigration attitudes. The gender differences we observe –whereby native women respond to the idea that Muslims hold progressive views on gender, but native men are unmoved by that treatment– cannot be explained by theories of economic competition between natives and immigrants, or by cultural conflict between immigrants and natives construed as a group with homogeneous preferences. These results point to significant subgroup differences in preferences within the native population and suggest that the way to tap into these differences to reduce discrimination is to identify the core set of norms and ideas that define subgroup identities.

Our results explore mechanisms underlying public opposition to the hijab. While veiling has been common in the memory and experience of Christian Orthodox, Catholic, Mennonite and other faiths, in recent times the veil has become a focal point of opposition to Islam. While some view the intolerance of the veil in public spaces as reinforcing a secularist tradition in government, others view it as symptomatic of weakening democratic ideals in Western society (Norton, 2013). Our study contributes to an ongoing debate about "the hijab penalty" by showing that the perception of the hijab as a symbol of regressive views on gender roles is not an elite phenomenon, as is commonly argued by proponents of multiculturalism; rather, perceptions of the hijab as a symbol of repressive attitudes toward women are broadly shared by ordinary people and those perceptions shapes their behavior toward Muslims. However, our experiment also demonstrates that when the veil's religious and political meanings are separated, it becomes much less salient as a marker of cultural difference and it no longer generates discrimination among a large segment of the native population.

While our study is grounded in the specific context of inter-group conflict over immigration, it has important implications for social-psychological theories of different types of inter-group

conflict. Consistent with previous studies, we find that a common in-group identity reduces bias and discrimination. While this usually occurs via reducing positive behavior toward the in-group (Brewer, 1999), in our setup establishing a common ingroup identity increases positive behavior (helping) toward the out-group (immigrants). Our experiment shows that shared ideas can help forge shared identities. Gender identity, which could be used to define a common ingroup unifying native and immigrant women, is only activated in a way that reduces native-immigrant bias when there is ideational agreement among natives and immigrants about the meaning of gender identity. We show that gender identity can serve as a crosscutting identity that eliminates discrimination by native women toward immigrant women only when they agree on what it means to be a woman. In the progressive gender norm condition, where such ideational agreement between the majority of natives and immigrants is achieved, the native/immigrant divide as well as the Christian/Muslim divide lose significance for native women and gender identity becomes more salient.

Thus, a key contribution of our study is to emphasize that shared ideas can reduce the perceived social distance that separates natives and immigrants by forming the basis for re-categorizing both as members of a common in-group identity—that of citizen. While this shows that cultural markers such as the hijab need not divide natives from immigrants, the inter-sectionality of social identities limits the ways that such re-categorization of immigrants as members of a new ingroup can be achieved via targeted policy interventions. Any such intervention that establishes a commonality of ideas and interests among immigrants and sub-groups of natives might also accentuate differences from other subgroups of natives. In our experiment, gender, religious, and national identities all become salient as we expose bystanders to non-native (immigrant) women wearing a hijab. When the ideational threat the hijab poses to native women is eliminated, only women are responsive to this intervention and men continue to discriminate against Muslim women. Thus, the types of cultural threat that men and women perceive are likely to be different. Any intervention designed to alleviate concerns arising from a specific threat that is salient to women—specifically the perception that Muslims are regressive vis-á-vis women's rights—makes gender identities more salient than religious or national identities for women *only* and is not an effective way to reduce bias among

native men. Therefore, while in theory cross-cutting identities can help reduce inter-group conflict by facilitating the re-categorization of individuals into a common in-group identity, in practice, such an effect will be hard to achieve since policy interventions designed to diminish bias by specific sub-groups may create new out-groups that are not affected by those interventions.

Finally, our study has crucial implications for the design and implementation of policies to promote multiculturalism in the context of Europe's immigration crisis. The strong effects of shared norms and ideas suggest that multiculturalism is possible, but it also has its limits. While tolerance of ascriptive differences between native and immigrant populations is an attainable goal, success depends on the degree of cultural (rather than simply economic) integration of immigrants. Differences in ethnic, racial, or linguistic traits can be overcome, but citizens will resist abandoning longstanding norms and ideas that define their identities in favor of a liberal accommodation of the values of others.

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